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BOARD OF PEMBINA COUNTY COMMISSIONER'S PROCEEDINGS

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December 16, 2025

9:00 AM

Board of Pembina County Commissioners met in the Commissioners Meeting Room of the Courthouse.

Chairperson Hardy called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM. Roll call: Patrick Hardy, Scot Becker, Blaine Papenfuss, Darin Otto, Andrew Cull. A quorum was declared.

Also, in attendance were: Zelda Hartje, Lisa Keney, Tax Director; Terry Meidinger, Sheriff; Marcus Ramsay, Chief Deputy; Bill Gunderson, Randy Emanuelson, Don Kemp, Ted Juhl, LuAnn Kemp, Robert Fleming, Mike Ferrie and Zach Herrmann, Houston Engineering; Jeff Daley, KLJ Engineering.

Motion made by Darin Otto and seconded by Blaine Papenfuss to approve the agenda. All voting in favor; motion carried.

The public comment portion was started at 9:02 AM.

The public comment portion was closed at 9:18 AM.

Motion made by Andrew Cull and seconded by Blaine Papenfuss to approve the December 2nd, 2025 meeting minutes. All voting in favor, motion carried.

Motion by Blaine Papenfuss and seconded by Darin Otto to approve the County Deed and Corrected County Deed as presented. All voting in favor, motion carried.

Motion by Blaine Papenfuss and seconded by Scot Becker to approve and have Chairman Hardy sign the raffle permit for Tri County Trail Riders. All voting in favor, motion carried.

Discussion on year-end transfers. Motion by Andrew Cull and seconded by Blaine Papenfuss to transfer the investment interest of \$171,600.70 to the general fund and transfer \$100,000.00 from the general fund reserve to the general fund. All voting in favor, motion carried.

Motion by Blaine Papenfuss and seconded by Scot Becker to approve the processing of an end of year batch of claims, with the checks being held until the next meeting for approval. All voting in favor, motion carried.

The water board met with the commission and gave an update on the Renwick project. It is pretty much complete. They will look at it in the spring and make sure everything is in good shape and the seeding is done. The problem with the Olga dam liner discussed. They are working on it. They will be looking at all the dams with those types of liners that were put in during the 1980's. The state dam safety department will be inspecting all of them with their specialized equipment. Drain 78 repair is also wrapped up. They discussed the snagging and clearing project. They are asking if the commission wants to continue it. Commissioner Otto asked if it can be done in certain spots instead of just keep going straight up the river to some of the worse areas. Mr. Fleming stated they could but they would need to do some inspecting before that was done. Zach Herrmann discussed that possibility. He said it has been done in the past and they would put a drone up to inspect the area first. He said you have to be careful when doing the jump around method. He stated they could bid it out in different mile areas as well. He stated the commission would need to decide now if they wanted to move forward with the project and get state cost share funding. Getting this project started with the drone footage would cost approximately \$7500.00. This would need to be done before the project would be moved forward. Discussion on a new bridge that was put in and if they can go into a tributary to clear it out to safeguard the new bridge. Mr. Herrmann stated it would need to be linked back to show benefit to the Tongue River. Mr. Fleming will look into any legal precedence. He stated the snag and clear only pulls out timber and trees. Motion by Blaine Papenfuss and seconded by Scot Becker to proceed with the next segment to fly the drone and get the information before the final approval of the project and pay half of the cost from the general reserve fund. Commissioner Otto stated this is not a motion to go forward with the project it is just to get good information to make an informed decision. The drone would be flown approximately in April. Roll Call: Pat Hardy, yes; Scot Becker, yes; Blane Papenfuss, yes; Darin Otto, yes; Andrew Cull, no. Motion carried.

Alissa Sharp with the extension office gave an update on pesticide training. She said there are 105 people to recertify this year. She will be going to Drayton, Cavalier, Neche and Mountain instead of having everyone coming to Cavalier. The Annual Crop Improvement meeting will be on February 11th at the Mountain Community Center. Kari also mentioned there is a book club coming up regarding anxious generation. The parent educator out of Grand Forks will be coming up to do that.

Lisa Keney met with the commission regarding the soils committee meeting. She stated the State Supervisor of Assessments has to approve the modifiers for 2026. She stated the modifiers we currently use are frequent flooding, salinity, alkaline and rock. There were a couple changes with a senate bill 2367 and she reviewed that with the soils committee. She stated Sidwell will be working on the land use layer. With Senate Bill

2367 there are three considerations when it comes to property for agricultural property. You must use actual use of the property for cropland or noncropland purposes by the owner of the parcel, soil type or soil classification data from soil survey and the third is schedule of modifiers that must be used to adjust agricultural assessments within the county as approved by the State Supervisor of Assessments. Due to this bill, these are the three things that have to be used when valuing property which is something new this year. We do already use this process. No new modifiers were added this year. Motion by Darin Otto and seconded by Scot Becker to approve the modifiers as presented by the soils committee. Discussion on the state making the new modifier rule being a good thing. All voting in favor, motion carried. The flooding modifier was discussed. The owner of the property has to be the applicant. Land renters are not allowed to apply now. Motion by Blaine Papenfuss and seconded by Darin Otto to move the flooding modifier to a five-year application instead of a three-year. All voting in favor, motion carried.

Land uses discussed. Ms. Keney stated she does not need to get them approved, but likes to have the commission approve them. Land uses requested to be approved are as follows: Drains, Woodland, Shelterbelt, Water, Roads, Cemetery, Gravel Pit, Pipeline, Railroad, Farmstead, Pasture, Waste, Native Woodland Program and Government Easement Program (WSE/EWP/WRP). Motion by Blaine Papenfuss and seconded by Scot Becker to approve the land uses as presented. All voting in favor, motion carried.

She also asked permission if she could serve on the Board of Directors of Northern Valley Homes. She was asked to be on the board. She stated they meet approximately six or seven times a year for an hour. She stated it is a paid position and would use her time if necessary. Motion by Blaine Papenfuss and seconded by Darin Otto to allow her to serve on the board as long as it doesn't interfere with her tax director job. All voting in favor, motion carried.

Terry Meidinger met with the commission regarding the 2017 Ram pickup. It was a Stonegarden vehicle. It was replaced with a 2025 F150. Per the Stonegarden program, they are not allowed to keep the vehicles. They have to decommission them. He is asking for permission to give that pickup to the highway department. Motion by Darin Otto and seconded by Blaine Papenfuss to transfer that vehicle to the highway department. Discussion followed on how the bidding process works for county vehicles versus Stonegarden vehicles. For county vehicles, he brings the bids to the commission, but for Stonegarden he has to take the lowest bid received. All voting in favor, motion carried.

The county received a letter from the North Dakota Auditor's office notifying us we will be moved to the wait list and suggesting the county hire a private firm for annual audits moving forward. Auditor Gapp presented two proposals received from Widmer Roel and Eide Bailly. Motion by Darin Otto and seconded by Scot Becker to approve the proposal by Widner Roel. All voting in favor, motion carried.

Jeff Daley from KLJ stopped in to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and to thank the commission for the opportunity to work with Pembina County. He did give an update on the rehab projects and stated the contractor probably wouldn't be back until the weather improves.

Commission reviewed the November financial report and claims. Motion made by Darin Otto and seconded by Blaine Papenfuss to approve the consent agenda as presented. All voting in favor; motion carried.

Motion made by Blaine Papenfuss to adjourn the meeting. All voting in favor; motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 10:37 AM.