

## **PROCEEDINGS OF THE DODGE COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

Regular meeting of the Dodge County Board of Supervisors was called to order by Chairman Missel at 9:00 A.M. on Wednesday, September 6, 2023 in the Board Room of the Courthouse, Fremont, Nebraska with the following members present: Beam, Weddle, Backens, Missel and Bendig. Absent: Strand and Tawney. Prior to roll call Chairman Missel announced the meeting to be an open public meeting and that the current open meeting laws are posted on the wall and available for anyone's review.

The Board unanimously declared the meeting legally convened.

The Board unanimously approved the agenda as printed and received and placed on file county officials' reports, Certificates of Insurance for Lyman-Richey Corporation and Northern Natural Gas Co., Moving Permit for Hewitt's Service Center to move a Quad Trac (Case IH Tractor) over county roads on August 22, 2023, Moving Permit for Barnhart Crane to move a crane over county roads to County Road S onto a farm and return August 22, 2023 and Utility Installation Agreement with OPPD for overhead secondary crossing and set pole at 1726 County Road R, Ames, NE.

The Board unanimously approved the minutes of the August 23, 2023 meeting as printed.

At 9:05 A.M., the Board recessed as a Board of Supervisors and convened as a Board of Corrections. Chairman Missel dispensed with roll all members being present except for Supervisors Strand and Tawney.

Under any items of discussion, Supervisor Beam reported that there are currently 70 inmates in custody with 55 being held in Saunders County, 11 in Washington County, 3 at the Nebraska Department of Correctional Services and 1 under house arrest. There were 21 individuals booked into custody over the Labor Day weekend.

At 9:06 A.M., the Board adjourned as a Board of Corrections until Wednesday, September 20, 2023 at 9:05 A.M.

Immediately thereafter, the Board reconvened as a Board of Supervisors. Chairman Missel dispensed with roll all members being present except for Supervisors Strand and Tawney.

The Board unanimously approved the wage & hour claims as submitted in the amount of \$270,670.20.

The Board unanimously approved the financial claims as submitted in the amount of \$568,658.95.

The Board unanimously accepted the recommendation of the Information Technology (IT) Committee and approved Applied Connective Technologies as the provider for the new hosted VoIP based telephone system. Supervisor Bendig reported that the IT Committee received bids from Applied Connective Technologies and Great Plains Communications. He said the main differences in the proposals are the WiFi systems and the arrangement for the telephones. Great Plains Communications works

with a Cloud based WiFi system while Applied Technologies operates the WiFi through the county's existing internet provider. Great Plains Communications would lease the telephones to the county while the proposal from Applied Connective Technologies includes the purchase of the telephones. The committee preferred the option of the county owning the telephones. Supervisor Bendig said the committee asked that redundancy be built into the WiFi system by having two internet providers involved in the plan. Chairman Missel said he thinks this new system will serve the county well and will bring it up-to-date with current technology.

The Board unanimously approved the following expenditures of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds in the FY2023/2024 budget: County Attorney – Upgrade Omni, \$25,000, Sheriff – 1) Additional Office Equipment, \$15,000, 2) Additional Body Cameras, \$37,000, 3) Two vehicles, \$100,000, County Clerk – Copy Machine, \$9,000 and Extension Office – Plumbing, \$25,000 for a grand total of \$211,000. Supervisor Bendig said the Finance Committee considered these projects while creating the budget for next fiscal year. He added that this will reduce the amount of taxes needed for the FY2023/2024 budget. Supervisor Backens asked how much ARPA funding remains after these allocations. Supervisor Bendig said there is approximately \$30,000 - \$50,000 remaining.

Committee Reports – Chairman Missel reminded the Board about the open house for the Rawhide Creek Watershed Flood Risk Reduction Plan from 5:00 P.M. – 7:00 P.M. this evening at the Dodge County Extension Office 1206 W. 23<sup>rd</sup> St., Fremont, NE.

At 9:14 A.M., the Board unanimously passed a motion to go into closed session to discuss general assistance claims.

At 9:20 A.M., the Board unanimously passed a motion to go back into open session from the discussion of the claims. No action was taken on any of the claims as a result of the closed session.

The Board unanimously approved the reappointment of Vernon Brandert to the Dodge County Board of Adjustment for another three-year term, expiring August 31, 2026.

The Board unanimously adopted a Resolution renaming Old US Highway 30 to County Road U and authorized the necessary signatures on the Resolution. Chairman Missel read the Resolution for the record. Highway Superintendent Scott Huppert said he has had a few complaints from business owners affected by this change. Chairman Missel said, as a business owner himself, he understands and appreciates their concerns. However, from a safety perspective, the name change is necessary.

The Board unanimously adopted a Resolution declaring the relinquishment of ownership of the right-of-way on a segment of vacated Jones Street to the adjacent landowners and authorized the necessary signatures on the Resolution. This Resolution was originally adopted at the August 9, 2023 meeting of the Dodge County Board of Supervisors. When the Resolution was filed with the Register of Deeds it was communicated that the Resolution needed to be rewritten with more detail regarding the legal descriptions of the property involved. Chairman Missel read the Resolution for the record.

Highway Superintendent Scott Huppert reported that his employees are regrading County Road 8 between County Roads K and L and they are working with the landowners and power company (with underground lines) to address water issues in this location. Employees are cleaning out ditches and mowing around guard rails. They are moving cement blocks for the new salt shed; the shed will be coming in on September 21<sup>st</sup> and will be installed the following week. The dust control on County Road 7 west of North Bend is a success. The magnesium mixture hardens the surface of the roadway and won't corrode vehicles like the calcium mixture will. County Road 13 Blvd and County Road F are closed for the Highway 275 Bypass project around Scribner. The box culvert project on County Road F is two weeks ahead of schedule and should be done by harvest. The seeding and striping are done on Yager Road. Superintendent Huppert said work will have to be done to the center of Yager Road, but he will deal with that as it comes up. No more payments are being made to the contractor for this project. The paving on County Road 18 is starting today and should be completed by tomorrow. He reported that there are approximately 850 rural address signs up; if they work this weekend, they should be about halfway done.

At 9:40 A.M., the Board recessed as a Board of Supervisors.

At 10:04 A.M., the Board convened as a Board of Equalization with the following members present: Beam, Weddle, Backens, Missel and Bendig. Absent: Strand and Tawney.

The Board unanimously accepted the recommendation of County Treasurer Bargstadt on form 457, Application for Exemption from Motor Vehicle Taxes for 2023 on a 2016 Blue Bird bus from Young Men's Christian Association of Fremont, NE (DBA Fremont Family YMCA), 810 N. Lincoln Ave., Fremont, NE, granted the exemption and authorized Chairman Missel to sign the form.

The Board unanimously accepted the recommendation of County Treasurer Bargstadt on form 457, Application for Exemption from Motor Vehicle Taxes for 2023 on a 2024 Chevy Trax from Midland University, 900 N. Clarkson St., Fremont, NE, granted the exemption and authorized Chairman Missel to sign the form.

The Board unanimously received the list of 2023 Dodge County Permissive Exemptions (including cemeteries) from County Assessor Churchill and instructed the County Clerk to publish the list in the month of September per Nebraska Statute #77-202.03(5).

At 10:07 A.M., Chairman Missel adjourned the Board as a Board of Equalization until Wednesday, September 20, 2023 at 10:00 A.M.

At 10:10 A.M., the Board reconvened as a Board of Supervisors. Chairman Missel dispensed with roll all members being present except for Supervisors Strand and Tawney.

At 10:10 A.M., a Public Hearing was held to hear testimony for and/or against the proposed setting of Dodge County's tax request for fiscal year July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024. Hearing no testimony for or against the proposed tax request, Chairman Missel closed the public hearing at 10:11 A.M.

Immediately thereafter, the Board recessed as a Board of Supervisors.

At 10:30 A.M., the Board reconvened as a Board of Supervisors. Chairman Missel dispensed with roll all members being present except for Supervisors Strand and Tawney.

At 10:30 A.M., a Public Hearing was held to hear testimony for and/or against the proposed FY2023/2024 County Budget. Former Dodge County Clerk Fred Mytty has assisted with the preparation of the FY2023/2024 county budget. He summarized a Power Point presentation that he prepared regarding the proposed budget. He pointed out some of the factors that are known right now. The 2019 flood repairs are done (approximately a \$19 million expense), the loans are paid off due to reimbursements from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and townships. The first responder communications project is in maintenance mode. The completion of state highway construction projects has increased the amount of roadway that the county is responsible for maintaining. Dodge County will have to participate in the public hearing that is part of LB644, the "Property Tax Request Act". All entities that raise their taxes more than 2% plus growth must participate in the public hearing. The cash on hand in all funds is down 28.9% from last year's balance largely due to spending American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds. The cash on hand in local property tax supported funds (road fund, general fund, indigent fund, building fund) is down 13.3%. Reserve funds (interest, inheritance tax & capital improvement/economic development) have \$5.2 million, which is .8% less than last year. The Finance Committee asked department heads to voluntarily cut their budgets which amounted to roughly \$1 million. But it was also discovered that the flood control fund will need \$1.54 million for upfront costs for projects. The Finance Committee also decided to transfer \$2.5 million from the reserve fund to lower the property tax. Mr. Mytty said people may wonder why operating expenses went down, but the tax requirement is more. He explained that it's because the federal ARPA funds skew the budget. With the \$7 million federal fund on a \$40 million budget, the total expenses went down. However, the cash on hand on local property tax supported funds is down which require new local taxes. The Finance Committee decided a tax increase is necessary to support the Capital Improvement/Economic Development Fund, the Road Fund and the Flood Control Fund. The county's levy for FY2023/2024 is .24247 an increase of 1.764 cents from FY2022/2023. On a \$100,000 piece of property, that means a \$17.64 increase in county taxes. He also pointed out that the statewide average for counties is \$.28414 and counties over 20,000 in population was \$.31727 in 2022. Dodge County is below these averages. The FY2023/2024 County Budget will be on the agenda for approval on September 20, 2023. The LB644 public hearing will be held on September 21, 2023 at 6:01 P.M. in the Fremont Public Schools Room at 130 E. 9<sup>th</sup> St., Fremont, NE.

**Gene Schultz**, 2306 Jean Drive, Fremont, NE read his written testimony (copies were given to each board member and the county clerk's office). He said he opposes giving any money out of the Dodge County budget to Election Systems and Software (ES&S). He would also like to see Dodge County get back to hand counting ballots. Chairman Missel said he would share an email that Mr. Schultz sent him with links to more information on what was discussed today to the other board members.

**Doug Wittmann**, 124 County Road M, Dodge, NE testified that he doesn't trust the voting machines and believes there is a large majority that don't trust them either. He would like to see Dodge County set a precedent and go back to "honest paper ballots and hand counting the ballots". He added that the lack of transparency surrounding the 2020 election has raised suspicions.

**Fred Mytty**, 539 N. Luther Road, Fremont, NE addressed the Board. He said he was the Dodge County Election Commissioner for 48 years. When he ran it was rumored that the current county clerk didn't want to run because she was tired of elections. Statistically, vote counting would take up until 6:00 – 8:00 A.M. during the former county clerk's tenure. Mr. Mytty said he got it down to 2:00 A.M. his first election by doubling

the size of the canvassing board. By 1982, he said he was ready for some relief and that is when ES&S came along. Every election, Secretary of State Evnen selects random races in random precincts across the state to be hand counted and compared to the machine count. Mr. Mytty said every random count in Dodge County under his authority came out perfect. He added that he does not believe the presidential race can be compromised.

At 11:03 A.M., Chairman Missel closed the public hearing and thanked those who provided testimony. He also reminded everyone that the budget will be on the agenda for approval at the September 20, 2023 meeting of the Dodge County Board of Supervisors.

At 11:05 A.M., Chairman Missel adjourned the Board as a Board of Supervisors until Wednesday, September 20, 2023 at 9:00 A.M.

Micki Gilfry  
Dodge County Clerk