

OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF  
NIOBRARA COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
Tuesday, April 2, 2024, 9:00 a.m.  
Commissioners' Office- Niobrara County Courthouse  
424 S. Elm Street, Lusk, WY

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A regular meeting of the Niobrara County Commissioners commenced on April 2, 2024, at 9:02 a.m. Present were Chairman Patrick H. Wade, Vice-Chairman John Midkiff, and Commissioner Elaine Griffith. Also present were County Clerk Becky L. Freeman and Sheriff Randy L. Starkey. Members of the audience were Undersheriff Kelly Dean, Chief of Police Jake Gordon, police officer Jay Owren, Brandie Collins with the *Lusk Herald*, and Sheila Boldon. Chairman Wade led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Road & Bridge- Foreman Fred Thomas met with the Commissioners and updated them on road and bridge business.

He said he had a conversation with a landowner on Divide Road who raised concerns about the dust on the road because of an oil company moving in a surface rig. Mr. Thomas said he went out there and flagged trucks to slow down. He said the oil company told him they would put water on the roads.

He updated them on the 2024 Road Rehabilitation Road Project. He said BenchMark is sending out bid packets for the project with a pre-bid meeting at the county shop on April 23<sup>rd</sup> at 10:00 a.m. and bid openings on May 7<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 a.m. at the courthouse in the Commissioners' meeting room.

He also discussed a letter of violation he received in December from the Department of Environmental Quality on the Boner Pit. He said that road and bridge employees went out there last week and worked on cleaning it up. Once this is complete, he will need to resubmit the pit report. He discussed turning back a couple of pits but is receiving conflicting information from Air and Water Quality Departments on how to do so.

Mr. Thomas said he has a new employee that must apply for his CDL, and he asked if the employee would be paid while attending school. The group discussed the matter, and it was noted that other employees are paid while attending educational classes.

Commissioner Griffith moved to approve the county paying Kassidy Bruegger's wages while he attends CDL training and will pay the cost of the class. Vice-Chairman Midkiff seconded, and the motion carried.

County Attorney- Anne Wasserburger met with the Commissioners to discuss contracts. Chief of Police Jake Gordon presented a draft contract for a school resource officer (SRO). There are some details that still need to be addressed between the school and the Town of Lusk before the contract becomes final.

Chief Gordon said the officer must go through the academy as well as receive active shooter training and school resource officer specific training.

Attorney Wasserburger said the only thing that binds the county in this contract is the \$20,000.00 funding commitment. She asked Sheriff Starkey if the resource officer and the sheriff's office could enter into an agreement for schools outside of city limits and he said it could be done.

She stressed the point that the county would have no supervisory authority. She also wanted additional language in the contract to further protect the county.

The Commissioners agreed to participate in the contract with a funding obligation not to exceed \$20,000.00 and will sign once the contract is finalized.

Old Business- Commissioner Griffith updated the group on the Community Services Juvenile Board and said there was an upcoming meeting to review and approve the budget for the program.

Sheriff Randy Starkey said he was contacted by Rapid Fire Protection, and they stated they would provide a bid to the county for the inspection of fire extinguishers and sprinkler systems at the sheriff's office, courthouse, and library.

Chairman Wade said he has nothing new to report on the fairgrounds property nor has he heard any more from the developers.

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Elected Officials and Department Heads- Melanie Pearce, Regional Public Health Nurse Supervisor said an individual has been hired as the Prevention Grant Specialist. The individual will work 20 hours a week for April and then move to 32 hours per week.

She also said that a new refrigerator and freezer had been requested and were approved through a COVID grant. These will be used to store vaccines and other temperature sensitive items.

She said Wes Vetter sent her some images of signs he could make for the public health nurse building, but those would hang. She asked him to send something that could be set off to the north side of the building.

Lastly, she said the budget for the Preparedness Grant was completed and they have been awarded \$52,000.00; however, the state wants everyone under this grant to work 40 hours per week. The Commissioners did not believe there was enough work for the Niobrara Public Health Response Coordinator to warrant 40 hours and said 32 hours is the current limit. She also said there would be an open house for the public health nurse building on May 3rd.

Sheriff Starkey said that the justice center roof and interior repairs have been completed and the prisoners have been moved in. He said the carpet in the front office and other rooms should be done today or tomorrow along with the security wall in the front office. He is still looking for a jail nurse that could work one to two hours per week to make sure all inmate medicines are correct.

He said the wooden poles in the sheriff's garage are beginning to show wear and tear due to inadequate drainage.

Emergency Management Coordinator James Santistevan discussed an upcoming weather spotting class he is conducting on April 8<sup>th</sup> at the fairgrounds.

Assessor Teri Stephens provided a copy of legislative items that will go into effect for the remainder of this year and for next year.

She said her notice of valuations will be sent out soon.

Clerk of Court Chrisanna Lund said she and Sheriff Starkey are waiting for the next round of Homeland Security Grant Funding to open so they can apply for additional security related items.

She sent out jury notices for the April 1, 2024 through March 31, 2025 jury cycle.

Treasurer Keri Thompson said the audit report was available and said that consulting services with the auditors are available if any entities wanted to participate.

County Clerk Becky L. Freeman discussed the upcoming elections.

Chairman Wade discussed upcoming information gathering public meetings for updates to the Land Use Plan being held on April 9<sup>th</sup> with an alternate weather date of April 16<sup>th</sup>.

He also said that the county and conservation districts are cooperative agencies in the Newcastle BLM Resource Management Plan update and will have several upcoming meetings.

He noted that BenchMark of Torrington is beginning work on a draft Land Use Plan but said the Commissioners do not want to know what it says until public meetings have been conducted. He mentioned that the Planning and Zoning Manual cannot be revised until the Land Use Plan is updated.

Wyoming Child & Family Development- Lori Milness, Director of quality assurance for Wyoming Child and Family Development and Morgan Kling, Director, and Teacher for the Lusk branch, met with the Commissioners to discuss funding requests for the FY2025 budget. In the past, the county has granted a property tax waiver and budgeted \$1,000.00 to help fund the operation and this is WYCFD's request this year.

Commissioner Griffith moved to continue to provide the property tax waiver and \$1,000 annual contribution to Wyoming Child and Family Development. Vice-Chairman Midkiff seconded, and the motion carried.

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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 of the March 16, 2024 meeting and receipts for February from the Public Health Nurse for \$24.00 and for March from the County Clerk for \$2,764.00, and from the Clerk of Court for \$423.00.

Payroll and the following vouchers were approved for payment:

Bills are listed in the following format: Vendor- Department- Description- Amount- March Payroll- \$122,114.67, **Aflac**- Various- Supplemental insurance- \$7,530.76, **Allbright's True Value**- Various- Supplies, parts, maintenance/repairs- \$269.85, **Alsco**- Road & Bridge- Shop towels & coveralls- \$412.18, **Amazon Capital Services**- Public Health Response Coordinator- Supplies, new equipment- \$3,736.48, **Anne Wasserburger**- County Attorney- Supplies- \$388.54, **BenchMark of Torrington**- Various- 2024 Road Rehab Project, Land Use Plan Revision, Road, Street, Site Design Manual Development- \$11,510.44, **Benzel Pest Control, Inc.**- Justice Center- Maintenance- \$97.92, **Big Horn Roofing, Inc.**- Justice Center Roof Repairs- Pay request 4- \$13,449.18, **Black Hills Chemical & Janitorial**- Various- Supplies- \$808.33, **Black Hills Energy**- Various- Utilities- \$1,752.03, **Boldon Welding & Repair, LLC.**- Road & Bridge- Equipment repairs- \$24.13, **Budd-Falen Law Offices**- Commissioners- Legal review for Draft Land Use Plan- \$1,125.00, **Canon Financial Services**- General County- Copier service agreements- \$380.00, **CenturyLink**- Various- Telephones- \$2,274.90, **CenturyLink Business Services**- Various- Telephones- \$69.40, **Connecting Point Computer Centers**- Various- Copier service agreements & color copy overages- \$1,202.96, **Cory Wilcox**- Coroner- Deputy coroner stipend- \$150.00, **Decker's Market**- Dispatch- Supplies- \$8.84, **Delta Dental of WY**- Various- Dental insurance- \$922.00, **Dennis C. Meier**- Circuit Court Magistrate- Office rent- \$1,000.00, **Double A Properties, LLC.**- Co. Attorney- Office rent- \$1,000.00, **Empower Trust Company, LLC.**- General Co.- Deferred Compensation- \$19,235.00, **Federal Safety Compliance Center, Inc.**- Road & Bridge- Supplies- \$298.50, **Floyd's Truck Center**- Road & Bridge- Parts- \$44.20, **Frank Parts Co.**- Various- Parts, vehicle repairs, oil- \$999.67, **Fusion Cloud Services**- Various- Telephones- \$1,178.59, **Geographic Innovations**- Various- Professional mapping, county map printing costs- \$2,410.00, **Goshen County Detention Center**- Detention- Inmate housing & medical- \$8,234.37, **GreatAmerica Financial Services**- Sheriff- Copier service agreement- \$129.00, **GSG Architecture Design**- Justice Center- Construction administration- \$2,820.00, **Herren Brothers True Value**- Justice Center- Repairs/new equipment- \$1,127.78, **J. G. Construction, LLC.**- Road & Bridge- Equipment repairs- \$381.88, **Jackie Milne**- Public Health Nurse- Travel expense, supplies- \$78.70, **Jameson Cleaning & Maintenance**- Facilities- Fairgrounds cleaning contract, fairgrounds event booking contract (Jan-March), maintenance- \$9,480.00, **Janette Starck**- Elections- Travel expense- \$161.65, **Jub Jub, Inc.**- General County- IT Expense- \$125.00, **Kellie Chichester**- Extension- 4-H Educator travel expense- \$246.56, **Ken Brown**- Clerk of Court- Court appointed attorney fees- \$1,920.00, **Lawson Products, Inc.**- Road & Bridge- Parts- \$652.43, **Lexie Painter**- Extension- Contract labor- fair board bookkeeping (Jan-March)- \$1,800.00, **Long Building Technologies**- Facilities- Justice center maintenance- \$1,929.51, **Lori Himes**- Assessor- Travel expense- \$45.68, **Lusk Herald**- Various- Publications- \$996.84, **Lusk State Bank**- Various- Payroll taxes- \$34,718.20, **Michael Harberts**- General County- IT Expense- \$660.00, **Michelle Kremers**- Various- Travel expense- \$166.83, **Miller Construction**- Justice Center- Justice center interior maintenance- \$8,700.00, **Monica Wilcox**- Public Health Response Coordinator- Supplies, travel expense- \$316.50, **Niobrara County Assessor**- Various- Supplies (County Maps)- \$350.00, **Niobrara County Hospital District**- Various- 1% Option Tax-\$18,083.34 & inmate medical- \$207.00, **Niobrara County Library**- Deferred compensation reimbursement- \$1,875.00, **Niobrara County Public Health**- Prevention Grant- Administration- \$8.40, **Niobrara County Sheriff's Office**- Sheriff- WYDOT License plate transfer fee- \$2.00, **Niobrara Electric Association**- Various- Radio tower electricity- \$61.42, **Office Depot**- Various- Supplies- \$415.60, **Office of State Lands & Investments**- Various- Annual radio tower special use lease - \$1,066.68, **Office of the State Public Defender**- Clerk of Court- FY2024 Public Defender Expenses- \$10,727.33, **Plainsman Printing & Supply**- Clerk of Court- Supplies- \$390.62, **Quality Carpet Care**- ARPA Grant- Justice Center front office repairs & updates- \$2,985.75, **Rancher's Feed & Supply, Inc.**- Road & bridge- Parts- \$37.50, **Randy Starkey**- Sheriff- Travel expense- \$19.47, **Sandrock Vision Clinic**- Facilities- Rent & utilities for temporary sheriff's office- \$851.39, **Sublette County**- Commissioners- County share of 2024 WCCA Congressional Tour dues- \$395.00, **The Radar Shop**- Sheriff- Radio repair- \$455.00, **Thomson Reuters-West**- County Attorney- Law library- \$173.89, **Tina**

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**Christianson-** Elections- Travel expense- \$135.34, **Torrington Office Supply-** Various- Supplies- \$184.00, **Town of Lusk-** Various- Utilities- \$2,584.30, **Traci Bruegger-** Facilities- Cleaning contract- \$4,300.00, **University of WY-** Extension- Co. share 4-H educator salary 3<sup>rd</sup> qtr. 2024- \$6,846.00, **Verizon Wireless-** Various- Phones, base charge \$417.08, **Visa-** Various- Supplies, travel expense, postage, new equipment, IT expense, TANF grant, medical supplies, schools, commissary- \$8,248.94, **Vision Service Plan-** Various- Vision Insurance \$375.86, **Visionary Broadband-** Various- IT expense- \$745.14, **Westco-** Road & Bridge- Fuel- \$8,619.72, **WEX Bank-** Various- Fuel- \$2,618.20, **WY Assoc. of Sheriffs & Chiefs of Police-** Sheriff- Schools- \$185.00, **WY Dept. of Workforce Services-** General County- Quarterly workers' comp. payment- \$6,115.33, **WY Enterprise Technology Services-** Various- Computer expense- \$21.94, **Wyatt Electric, Inc.-** Various- FG Fire panel install- \$37,783.59, courthouse backup generator- \$49,806.58, **Wyoming Child & Family Development-** Annual support- \$1,000.00, **Wyoming County Commissioners' Assoc.-** Commissioners- WCCA MOU Greater Sage Grouse Plan fees- \$460.19, **Wyoming Educators' Benefit Trust-** Co Admin- Health & life insurance- \$23,626.05, **Wyoming Network, Inc.-** General County- IT expense- \$200.00, **Xerox Corp.-** Co admin- Copier service agreement- \$129.02  
March Total- \$461,696.67


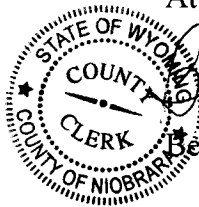
There being no further business, Commissioner Griffith moved to adjourn the meeting at 12:45 p.m. Vice-Chairman Midkiff seconded, and the motion carried.

NIOBRARA COUNTY COMMISSIONERS



Patrick Wade, Chairman

Attest:



Becky L. Freeman, County Clerk