

Proceedings of the Mountrail County Commissioners

1. OPENING & ROLL CALL

The Board met in special session on Thursday, August 4, 2022 at 1:00 P.M. at the Emergency/Community Room, Mountrail County Courthouse, Stanley ND with Commissioners Joan Hollekim, Jason Rice, Wayne Olson , and Trudy Ruland present and Dan Uran was absent. Others in attendance were Melissa Vachal, P&Z Administrator/Recorder; Brad Ellis, Building Supervisor; Rory Porth, Tax Assessor; Lori Hanson, Tax Director; Nichole Degenstein, Human Resource Director; Corey Bristol, Sheriff; Lynnette Vachal, Extension Agent; Scott Duerre, Road & Bridge Superintendent; Ivan Graf with Armor Interactive; Madison Rodgers, Clerk of Court; NDACo, Lonnie Bosch with NRG, Carrie Krause, President of the North Dakota Association of Counties (NDACo) and Aaron Birst, Executive Director for North Dakota Association of Counties (NDACo).

Chairman Ruland called the meeting to order.

2. APPOINTMENT SCHEDULED

1:00 P.M.

Ivan Graf with Armor Interactive discussed the issues with the malware infection on some of the county computers. Discussion was held on hiring a third-party remediation for the cyber security.

Moved by Comm. Hollekim, seconded by Comm. Olson, to approve Armor Interactive to be able to hire a third-party forensic cyber security company and to work with Auditor, Stephanie Pappa, to resolve this issue. Upon roll call, Ruland, Hollekim, Rice and Olson voted yes. Motion carried.

Comm. Ruland asked the question if the Treasurer and Human Resource departments should be more careful with all the personnel folders and the banking information. Ivan Graf suggested that the passwords for the banking logins should be changed. Also it was suggested to have a stand-alone computer to do all banking without using email.

1:15 P.M.

Discussion was held with the North Dakota Association of Counties and North Dakota County Commissioner Association concerning issues and challenges within the County.

Discussion was held with Department Heads concerning the malware infection. Lonnie Bosch with NRG commented on different anti-malware software programs that are available through the State at no cost to the County.

Madison Rodgers, Clerk of Court discussed the State taking over the clerk of courts offices across the state. Clerk of Court Rodgers expressed concerns of personnel changes and possible demotions of some of clerk of courts as it was insinuated there would only be one clerk of court within each district. Aaron Birst, Executive Director with North Dakota Association of Counties (NDACo) stated this proposal would need to be brought through the Supreme Court and legislation to have it passed.

Discussion was held on centrally assessed properties. Stephanie A. Pappa, Auditor stated this has been better the last few years.

Discussion was held on the law enforcement and correctional facility turnover issues. Corey Bristol, Sheriff stated Mountrail County hasn't been impacted with this issue.

Scott Duerre, Road & Bridge Superintendent discussed the required CDL training. Aaron Birst stated they are looking at regional trainings held within the counties to make things easier for training.

Comm. Hollekim discussed the salaries for the NDSU Extension Agents and the need for the salaries to be increased. Lynnette Vachal, Extension Agent discussed the stipend will be removed for all western region agents and NDSU is trying to make the salary more competitive.

Comm. Rice discussed the bank for wetlands and asked if it would be possible to create your own wetlands bank. Aaron Birst stated that this has been in discussion to set up a wetland banks with collaboration with other counties.

Lori Hanson, Tax Director discussed how legislation proposed each year pertaining to property tax exemptions and how the tax burden is shifted amongst other taxpayers. Tax Director Hanson discussed costly changes to tax statements, such as adding a pie chart, that are proposed through legislation with

only a few taxpayers even looking at the information. Aaron Birst stated the exemption of properties and tax statements will be challenging for the legislative committee due to a lot of the new people in the legislature and the experienced leaders leaving.

Melissa Vachal, Recorder discussed blockchain technology and using this technology to store data. Aaron Birst stated block chain won't be implemented anytime soon.

Discussion was held on the long waits of the Corps of Engineers 404 permits on road projects. Comm. Ruland stated the longer the approval of the 404 permit the larger the cost of the road projects.

Aaron Birst discussed the Ambulance Districts across the state are struggling and may eventually need the counties to supply employees for the Ambulance Districts.

Aaron Birst discussed legislation to end the ND Public Employees Retirement System defined benefit retirement program for new employees. The counties will be faced with decisions in the near future regarding pension plans.

3. ADJOURN

The Board adjourned at 3:03 P.M. to meet in regular session on Tuesday, August 16, 2022 at 9:00 A.M. Accepted and approved this 16th day of August, 2022.

Trudy Ruland, Chairman

Mountrail County Commissioner

Stephanie A. Pappa

Mountrail County Auditor