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BOARD OF PEMBINA COUNTY COMMISSIONER'S PROCEEDINGS

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June 16, 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, Cory Mortensen, Interim Sheriff; Knute Gjovik, Chief Deputy; Lisa Keney, Tax Director; Kelly Cluchie; Devin Johnson, Highway Superintendent; Jeff Daley, KLJ Engineering; Garret Fontaine, States Attorney.

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

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

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

Motion made by Scot Becker and seconded by Blaine Papenfuss to approve the June 2nd, 2026 meeting minutes. All voting in favor, motion carried.

Motion by Blaine Papenfuss and seconded by Darin Otto to approve the raffle permit application for Gardar Township Hall. All voting in favor, motion carried.

Motion by Blaine Papenfuss and seconded by Darin Otto to approve and have Chairman Hardy sign the Certification of Township Road Mileage Report. Discussion on any major changes. There were none. All voting in favor, motion carried.

Discussion on Interim Sheriff salary and Chief Deputy salary. States Attorney Fontaine stated it is a unique situation right now. He stated the Interim Sheriff has the ability to designate the rest of the chief deputy salary that is in the budget and if he doesn't plan on going above that he doesn't need commission approval. Motion by Scot Becker and seconded by Blaine Papenfuss to set the salary of the interim sheriff to line 12 on the sheriff line of the pay scale for a monthly salary of \$7,794.00. Commissioner Cull stated he is for moving it up to the sheriff line but not to the same step as he is the Interim

Sheriff until the next election. Commissioner Becker states he feels the pay should track with the added responsibilities. Commissioner Papenfuss stated he agrees with Commissioner Becker. Roll Call: Patrick Hardy, yes; Scot Becker, yes; Blaine Papenfuss, yes; Darin Otto, yes; Andrew Cull, no. Motion carried.

Discussion on online tax payment service. The auditor explained the current provider, ACI Worldwide, informed the county there would be a monthly fee of \$495.00 per month starting in August of 2026. The auditor reached out to other counties and the entire office participated in a demo from Point & Pay. There is no monthly charge to the county for their services. The fee for users would be 2.5 percent of the total paid if paid with a card and \$1.50 for an e-check for any amount paid. The current fee with ACI is 3.5 percent and they do not offer an e-check option. That would be a savings for the county and its tax payers. Commissioner Otto asked if the auditor had any contact with anyone who currently uses them and the auditor stated she had spoken with Griggs County and they are very happy with the services. Motion by Darin Otto and seconded by Scot Becker to switch to Point & Pay. All voting in favor, motion carried.

Zelda Hartje addressed the commission on the Pembina County Historic Preservation Contract. They will be receiving a grant of \$5,635.00. The in-kind amount is \$15,680.00. That comes from the volunteers. She is requesting an approval of the contract and assurance agreement and signature of the chairman. Motion by Blaine Papenfuss and seconded by Scot Becker to approve and sign the agreements for the grant. All voting in favor, motion carried.

States Attorney Fontaine addressed the commission on the Floodplain Management Ordinance from FEMA. He stated this ordinance is a requirement from the federal government in order for the county to get FEMA funding in case of any natural disaster emergency. He stated he cleared this with FEMA on the front end. He stated the ordinance is putting the Emergency Manager in charge of a large portion of this ordinance. He stated we do have our own zoning ordinances and this is strictly for floodplain areas. Motion by Darin Otto and seconded by Blaine Papenfuss to approve the Floodplain Management Ordinance as presented. All voting in favor, motion carried.

Kelly Cluchie addressed the commission on the jail elevator. He stated since they have to have the whole thing disabled, they are suggesting to do the seal at the same time. If they make two trips there would be setup and travel charges for both times. He stated the cost of the packing seal would be \$6334.00. This would prevent the grease from leaking into the water. Motion by Blaine Papenfuss and seconded by Darin Otto to proceed with the packing of the elevator at the same time as the chain repair. Kelly said it has been working well since the pumps were all installed. All voting in favor, motion carried.

Lisa Keney, Tax Director, presented an abatement request for Fort Pembina Historical Society in Pembina, North Dakota for 2025. It was approved by the City of Pembina at

their city council meeting. She stated they asked the building value be dropped to \$31,316.00 and the land to \$17,010.00. The previous market value was \$219,051.00. So, we would be exempting \$170,725.00. She stated the refund would be approximately \$2,478.58. Ms. Keney stated century code states if parts of buildings are available for rent to generate income, it is taxable. Commissioner Becker questioned the use of the building as it being a nonprofit. He asked about how it compared to the one outside of Cavalier. Ms. Keney stated there are businesses renting space and they are generating income for themselves. Commissioner Becker then asked if the city's original position was the whole thing was taxable and this is an adjustment down. Lisa stated in the 2025 tax season it in the assessor's workbook to change the value to zero. She never received an exemption application so she left the value as is. They had not applied so she would not know if they were exempt. The city approved the values and then the Fort Pembina Historical Society came in and questioned it at the city and this abatement is a result of that. Motion by Darin Otto and seconded by Scot Becker to approve the abatement as presented. All voting in favor, motion carried.

Cory Mortensen, Interim Sheriff, presented on the fees the jail charges for housing inmates. We are currently at \$90.00 and most other facilities are at \$100.00 to \$110.00. He feels it should be increased. Commissioner Otto stated he has spoken with Cory on this issue and it seems logical to be more competitive with the rest of the facilities. Motion by Darin Otto and seconded by Scot Becker to increase the fee for housing inmates to \$100.00. All voting in favor, motion carried.

Cory stated there is a 2016 Ford Explorer with 164,000 miles that has been decommissioned and needs a new water pump and radiator. He would like to put it up for sale. Motion by Blaine Papenfuss and seconded by Scot Becker to sell the vehicle as is and advertise locally. All voting in favor, motion carried.

Devin Johnson presented a utility permit for Nodak Electric in Midland Township, Section 6 & 7 on County Road 3. Motion by Andrew Cull and seconded by Blaine Papenfuss to approve the permit. All voting in favor, motion carried.

Devin then presented a drainage permit application from Luke Longtin in Walhalla Township, Section 27, Range 56 along County Road 9. He wants to clean a ditch out that has been building up silt over time. Motion by Scot Becker and seconded by Andrew Cull to approve the permit. All voting in favor, motion carried.

Devin then presented a culvert request for Akra Township, Section 25, Range 56. This is getting replaced through the flex funding township program. They are asking it be lowered by three tenths. Motion by Darin Otto and seconded by Blaine Papenfuss to approve the culvert request. All voting in favor, motion carried.

Devon stated there was a permanent closure of the Stutsman State Bridge. The City of Pembina hired an engineer to see if they could keep it open for one ton.

Commissioner Papenfuss asked about the first bridge on number 11 going East of 81. He stated it has sunk down. Devin stated they started patching. Commissioner Papenfuss stated it moved a lot in four days.

Jeff Daley presented the resolution request for the bridge North of Leroy which was bid through the DOT. He said there were six bids. He stated the low bidder was Wagner Construction at \$956,870.00. This was under the engineer's bid. He is requesting a motion to approve the bid award. This will get the contract work in motion. Motion by Darin Otto and seconded by Blaine Papenfuss to approve and have the chairman and auditor sign. All voting in favor, motion carried.

Mr. Daley gave an update on the structure rehab project with 17 sites by Key Contracting. They are down to their last two bridges which are tough to get to when it rains. He stated they are still waiting on materials. There are two that need pile repair yet that had been closed. They will get those completed as soon as materials arrive to get them opened.

County Road 3 box culvert by Hensel is slated to be started late in July by Gladen Construction. It has an end of August completion date.

Swingen is looking to start the Pembina County 12 bridge project by Mitchell's next week.

Two ER projects by Leroy and by Neche are slated to start after the 4th of July. The first one is the slope improvement work right in Leroy and the second is along County Road 55 East toward Neche by Gowan Construction.

The Highway 44 project was discussed. Reede construction subcontractor has removed all the asphalt for phase one. They are also working on culverts. They have also started hauling in borrow to make the turn lanes. They want to start the subgrade prep the end of this week or early next week depending on weather. Mr. Daley presented the first pay estimate for this project. It is in the amount of \$433,883.51. The county pays this amount and then requests reimbursement through the flex funding of 76 percent. He stated there will be pay estimates approximately every two weeks. They will work to get those presented at the commission meetings for approval. Discussion on access to the campground at Drayton and how traffic will be routed. A township road being used discussed. Mr. Daley stated Reede plans on coming in after the 4th for concrete work and he hopes the subgrade and base work can be done as soon as possible but the rain has set them back so they are doing culvert work.

Mr. Daley then presented the bridge project award through the flex funding program. The county covers the design engineering and the state covers the construction and construction engineering. He said it is about 3 miles east of Gardar. He stated it is a single span bridge. He presented the design engineering agreement for approval. The

project will be bid in 2027. Motion by Darin Otto and seconded by Blaine Papenfuss to approve and have Chairman Hardy sign the agreement. All voting in favor, motion carried.

Discussion on railcar flat beds for use as a bridge at Bathgate to get to the city dump. Devin received a bid for two 9' x 89' railroad flat beds delivered for \$34,200.00. He stated the barricades have been removed from this area and thrown to the side.

Devin stated bridge 128-08 was closed. It is at the intersection of 1 and 4. He stated the east abutment moved four feet. Discussion on ways around the closure. He stated there is only one resident out that way.

Commission reviewed the May financial report and claims. Motion made by Darin Otto and 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 10:39 AM.