

**OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS
PENNINGTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
TUESDAY, JANUARY 26TH, 2021, 5:00 P.M.**

Pursuant to adjournment, the Pennington County Board of Commissioners met in the Pennington County Justice Center Board Room in Thief River Falls, MN, on Tuesday, January 26th, 2021 at 5:00 p.m. Members Present: Darryl Tveitbakk, Seth Nelson, Bruce Lawrence, Neil Peterson, David Sorenson. Members Absent: None.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Peterson and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

County Coordinator Kevin Erickson presented the following amendments to the agenda:

- Economic Development Tax Abatement Hearing will be held at 5:30 p.m.
- Sheriff Ray Kuznia will not be in attendance
- Calvin Benson will not be in attendance

Motioned by Commissioner Tveitbakk, seconded by Commissioner Sorenson, to approve the agenda as amended. Motion carried.

Recognition of Citizens – No citizens were present.

Motioned by Commissioner Tveitbakk, seconded by Commissioner Nelson, to approve the Board minutes of January 5th, 2021 as written. Motion carried.

Motioned by Commissioner Lawrence, seconded by Commissioner Sorenson, to approve the Human Services warrants totaling \$271,712.55, the December Auditor/Manual warrants totaling \$3,636,338.98, and the following Commissioner warrants. Motion carried.

County Revenue	\$156,419.74
Road & Bridge	\$ 15,344.07
Solid Waste Facility	\$ 10,418.00

Per diems and meal reimbursements in the amount of \$105.93 were also approved.

Human Services Director Julie Sjostrand met with the Board and presented the consent agenda from the January 19th, 2021 Human Services Committee meeting. On a motion by Commissioner Sorenson and seconded by Commissioner Lawrence, the following recommendations of the Pennington County Human Service Committee for January 19th, 2021 (detailed minutes on record) are hereby adopted:

SECTION A

- I. To approve the December 15th, 2020 Human Service Committee meeting minutes.
- II.
 - A. To approve CY 2021 Family-Based and outpatient services Purchase of Service Agreement with Northwestern Mental Health Center.
 - B. To approve the CY 2021 Pennington County Family Services/Children’s Mental Health Collaborative Supportive Services Agreement with Northwestern Mental Health Center, Inc.
 - C. To approve the Nessus Pro Scanning tool to meet the IRS Office of Safeguards configuration requirements for the 2020 County Inspection Report.

- D. To approve a Tailgating Policy to meet compliance with 2020 County Inspection Report.
- E. To approve the Pennington County Representatives to the Northwest Juvenile Center Board.

SECTION B

- I. To approve payment of the Agency’s bills.

Marc Bloomquist of the MN Department of Corrections and County Attorney Seamus Duffy met with the Board to discuss Drug Court that is coming to Pennington County. Mr. Bloomquist stated a \$499,486.00 grant includes funding for one FTE Probation Agent, a .5 FTE Case Aide, and a .25 FTE Coordinator. He discussed the county’s drug cases in recent years and also the detention rates both before and during the COVID-19 pandemic. Probation agents and therapists are now meeting with clients via Zoom and that is working very well, with the client failure rate falling from the normal 25% to 0%. Mr. Bloomquist stated he would like to return in the spring to discuss more numbers. The Board thanked Mr. Bloomquist and Mr. Duffy for their report.

Representative John Burkel met with the Board via Zoom and conference call. Following introductions, Mr. Burkel stated he has been appointed to the Ag Committee, the Industrial Ed and Economic Development Committee, and the Human Services Committee. He heard our county is contracting our Engineer with Roseau County and that Kittson County is struggling to hire for the position as well. He questioned if it would be helpful to have the residency requirements lifted through legislation. Engineer Flaagan stated that the idea has been discussed but he doesn’t believe it will be supported. Mr. Burkel ended by thanking the Board for their time and asked that the County reach out to him with ideas and needs in the future.

At 5:30 p.m. Chairman Peterson recessed the County Board meeting and called the Hearing on Economic Development Tax Abatement Program to order as duly advertised.

County Auditor-Treasurer Jennifer Herzberg reviewed the Economic Development Tax Abatement Policy and the 9 parcels that the City of Thief River Falls has determined as qualifying. These abatements are for residential properties and only in certain areas of the City of Thief River Falls. No comments were heard on the abatements.

Chairman Peterson closed the Hearing and called the Board meeting back to order at 5:35 p.m.

Motioned by Commissioner Tveitbakk, seconded by Commissioner Lawrence, to approve the abatement of the County’s portion of real estate tax as per the abatement policy and recommended by the City of Thief River Falls and authorize the County Auditor-Treasurer to issue payment by Auditors warrant. Motion carried.

<u>Parcel Number</u>	<u>Owner</u>	<u>Amount</u>
25.12100410	Kellie Dagg	\$ 658.70
25.12100310	Tanner Nessen	\$ 823.10
25.12100910	Brandi Dorge	\$ 699.89
25.12100710	Mackenzie Swick	\$ 810.33
25.04703801	Jeremiah Nichols	\$1,158.47

25.12100810	Tanner Dicken	\$ 863.97
25.02201700	Diana Donarski	\$ 900.76
25.04300421	Wendall Wegge	\$1,144.17
25.11500300	Marcia Sandal	\$1,115.21

County Engineer Mike Flaagan met with the Board and requested permission to advertise for fuel, equipment rental, and culvert bids for 2021, with a bid opening scheduled for March 8th, 2021 at 11:00 a.m. Motioned by Commissioner Lawrence, seconded by Commissioner Nelson, to authorize the Engineer to advertise for fuel, equipment rental, and culvert bids for 2021. Motion carried.

Mr. Flaagan discussed the county's annual membership to The Transportation Alliance that is about to expire. The Alliance lobbies for counties at the state and federal level regarding highway funding and related interests, and he recommends we renew our membership. Motioned by Commissioner Lawrence, seconded by Commissioner Tveitbakk, to approve renewing our annual membership to The Transportation Alliance at a cost of \$1,724.00. Motion carried.

Mr. Flaagan stated that the contract between Pennington and Roseau counties for Engineer services expires at the end of January 2021 and he presented a renewal agreement with the same financial terms, but with the agreement continuing until such time that Roseau hires an Engineer or as otherwise provided therein. He stated that Roseau County has hired a headhunter and they expect to have someone on staff by April 1st, 2021. The Commissioners questioned Mr. Flaagan if working for both counties is putting a strain on him and his duties in Pennington County. Mike replied things are going well but he would inform them if that changes moving forward. Motioned by Commissioner Lawrence, seconded by Commissioner Nelson, to approve the contract renewal between Pennington and Roseau Counties for Engineer services provided by Pennington County; contingent upon legal review by the County Attorney. Motion carried.

Motioned by Commissioner Lawrence, seconded by Commissioner Sorenson, to approve a Memorandum of Agreement between Pennington County and the Pennington County SWCD for the Drainage Record Modernization Database Project. Motion carried.

Commissioner Tveitbakk reported that Pennington County is one of 9 designated COVID-19 vaccination sites within the state and he volunteered at the clinic held last weekend. The clinic was a success with some traveling 300+ miles to our site to be vaccinated. Additional clinics will be held here the next two weekends.

Commissioner Nelson presented an update from a recent meeting of the Inter-County Community Council. They were recently subject to an audit and were successful in passing; financially the I.C.C.C. is doing very well.

County Auditor-Treasurer Jennifer Herzberg discussed a contract extension for the current property tax system through the MN Counties Computer Coop (MCCC), extending it out through December 31st, 2023. She stated that other tax systems are being viewed and evaluated, but if/when a new system is approved it will take at least one year to be functional. Motioned by Commissioner Sorenson, seconded by Commissioner Nelson, to approve a contract extension with MCCC for the current property tax system through December 31st, 2023. Motion carried.

County Coordinator Kevin Erickson opened discussion regarding a new switch that is needed in the County Board room. Commissioner Tveitbakk discussed this in further detail, noting it is needed so that all components can communicate and be functional. AVI Systems Inc. has quoted a total cost of \$4,455.55 for the new switch and integration into the system. Motioned by Commissioner Lawrence, seconded by Commissioner Tveitbakk, to approve the purchase of a new Matrix switch from AVI Systems Inc. for the County Board room at the quoted price of \$4,455.55. Motion carried.

The County Coordinator read aloud a resignation letter received from STS Crewleader-Coordinator Seth Tveiten. Motioned by Commissioner Lawrence, seconded by Commissioner Nelson, to accept the resignation of Seth Tveiten as STS Crewleader-Coordinator effective February 5th, 2021. Motion carried. The Board expressed their thanks Mr. Tveiten for his service to the County.

Motioned by Commissioner Tveitbakk, seconded by Commissioner Sorenson, to authorize the County Sheriff to advertise for the soon-vacant, full-time STS Crewleader-Coordinator position. Motion carried.

Commissioner Lawrence discussed the shared Ag Services Director position and agreement between Pennington County and Marshall County, which is currently vacant. Mr. Lawrence noted that each county has different needs of this position, so it is being recommended that the agreement with Marshall County be terminated and that we advertise for a Part-Time Ag Services/Solid Waste Coordinator for Pennington County, with hours not to exceed 25 per week. Motioned by Commissioner Lawrence, seconded by Commissioner Tveitbakk, to advertise for a Part-Time (25 hour/week) Ag Services/Solid Waste Coordinator for Pennington County. Motion carried.

County Attorney Seamus Duffy presented an update on the Justice Center, stating that the in-person trial order by Justice Gildea has been continued through March 15th, 2021 and that trials are to be held via Zoom.

Motioned by Commissioner Sorenson, seconded by Commissioner Nelson, to adjourn the Board meeting to February 9th, 2021 at 10:00 a.m. Motion carried.

ATTEST:

Kevin Erickson, County Coordinator
Pennington County

Neil Peterson, Chairman
Board of Commissioners