

NIOBRARA COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' MEETING
NIOBRARA COUNTY, WYOMING
MARCH 19, 2024

The County Commissioners' meeting was called to order on March 19, 2024, at 9:02 a.m. by Chairman Patrick H. Wade. Vice-Chairman John Midkiff, Commissioner Elaine Griffith, and County Clerk Becky L. Freeman, and Sheriff Randy Starkey were present. Members of the audience included Brandie Collins with the *Lusk Herald*, Sheila Boldon, Dan Ritter, Mark Arnold, Sara Travnicek, and Marilyn Nelson.

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

He said that BenchMark of Torrington will be here at 1:30 p.m. to discuss plans for the 2024 Road Rehab Project.

They are busy working on cleaning out auto gates and getting caught up on spring maintenance.

He hasn't heard anything more on the oily dirt dumped on 28 Road, but he is noticing more and more trash being dumped alongside county roads.

He has received some complaints about dust on the roads and whether there was a product(s) that could be placed on them.

Old Business- There was nothing new to report on the old jail. Chairman Wade explained to the audience members that they are trying to determine a purpose for the old building.

County Attorney- Anne Wasserburger met with the Commissioners to discuss the independent contractor agreements for the fairgrounds event bookings and bookkeeping duties. The contracts need to reflect an effective date of when services were performed. Once these changes have been made, the contracts are ready to be signed. She also discussed a proposed contract for a nurse for inmate medical that Sheriff Starkey had provided. This was tabled.

She asked the Commissioners if she could purchase a laptop for her office that could also be used during court as she did not include the funding in her budget this fiscal year.

Commissioner Griffith moved to authorize Attorney Wasserburger to purchase a laptop for the office and to use during court proceedings. Vice-Chairman Midkiff seconded, and the motion carried.

Next, the group discussed the fairgrounds property. Chairman Wade addressed concerns he has received about selling county property and setting precedence on selling other county properties.

Attorney Wasserburger told the audience that it would not become an issue here, that this is a unique situation. She said the Commissioners have thought long and hard on this matter and want what is best for the citizens of Niobrara County.

Chairman Wade said he did not want a black eye for the County, nor did he think the company would want that either.

The Commissioners have received comments both in favor of and in opposition to selling the fairgrounds.

Chairman Wade reiterated his biggest concern is that he doesn't want the Commission to put undue stress on private individuals' decisions to sell or not.

He commended everyone for being as respectful as they had been and noted that no action will be taken at this time as they want private negotiations to take place before deciding on this matter.

Dru Bower, President of DRU Consulting, met with the Commissioners via Zoom to provide an update on the Newcastle BLM Resource Management Plan.

Public Health- Melanie Pearce, Regional Public Health Nurse Supervisor, met with the Commissioners and discussed two public health grants. She also updated them on public health nursing activities.

The first grant with the WY Dept. of Health, Public Health Division amends the term of the original agreement from June 30, 2024 to June 30, 2025. This grant is to be used to support any COVID-19 Vaccination Outreach Activities.

Commissioner Griffith moved to sign Amendment One for the COVID-19 Vaccination Outreach Activities grant. Vice-Chairman Midkiff seconded, and the motion carried.

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The next grant discussed was for public health infrastructure needs and workforce development expansion. This grant was awarded to every county and can be used to help fund a public health nurse administrative assistant salary. It is for \$25,000.00 with a term ending November 30, 2027.

Commissioner Griffith moved to sign the WY Dept. of Health Public Health Division Workforce Development Grant Agreement. Vice-Chairman Midkiff seconded, and the motion carried.

Prevention Grant- Commissioner Griffith said the vacant position was advertised and there are two applicants.

Extension Office Copier Contracts- Kellie Chichester, 4-H/Youth Development/Extension Educator met with the Commissioners to discuss the renewal of the Canon copier full-service contract. The original contract was signed at the last meeting but did not provide an adequate quantity for color copy overages. She contacted Connecting Point to see if a better rate was available and presented three options.

Considering the additional information received and the fact that the contract with Copier Connection for the extension copier has not been submitted, Commissioner Griffith moved to rescind the motion made on March 5, 2024, and approve the contract with Copier Connection for \$2,070.00 per year or \$173.00 per month. Vice-Chairman Midkiff seconded, and the motion carried.

Land Use Plan Update- The Commissioners had been informed that the current land use plan does not mention renewable energies and contracted with BenchMark of Torrington to update the current Land Use Plan.

Rachelle Anderson and Brian Wakefield, with BenchMark of Torrington, presented a draft agenda for an information gathering meeting for the Land Use Plan update at the Shooting Sports Building at the fairgrounds, with a meeting scheduled for April 9, 2024, at 5:00 p.m. In the event of bad weather, the meeting will be held at the Shooting Sports Building at 5:00 p.m. on April 16, 2024.

James Kruse and Michelle Zimmerman were also in attendance.

WYDOT Fuel Contract- Vice-Chairman Midkiff moved to authorize Sheriff Randy Starkey to enter the fuel contract on behalf of Niobrara County, between WYDOT and Niobrara County. Commissioner Griffith seconded, and the motion carried.

Health Insurance Renewal- Commissioner Griffith moved to approve the health insurance renewal plan as set forth by Wyoming Educators' Benefit Trust. Vice-Chairman Midkiff seconded, and the motion carried.

Independent Contractor Agreements- Commissioner Griffith moved to approve and sign the independent contractor agreements between Niobrara County and Jameson Cleaning for fairgrounds event booking services for \$600.00 per month, and Lexie Painter for fair board bookkeeping services for \$600.00 per month. Vice-Chairman Midkiff seconded, and the motion carried.

Justice Center Re-Roof Project Certificate of Substantial Completion- Vice-Chairman Midkiff moved to sign the Certificate of Substantial Completion. Commissioner Griffith seconded, and the motion carried.

Commissioner Griffith moved to authorize WyoHelp to apply for and administer the Community Juvenile Services Board Grant on behalf of Niobrara County. Vice-Chairman Midkiff seconded, and the motion carried.

Planning and Zoning Board Vacancy- The Commissioners acknowledged receipt of Jordan Reed's resignation from the Planning and Zoning Board. Chairman Wade suggested advertising the vacancy in the paper and have applications due by April 15th.

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 5, 2024 meeting, receipts for March from the Sheriff for \$285.00, and a Tax Roll Supplement on USA Energy LLC from the 2023 tax year for \$2,049.23.

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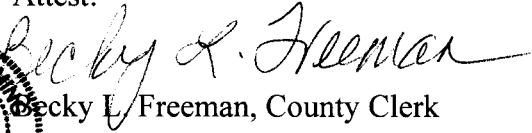
There being no further business, Commissioner Griffith moved to adjourn the meeting at 3:26 p.m. Vice-Chairman Midkiff seconded, and the motion carried.

NIOBRARA COUNTY COMMISSIONERS



Patrick Wade, Chairman

Attest:



Becky L. Freeman, County Clerk

