

The following are "unofficial minutes" subject to change at the next meeting.

## BOARD OF PEMBINA COUNTY COMMISSIONER'S PROCEEDINGS

[www.pembinacountynd.gov](http://www.pembinacountynd.gov)

May 20, 2025

9:00 AM

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

Chairperson Otto 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; Samantha Diemert, Emergency Manager; Marcus Ramsay, Chief Deputy; Rachel Ramsey, Public Health Director; Terry Meidinger, Sheriff; Garret Fontaine, States Attorney; Lisa Keney, Tax Director; Monica Brusseau, Deputy Clerk/Recorder; Devin Johnson, Highway Superintendent; Jeff Daley, KLJ Engineering, Jeff Stevenson, Duane Schurman.

Motion made by Blaine Papenfuss and seconded by Scot Becker to approve the agenda with the addition of bid opening for the 2018 Expedition. All voting in favor; motion carried.

Motion made by Scot Becker and seconded by Patrick Hardy to approve the May 6th, 2025 meeting minutes. All voting in favor; motion carried.

Motion by Andrew Cull and seconded by Blaine Papenfuss to approve the duplicate warrant request for Docu-Shred for \$113.35. All voting in favor, motion carried.

Motion by Andrew Cull and seconded by Patrick Hardy to appoint Jim Benjaminson to the Pembina County Housing Authority Board. All voting in favor, motion carried.

Motion by Blaine Papenfuss and seconded by Scot Becker to appoint Danielle Blair to the Job Development Board. All voting in favor, motion carried.

A parcel of land that is not platted adjacent to the City of Mountain was discussed. Erik Knutson inquired regarding getting it platted. Motion by Scot Becker and seconded by Blaine Papenfuss to table the issue until Garret Fontaine arrives.

Chairman Otto opened the 2018 Expedition bid received. It was from Jeremy Seng for \$1,855.00. Discussion followed. Motion by Blaine Papenfuss and seconded by Patrick Hardy to accept the bid as is from Jeremy Seng. All voting in favor, motion carried.

States Attorney Fontaine arrived at the meeting at 9:20 a.m. Discussion of the unplatted parcel in Mountain discussed. The legal description of the parcel shows it is in the City of Mountain. Mr. Knutson wants to get financing to fix it up, but because it's not platted, he can't get financing for it. Mr. Fontaine stated it sounds like it is a civil issue and Mr. Knutson needs to discuss this with his private attorney. He stated it sounds like it needs a corrected title processed. Mr. Fontaine will look into it to determine if it is a county issue.

Garret Fontaine presented the updated sick leave bank system policy to the commission. Motion by Andrew Cull and seconded by Blaine Papenfuss to accept the revised policy manual. All voting in favor, motion carried.

Lisa Keney presented an abatement application from Jeff Stevenson. Lisa stated she wanted to allow Mr. Stevenson time to provide any additional information he had related to his abatement application that wasn't previously provided. He stated he had no new information but handed out a piece of paper to the commissioners. He stated Pembina County has minimal acres in CRP, and those that do are being persecuted. He further stated he feels all land is crop land. He compared parcels around his parcels which all have different land classifications and he feels those should all be valued the same. He stated he wants proof that there should be these differences of classifications of land. Ms. Keney stated Mr. Stevenson is asking for an abatement on parcels 01-0420000 and 01-0420020 asking they be assessed equally to parcels 01-1340000 and 01-1350000. His parcels are enrolled in the CRP (Conservation Reserve Program) and the ones he's comparing to have been reduced to waste due to a decision by the Pembina County Soils Committee, with review by the Pembina County Tax Office. This abatement request was denied by Akra Township on April 16<sup>th</sup>, 2025. The referenced parcels were abated on December 3, 2024, but that abatement was denied by the Pembina County Commission. The parcels in question were abated due to surrounding parcels being enrolled in WSE (Wetland Reserve Easement), EWP (Emergency Watershed Protection), and WRP (Wetlands Reserve Program). She thanked assessor Casey Krieg for providing Mr. Stevenson information and that information has been provided to all county commissioners. She further stated in the Guide to Assessing it states that wetlands need to be classified in North Dakota Century Code 57-02-10 and she has sent this information onto the states' attorney as well. Motion by Blaine Papenfuss and seconded by Andrew Cull to deny the abatement. Further discussion followed. Ms. Keney explained in the Guide to Assessing it states CRP land is to be valued as crop land. She stated Pembina County has approximately 10,000 acres enrolled in CRP. Roll call: Pat Hardy, yes; Scot Becker, yes; Blaine Papenfuss, yes; Darin Otto, yes; Andrew Cull, yes. Motion carried.

Lisa Keney presented an abatement application from Duane Schurman. She offered Mr. Schurman the opportunity to present any additional information he had for his abatement that wasn't presented previously. She sent all information she already had to the commissioners in an email. He presented a worksheet for all commissioners. He stated it needed to be determined if the true and full value was correct in 1974. He purchased the property in 2024. He is questioning the value of his property for 2024. He stated that per information provided by Zelda, property values were determined by Vanguard. He is asking for it to be valued at \$125,000.00. Ms. Keney stated the value was \$125,708.00 in 2020 through 2022 per information provided by the assessor. In 2023 there was a five percent increase by the County Board of Equalization which brought the structure's value to \$131,993.00. There was a four percent increase in 2024 by the County Board of Equalization which brought the value to \$137,228.00. The City of Walhalla denied his abatement request on May 5, 2025. Ms. Keney also stated she used the Vanguard Manual for assessing but the Vanguard data will not be available until approximately 2028 and will only be implemented if voted to do so by the commission. She stated for 2025, the local assessor has put a value of \$2,618.00 on the land and \$131,575.00 on the structure for a total of \$134,193.00. Motion by Scot Becker and seconded by Blaine Papenfuss to deny the abatement. Mr. Schurman gave further information on his unit and comparable. Roll call: Pat Hardy, yes; Scot Becker, yes, Blaine Papenfuss, yes, Darin Otto, yes; Andrew Cull, yes. Motion carried.

Lisa Keney gave an office update. She had an interview last week. She is asking to hire that person as an administrative assistant and allow an evaluation of their performance and if it is determined they are suitable for the assessor position and want to take the position, move forward with the transition. Motion by Scot Becker and seconded by Blaine Papenfuss to go ahead with hiring this person as an administrative assistant. All voting in favor, motion carried.

Commissioner Otto stated what a privilege it was to work with Lisa Wieler and what a great asset she was to the county. He then asked for a moment of silence to remember her. She worked for the county for almost 21 years.

Jeff Daley of KLJ handed out the tabulation of bids for the paving projects of Highway 3, 55 and 2. Devin recommended base bid with option 1 and option 2 and use the Prairie Dog Funds to cover the cost of \$3,802,741.98. Discussion on bidders. Commissioner Cull stated he would like to see it go to a local bidder. KLJ said it is set up to go to the lowest responsible bidder. State's Attorney Fontaine explained that you have to have a documented history to show reason not to accept a bid. Motion by Blaine Papenfuss and seconded by Patrick Hardy to approve the base bid with Option 1 and 2 from Knife River Materials. Roll call: Patrick Hardy, yes; Scot Becker, no; Blaine Papenfuss, yes; Darin Otto, yes; Andrew Cull, yes. Motion carried.

KLJ Project 2503-00704 Pavement Testing Agreement discussed. Motion by Andrew Cull and seconded by Blaine Papenfuss to accept and sign the agreement. All voting in favor, motion carried.

Asphalt and Chip bids were opened. The first one was from Flint Hills Resources. It was \$2.71 per gallon for chip seal oil; \$1.57 for fogging oil and mini mac oil \$3.19 per gallon. This is delivered price. The second bid opened was from Cenovus for MC patching oil at \$3.82 per gallon. Motion by Blaine Papenfuss and seconded by Scot Becker to accept those bids as presented. All voting in favor, motion carried. Devin then opened the one bid for chips. It was from Gowan Construction with a bid of \$19.00 per ton with .23 cent per mile delivery fee. It would come from Halma, MN. Motion by Andrew Cull and seconded by Blaine Papenfuss to accept the chip bid from Gowan Construction. All voting in favor, motion carried.

Devin stated he received a culvert request from the NDDOT on County Road 2. Motion by Blaine Papenfuss and seconded by Scot Becker to approve it with the recommendation from Devin for a 24-inch culvert. All voting in favor, motion carried.

Jeff Daley gave an update on the bridge project. Gowan is going to try and get it paved and done the second week in June depending on the weather. The Beaulieu/Akra structure project is projected to be started in August.

Commission reviewed the April financial report and claims. Motion made by Blaine Papenfuss and seconded by Scot Becker 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 11:25 AM.