

HOWARD COUNTY COMMISSIONER'S MINUTES

January 28, 2025

A Meeting of the Howard County Board of Commissioners was convened in open and public session on the 28th day of January, 2025, in the Boardroom, Howard County Courthouse, St. Paul, Nebraska.

Notice of the meeting was given thereof on the 22nd day of January, 2025. 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. A proof of publication is filed in the Clerk's office.

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

Pledge of Allegiance- The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

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 was present to discuss scheduling a County Road's Work Session with the Commissioners. During this time, the One and Six Year Plan would be discussed as well as other road projects. The Commissioners agreed to schedule the Work Session for February 11, 2025, following the regular Commissioner meeting. Ms. Thomsen provided the Board with a work list that had previously been requested by the Board. The Board went through the list with Ms. Thomsen. Ms. Thomsen asked the Board about advertising for an open position. Following discussion, Urbanski made a motion to advertise in the local paper on February 5th and February 12th for an open road's worker position and seconded by Lukasiewicz. Roll: Lukasiewicz, Aye; Hirschman, Aye; and Urbanski, Aye.

Executive Session-Personnel-The executive session was placed on the agenda but was not needed.

Mail – Email correspondence regarding Historic Tax Credits.

Email from Rodney Zulkoski with the Nebraska Department of Transportation regarding a project on Hwy 11. The County Surveyor is required to find the section markers and the County will receive a set amount per section marker as listed in a previous agreement.

Unfinished Business – None.

Introduction Extension-Kayla Nilson –Ms. Nilson will be present at the February 11, 2025, meeting.

Emergency Manager Update- Emergency Manager, Allen Wilshusen was present to update the Board. First discussed was an EMPG (Emergency Management Performance Grant) which is a federal grant provided by FEMA that Mr. Wilshusen applies for. The grant pays for approximately half of his salary. He also discussed the LEOP (Local Emergency Operations Plan) Book which is in digital format through Bold Planning. NEMA will be changing to a new company. He has been updating employee identification badges and will work with the City of St. Paul to provide badges. Also discussed were activities that have taken place and others that were planned. Just recently, a training was held at the courthouse with EMS

and firefighters from across the County on how to handle an emergency at the courthouse. On April 7th, 2025, a severe storm awareness program is scheduled in St. Libory. The Board appreciated the updates.

Resolution 2025-5-Transfer Excess Funds – The auditor requested the excess funds be transferred to the General Fund. Urbanski made a motion to approve Resolution 2025-5, the transfer of excess funds in the County Clerk’s Warrant Account to the General Fund in the amount of \$14,000.00 and seconded by Lukasiewicz. Roll Call: Lukasiewicz, Aye; Hirschman, Aye; and Urbanski, Aye.

Gerald Jess-Kelso Cemetery and Bob Dvorak-Melrose Cemetery- Bob Dvorak was present to discuss the Melrose Cemetery. Mr. and Mrs. Dvorak and Rylan Dvorak have been cleaning up the cemetery and trying to locate unmarked graves. He stated if the survey corners of the cemetery were marked it would aid in finding the graves. Mr. Dvorak asked if Tim Aitken, County Surveyor could survey the cemetery and locate the survey corners. Mr. Dvorak would like to mark the corners with concrete railroad ties. Urbanski made a motion to have County Surveyor, Tim Aitken survey, locate and mark the survey corners of the Melrose Cemetery and seconded by Lukasiewicz. Roll Call: Lukasiewicz, Aye; Hirschman, Aye; and Urbanski, Aye. Hirschman will contact Mr. Aitken regarding surveying the cemetery. Pioneer cemeteries were briefly discussed and when a cemetery is considered abandoned. This would mean there are no burials for five consecutive years. Funding through a taxing district would take time to do. Also the Board talked about reaching out to other funding groups within the County. Donations and volunteers were also discussed.

County Building Update – Highway Superintendent, Janet Thomsen was present to update the Board on the county building. Siding has been completed on the north side and southeast side of the building. A dent or ding in the siding on the northeast corner of the building was noted.

Planning and Zoning-Blasé Update- Planning and Zoning Administrator, Cheri Klinginsmith was present to discuss a letter sent to Gunner Buchhammer, attorney for the Blasé Feedlots. Others present for the meeting were Deputy County Attorney, Heather Sikyta, Planning and Zoning member, Terry Spilinek, Attorney Gunner Buchhammer and Cassidy Van Meter. Included in the Board’s packet was a copy of the Planning and Zoning minutes for the January 15, 2025, meeting. During the Planning and Zoning meeting, the Zoning Board did not approve the additional four corner lots, one of which is to be abandoned. The Planning and Zoning Board recommended the Blasé’s apply for a commercial feed lot. Ms. Klinginsmith updated the Board on the current feedlot sites. The Board also asked about ownership of the feedlots. Discussion was held between the parties present and the Board. No action taken.

County Burial Application-Redding – The Board received a completed application for a county burial for Cody Redding. The Board reviewed the application and possible assets. Lukasiewicz made a motion to approve the county burial application for Cody Redding and seconded by Urbanski. Roll Call: Lukasiewicz, Aye; Hirschman, Nay; and Urbanski, Aye. Motion Passed.

Spectrum Increased Billing – The Clerk received an email from Hamilton Communication that the Sheriff’s office was having issues with uploading body camera footage. IT has requested that Spectrum increase the internet speed which will cost an additional \$70.00 per month. This will be on a month to month basis to see if this will remedy the issue. Lukasiewicz made a motion to approve the additional charge of \$70.00 per month to increase the internet speed on a month to month basis and seconded by Urbanski. Roll Call: Lukasiewicz, Aye; Hirschman, Aye; and Urbanski, Aye.

Sheriff-Updates; Budgets-Sheriff's and Canine Fund- Sheriff Hoff and Chief Deputy Paul Tartaglia were present to discuss radios that were purchased in August 2024. The payment of the radios was to come out of the ARPA funds. An invoice from Motorola was received on January 15, 2025 in the amount of \$10,390.82, for the radios. All of the ARPA funds were spent as of December 31, 2024. Urbanski made a motion to approve paying the Motorola invoice in the amount of \$10,390.82, out of the miscellaneous general account and seconded by Lukasiewicz. Roll Call: Lukasiewicz, Aye; Hirschman, Aye; and Urbanski, Aye. The Sheriff's office had previously paid invoices on the radios out of the Sheriff's budget that were to come out of the ARPA funds. The bills were paid to Platte Valley in December. This amounted to around \$6,000.00. Commissioners agreed to revert some future bills and pay out of miscellaneous general to offset that amount. Future bills will need to be reviewed as they come in to stay within the amount budgeted. Questions on the Canine Fund were also discussed. The Sheriff's department will track the overtime hours for the use of the canine. The Sheriff's office is to provide the Clerk's office with overtime information monthly.

Payroll Questions – The County Clerk had reached out to legal counsel at NACO regarding the County Attorney Position due to the death of David Schroeder and calculation of final paycheck for Mr. Schroeder. The Board read an email the Clerk received from Elaine Menzel, legal counsel for NACO. Urbanski made a motion to approve prorating the salary for Mr. Schroeder for the month of January from January 1, 2025 to January 20, 2025 (date of death) and include the buyout amount of \$375.00, and seconded by Lukasiewicz. Roll Call: Lukasiewicz, Aye; Hirschman, Aye; and Urbanski, Aye.

County Attorney Position – The Board wished to thank Heather Sikyta for filling in during the County Attorney's absence. Per State Statute, the Board is required to fill the vacated County Attorney position within 45 days of the date of Mr. Schroeder's death on January 20, 2025, which would be by March 6, 2025, the appointee would fulfill Mr. Schroeder's term through December 31, 2026. Those present to discuss the County Attorney position are Deputy County Attorney, Heather Sikyta, Attorney, Julie Gawrych, Sheriff, Mike Hoff, Chief Deputy, Paul Tartaglia and Deputy, Malik BearHeels. One of the questions on filling the position was this would be a part-time position. Ms. Sikyta said she is happy to fill in until the position is filled and felt that the County should go out for applications. Urbanski made a motion to advertise on February 5th and 12th in the Phonograph Herald, NACO website and an Attorney's website and accept applications for County Attorney until February 19, 2025, hold a special meeting on February 20th at 8:30 a.m. to review County Attorney applications, place County Attorney Position on the February 25th agenda in case anything needs to be discussed, have the interview process scheduled from February 25th through March 3, 2025, and designate Urbanski and Sheriff Mike Hoff to conduct interviews and plan a special meeting on March 4th at 8:30 a.m. to appoint a County Attorney and seconded by Lukasiewicz. Roll Call: Lukasiewicz, Aye; Hirschman, Aye; and Urbanski, Aye.

Resolution 2025-6 - Lukasiewicz made a motion to approve Heather Sikyta to remain as a signatory, add County Treasurer, Sara Roy and remove David T. Schroeder as signatories on the Howard County Attorney Trust Account and seconded by Urbanski. Roll Call: Lukasiewicz, Aye; Hirschman, Aye; and Urbanski, Aye.

Executive Session-Personnel- Executive session was not needed.

Consent Agenda - The Board reviewed the payroll and claims dated 1/28/2025, and the minutes dated 1/14/2025. Motion was made by Urbanski and seconded by Lukasiewicz to approve the payroll and claims dated 1/28/2025, General-\$286,688.71 and Roads-\$92,433.82, and Canine Cost-\$6,143.00 for a

total of \$385,265.53, minutes dated 1/14/2025, and authorize Board Chair, Kathy Hirschman to sign the minutes. Roll Call: Lukasiewicz, Aye; Hirschman, Aye; and Urbanski, Aye.

There being no further business to come before the Board, motion was made by Lukasiewicz and seconded by Urbanski to adjourn the meeting at 12:22 p.m. Roll Call: Lukasiewicz, Aye; Hirschman, Aye; and Urbanski, Aye. Meeting adjourned. The next regular meeting of the Howard County Board of Commissioners will be February 11, 2025.

Dated this 28th day of January, 2025.

Kathy Hirschman

Howard County Board Chair

ATTEST: Brenda Klanecky
 Howard County Clerk