

Forman, North Dakota  
June 4, 2024

The Sargent County Board of Commissioners met at 8:30 with the following members present: Wade Anderson, Jason Arth, Lyle Bopp, Mark Breker, and Scott Johnson. Also present was Jayne Pfau, State's Attorney; Tia Bopp, Auditor's Office and Pam Maloney, County Auditor.

Chairman Scott Johnson called the meeting to order.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Motion to accept the agenda as amended. (Breker/Anderson) Motion carried.

Motion to approve the May 21, 2024 meeting minutes. (Anderson/Bopp) Motion carried.

After the review of the Joint Powers Agreement pertaining to Drain #12, the state's attorney sees no issue with paying the county's cost-share portion of the crossings. Motion to reimburse the Sargent County Water Resource District for 40% of the Drain #12 crossings costs. (Anderson/Arth) Upon roll call vote, motion carried unanimously.

Motion to give county employees Friday, July 5 as a paid holiday for 2024. (Arth/died for lack of second)

Motion to switch the Juneteenth holiday, June 19, 2024 for Friday, July 5<sup>th</sup>, 2024 for this year only, upon the Personnel Board's approval. (Bopp/Arth) Roll Call Vote: Yes – Arth, Bopp & Johnson. No – Anderson & Breker. Motion carried.

The airport authority contracts with Milnor and Gwinner Cities have been sent out to the cities for their review. They are requesting that the contracts be good for five years, rather than three; and that the airport authorities are a party to the contract as well as the county and the cities. Motion to approve the contracts with the requested changes. (Anderson/Breker) Upon roll call vote, motion carried unanimously.

Motion to allow the courthouse to be closed from 12:30-1:30 pm on June 17<sup>th</sup>, 2024 for an Active Assailant Drill and to approve the purchase of pepper spray for those employees that want pepper spray at their work stations. (Anderson/Arth) Upon roll call vote, motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Bopp inquired about a swimming pool ordinance. State's Attorney Pfau stated that would be something each individual city would have to enact.

Neil Weaving, Custodian, arrived at the meeting. He stated that G & R Controls have been in for radiator repair; most furniture has been put back in place after the carpeting project for the court facility grant; some gallery seating has been sold; the reseeding of the lawn went well; he will get quotes for additional painting that he would like done; Jacobson Plumbing, Heating & Excavating has installed the water spigots, but one of them is leaking, so they will be back to repair the leak; and the front outside steps need repair.

LaJuana Hayen, Tax Director, and Samantha Hoselton, Assistant Tax Director, arrived at the meeting, along with several county residents; Wendy Willprecht, Emergency Manager/911 Coordinator; Richard Ruch, County Resident; Duane Peterson, Human Resources Director; & Travis Paeper, Sheriff. The Board of Review and Equalization proceeded to organize for 2024 at 9:30 a.m.

Ms. Hayen brought forth 289 farm home exemptions. Motion to accept the 289 farm home exemptions. (Breker/Anderson) Upon roll call vote, motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Hayen brought forth 27 Veteran Credit Exemptions. Motion to accept the 27 Veteran Credit Exemptions. (Arth/Bopp) Upon roll call vote, motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Hayen brought forth 68 Homestead Credit Exemptions. Motion to accept the 68 Homestead Credit Exemptions. (Arth/Anderson) Upon roll call vote, motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Hayen stated that Troy Schreiner had been in regarding the value on his storage building in Forman City – Parcel # 25-8255001. After reviewing the property card, she is recommending a

decrease in his value. Motion to concur with the tax director decreasing Mr. Schreiner's value from 174,600 to 51,900. (Anderson/Arth) Upon roll call vote, motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Hayen recommends increasing all commercial lots and buildings countywide 7.5%. This would fall within the 10% tolerance at 91.3%. Motion to concur with the tax director & increase commercial lots and buildings countywide 7.5%. (Breker/Anderson) Upon roll call vote, motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Hayen is recommending no change to agriculture values. 2024 Sargent County's average value per acre as determined by North Dakota State University (NDSU) is \$1,056.19 and this average per acre value has been set by the ND Tax Commissioner's Office.

Ms. Hayen recommends the following increases of valuation of residential lots & buildings: Rural Residences – 20%; Cayuga City – 25%; Cogswell City – 25%; Forman City – 30%; Gwinner City – 36%; Havana City – 25%; Milnor City – 36%; and Rutland City – 34%. 10% of these increases are on lot value with the remainder being the structure increase. This would fall within the 10% tolerance at 90.1%. Motion to concur with the tax director's recommended increases in residential values. (Breker/Anderson) Several Gwinner City residents spoke out about the recommended increases. Most are concerned about the dramatic increase in their valuations this year, ranging from 20% to 25%. Others stated that the appraisal value of the home in question is much lower than the true and full valuation assessed by the county. Their other concern is the difference in percentage increases from parcel to parcel within their city. They stated that the increased taxes are unaffordable & will push the elderly from their homes. Others question whether the state's requirements regarding sales ratios, map factors & market areas should be the same for smaller counties versus larger counties. Those speaking at the meeting today were: Grover Riebe, Dennis Dahl, Brodie Crandall, John Thompson, Cindy Enderson, Adam Hill, Dana Erickson, Sam French, Chad Crandall, Cheryl Anderson, Kari Ulven, Geneva Waswick, Jerry Waswick & Dan Johnson. Daro Crandall of Herman Township also spoke regarding the continued valuation increases on his rural home. After much discussion, roll call vote was taken: Yes – Anderson & Breker. No – Arth, Bopp & Johnson. Motion failed. The public left the meeting at this time.

After a short recess, motion to approve all recommendations made by the tax director, other than those for Gwinner City. (Arth/Bopp) Motion tabled.

Ryan Johnson & Cheryl Anderson, Gwinner First Responders; and Brian Tayer & Jeri Christiansen, Milnor Ambulance Squad; arrived at the meeting. Trent Mahler, Forman Ambulance Squad, was present through technology. Discussion was held regarding the contract agreement between the three EMS entities and the county. State's Attorney Pfau is not recommending the approval of the contract as it is written. Paragraph #2 states the "Auditor will only pay bills after they have been approved by the Ambulance Board and after an appropriate audit". She is recommending that all bills provided by the squads to the auditor, then be brought to the commission for their approval, the same as how all other department's bills are handled. After much discussion, motion to approve the contract with the amendment to Paragraph #2 which would require the bills to be approved by the commission. (Breker/Arth) Upon roll call vote, motion carried unanimously.

After further discussion and research, the tabled motion to approve all recommendations made by the tax director, other than those for Gwinner City was rescinded.

Tim Faber, Road Supervisor; Damon DeVillers, Interstate Engineering; Paul Mund & Scott Mund, Hall Township Supervisors, arrived at the meeting. There are two properties within the village of DeLamere that have been condemned by the North Dakota State Health Department. Clean-up of these properties would be the responsibility of the township. They are also concerned about the trees in the right-of-way along County Road #14. Motion to send letters to the landowners requesting them to remove the trees in the right-of-way. (Bopp/Arth) Upon roll call vote, motion carried unanimously.

Hall Township is also requesting a culvert replacement in Section 9-132-53 on County Road #14 between 146<sup>th</sup> Ave SE and Broadway Ave W, Delamere. Mr. Faber will replace the culvert.

Mr. DeVillers provided the board with the bid tabulations from yesterday's bid openings for County Road #14 Seal Coat and Patching Project and the Courthouse Parking Lot Reconstruction & Lighting Project.

Three companies provided bids for the County Road #14 Seal Coat & Patching Project: Morris Seal Coat and Trucking, Morris MN; Bituminous Paving, Ortonville MN; and Asphalt Surface Technologies, St. Cloud MN. Motion to award the project to the low bidder, Morris Seal Coat & Trucking for the Base Bid of \$397,778.49. (Anderson/Arth) Upon roll call vote, motion carried unanimously.

Four companies provided bids for the Courthouse Parking Lot Reconstruction & Lighting Project: All Finish Concrete, West Fargo ND; Comstock Construction, Wahpeton ND; Gast Construction, Fargo ND; and Northern Improvement Company, Fargo ND. Motion to award the project to the low bidder, Gast Construction for the Base Bid plus Alternative #1 (Concrete Pavement) for the Project for a total of \$574,366.73. (Anderson/Bopp) Upon roll call vote, motion carried unanimously.

Meeting recessed at 12:41 p.m. until Monday, June 10 at 7:00 p.m.

Meeting reconvened at 7:00 p.m. Monday, June 10<sup>th</sup>, with the following commissioners present: Anderson, Bopp, Breker & Johnson. Commissioner Arth was present through technology. Also present was LaJuana Hayen, Tax Director; Samantha Hoselton, Assistant Tax Director; Jayne Pfau, State's Attorney, Tia Bopp, Auditor's Office and Pam Maloney, County Auditor. County residents attending were: Sam French, Richard Ruch, Jerry Waswick, Dave Jacobson, Chad Crandall, Cheryl Anderson, Daro Crandall, Rebecca Dalstein, Tom Orth, Grover Riebe, Julie Johnson, Dennis & Denise Dahl, Brodie Crandall & Shane Swanson.

Motion to reconsider the motion from the June 4<sup>th</sup> area of the meeting to concur with the tax director's recommended increases in residential values so the county would fall within the 10% tolerance with 90.1%. (Arth/Bopp) Discussion followed.

Questions were raised on how the percentages were arrived at and how the assessments were figured. Other things discussed were that the ND Administrative Rules are creating problems in smaller counties, map factors are skewed and should be re-evaluated and that budgets need to be controlled on all levels and that the residential properties need to be re-appraised by Vanguard as soon as possible. The taxpayers present were encouraged to review their property card with the tax director to make sure it is as accurate as possible.

After the discussion, roll call vote was held: Yes – Arth, Anderson, Bopp, Breker & Johnson. No – None. Motion carried.

The Board of Review and Equalization adjourned "SINE DIE" at 7:48 p.m. (Bopp/Anderson) Motion carried unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 7:49 p.m.

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SCOTT JOHNSON – CHAIRMAN

ATTEST:

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PAM MALONEY – COUNTY AUDITOR