

NIOBRARA COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' MEETING
NIOBRARA COUNTY, WYOMING
October 17, 2017

The County Commissioners' meeting was called to order on this date at 9:00 a.m. with Chairman Richard A. Ladwig, Commissioners Commissioner Patrick H. Wade, Commissioner John Midkiff and County Clerk Becky L. Freeman, present.

Chairman Ladwig recessed the meeting at 9:01 a.m. to conduct a public hearing on a change of zoning application.

Public Hearing- Chairman Ladwig called the public hearing to order for the purpose of receiving public input on the change of zoning application submitted by Bridger Wireless, LLC. They are requesting a change of zoning from agriculture to commercial on a parcel of land they are leasing which is located in T32N, R66W, Sec. 9, Part of the S/2 South of ROW; Sec. 10, Part of the NWSW, S2SW and SWSE South of ROW; Sec. 16, N2, W2SW (SE1/4, NE1/4, Sec. 9, T32N, R66W)- 2166 State Hwy 20, Keeline to construct a 195'-0" guyed tower within a 55'x60' fenced compound for telecommunication purposes.

An agent for Tower Engineering Professionals, engineers for the project and representing Bridger Wireless, LLC., met with the commissioners and gave a brief history of the project. He said that AT & T would be one of the anchor tenants on the tower and there might be additional carriers added in the future. Commissioner Wade asked what the coverage area would be like and the agent thought it would cover approximately 30 miles.

He was also asked when the construction would begin and he thought perhaps in the first quarter of 2018.

There being no further questions or comments, the hearing was closed.

Chairman Ladwig reconvened the regular meeting.

Change of Zoning Application for Bridger Wireless, LLC.- Commissioner Wade moved to approve the Change of Zoning application from agricultural to commercial for the above stated purposes. Commissioner Midkiff seconded, motion carried.

Road and Bridge- Fred Thomas, Road and Bridge Foreman, met with the Commissioners and discussed road and bridge business.

The group discussed starting a new road rehabilitation project and Mr. Thomas said that there are six miles of road on K-Field to gravel. He said that most of the road is good, but it needs pulled, shaped and graveled.

Brian Wakefield, engineer for BenchMark of Torrington, joined the meeting. He said the road needs to be reshaped and that will be put in the bid. Mr. Thomas said that in conjunction with this project, road and bridge would be installing a new auto gate at Wallace's. He also said that they will most likely have to pull from Dave Thomson's pit to finish the north end of K-Field Road.

The group discussed a timeline and after advertising for two weeks and a pre-bid meeting, they should be able to open the bids by the second meeting in November.

Jackie King, Deputy State Director for Congresswoman Liz Cheney, joined the meeting to listen to issues and concerns from the Commissioners and answer any questions they might have.

Mr. Thomas asked the Commissioners if they would consider authorizing the purchase of an additional \$100,000.00 of rock from the Manville Pit. He said that \$100,000.00 would gravel approximately 55 miles of road at a 4" depth.

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Commissioner Midkiff was in favor of purchasing the additional gravel. Commissioner Wade was as well, but he thought that the Thomson pit should be used as well.

County Attorney-The Commissioners held a phone conference with County Attorney Cally Lund. Attorney Lund asked the Commissioners if they had reviewed the towing contract and if they had any comments. Commissioner Wade had some questions, such as the flat \$300 fee to tow a vehicle, whether it be in town or out of town. He also addressed points that need reviewed as far as headings, etc. The group will discuss this further at their next meeting.

Commissioner Wade inquired about the status of the insurance waiver for events held at the fairgrounds. Attorney Lund said that it still a work in progress and that she wants to meet with the fair board again and will get ahold of Denise Smith to see what they want to do.

Consent Agenda- Commissioner Wade moved to approve the consent agenda. Commissioner Midkiff seconded, motion carried. Items on the consent agenda were the minutes of the October 3, 2017 meeting and receipts for the month of September from the Clerk of District Court for \$544.00.

Letter of Support- Commissioner Midkiff moved to ratify a letter of support from the Niobrara Conservation District. Commissioner Wade seconded, motion carried. The letter states that organizations in Niobrara County are in support of the Wyoming Business Council partnering with WY DEQ to pursue a revolving loan fund grant to assist Wyoming communities and developers with flexible low-interest loans, as well as sub-grants to eligible entities, to clean up blighted properties and contaminated land.

Chairman Ladwig recessed the meeting until 2:30 p.m.

Chairman Ladwig reconvened the meeting at 2:30 pm

Vista Beam- Matt Larsen, CEO of Vista Beam, met with the Commissioners and Long Term Recovery Manager Dell Atkinson to discuss possible internet options for people in central and northern Niobrara County who can't get internet or lack consistent reliable landline service. Also in attendance was Jackie King.

Commissioner Wade updated Ms. King about complaints he has received from local constituents regarding internet service or lack thereof. Because of Century Link's petition for deregulation, the people that will be affected are concerned because if they have no landline or it is so expensive and they can't get cell phone service in those areas, they will have no way to contact anyone, such as emergency services.

Commissioner Wade further described how Century Link's argument for the deregulation in certain areas is that there are other services provided for people, but that doesn't hold true for portions of Niobrara County. He thinks that the phone issue should be taken care of first and then try to get broadband service.

Ms. King asked if the Commissioners had commented to the Public Service Commission regarding this matter and said she thinks they should as a whole for the county.

The group discussed the need for some form of communication for those affected, be it landlines, or VoIP or internet to contact emergency services.

Mr. Larsen said much of the phone equipment up north is antiquated and can't be replaced or if fiber optics are installed, the cost is exorbitant. He feels that trying to work with Century Link might be a dead end and the focus should be on getting more cell service in areas. This will help with voice, but not necessarily data.

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The group discussed various ways to get internet to people, such as portable towers, and costs associated with that.

Mr. Larsen said that Vista Beam could come here, but the issue is that due to costs, he would need to have a lot of customers sign on or get assistance from another source, perhaps low interest funds or grants.

He said that if a portable tower is used, once it is set up, there isn't a lot of extra costs, like connectivity, electricity or rent.

Commissioner Wade asked if Vista Beam had an agreement that is signed with the land owner. Mr. Larsen said that Vista Beam's cost to set up is about \$4,000-\$5,000 if the customer already has tower, otherwise it can be up to, if not more than, \$10,000 per site to set up.

Ms. King asked about how many commitments it would take and he said at least ten people to make a repeater make sense.

The Commissioners thanked everyone for their input and will discuss this further.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned.

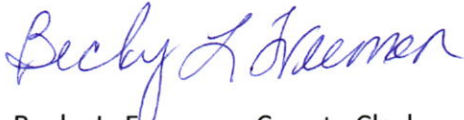
NIOBRARA COUNTY COMMISSIONERS



Richard A. Ladwig, Chairman



Attest:



Becky L. Freeman, County Clerk