Official Proceedings of the Stutsman County Commission – May 20, 2025

At 7:30 a.m. Vice-Chairman Taylor called the special meeting of the Stutsman County Commission to order. Mike Hansen, Amanda Hastings, Chad Wolsky, and Levi Taylor answered the roll call.

The pledge of allegiance was recited.

Vice-Chairman Taylor stated that there were 11 total applicants for the Commission vacancy and explained that ballots will be handed out to the current Commissioners and each will vote for their top 5 applicants. After tally of the votes, the top 5 candidates will then be invited to the podium to speak for a couple minutes and then the Commission will vote for 3 of those 5, and later a vote for 1 of 3. In the event of a tie, Chad Kaiser, Sheriff, will act as the tiebreaker.

Ballots were handed out and tallied by Jessica Alonge, Auditor/COO. Alonge presented the results: Daren Peterka received 4 votes, Benjamin Tompkins received 3 votes and John Grabinger received 2 votes. There was a tie with one vote each for John Baumgartner, Dernel Denning and Taylor Vining. Sheriff Kaiser was handed a ballot to determine the tie breaker by voting for 2. Votes were cast for Taylor Vining and Dernel Denning. The top 5 candidates who will be called to speak are Daren Peterka, Benjamin Tompkins, John Grabinger, Dernel Denning, and Taylor Vining.

Dernel Denning addressed the Commission; he was a previous owner and the current regional manager of Central Business Systems and has been a county resident since 1986. Denning stated that he would bring business experience to the commission and would remain open to new ideas.

John Grabinger addressed the Commission; he has lived in Stutsman County his entire life and has previously served on the Jamestown City Council, the Jamestown Fire Department for 16 years, and served on the Senate for 8 years. Grabinger stated that he worked alongside Jerry Bergquist and helped change the municipal airport to a regional airport as well as many other projects in the area.

Daren Peterka addressed the Commission; he moved to the County 31 years ago and during his time working with Interstate Engineering has become very involved with county projects as well as attending numerous meetings. Taylor questioned how Peterka would handle County contracts with Interstate engineering. Peterka stated that he relinquished his ownership in Interstate Engineering 5 years ago and does not participate in the firm's ESOP. He is trying to retire, and feels it would be appropriate to abstain from voting on contract awards to Interstate Engineering but would participate in the discussion surrounding the decision.

Benjamin Tompkins next addressed the Commission; he has lived in Stutsman County his entire life and farms near the Pingree and Buchanan areas. Tompkins stated that he does not have board experience, but is eager to learn and provide fresh ideas and insight to the Commission.

Taylor Vining addressed the Commission; he was born in Stutsman County and served 5 years on the Jamestown Fire Department, has worked at Wilhelms for 15 years, and is connected to his family business which has been anchored in the community for the past 60 years. He stated he does not have board experience is willing to learn and listen to create solutions for those in the community.

Alonge handed ballots to each Commissioner to vote for their top three candidates each. Alonge tallied the votes and presented the results: Daren Peterka and Benjamin Tompkins each received 3 votes, and Dernel Denning and John Grabinger each received 1 vote. Sheriff Kaiser was handed a ballot to determine the tie breaker, and the vote was cast for John Grabinger.

Alonge handed ballots to each Commissioner for a final vote of the top three candidates. Alonge tallied the votes and presented the results: Daren Peterka received one vote and Benjamin Tompkins received 3 votes.

A motion to carry the results to the regular Commission meeting for a final nomination and vote was made by Wolsky, seconded by Hastings. Roll call vote: Hansen, Hastings, Wolsky, and Taylor voted aye. Motion carried.

At 7:54 a.m. a motion to adjourn the special commission meeting was made by Taylor, seconded by Hastings. Motion carried.

ATTEST:

Jessica Alonge Auditor/COO	Levi Taylor Commission Vice-Chairman