

The Barnes County Commission met in regular session on Tuesday, March 18, 2025, with Bill Carblom, Mike Schwehr, Vicky Lovell, Pete Paulson, and Shawn Olauson present. Chairman Bill Carblom called the meeting to order at 8:02 a.m., roll call was taken, the Pledge of Allegiance was recited, and the agenda was reviewed.

Planning and Zoning

Jessica Jenrich discussed variance applications from John Owen for drain tile located on the SW¼ 30-143-56 in Ellsbury Township; Vicky Lovell made a motion to approve the setback for John Owens; Pete Paulson seconded the motion. Motion carried with all members voting yes apart from Shawn Olauson who stepped out of the meeting. Jonathan Hannig applied for a variance setback for drain tile located on the North Half of 23-140-57 in Alta Township; Vicky Lovell made a motion to approve the application for Mr. Hannig; Shawn Olauson seconded the motion. Motion carried with all members voting yes. Kristen Lindgren variance of 50' from the center of the subdivision road located in Section 25-143-58 Lot 2 in Sandy Beach Subdivision in Sibley Trail Township; Shawn Olauson made a motion to accept the variance for Kristen Lindgren; Pete Paulson seconded the motion. The motion carried with all members voting yes. Lucas Rodin applied for a variance setback on trees located in the SE¼ 137-61 Auditors Lot 1 in Greenland Township; Vicky Lovell made a motion to accept the variance application for Lucas Rodin; Shawn Olauson seconded the motion. Motion carried with all members voting yes. Janette Hanson applied for a variance creating a subdivision on lot size located in sections W½ of SW¼ 19-137-57 and N½ of NW¼ 30-137-57 in Thordenskjold Township in which she owns the building but not the land it sets on. This is also less than five acres of land. Vicky Lovell made a motion to deny the application; Mike Schwehr seconded the motion. The motion to deny carried with all members voting yes. Building permits were reviewed.

VC-BC Development Corporation

Jennifer Feist and Mary Lee Nielsen discussed the request for funds for a Single-Family Housing Pilot Program in the county. \$60,000 is being requested from non-Economic Development funds and \$118,750 from Economic Development funds to help fund the Single-Family Housing Pilot Program with a goal of drawing more people to move to Barnes County by making more affordable housing and increasing housing inventory and increasing the tax base. This is for new construction homes only. Home and Infrastructure bills are currently before the legislature. This would put the funds in place to leverage and access as much of the state funds as possible. Currently, the commission is not interested in investing in this program with non-economic development funds. Bill Carblom made a motion to approve the release of \$118,750 of Economic Development funds for the exclusive use of new home construction to be built in rural Barnes County towards the Single-Family Housing Pilot Program with the effective date of April 1, 2025, and must be used for primary residences subject to property tax. Shawn Olauson seconded the motion. The motion carried with Mike Schwehr, Shawn Olauson and Bill Carblom voting yes and Vicky Lovell and Pete Paulson voting no.

Tax Equalization

The Abatement Applications for Parcel #63-4180125, #63-4180242, and #63-4180251 for the Valley City Christian School was discussed for the 2023 and 2024 years. Valley City Christian School is a 501C3 Tax Exempt school, but the bookkeeper was not aware that this made them exempt from all taxes she paid the tax in full. The correct paperwork was not filed until that realization. Vicky Lovell made a motion to approve the abatement application; Mike Schwehr seconded the motion. The motion carried upon roll-call vote with all members voting yes. The current contract assessing rate of \$4.00 per parcel was discussed for cities and townships. Shawn Olauson made a motion to increase the rate to \$4.50 per parcel; Pete Paulson seconded the motion. Motion carried with all members voting yes.

Highway Department

Jamie Smith discussed quotes for a used truck and a new trailer. Gravel is harder to obtain and a 62-mile round trip with a tandem truck isn't very efficient. This is approximately twelve yards of gravel. The recommendation is a 2022 Peterbilt truck with 181,000 miles from J & M Truck Sales for \$75,900.00 and a new 2024 Cross County trailer for \$68,000.00 with a one-year warranty from RDO for a total of \$143,900.00. Bill Carblom made a motion to approve the purchase of the 2022 Peterbilt and the RDO trailer for a total of \$143,900.00. Shawn Olauson seconded the motion. Motion carried with all members voting yes.

Auditor's Office

Mike Schwehr moved to approve March 4, 2025, minutes as presented; Vicky Lovell seconded the motion. Motion carried upon roll call vote with all members voting yes. County Government week will be March 30 through April 4th making April 1st as County Government Day in which the county will be serving walking tacos and ice cream floats to the public.

Sheriff & Corrections

Jeremy Wolff and Randy McClafin met with the commission to discuss sharing a full-time position. Melissa Neitzke currently works part time now for corrections and comes to us with experience and a degree in criminal justice. She is a certified law officer, she has been a jail administrator, she knows the CIS system, she knows the Guardian software that is used at the jail. Judge Thornton will be requesting security at all his trials which will take an officer. Sharing this employee would work best for both departments since she has all the knowledge needed for each

department. Randy would like to increase Melissa from part time to full time and have her work for both departments. Pete Paulson made a motion to hire Melissa full-time at the rate of \$25.00 per hour with a start date of April 9th to be shared between the Jail and Sheriff departments; Shawn Olauson seconded the motion. The motion carried with all members voting yes. Gunnar has been doing Truck Patrol. Grant funding has been received from the VC Eagles Aerie of \$7,500 and the state contributes \$1,500 per radio for two radios. Total cost to the county would be approximately \$4,000.00 to \$5,000.00. Vicky made a motion to move forward with the purchase of two radios utilizing the donated funds from the Eagles and the state. Motion carried with all members voting yes. Randy wanted to say thank you to the Eagles for the donation and Sarah Miller for writing the letter to the Eagles.

Commission Discussion

Pete Paulson attended the Economic Development Corporation meeting and the Airport meeting. Carry over fund balances were discussed. Shawn Olauson attended the School Annexation meeting and the Water Board meeting. Snagging and clearing was stopped on the river because of ice issues. He attended the Thordenskjold Drain meeting which they are thinking of extending. They were looking for farmer input now so if they extend the drain in five years they will need bigger culverts. Vicky will be having some county interviews on Thursday and the annexation the City of Valley City was looking into was discussed. Bill Carblom attended the NDSU meeting in which evaluations were conducted. Amy teaches some classes to inmates at the jail. The Winter Show went well. The VC School Building fund under levied was discussed. The legislator fix was discussed, and the auditor will look into this option.

With no further business, Vicky Lovell made a motion, seconded by Shawn Olauson, to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried unanimously, with all members voting "aye" and the meeting was adjourned at 10:03 a.m.

Bill Carblom, Chairman
Barnes County Commission

Julie Mindt
Barnes County Auditor