

September 26, 2023

The Merrick County Board of Supervisors met Tuesday, September 26, 2023 at 9:05 a.m. in the Supervisors Room, County Courthouse, Central City, NE, with Kreachbaum, Dexter, Jarecke, Placke, Kucera, Wiegert, Weller, County Attorney Kunz and County Clerk Strobel present.

Notice of the meeting was given thereof by publications in the Republican Nonpareil, The Palmer Journal and the Merrick County Website. Proof of publication is filed in the Clerk's Office. Copies of the agenda were mailed to each Supervisor and kept current and available to the public at the County Clerk's Office. Chairman Wiegert declared the meeting was preceded by publicized notice and having acknowledged and identified the location of the posting of the current copy of the Open Meetings Act, called the meeting to order and in open session at 9:05 a.m.

Moved Placke second Dexter to convene as Board of Supervisors at 9:05 a.m. Roll Call: All Ayes

Moved Placke, second Dexter to approve the agenda Roll Call: All Ayes.

Moved Kucera, second Weller to approve the minutes September 12, 2023 as published. Roll Call: All Ayes.

Meeting Reports: Weller: Central District Health September 11·Bader Park, September 19; Dexter, Kucera, Wiegert-Finance Committee meetings September 18, 19 & 25; Dexter, Kucera, Placke, Jarecke-NACO Central District meeting in Kearney September 21st; Placke, Dexter and Kreachbaum: Long Term Board, September 20; Dexter: Five Nines Safety meeting in Columbus September 20. September 21 met with Hamilton Telecommunications at the Extension Building regarding panic buttons and cameras, Safety Meeting September 25th; Jarecke-Central Nebraska Community Action Partnership in Loup City September 19th. Kreachbaum-Evening of September 20 Pipeline Security meeting.

Treasurer Gilg reported the General Fund is down around \$251,000 from last year.

Discussion regarding the Employee Parking lot. Captain Bauer sent a letter to Dexter due in part because the jail would like to have two handicapped and three additional parking stalls for the jail. Two stalls would be designated "Safe Place" for exchanges. Anyone using the back doors for access into the courthouse must be accompanied by an employee. No action taken.

Moved Placke, second Kucera to approve District Court to surplus a typewriter as seen fit. Roll Call: All Ayes

Moved Kucera, second Placke to Open the County Budget Hearing at 9:31 a.m. Roll Call: All Ayes. Due to inaccurate amounts submitted for publication by Dana Cole & Associates, the Budget Hearing will have to be postponed until October 10, 2023 Board Meeting. Clerk Strobel told the board that after speaking with Jeff Schreier with the State Auditor's Office, he informed her there would not be a penalty for late filing. Mitch Inman with Dana Cole & Associates will be arriving to the board meeting around 2:00 p.m. to go over the budget. Moved Kucera, second Dexter to close the Budget Hearing at 9:46 a.m. Roll Call: All Ayes

Treasurer Gilg went over the past due accounts receivable with the surveyor and highway departments. Surveyor Department has collected close to \$4,800.00 and the Highway Department collected \$56,290.00. Andrew Simmons informed Gilg that Loup Township will levy enough this year to take care of the balance in full. Loup has received \$23,350.00 from the County Treasurer since the last payment. Proposal regarding the Public Defender position received from Jennifer Kearney was discussed. Placke stated she received a phone call regarding the State Statutes regarding the hiring of a Public Defender. The county board needs to form a policy board which includes two attorneys and one lay person. Supervisor Jarecke will look into forming the board.

Moved Kucera, second Dexter to go into Executive Session at 10:08 a.m. for contract negotiations. Roll Call: All Ayes. Moved Dexter, second Jarecke to close Executive Session at 10:27 a.m. Roll Call: All Ayes

Moved Kreachbaum, second Dexter to return hours of vacation time and return the hours worked with vacation time for the Juneteenth holiday in 2023 to the union employees in the roads department. Roll Call: All Ayes

Appreciation meals for the county employees was discussed. Action will be required at the next board meeting. County Attorney Kunz will meet with Deputy County Attorney Luzum and address the Vyve contract. No bills will be paid until resolved.

County budget discussions continued regarding the proposed 3% increase in wages in the sheriff's department. The proposed budget received for deputy's wages was \$593,886.00 compared to the prior adopted of \$517,824.00. 3% of prior budget adopted would be \$533,358.72 for fiscal year 2023-2024. Budget discussions to continue at 2:00 p.m. when Mitch Inman with Dana Cole & Associates is present. Moved Jarecke, second Kucera to approve the August Fees submitted by District Court, County Sheriff and County Clerk. Roll Call: All Ayes

September 20 payroll: General: \$39,391.1500, Roads \$19,205.41, Juvenile Diversion \$2,450.37.

September 20 payroll expenses: General: \$42,102.00, Roads \$21,299.44, Juvenile Diversion \$2,733.40.

September 29 payroll: General: \$45,307.82, Roads: \$1,722.40. September 29 payroll expenses:

\$47,985.98, Roads: \$3,561.07. Moved Kucera, second Dexter to approve the payroll as presented. Roll Call: All Ayes

Moved Kucera, second Jarecke to recess until 1:50 p.m. Roll Call: All Ayes

Moved Kucera, second Jarecke to reconvene as Board of Supervisors at 1:54 p.m. Roll Call: All Ayes; Kreachbaum and County Attorney Kunz absent. Mitch Inman with Dana Cole & Associates was present to discuss the budget with the board and the county clerk. Supervisors were given budget printouts to go through along with Inman and Clerk Strobel. Central District Health budget request of \$32,000.00 was discussed. Hamilton County pays \$5,000.00 while Hall County pays \$79,300.00. Placke informed the board that if you figure by census, Hall County pays \$2.16 per resident. Merrick County census of 7221 would be \$16,667.00. It was decided that Merrick County will pay \$16,000.00 to the Central District Health Department. \$12,229.00 to be spend out of Opioid Recovery and \$8,152.14 out of the General Fund pay Region III budget request of \$20,381.14. General Fund requested budget was reduced by \$230,000, Road request reduced \$109,420.38. Sheriff Westman appeared before the board to discuss budget requests. Westman explained the \$593,886.00 was figured for nine deputy positions, in which two positions are vacant. Westman also explained he lost another deputy today, making three vacant positions, with one being vacant for over a year. Westman agreed with the board that \$80,000.00 would be able to be cut from the deputy budget. The Finance Committee suggested a \$45,000.00 cut out of a new sheriff vehicle at a previous meeting which Placke stated she wanted to make an increase for a vehicle. Clerk Strobel stated after removing \$80,000.00 from the deputy wage they would be able to budget \$25,000.00 back into the sheriff's vehicle. Being no further business, Moved Kucera, second Placke to adjourn at 4:10 p.m. Roll Call: All Ayes.

/s/Roger Wiegert, Chairman

/s/Trisha Fate-Strobel, County Clerk