

NIOBRARA COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' MEETING  
NIOBRARA COUNTY, WYOMING  
JANUARY 2, 2024

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The County Commissioners' meeting was called to order on January 2, 2024, at 9:01 a.m. by Chairman Patrick H. Wade. Vice-Chairman John Midkiff, Commissioner Elaine Griffith, and County Clerk Becky L. Freeman were present. Sheriff Randy Starkey and Brandie Collins with the *Lusk Herald* were in attendance.

Road and Bridge- Town of Manville Mayor Richard Ladwig met with the Commissioners and Foreman Fred Thomas to discuss transferring the Manville Spur, which is part of the "old highway 20" to the Town of Manville.

He explained that through grants the Town has received enough money to put in a new water line. They must cut or bore the Manville Spur four times to install a 6" main. They would like to take ownership of the Spur from the cemetery to the west end of the road. If that is not an option, Mayor Ladwig would like authorization from the Commissioners to cut the road. Foreman Thomas did not have a problem with cutting the road, stating it is a slow speed road and there are millings available to patch the road if necessary.

Commissioner Griffith asked why the road was not transferred several years ago and Chairman Wade said that one factor was whether the Town could own an easement outside of their city limits.

Foreman Thomas went on to address road and bridge business and said the new blade is in Casper and should be here soon.

Old Business- There was nothing new to report on the old jail or the juvenile service program.

Resolution 24-01- Vice-Chairman Midkiff moved to approve Resolution 24-01, **ACTION SUPPORTING COUNTY CUSTOM, CULTURE, AND HERITAGE IN DECISION MAKING REGARDING FEDERAL LANDS IN NIOBRARA COUNTY, STATE OF WYOMING.** Commissioner Griffith seconded, and the motion carried. A complete copy of the resolution is on file in the county clerk's office and on the county's website [www.niobraracounty.org/commissioners/resolutions](http://www.niobraracounty.org/commissioners/resolutions).

Resolution 24-02- Commissioner Griffith moved to approve Resolution 24-02, **ACTION SUPPORTING COUNTY CUSTOM, CULTURE, AND HERITAGE IN DECISION MAKING REGARDING STATE OR PRIVATE LANDS IN NIOBRARA COUNTY, STATE OF WYOMING.** Vice-Chairman Midkiff seconded, and the motion carried. A complete copy of the resolution is on file in the county clerk's office and on the county's website- [www.niobraracounty.org/commissioners/resolutions](http://www.niobraracounty.org/commissioners/resolutions).

Resolution 24-03- Vice-Chairman Midkiff moved to approve Resolution 24-03, E-911 Surcharge Fees. Commissioner Griffith seconded, and the motion carried. A complete copy of the resolution is on file in the county clerk's office and on the county's website- [www.niobraracounty.org/commissioners/resolutions](http://www.niobraracounty.org/commissioners/resolutions).

Appoint Voting Member to the Wyoming County Commissioners' Association (WCCA)- Commissioner Griffith moved to appoint Pat Wade as the voting member to the WCCA. Vice-Chairman Midkiff seconded, and the motion carried.

Authorization for Investment of Public Funds- Commissioner Griffith moved to authorize the Niobrara County Treasurer to invest Niobrara County's public funds with the following entities: Lusk State Bank, a division of Banner Capital Bank, Multi-Bank Securities, Inc, Wyoming Government Investment Fund, Wyoming CLASS, and Wyoming State Treasurer/WYO-STAR and WYO-STAR II. Vice-Chairman Midkiff seconded, and the motion carried.

Designation of Depository for Public Funds- Commissioner Griffith moved to designate the following depositories for public monies collected and held by the Niobrara County Treasurer: Lusk State Bank, a division of Banner Capital Bank, and First Northern Bank of Wyoming. Vice-Chairman Midkiff seconded, and the motion carried.

The Commissioners acknowledged receipt of a banking disclosure statement from Keri Thompson, County Treasurer, stating she conducts personal business with Lusk State Bank.

Land Use Plan (LUP) Update Proposal- Commissioner Griffith moved to accept BenchMark of Torrington's updated proposal for the LUP revision. Vice-Chairman Midkiff seconded, and the motion carried.

County Road Use Manual- Vice-Chairman Midkiff moved to accept BenchMark of Torrington's proposal for the County Road Use Manual development. Commissioner Griffith seconded, and the motion.

Elected Officials & Department Heads- County Nurse Manager Darcey Cowardin joined the meeting by phone and asked the Commissioners if they had reviewed the Workforce grant program. They stated they had not but would do so before the next meeting.

Public Health Nurse Michelle Kremers said it has been a bit slow in the office, but some vaccines have been given and that overall, things are going well.

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Public Health Response Coordinator Monica Wilcox said the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter deliverables had been completed along with the inventory for personal protective equipment. She said she is working on inventory for the public health nurse as well.

Sheriff Randy Starkey said Big Horn Roofing has begun work on the roof.

4-H Youth Educator Kellie Chichester said the interview process for an administrative assistant is done and that she would implement the option to execute a background check due to the close work this individual would be doing with youth. She also said that their modem is going out and will need to be replaced.

She extended a huge thank you to the road and bridge crew for clearing the fairgrounds parking lot.

Clerk of Court Chrisanna Lund said there has been an increase in criminal cases. She said a few jury trials are scheduled, but most will be settled before trial.

Assessor Teri Stephens said the declarations were mailed last Friday, her office is entering summer review information, and she is working on sales analyses.

Vice-Chairman Midkiff said he and Commissioner Griffith attended the hazard mitigation meeting and it went well.

County Clerk Becky Freeman said it was business as usual in her office.

County Attorney- Attorney Anne Wasserburger met with the Commissioners to discuss the Rapid Fire Protection annual alarm, fire extinguisher and hood inspection agreement. At the last meeting, the Commissioners and fair board members present agreed that the fair board would pay the cost of \$2,514.00 for annual inspections. The Commissioners wanted to confirm who should sign the agreement. Attorney Wasserburger thought that the County should sign it because they own the buildings and develop a simple MOU with the fair board documenting who will pay the annual cost. The Commissioners asked Ms. Wasserburger to draft this agreement for them to sign at the next meeting.

They also reviewed the MOU with WYDOT, and she said it was ready to sign.

Rapid Fire Protection Agreement- Commissioner Griffith moved to approve the Rapid Fire Protection annual alarm, fire extinguisher and hood inspection agreement. Vice-Chairman Midkiff seconded, and the motion carried.

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with WYDOT- Commissioner Griffith moved to approve the MOU between the Wyoming Dept. of Transportation and Niobrara County, in which the County will provide WYDOT with real-time county road closure information to be reported to navigation companies through WYDOT's public traveler information systems. Vice-Chairman Midkiff seconded, and the motion carried.

Executive Session- Vice-Chairman Midkiff moved to enter executive session at 10:54 a.m. with County Attorney Wasserburger and Deputy Attorney Doyle Davies to discuss personnel issues.

Vice-Chairman Midkiff moved to exit executive session at 11:21 a.m. Commissioner Griffith seconded, and the motion carried. No action was taken on the matter.

The regular meeting reconvened and concerns were raised regarding current county nurse manager Darcey Cowardin. It was felt that a letter should be sent to the Public Health Regional Supervisor, Stephanie Lund, requesting a new county health nurse manager be assigned to Niobrara County.

Commissioner Griffith moved to write a letter to Regional Nurse Manager Stephanie Lund requesting that Niobrara County be placed under a new county nurse manager. Vice-Chairman Midkiff seconded, and the motion carried.

Consent Agenda- Vice-Chairman Midkiff moved to approve the consent agenda. Commissioner Griffith seconded, and the motion carried. Items on the consent agenda included the minutes of the December 16, 2023 meeting.

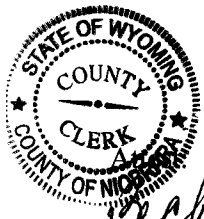
Payroll and the following vouchers were approved for payment: Bills are listed in the following format: Vendor- Department- Description- Amount- December Payroll- \$121765.82, Aflac- Various- Supplemental insurance- \$8104.35, Allbright's True Value- Various- Supplies, parts- \$158.64, AlSCO- Road & Bridge- Shop towels & coveralls- \$303.86, Anne Wasserburger- County Attorney- Supplies- \$97.72, Atlantic Data Systems- Dispatch- IT expense- \$559.60, Benzel Pest Control- Justice center maintenance- Pest control- \$97.92, Black Hills Chemical & Janitorial- Fairgrounds- Fairgrounds supplies- \$82.54, Black Hills Energy- Various- Utilities- \$1975.85, Body Builders Body Shop- Sheriff- Vehicle repairs (hail damage) \$7251.25, Boldon Welding & Repair, LLC.- Road & Bridge- Parts- \$148.76, Budd-Falen Law Offices- Commissioners- Planning & Zoning manual revision- \$150.00, Canon Financial Services- General County- Copier service agreements- \$330.00, Capital One Trade Credit- Road & Bridge- Parts- \$92.98, CenturyLink- Various- Telephones- \$2,444.84, CenturyLink

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Business- Various- Telephones- \$71.29, Connecting Point Computer Centers- Various- Copier service agreements- \$316.17, Cory Wilcox- Coroner- Deputy coroner stipend- \$150.00, Coulson Law, LLC.- Clerk of Court- Court appointed attorney- \$48.00, County Clerks' Assoc. of WY- Dues- \$500.00, Decker's Market- Various- Inmate meals & supplies- \$19.41, Delta Dental of WY- Various- Dental insurance- \$1004.70, Dennis C. Meier- Circuit Court Magistrate- Office rent- \$1000.00, Double A Properties, LLC.- Co. Attorney- Office rent- \$1000.00, Empower Trust Company, LLC.- General Co.- Deferred Compensation- \$19235.00, Frank Parts Co.- Various- Parts- \$377.62, Fusion Cloud Services, LLC.- Various, Telephone- \$1174.92, Geographic Innovations- Various- Professional mapping- \$1500.00, Herren Brothers True Value- Road & Bridge- Parts- \$112.13, Holmes Ranch Excavation LLC.- PHN Building- Project oversight- \$2500.00, Jameson Cleaning & Maintenance- Facilities- Fairgrounds cleaning contract, repairs- \$7744.50, Jub Jub, Inc.- General County- IT expense- \$90.00, Ken Brown- Clerk of Court- Court appointed attorney- \$348.00, Lusk Herald- Various- Publications- \$771.70, Lusk State Bank- Various- Payroll taxes- \$36053.42, Michael Harbert- General County- IT expense- \$335.00, Michelle Kremers- Various Public Health- Travel expense- \$32.76, Monica Wilcox- Public Health Response Coordinator- Travel expense- \$72.05, Niobrara County Circuit Court- Garnishment- \$702.30, Niobrara County Fair Board- Quarterly tax allocation- \$19462.86, Niobrara County Hospital District- 1% Option Tax- \$45,729.51, Niobrara County Library- General County- Deferred compensation reimbursement - \$1875.00, Niobrara County Treasurer- Treasurer- Postage- \$5.50, Niobrara Electric Association- Various- Radio tower electricity- \$62.49, NMC, Inc.- Road & Bridge- Parts- \$266.33, Patrick Cole- PHN Building- Utilities- \$235.00, Plainsman Printing & Supply- County Clerk- Supplies- \$258.85, Rancher's Feed & Supplies, Inc.- Various- Supplies, publications- \$642.94, Regional West Medical Center- Coroner- Autopsy- \$776.00, Sand Rock Vision Clinic- Facilities- Rent & utilities for temporary sheriff's office- \$779.33, Skeeter Construction- Library- Installation of shelving- \$9874.30, Stinker Stores, Inc.- Various- Fuel- \$4047.41, Stryker- Coroner- New equipment- \$1746.50, Summit Fire & Security- Detention- Maintenance- \$499.00, Thomson Reuters-West- County Attorney- Law library- \$173.89, Torrington Office Supply- Various- Supplies- \$106.62, Town of Lusk- Various- Utilities- \$2769.30, Traci Bruegger- Facilities- Cleaning contract- \$4300.00, Tyler Technologies- Treasurer- Computer expense- \$82.69, USPS- General County- Postage- \$4500.00, Verizon Wireless- Various- Phones, base charge \$668.03, Visa- Various- Supplies, travel, postage, new equipment, IT expense, prevention grant, justice center mtn., schools, parts- \$4352.89, Vision Service Plan- Various- Vision Insurance \$406.55, Visionary Broadband- Various- IT expense- \$745.14, Westco- Road & Bridge- Fuel- \$6485.20, WY Assoc. of Co. Agricultural Agents- Extension- Dues- \$100.00, WY Assoc. of Sheriffs & Chiefs of Police- Sheriff- Dues- \$250.00, WY Enterprise Technology Services- Various- Computer expense- \$69.14, Wyatt Electric, Inc.- Courthouse- Equipment mtn.- \$251.50, Wyoming Dept. of Workforce Services- General County- Quarterly worker's comp.- \$6150.38, Wyoming Educators' Benefit Trust- Co Admin- Health & life insurance- \$21411.09, Wyoming Machinery Company- Road & Bridge- New equipment- \$14500.00, Wyoming Network, Inc.- General County- IT expense- \$200.00, Wyoming Sheriffs' Association- Sheriff- Dues- \$400.00, Wyoming State 4-H Foundation- Extension- Dues- 100.00, Wyoming State Safe & Lock Co.- Facilities- Bldg./equip mtn.- \$2347.75, Xerox Corp.- Co admin- Copier service agreement- \$128.85

Payroll Deductions & Accounts payable total- \$253717.32  
Grand total for December-\$375483.14

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned.



*Becky L. Freeman*  
Becky L. Freeman, County Clerk

NIOBRARA COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

*Patrick Wade*  
Patrick Wade, Chairman