

Forman, North Dakota  
January 29, 2018

The Sargent County Board of Commissioners met in the Commissioner's Room for a Special Meeting called by the Chairman at the Sargent County Courthouse at 9:00 a.m. with the following members present: Dave Jacobson, Jason Arth, Sherry Hosford, Mike Walstead, and Bill Anderson. Also present was Lyle Bopp, State's Attorney; Jayne Pfau, Assistant State's Attorney; Travis Paeper, Sheriff; Alison Toepke, Treasurer/Recorder/Clerk of Court; Tibby Hinderlie, the Sargent County Teller; and, Pam Maloney, Sargent County Auditor.

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss retaining the services of The Village Business Institute to investigate an employee's complaint of a hostile work environment.

Commissioner Anderson inquired whether this meeting involved the discussion of confidential information concerning personnel that would require an executive session, but Mr. Bopp said there are not enough grounds to justify an executive session as there is no legal action against the county.

Commissioner Walstead explained that there had been a hostile workplace complaint filed with Sargent County early last week, and that he had met with the state's attorney to discuss what course of action to take. County policy provides that there could have been a committee of two commissioners appointed to investigate the complaint, or the county could retain the services of an independent, impartial third party to conduct the investigation. Commissioner Walstead did not think that the commission should be both the investigator of the complaint and the judge of its sufficiency at the same time, so he had contacted The Village Business Institute to investigate the complaint if the Commission approved. He has discussed the matter with John Trombley, The Village Business Institute's Consulting & Training Manager, who is willing to take on the case. An investigation will include interviews of County employees and an analysis of county policy information. It was also discussed that Mr. Bopp should check with Mr. Trombley to make sure he has no conflict of interest with either party, as Sargent County has its Employee Assistance Program (EAP) that employees may contact to discuss personal and employment issues through The Village.

The goal is to address conditions that may constitute a hostile work environment and to restore a good working relationship among all of the employees involved.

Motion to retain the services of John Trombley, The Village Business Institute, to conduct the investigation of the hostile work environment complaint in Sargent County and to authorize the Chairman to execute the contract with VBI. (Anderson/Hosford) Upon roll call vote, motion carried unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 9:17 a.m.

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MIKE WALSTEAD – CHAIRMAN

ATTEST:

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PAM MALONEY – COUNTY AUDITOR