

Wells County Commissioner's Meeting Minutes

December 4, 2025

The December meeting was called to order by Chairman Dockter at 8:01 AM. Present at the meeting were Stan Buxa, Dennis Dockter, Danny Maxwell, Brian Miller, Tim Buchwitz, Lydia Gessele, Brittany Long, Caitlyn Roemmich, Randy Suckut, Daniel Stutlien, and Neil Nelson of the Herald-Press. Commissioner Bryan Lautt was not present.

BM (M), DM (S) to approve the minutes from the November Meeting. Unanimously carried.

Employee timesheets were reviewed by the commissioners.

SB (M), BM (S) to approve the bills as presented. Unanimously carried.

The current WC Balance Sheet was reviewed and discussed. Also, the Auditor shared current county investments as well as Commission controlled WC funds, also noting \$400,000 was transferred out of the MM November 28th to cover payroll, bills, and payments to political subs. DM (M), SB (S) to approve the Balance Sheet. Unanimously carried.

SB (M), DM (S) to approve Laura Muscha, Treasurer, and Daniel Stutlien, Auditor, to purchase or cash out CD's and investments on behalf of WC. Unanimously carried.

The only correspondence received this month involved the Bank of ND's Revolving Loan Fund for infrastructure, and notification of the 62nd Annual Joint ND Water Convention scheduled for December 9-11 in Bismarck.

Commission Portfolios were discussed.

The Commission discussed officers and portfolio assignment for 2026. BM (M), SB (S) to nominate Dennis Dockter as Chairman and to cast a unanimous ballot for Dockter. Unanimously carried. SB (M), BM (S) to appoint Danny Maxwell Vice-Chairman. Unanimously carried. WC needs a representative for both the South Central Dakota Regional Council and the WC Housing Authority, as well portfolio holders for Clerk of Court & Sheriff's Dept., Treasurer's Office & States Attorney, Custodial, Road & DES, Extension, Recorder & HR, and Auditor & Tax Director. Chairman Dockter will review portfolio assignments at the January meeting.

Wells County received beer and liquor licenses applications from all existing licensees, including Fessenden Country Club, Fessenden Country Club (*Festival Hall*), Flatland Trail Blazers, Inc. (*Wells County Fairgrounds*), KALR Inc. (*Bremen Bar*), Kotoco Fuels Inc., and Peaceful Valley Golf Course. BM (M), DM (S) to approve each of the license requests for 2026. Unanimously carried.

SB (M), DM (S) to approve DHB, FIBT, and FSB as designated depositories for Wells County Funds for 2026. Unanimously carried.

Commission meeting dates for 2026 were provided the Commission.

Yearend authorizations were discussed. DM (M), BM (S) to authorize the Auditor to approve all payments for postage, and to election workers, schools, townships, cities, fire districts, ambulance districts, and any other agencies including County Agency, Preservation, ND 24/7, Sheriff, and 911 Wireless funds, as the Auditor may deem appropriate without first presenting the payments to the Commissioners for approval throughout 2026. Unanimously carried.

Under the new Public Comments portion of the meeting, Randy Suckut requested to address the Commission regarding county roads and highways. Suckut began by thanking the Commission for their service. He then went on to thank the Road Dept. for filling the holes in County #71. Suckut's question to the Commission was regarding how WC prioritized the roads for which flex fund applications were submitted. The Commission shared some of the criteria utilized and will share traffic counts with Suckut when available.

Caitlyn Roemmich, Director of WC District Health, and Brittany Long, member of the WC District Health Board, revisited the Commission regarding the District's impending financial hardships. SB (M), BM (S) to authorize up to \$150,000 to be provided, along with documentation, as necessary during 2026 from General Fund resources to keep District Health operational. Unanimously carried.

WC Road Foreman, Brent Keller, met with the Commission to discuss matters of his Dept. Keller discussed the completion of the horse barn removal at the Fairgrounds, as well as razing a property in Fessenden which came back to WC due to unpaid taxes. Keller has met with the Fair Board to discuss placement of more asphalt millings at the Fairgrounds late next summer or early fall. WC has had gravel crushed to prepare for the '26 season. Shop inspections have been completed for the quarter, and various compliances issues will need to be addressed. Keller discussed personnel and equipment needs, specifically a trailer for the Dept.

Jason Mayfield of Wold Engineering sat with the Commission to discuss the status of flex fund applications, completed projects, and potential upcoming projects in WC.

An abatement request was considered from Gibby Carlascio for parcel #80389000. SB (M), DM (S) to deny the request. Unanimously carried.

A proposal for precinct and polling locations for Election '26 was distributed. BM (M), SB (S) to accept the proposal of WC being a single precinct with splits for rural WC, as well as the cities of Bowdon, Cathay, Fessenden, Hamberg, Harvey, Hurdsfield, and Sykeston. Unanimously carried. In addition, WC Auditor Daniel Stutlien distributed information regarding candidacy and office holder requirements as well as petition requirements.

The resignation submitted by Amy Dale, WC VSO, effective 11/30/25, was considered. SB (M), DM (S) to accept the resignation and thank her for her time of service. Unanimously carried.

Following interviews, Dakota Steedsman was recommended by the interview committee for the VSO position. DM (M), BM (S) to approve the hiring of Steedsman. Unanimously carried.

An offer to remain a member of the South Central Dakota Region Council was presented to the Commission. SB (M), BM (S) to maintain WC's membership in the organization. Unanimously carried.

The WC Property Foreclosure was held November 18th. Five (5) parcels did not sell and, thus, were either transferred to the Cities of Bowdon (#55021000) and Harvey (#80461000) respectively for \$1.00 ea., or were retained by Wells County (#24518000, #50508000 & #50509000). As such, WC Auditor, Daniel Stutlien recommended the Commission abate the '22, '23 & '24 taxes on each of these parcels. BM (M), DM (S) to abate the taxes on the aforementioned parcels. Unanimously carried.

The Commission began discussions regarding long-term planning in an effort to develop clarity of fiscal direction and challenges of WC. The Commission were asked for their input to the

document before the process begins. It remains the plan to have this process completed by Spring '26.

The ND County Commission Summit will be held Tuesday, December 9th, in Bismarck.

The WCEG Christmas Social will be held Wednesday, December 10th, at 2:00 PM at FH.

The next Six-County Meeting will be held in Emmons Co. Thursday, December 11th, at 10:00 AM.

The next regular meeting of the WC Commission will be held Tuesday, January 6th, at 8:00 AM in the KTL Building.

The next WC Departments meeting will be held Thursday, January 15th, at 2:00 PM.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:31 AM.

The following Fees and Receipts were approved and ordered filed:

Clerk of Court	\$	265.00
Recorder	\$	5,622.56
Sheriff	\$	917.50
Misc.	\$	27,647.79

On motion, the following bills were ordered paid: (*Gross wages, when listed*)

#Direct Deposit	Payroll, General (1000)	\$	94,142.59
#Direct Deposit	Payroll, Road (2001)	\$	40,755.60
#Direct Deposit	Payroll, 911 (2003)	\$	1,308.55
#Direct Deposit	Payroll, County Agent (2005)	\$	3,194.47
#Direct Deposit	Payroll, Social Welfare (2007)	\$	71,933.62
#ACH BC/BS	Insurance	\$	60,126.87
#ACH NDPERS	Retirement	\$	32,727.57

Dec.

25

GENERAL

ND Envelope Company	\$623.91	Central Supplies
Farm and Home Publishers	\$270.00	Misc. Supplies
ODP Business Solutions, LLC	\$71.77	Central Supplies
Herald Press	\$395.50	Central Supplies
Pitney Bowes	\$39.00	Postage
Dakota Mailing	\$242.39	Postage meter supplies
Wells County Treasurer	\$358.21	Telephone
NDTC	\$647.60	Telephone
Fessenden City	\$397.58	Countywide Utilities
Otter Tail	\$1,434.18	Countywide Utilities
Wells County Treasurer	\$61.70	Bank Charges
ND Assn. of Counties	\$1,815.00	Continuing Education
TK Elevator	\$18,145.71	Courthouse Maintenance
MARC	\$451.83	Courthouse & KTL Maintenance
Dakota Dust-Tex	\$461.76	Courthouse & KTL Maintenance
Farmers Union Oil-Fessenden	\$24.97	Courthouse & KTL Maintenance

Herald Press	\$535.50	Legal Publications
South Central Dakota Regional Council	\$9,685.00	Dues
ND Assn. of Counties	\$8,046.00	Co. Dues
ND Assn. of Counties	\$1,725.00	NDCCA Dues
ND Assn. of Counties	\$18,476.19	WComp.
Wells County Treasurer	\$286.21	Safety Supplies
Janelle Pepple	\$140.00	Safety Supplies
Dakota Fire Extinguishers	\$1,425.94	Safety Supplies
Advanced Business Methods	\$6,130.48	Technology
NDACo Resources Group	\$65.45	Technology
ITD	\$1,480.60	Technology
NDTC	\$100.74	Technology
Karissa Dockter	\$240.00	Treasurer Health Ins.
Carla Johnson	\$250.00	Clerk of Court Health Ins
Carla Johnson	\$112.00	Travel
Sidwell Company	\$8,049.57	Sidwell/Vanguard
Wells County Treasurer	\$95.96	Training
Wells County Treasurer	\$922.43	Travel/Mileage/Veh.Maint.
Farmers Union Oil-Fessenden	\$446.23	Travel/Mileage/Veh.Maint.
Wells County Treasurer	\$40.47	Uniforms
Uniform Center	\$802.87	Uniforms
Opdahl Body Shop	\$6,408.00	Vehicles-Decals
Wells County Treasurer	\$33.47	Misc.
Wells County Treasurer	\$114.21	Telephone
NDTC	\$64.96	Telephone
Otter Tail	\$54.09	Utilities
Fessenden City	\$320.18	Festival Hall/Fair Utilities
Otter Tail	\$690.18	Festival Hall/Fair Utilities
	<hr/>	
	\$92,182.84	

HB 1066

Knife River Materials	\$16,865.67	HB 1066
Wold Engineering	\$1,011.94	HB 1066
KLJ Engineering, LLC	\$41,653.44	HB 1066
	<hr/>	
	\$59,531.05	

911

ND 911 Association	\$100.00	Dues/Registration Fees
--------------------	----------	------------------------

JAIL & TRANSPORTATION

HACTC	\$152.88	Jail & Transport Medication
HACTC	\$9,690.00	Jail & Transport Prison Board
	<hr/>	
	\$9,842.88	

CO. AGENT

Connie Loen	\$250.00	County Agent Health Ins
-------------	----------	-------------------------

NDTC	\$121.75	Telephone
Ciera Kotaska	\$324.58	Travel/Mileage
Otter Tail	\$51.52	Utilities
	<hr/>	
	\$747.85	

SOCIAL SERVICES

Wells County Treasurer	\$75.00	Dues/Reg Fees/Foster Care
Wells County Treasurer	\$116.95	Client Support
Wells County Treasurer	\$75.45	Fuel/Foster Care
Farmers Union Oil-Fessenden	\$101.15	Fuel/Foster Care
Patriot Fuels	\$41.56	Fuel/Foster Care
Alicia Lamm	\$64.28	Meals/Foster Care
Wells County Treasurer	\$49.23	Fuel/Child Protect. Serv.
Otter Tail-Jamestown	\$431.76	Child Protect./Safety Perm.
Paula Duren	\$250.00	Parent Aid Health Ins.
Farmers Union Oil-Fessenden	\$76.98	Income Maintenance / Fuel
Wells County Treasurer	\$75.00	Dues/Registration Fees
Wells County Treasurer	\$116.87	Family Social Worker/Fuel
CenDak Cooperative-New Rockford	\$56.12	Family Social Worker/Fuel
Farmers Union Oil-Fessenden	\$26.46	Family Social Worker/Fuel
Wells County Treasurer	\$13.00	Vehicles
Wells County Treasurer	\$14.50	Meals/Foster Care
Lori Henne	\$75.00	Dues/Registration Fees
Farmers Union Oil-Fessenden	\$215.80	In Home Care/Fuel
Patriot Fuels	\$290.17	In Home Care/Fuel
Dales Radiator & Repair	\$54.50	Vehicles
B & B Service and Repair LLC	\$67.25	Vehicles
Opps Auto Body	\$75.00	Vehicles
Wells County Treasurer	\$193.80	Contracted Services
4th Corporation	\$140.00	Contracted Services
Advanced Business Methods	\$251.85	Contracted Services
Leaf	\$312.00	Contracted Services
Patriot Fuels	\$211.73	Fuel
Wells County Treasurer	\$434.94	Telephone
Dakota Central	\$171.64	Telephone
NDTC	\$585.39	Telephone
Farmers Union Oil-Fessenden	\$99.95	Vehicles
Central City H2O+	\$90.00	Zone Admin Support/Misc
NDACo Resources Group	\$1,080.00	Zone Admin Support/IT Other
ITD	\$126.66	Zone Admin Support/IT Other
Wells County Treasurer	\$263.24	Zone Admin Supp./Office Materials
	<hr/>	
	\$6,323.23	

WEED CONTROL

Cost Share Participants	\$79,495.00	
Donna Rau	\$220.87	Salary - Employee
Herald Press	\$294.00	Advertising

Benson County Farmers Press	\$224.00	Advertising
Sunshine Spray Service	\$8,850.00	Chemical Spraying
ND Weed Control Association	\$285.00	Dues/Registration Fees
		Noxious Weed/Leafy Spurge/Cost
Woodward Township	\$500.00	Sharing
	<u>\$89,868.87</u>	

HWY TAX

Mid-Dakota Lumber	\$135.73	Building Upkeep
K & S Builders, LLC	\$1,500.00	Building Upkeep
Farmers Union Oil-Fessenden	\$7,208.03	Fuel
Power Plan	\$4,920.98	Machinery Repairs & Supplies
Butler Machinery	\$2,644.69	Machinery Repairs & Supplies
NAPA-Harvey	\$166.24	Machinery Repairs & Supplies
Gooseneck Implement	\$99.89	Machinery Repairs & Supplies
Wells County Treasurer	\$218.67	Supplies
Linde Gas & Equipment	\$145.90	Supplies
Dales Radiator & Repair	\$40.00	Supplies
Lemer's ACE & Rental	\$33.96	Supplies
NDTC	\$145.72	Telephone
Wells County Treasurer	\$95.98	Travel/Mileage
Doug Mertz	\$126.00	Travel/Mileage
Timothy Schmiess	\$67.20	Travel/Mileage
Gary Kaul	\$44.80	Travel/Mileage
Harvey City	\$64.20	Utilities
Wells County Treasurer	\$202.14	Utilities
Fessenden City	\$155.49	Utilities
Sykeston City	\$49.00	Utilities
Otter Tail	\$395.57	Utilities
Central Plains Water	\$174.54	Utilities
Northern Plains Electric	\$217.86	Utilities
Cathay City	\$95.00	Utilities
Susag Sand & Gravel	\$38,720.00	Road Materials
Susag Sand & Gravel	\$390.00	Hauling
	<u>\$58,057.59</u>	

PRESERVATION

Tyler Technologies	\$4,748.41	Technology-Doc Pro
--------------------	------------	--------------------

24-7

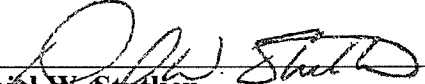
Office Of Attorney General	\$320.00	Scram Fees
Wells County Treasurer	\$63.90	24-7 Pharm Chem
	<u>\$383.90</u>	

\$321,786.62

Approved:


Dennis T. Dockter,
Wells County Commission Chairman

Attest:


Daniel W. Stutlien,
Wells County Auditor