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## BOARD OF PEMBINA COUNTY COMMISSIONER'S PROCEEDINGS

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May 19, 2026

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, Terry Meidinger, Sheriff; Cory Mortensen, Chief Deputy; Rachel Ramsay, Public Health Director; Ted Juhl, Randy Emannualson, Bill Gunderson, Robert Fleming, Don Kemp; Mike Ferrie and Zach Hermanson, Houston Engineering; Devin Johnson, Highway Superintendent; Jeff Daley, KLJ Engineering.

Motion made by Darin Otto and seconded by Scot Becker to approve the agenda with the addition of Sheriff Meidinger to speak to the commission. All voting in favor; motion carried.

The public comment portion was started at 9:01 AM.

Chief Deputy Mortensen arrived at the meeting at 9:03 AM.

The public comment portion was closed at 9:17 AM.

Motion made by Blaine Papenfuss and seconded by Scot Becker to approve the May 5th, 2026 meeting minutes. All voting in favor, motion carried.

Motion by Andrew Cull and seconded by Blaine Papenfuss to approve the raffle permit application for Growing Hope In Pembina County. All voting in favor, motion carried.

Motion by Darin Otto and seconded by Blaine Papenfuss to approve and have Chairman Hardy sign the certificate of local matches for project BRC-0099(015) for bridge inspections. All voting in favor, motion carried.

Sheriff Meidinger addressed the commission regarding his intent to retire on May 31<sup>st</sup> of this year. He thanked the commission for adding him to the agenda. He stated he would be retiring at the end of the month and he had discussed this with Darin Otto last

year that he intended to retire early in the summer. He stated as far as appointing an interim sheriff, Corey Mortensen has the respect of the whole department and in his taking over the position of Chief Deputy he has caught on to everything really well and has been doing a good job. He stated it has been a pleasure serving you guys. He stated you guys have been a really good commission. Commissioner Becker told Sheriff Meidinger he has done a good job too. Commissioner Otto asked Sheriff Meidinger how long it had been. He stated since January of '91. He spent 24 years in Walhalla and 11 ½ years as county sheriff. He started his sheriff position in January of 2015. Chairman Hardy then thanked Terry and stated he appreciates everything he's done. Motion by Darin Otto and seconded by Blaine Papenfuss to accept his resignation with gratitude and for his years of service. Sheriff Meidinger stated he would get the official letter turned into the auditor. All voting in favor, motion approved. Sheriff Meidinger again thanked the commission for everything they have done for the sheriff's office and the county. He again stated they have really done a good job. Motion by Darin Otto and seconded by Scot Becker to appoint Cory Mortensen as the interim Pembina County Sheriff starting June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2026. Roll Call: Patrick Hardy, yes; Scot Becker, yes; Blaine Papenfuss, yes; Darin Otto, yes; Andrew Cull, yes. Motion carried.

Motion by Scot Becker and seconded by Blaine Papenfuss to approve and have Chairman Hardy sign the resolution for project number BRC-3411(062). All voting in favor, motion carried.

The water board met the commissioners with updates. Mike Ferrie discussed the drone flight that was done for the snag and clear project on May 6th. He stated there are areas that have a lot heavier timber in the channel. He stated there was also a lot of beaver dam activity. Discussion on what area would be done. He stated they could do key areas instead of the full stretch all at once. Mr. Kemp stated he feels that would probably be the best idea since some areas don't look problematic. Commissioner Becker stated he was contacted by one land owner stating he had been doing some of this work at his own expense and asked if there was any evidence of that in the footage. Mr. Ferrie stated he did not see any evidence of this but at the elevation the drone was flying, you can't see those cut stumps and things like that. The commission will need to review the video footage and decide at the next meeting if they want to move forward with the snag and clear project and schedule a hearing to meet the cost-share deadline. Chairman Hardy said a land owner reached out to him in favor of the project. If the commission decides they want to move forward at the first meeting in June, a hearing will be scheduled.

Discussion on top soil movement into ditches from the recent high winds. Luann stated if the commission receives requests from land owners, they should send them to Luann and they will work with them on getting it cleaned out.

Discussion on Mr. Stevenson's concern. He did not attend the water board meeting. Mr. Fleming stated if he came and made a complaint at the water board, it would be

against the landowner which is Mr. Stevenson so they advised him to go to the Department of Environmental Quality. Mr. Stevenson believes there was debris left from the bridge project in his coulee. Commissioner Becker stated himself and Devin Johnson went to the area and pulled out stuff and did not see any kind of debris or anything non-native to the area. All they saw were excavator tracks from where they went in and knocked the beaver dam down. They took videos and pictures to show this. Luann stated Mr. Stevenson is waiting for a call back from the environmental quality and he wanted the material identified. Commissioner Otto asked if there was shale in the area. Mr. Kemp stated that would be more south. Mr. Fleming stated the area is on the drone footage.

Don Kemp gave an update on the Olga dam. They will be moving forward with the feasibility study. He stated Kent Weston, who is on the executive committee, has been working with the engineer to put together a comprehensive preview of all the dams in the Red River Basin. Mr. Kemp stated they will keep the commission updated as they move forward.

Rachel Ramsay met with the commission regarding the use of the Opioid Funds. She stated she comes once a year to provide information to the commission. She stated this year she made some changes. The total received was \$54,684.75. There is about \$40,000.00 remaining to use. She stated it is very specific on what you can spend it on. She stated we were paying \$4,000.00 annually for the Credible Mind platform. She stated the Credible Mind will be done at March 2027. She doesn't feel it is being utilized to the amount she hoped. She would like to discontinue that in March of 2027 and use the funds for all schools in Pembina County to implement the curriculum Positive Action. She spoke to all of the school districts and they are excited about it and on board. That is the proposed change. The schools have chosen what grades they want to target. It is a PreK through 12<sup>th</sup> grade curriculum. The amount remaining should cover 5 years for all of the schools. Motion by Andrew Cull and seconded by Blaine Papenfuss to go ahead with the plan as presented by Rachel as soon as possible. She stated it is a weekly or twice weekly curriculum all school year. All voting in favor, motion carried.

Devin presented a utility permit application for Nodak Electric Cooperative located at Township 160N, Section 7 & 18, Range 55W; County Road 3 in Park Township. Motion by Andrew Cull and seconded by Blaine Papenfuss to approve the permit. All voting in favor, motion carried.

Mr. Daley presented the contract for approval and notice to proceed for Chairman Hardy to sign for the Highway 44 project. It was approved at the last meeting. The preconstruction meeting is set for tomorrow morning. Mr. Daley stated they are looking to start next Tuesday. He then discussed the construction engineering contract. He stated there may be weekends that need to be worked due to weather and timelines. Discussion on work to be done and timelines followed. He stated the engineering fee will be approximately \$850,000.00 for this project. Motion by Drain Otto and seconded

by Blaine Papenfuss to approve and have Chairman Hardy sign the engineering contract. All voting in favor, motion carried. Millings that will be the property of the county discussed briefly regarding storage location. The county can sell the millings. Mr. Daley then presented a permit for Right of Way for this project. Motion by Darin Otto and seconded by Scot Becker to approve and have Chairman Hardy sign the Right of Way permit. All voting in favor, motion carried.

Mr. Daley stated Swingen Construction plans to start project BRC-3411 (062) at 1.5 miles South and 3 miles West of Crystal in June with a completion goal of September if all materials are received on time.

Rachel Ramsay left the meeting at 10:26 AM.

Discussion on a bridge by Bathgate that leads to their old city dump that has been closed within the last two weeks. Devin stated that to reopen it, they may have to look at keeping it at 3 ton. Commissioner Cull asked about making a bridge out of railroad cars for a bridge replacement at the site. Devin stated it's a possibility due to the abutments being in really good shape and has a sturdy base. Devin will look into it.

Commissioner Otto asked about an update on the Dumas bridge. Pile repair options discussed. Key Contracting has been contacted and availability of piling material is the issue right now. They also discussed to do the analysis and see if the NDDOT would be good with reopening them at a lower rating for pedestrian traffic. Commissioner Otto stated mail service is not being done in the area now. They will see what they can do.

Commission reviewed the April financial report and claims. Motion made by Blaine Papenfuss and by Darin Otto 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 10:36 AM.

