

NIOBRARA COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' MEETING  
NIOBRARA COUNTY, WYOMING  
NOVEMBER 7, 2023

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The County Commissioners' meeting was called to order on November 7, 2023, at 9:05 a.m. by Chairman Patrick H. Wade. Vice-Chairman John Midkiff, Commissioner Elaine Griffith, and County Clerk Becky L. Freeman were present. Members of the audience included Heather Goddard with the *Lusk Herald*, and Sheriff Randy Starkey.

Road and Bridge- Barney Reece met with the Commissioners, Foreman Fred Thomas, and Sheriff Randy Starkey to ask about the status of the S. Van Tassell Road for winter travel. Sheriff Starkey explained that there is a draft memorandum of understanding with WYDOT that the Commissioners and he are reviewing. If approved, this MOU will allow WYDOT to serve as the conduit to provide information to navigation companies and the traveling public regarding road closures including associated county roads to Hwy 20 and Hwy 85.

She also asked whether there would be winter maintenance on S. Van Tassell Road and Foreman Thomas assured her there would be.

Ally Garner, representing Senator Lummis' office, joined the meeting.

Foreman Thomas reported on heavy truck traffic on county roads. Chairman Wade wanted to clarify that it was Divide and N. Mahnke Roads that had received damage and Mr. Thomas confirmed that. Mr. Thomas also said that Cheyenne River is bad. He noted that the trucks are too heavy for our existing auto gates. He plans to have heavier duty auto gates built in the future if this traffic continues.

He discussed equipment issues, and plans for a winter road project, although he has not heard from the engineers on what they have developed.

Mr. Thomas received a letter from a landowner in Lance Creek complementing Colby Thurston's road work. Chairman Wade said he was contacted by non-resident individual complementing the road work done in the Hat Creek area. Mr. Thomas said that Gene Bartow had been working out there.

Old Business- It was mentioned that shingles have been blowing off the old jail due to the recent heavy winds. Ms. Garner inquired if there were any plans for the old jail and the Commissioners said some suggestions were to use it for office buildings. She said there might be federal grants available to update the building. She will provide the contact information for a grant finder.

Community Juvenile Services- Commissioner Griffith updated everyone on the latest juvenile services committee meeting.

Elected Officials and Department Heads- Sheriff Randy Starkey said it is busy in his offices. He said that a vendor will conduct a walk-through of the courthouse and give a proposal for cameras for various areas.

He said the new door into dispatch has been installed and painting has been completed.

Public Health Nurse Supervisor Darcey Cowardin said public health is getting ready to move into their new building this week.

Emergency Management Coordinator James Santistevan discussed the new grant available for the courthouse generator. The old grant expired in August of 2023. The new grant is for the same dollar amount and will be for one year. He said the Commissioners needed to confirm whether they wanted to move forward with the project.

He also presented a thank you card from the South Dakota School of Mines coaches and team extending their thanks for the aid they received from the County during the bus fire that occurred in October.

Public Health Response Coordinator Monica Wilcox gave an update on her office. She said she would be in Cheyenne for training next week.

Treasurer Keri Thompson said her office has been busy with tax payments as well as preparing for auditors.

Clerk of Court Chrisanna Lund said her office was busy in October. She and her deputy are still learning their new system.

Assessor Teri Stephens said that Sheriff Starkey had offered her one of his older vehicles to use as a field truck, but she said she would pass on it as it is older than the vehicle they are currently using.

Public Health Nurse Michelle Kremers said she is busy conducting extra clinics. She has supplied several RSV and Shingles vaccinations, as well as the inclusion of two new babies on her home visits.

County Clerk Becky Freeman said her office is busy with day-to-day work as well as preparing for auditors.

NIOBRARA COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' MEETING  
NIOBRARA COUNTY, WYOMING  
NOVEMBER 7, 2023

---

Commissioner Griffith noted that there will not be a county safety party for the near future due to recommendations provided by the auditors.

Michelle Kremers said that public health will have an open house for the public to attend once the office is ready.

Chairman Wade discussed a cooperating meeting he and Vice-Chairman Midkiff attended in Newcastle about the BLM. He noted commissioners from Weston and Crook counties attended as well as Lisa Shaw and Heidi Sturman.

Jeb Hanson joined the meeting along with Treasurer Keri Thompson and Assessor Teri Stephens and the group discussed "The People's Initiative to Limit Property Tax in Wyoming through Homeowner's Exemption" ballot initiative.

There was extensive discussion and many unanswered questions about this initiative.

County Attorney- Attorney Anne Wasserburger met with the Commissioners and said the draft agreement with WYDOT appears to be in order.

Neil Holmes joined the meeting and updated the Commissioners on the progress of the fire alarm panel installation at the fairgrounds, and the public health nurse building. He also discussed upcoming projects for which he would be the project coordinator and his associated fees. He will provide information to Mrs. Wasserburger so agreements can be drawn up.

There has been no further contact from Union Wireless so this item will be removed from the agenda.

24-Hour Catering Permit- Vice-Chairman Midkiff moved to approve a 24-Hour catering permit for Paleo Park to sell alcoholic beverages on November 17, 2023, for the Home Maker's Spa Day. Commissioner Griffith seconded, and the motion carried.

24-Hour Catering Permit- Vice-Chairman Midkiff moved to approve a 24-Hour catering permit for the Lusk Liquor Store to sell alcoholic beverages on November 11, 2023, for the Boots and Bling Gala. Commissioner Griffith seconded, and the motion carried.

Fair board Member Appointment- Commissioner Griffith moved to appoint Ty Molzahn to the fair board to fill the vacancy created by the resignation of Drew Hester. The term is effective immediately and runs until December 2024. Vice-Chairman Midkiff seconded, and the motion carried.

WYDOT MOU- Commissioner Griffith moved to authorize Sheriff Starkey to move forward in working with WYDOT to finalize the MOU. Vice-Chairman Midkiff seconded, and the motion carried.

Part-Time Magistrate to Perform Marriage Ceremonies- Commissioner Griffith moved to approve the appointment of Danny Dean Bauer as a part-time Circuit Court Magistrate for the sole and limited purpose of performing marriage ceremonies. Vice-Chairman Midkiff seconded, and the motion carried.

The Commissioners reviewed an estimate from Miller Construction for removal and reroofing of the south side of the fairgrounds roof. They will discuss this with the fair board at a future meeting.

It was noted that the Niobrara County Commissioners were awarded the Outstanding Elected Officials by the Wyoming Association of Conservation Districts.

Prevention Grant- Commissioner Griffith discussed this program and the current position vacancy. The Commissioner decided that it would be best to advertise the position after the holidays.

Courthouse Generator- After discussions with Emergency Management Coordinator James Santistevan, Commissioner Griffith moved to enter into a new grant agreement with the Office of Homeland Security for a courthouse emergency backup generator. Vice-Chairman Midkiff seconded, and the motion carried. The award is for \$104,000.00 and the term of the grant is from September 1, 2021, through August 31, 2024.

Consent Agenda- Vice-Chairman Midkiff moved to approve the consent agenda. Commissioner Griffith seconded, and the motion carried. Items on the consent agenda were the minutes from the October 17, 2023, meeting, and receipts for October from the County Clerk for \$3,324.00, Sheriff for \$428.00, and Clerk of Court for \$1,165.00.

The Commissioners approved Payroll and the following vouchers for payment: Bills are listed in the following format: Vendor- Department- Description- Amount- October Payroll- \$128733.97, Aflac- Various- Supplemental insurance- \$8726.12, 14 County Tire- Sheriff- Vehicle repairs- \$40.00, Absolute Solutions- Sheriff- New equipment- \$1072.00, Allbright's True Value- Various- Justice center maint., supplies, - \$611.80

NIOBRARA COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' MEETING  
NIOBRARA COUNTY, WYOMING  
NOVEMBER 7, 2023

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, AlSCO- Road & Bridge- Shop towels & coveralls- \$283.24, Black Hills Chemical & Janitorial- Various- Supplies- \$898.72, Black Hills Energy- Various- Utilities- \$376.40, Bloomer's LLC.- General Co.- Supplies - \$72.85, Boldon Welding & Repair, LLC.- Road & Bridge- Parts- \$22.34, Budd-Falen Law Offices- Commissioners- Legal review of the draft planning & zoning manual- \$175.00, Canon Financial Services- Various- Copier service agreements- \$660.00, Capital One Trade Credit- Road & Bridge- Parts- \$39.99, CenturyLink- Various- Telephones- \$2137.46, CenturyLink Business- Various- Telephones- \$67.84, Chantry Filener- General County- IT expense- \$1320.00, Connecting Point Computer Centers- Various- Copier service agreements- \$615.93, Cory Wilcox- Coroner- Deputy coroner stipend- \$150.00, Decker's Market- Various- Supplies, inmate meals- \$56.42, Delta Dental of WY- Various- Dental insurance- \$1004.70, Dennis C. Meier- Circuit Court Magistrate- Office rent- \$1000.00, Dept. of Health- Public Health Nurse- Co. share of PHN quarterly salary- \$5056.87, Double A Properties, LLC.- Co. Attorney- Office rent- \$1000.00, Frank Parts Co.- Various- Parts- \$212.21, Fusion Cloud Services, LLC.- Various, Telephone- \$1157.51, Geographic Innovations- Various- Professional mapping- \$1500.00, Goshen County Detention Center- Detention- Inmate housing & meds- \$10868.72, Great-West Trust Co., LLC.- Various- Deferred comp. contributions- \$19760.00, GreatAmerica Financial Services- Various- Copier service agreements- \$103.00, GSG Architecture Design- Facilities- Justice Center Roof Replacement Project- \$1410.00, Hiway Brake & Alignment- Sheriff- Vehicle repairs- \$1252.18, Hometown Country- Detention- Uniforms- \$77.00, Hospital Auxiliary- Facilities- Wreaths for courthouse- \$70.00, J. G. Construction- Public Health Nurse Grant- PHN Bldg. improvement- \$322.96, Jameson Cleaning & Maintenance- Facilities- Fairgrounds cleaning contract - \$7500.00, Jub Jub, Inc.- General county- IT expense- \$30.00, Katie Krein- Prevention Grant- Phone, IT expense, operational supports, svc. implementation- \$128.34, Ken Brown- Clerk of Court- Court appointed attorney- \$96.00, Long Building Technologies- Facilities- Maintenance- \$3955.24, Lori Himes- Assessor- Travel expense- \$150.28, Lusk Herald- Various- Publications, help wanted, subscription- \$1795.15, Lusk State Bank- Various- Payroll taxes- \$38142.42, Michael Harbert- General County- IT expense- \$1060.00, Michelle Kremers- Various Public Health- Travel expense- \$47.17, Mike Tomlinson- PHN Building- Weed removal- \$150.00, Monica Wilcox- Public Health Response Coordinator- Travel expense- \$144.11, Nebraska Safety & Fire Equipment, Inc.- Justice Center- Fire alarm inspection- \$720.00, Niobrara County Circuit Court- Payroll- Garnishment- \$488.42, Niobrara County Fair Board- Fair- 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter tax allocation- \$19462.86, Niobrara County Hospital District- 1% Option Tax- \$25113.74, Niobrara County Library- Various- Deferred compensation reimbursement & 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter tax allocation- \$39734.82, Niobrara County Public Health- Prevention grant- Indirect costs- \$206.12, Niobrara County Sheriff's Office- Sheriff- County plate transfer fee- \$2.00, Niobrara County Treasurer- Treasurer- Supplies- \$216.77, Niobrara Electric Association- Various- Radio tower electricity- \$61.95, Palen Law Offices, LLP- Clerk of Court- Court appointed attorney- \$276.00, Porter, Muirhead, Cornia, & Howard- General County- Consulting fees- \$4545.00, Safety-Kleen Systems, Inc.- Road & Bridge- Parts- \$356.53, Sand Rock Vision Clinic- Facilities- Rent & utilities for temporary sheriff's office- \$728.23, Smith Psychological Services- Dispatch- Employee medical- \$400.00, Stinker Stores, Inc.- Road & Bridge- Fuel- \$7564.75, Summit Fire & Security- Facilities- Fire extinguisher maintenance- \$1097.50, Sun Ridge Systems, Inc.- Sheriff- Maintenance agreement- \$2308.00, Teri Stephens- Assessor- Travel Expense- \$45.32, Thomas Y Pickett- Assessor- Professional appraisal- \$2000.00, Thomson Reuters-West- County Attorney- Law library- \$168.83, Torrington Office Supply- Various- Supplies- \$228.13, Town of Lusk- Various- Utilities- \$2426.02, Traci Bruegger- Facilities- Cleaning contract- \$4300.00, Tyler Technologies- Treasurer- Computer expense- \$82.69, Uinta County Public Health- MCH-Non TANF- Supplies- \$50.00, UW Extension- Extension- Co's share of 4-H educator quarterly salary- \$6846.00, Verizon Wireless- Various- Phones, base charge \$389.31, Visa- Various- Supplies, travel, postage, new equipment, uniforms, IT expense, prevention grant, justice center maint.- \$7460.04, Vision Service Plan- Various- Vision Insurance \$389.44, Visionary Broadband- Various- IT expense- \$873.65, Westco- Road & Bridge- Fuel- \$3356.83, Wyatt Electric, Inc.- PHN Building- Improvements/remodel- \$21950.00 Wyoming Educators' Benefit Trust- Co Admin- Health & life insurance- \$21411.09, Wyoming County Commissioners' Assoc.- Commissioners- Annual dues and 1<sup>st</sup> half of WCCA building payoff- \$11381.00, Wyoming Lawn Sprinklers- Justice Center- Sprinkler system maintenance- \$194.74, Wyoming Machinery- Road & Bridge- Parts- \$3.00, Wyoming Network, Inc.- General County- IT

NIOBRARA COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' MEETING  
NIOBRARA COUNTY, WYOMING  
NOVEMBER 7, 2023

expense- \$200.00, Wyoming Signs, LLC.- County Road Fund- Signs - \$1276.78, Wyoming County Treasurer's Office- General Co- Unclaimed property- \$4875.62, Wyoming Tribune Eagle- Dispatch- Help wanted ads- \$450.00, Xerox Corp.- Co admin- Copier service agreement- \$129.01,

Payroll Deductions & Accounts payable total- \$309090.16

Grand total for July \$437824.13


There being no further business, the meeting adjourned.

NIOBRARA COUNTY COMMISSIONERS



Patrick Wade, Chairman

Attest:

  
Becky L. Freeman, County Clerk

