

## HOWARD COUNTY COMMISSIONER'S MINUTES

March 12, 2024

A Meeting of the Howard County Board of Commissioners was convened in open and public session on the 12th day of March, 2024, in the Boardroom, Howard County Courthouse, St. Paul, Nebraska.

Notice of the meeting was given thereof on the 28th day of February 2024, a proof of publication filed in the Clerk's office. Copies of the agenda were posted in the courthouse, delivered to each Commissioner, and kept current and available to the public at the Clerk's office.

Chairman Hirschman called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. Roll Call: Gary Rasmussen, Aye; Kathy Hirschman, Aye; and Jessie Urbanski, Aye. Also, present is County Clerk, Brenda Klanecky.

Chairman Hirschman stated to those in attendance that a current copy of the Nebraska Open Meetings Act is available for review and indicated the location of such copy in the room where the meeting is being held.

**Public Comment**- None.

**County Road Discussion** – Highway Superintendent, Janet Thomsen presented a corrected wage increases document to the Board. Ms. Thomsen corrections were made to the assistant road foreman and the roads department secretary wages. Rasmussen made a motion to approve the corrections on the wage increases for the roads department as presented and seconded by Urbanski. Roll Call: Rasmussen, Aye; Hirschman, Aye; and Urbanski, Aye.

Bridge Projects- Ms. Thomsen stated that drone pictures would need to begin before the trees start to leaf out if the Board wanted to go that route. One of the bridges that is being looked at is located on Naper Road between 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Estimated cost of replacement would be \$400,000.00- \$500,000.00. There may be some other bridges that can be rehabbed instead of replaced. Also discussed was the bridge located on Inman Road going out to the golf course. Hirschman would like to get a traffic count on the Naper Road bridge. This was the consensus of all the Commissioners. The roads department will be receiving a traffic counter to use next week. The County will be receiving \$248,926.52 in federal funds sometime this month.

Gravel retrieving is being done in the St. Libory area. Ms. Thomsen provided a truck and equipment status update. Discussed were future projects.

**Mail** –

Opioid Settlement Payment

Update on front step project

Uncashed check-Sheriff's Department-a note will be sent to the donor.

NIRMA Training

**Unfinished Business**- None

**Mark Feeny-Road Maintenance Wildlife Management Areas** –Mr. Feeny was present to discuss three of the four wildlife management areas, Leonard A. Koziol, Harold Andersen and Marsh Wren all located in Howard County. Highway Superintendent, Janet Thomsen was also present for this discussion. The road grader operator based out of the Grand Island Game and Parks division that had maintained the access roads has retired. The program has been downsized and they are not looking to fill the position.

Mr. Feeney provided maps of the areas to the Board. Areas that need to be maintained are highlighted. Mr. Feeney handles all other maintenance except for grading the roads. The Game and Parks would like to enter into a service agreement with the Howard County Roads Department between June 1<sup>st</sup> and September 1<sup>st</sup> to grade the roads 3-4 times during that period. This agreement could be done as an annual or three-year agreement. Ms. Thomsen has estimated a \$200.00 per hour fee. Board suggested that the Highway Superintendent drive through each area and also review the costs of what to charge. This item will be placed on a future agenda within the next month.

**Resignation Letter-Sheriff Busch** –Sheriff Tom Busch was present to provide the Board of Commissioners with a new letter of resignation effective March 12, 2024. Board asked Mr. Busch about seized guns and the location. Is there a list? Discussed when the guns can be sold for parts and who to contact. Rasmussen made a motion to accept Mr. Busch’s resignation with regrets. Urbanski seconded the motion. Roll Call: Rasmussen, Aye; Hirschman, Aye and Urbanski, Aye. Mr. Busch stated he did not currently have a County vehicle and would leave his equipment.

**Letter of Recommendation – Sheriff Busch** – Tom Busch presented a letter to the Board recommending Mike Hoff who currently serves as Chief Deputy to be appointed to the Sheriff position.

**Resolution 2024-8 – Sheriff Signatories** – Urbanski made a motion to approve Resolution 2024-8, to add Sara Roy as signatory on the Sheriff and Jail accounts, Ms. Roy is already a signatory on the other two Howard County Sheriff accounts and remove Tom Busch as a signatory on all four accounts as listed on the Resolution. Roll Call: Rasmussen, Aye; Hirschman, Aye; and Urbanski, Aye.

**Protocol And Appointment Process for Sheriff’s Position** – A new Sheriff will need to be appointed within 45 days (April 25, 2024) of Sheriff Busch’s resignation. It was the general consensus of the Board to advertise the position. Ms. Hirschman suggested that Commissioner Urbanski and former Sheriff, Harold Schenck be on the interviewing committee. Mr. Schenck had previously agreed to be on the interviewing committee. Rasmussen made a motion to advertise the Sheriff’s position and have Commissioner Urbanski and former Sheriff Schenck on the interviewing committee. Applications would need to be turned in by April 5, 2024. The committee will come back with a recommendation to the Board at a special meeting on April 16, 2024 at 8:30 a.m. and to advertise in the local paper, the NACO website and the Grand Island Independent. Hirschman seconded the motion. Roll Call: Rasmussen, Aye; Hirschman, Aye; and Urbanski, Aye.

**Consent Agenda** - The Board reviewed the claims dated 3/12/2024 and the minutes dated 2/27/2024 as presented. Motion was made by Urbanski and seconded by Rasmussen to approve the Claims dated 3/12/2024: General-\$69,140.17, Roads-\$93,992.67, Covid American Rescue Plan-\$51,100.07, 911 Management Fund-\$750.96 and E911 Wireless Holding Fund-\$800.00 for a total of \$215,783.87, the minutes dated 2/27/2024, and Reports from the Clerk, District Clerk, Treasurer and Sheriff. Roll Call: Rasmussen, Aye; Hirschman, Aye; and Urbanski, Aye.

There being no further business to come before the Board, motion was made by Urbanski and seconded by Rasmussen to adjourn the meeting at 10:48 a.m. Roll Call: Rasmussen, Aye; Hirschman, Aye; and Urbanski, Aye. Meeting adjourned. The next regular meeting of the Howard County Board of Commissioners will be March 26, 2024.

Dated this 12th day of March, 2024.

Kathy Hirschman  
Howard County Commissioners

ATTEST:       Brenda Klanecky  
                  Howard County Clerk