Official Proceedings of the Stutsman County Commission – August 6, 2021

At 10:00 a.m., Chairman Klose called the special meeting of the Stutsman County Commission to order. Dennis Ova, Joan Morris, Steven Cichos, and Mark Klose answered the roll call. Ramone Gumke was absent.

Klose discussed the Stink Lake road project. Interstate Engineering needs a final decision on the project. It was discussed to go ahead with the project this year out of the Road and Bridge fund. Grinding the road will cost $16,000 per mile, so the total project will be approximately $325,000. Cichos made a motion to proceed to bid on the project, seconded by Ova. Ova, Morris, Cichos, and Klose voted aye. Motion carried.

Ramone Gumke joined the meeting at 10:15 a.m.

Klose discussed the 2022 preliminary budget. The salary increases discussed were a 3% COLA with a 2% step or a 2% COLA with a 2% step. Klose would like to see the 2% COLA. Cichos discussed conversations with employees that are at the top of the pay scale and would not receive the step increase. Shannon Larson, Human Resource Director, explained the salary schedule.

Sheriff Kaiser discussed the sheriff department's salaries. The city of Jamestown is now starting their police officers well above the sheriff's department's starting salary.

Commissioner Gumke stated that he supports a 3% COLA in order to stay on top of inflation and not have to do big increases to catch up when salary surveys are done.

Larson spoke with other counties that are looking at a 5-6% salary increase this year.

Gumke made a motion to include a 3% COLA and a 2% Step increase into the preliminary budget, seconded by Ova. Morris-no, Cichos-yes, Klose-no, Ova-yes, Gumke-yes. Motion carried.

Morris made a motion to decrease Library funding by $60,000, seconded by Cichos. Cichos would like to look more at the agreement between the city and the county that was put into place after the vote in 2008. Klose discussed the library's building fund that they established to save for a new facility. Morris pointed out that they budgeted a surplus of $100,000. She is only questioning duplicate services between the two libraries and the fact that they did not consolidate the libraries after the election. She would like to know who will hold the library accountable to proceed with consolidation of the buildings. Klose wants to make sure that the county is contributing their share since the city of Jamestown levies more for the library. Cichos-yes, Klose-no, Gumke-no, Ova-yes, Morris-yes. Motion carried.

Chad Kaiser pointed out the fact that the mill levy dropped by 3 mills last year by using CARES funding to buy down the mill levy. CARES funding was used again this year to decrease the mill levy. Next year, there will most likely be a large increase to catch up. He believes tax payers would rather have small increases each year than a large increase all at once.

Morris recognized Jessica Alonge and Shannon Larson for their hard work on the budget.

Morris made a motion to approve the preliminary budget, seconded by Ova. Motion carried.

Gumke made a motion to set the final budget hearing for October 7th at 6:00 p.m., seconded by Ova. Motion carried.

At 10:40 a.m., Gumke made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Cichos. Motion carried.

ATTEST:

Jessica Alonge Interim Auditor/COO	Mark T. Klose Commission Chairman