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Adams County Commissioners Dustin Laufer, Kevin Pagel, and Steven West work through issues at their Oct. 14 meeting. They heard concerns from the public regarding safety issues because of 23rd Street Road conditions. | PHOTO BY KARLA J. FLAK

County Commissioners address road concerns and 911 coordination

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Adams County Commissioners Dustin Laufer, Kevin Pagel, and Steven West continued to work through ongoing county road issues. Commissioners also discussed potential 911 address changes during their Oct. 14 meeting. Chairperson Laufer clarified that the address changes are for rural Adams County—not city roads—and that if those county addresses could be isolated, survey costs would be reduced by mailing questionnaires only to residents affected by the potential changes.

Two members of the community reported to the commission regarding their concerns about 23rd Street (Overhead Road). They stated that it is in dangerously poor condition, with so many potholes that drivers are often traveling on the wrong side of the road to avoid them. This creates a hazardous situation when drivers coming over the hill in their correct lane must take the ditch to prevent a collision. Commissioners noted that gravel and grading for that road remain on the list of county priorities. Laufer responded that the county is currently three years behind on graveling roads and, at the time of the meeting, contractors had been hauling large amounts of gravel to complete work on Country Club Road. He went on to explain that county workers are handling an increased workload until another person is hired. They will be advertising again to fill an additional Adams County Highway Department maintenance worker position soon.

Commissioners said that if traveling 23rd Street is truly a dangerous situation, barricades should be considered until the road can be repaired. It was discussed that a significant amount of tax dollars has gone into

the repair and maintenance of 23rd Street, and it is unfortunate that the road is currently in such poor condition. The commission also discussed that driving speeds and the amount of heavy traffic are both contributing factors. Laufer and Highway Superintendent Justin Blade have discussed the road's condition and are working through prioritizations. Laufer added that the plan is to get gravel spread and packed before the ground freezes. Discussions were also held regarding implementing spot weighing on that road. Commissioners reported that they have reached out to law enforcement officials to arrange vehicle weighing, noting that if only one truck is weighed, word might spread and others may reroute to avoid it. Temporary speed limit signs were also discussed as a short-term safety measure.

The commissioners received very positive feedback on the completed Black and Blue Road project. Several attendees commented that they had driven the road since its completion and said it was very well done and greatly improved.

Commissioners unanimously approved Steven West as the North Dakota State Fair Advisory Board delegate.

They also accepted the written resignation of current 911 Coordinator, Sheriff Jordan Fisher, whose resignation was effective immediately. Commissioners discussed efforts to secure a new 911 Coordinator for October and beyond, noting that a temporary appointment may be needed until a permanent replacement is found. They expressed support for the Office of Emergency Management potentially assuming the coordinator role. It was reported that the coordinator position has a fixed pay rate of approximately \$500 per month.

Krista Faller, County Auditor/Treasurer for Adams County, North Dakota, reported that one property reverted to Adams County for nonpayment of delinquent taxes levied against it. The property will be offered for sale on November 18, 2025, to the highest bidder at 10:00 a.m. in Faller's office at the courthouse. The information will be published in the newspaper, and no bids will be accepted for less than the appraised value. The property is Lot 12, Block 17, John's-Farr Addition, located at 301 Fourth Avenue North, Hettinger, N.D. Reported levied taxes and assessments against the property totaled \$11,784.60.

Sewer camera inspections yield heavier cleaning needs

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On Wednesday, October 29, at 1:00 p.m., the Hettinger City Council held a special session via telephone conference to address additional expenses for the city's sewer camera inspection and cleaning project. Mayor James Lindquist called the meeting to order, and the agenda—with only one action item—was approved. Council members discussed the additional costs of sewer CCTV cleaning.

The original June quote of \$109,000, which had been previously approved by the council, included costs for the entire sewer system to be camera-inspected and cleaned, as well as a built-in allowance in case some lines required heavier cleaning, reported Shannon Hewson of Brosz Engineering. Hewson explained that there is now more heavy cleaning needed than originally anticipated. He said CC Steel is willing to perform the extra work but has requested a discounted hourly rate to clean the remaining lines. Normally, the company would charge \$450 per hour; however, they are offering to complete the additional cleaning at \$350 per hour.

Hewson noted that although some heavy cleaning was already included in the approved quote, CC Steel has spent five to six hours cleaning per section. He said he met the crew on-site after the October council meeting, and at Seventh Street and Railroad Avenue, they encountered a main that was one-quarter to one-half full of sediment. Hewson instructed them to go ahead and clean that dense section anyway to keep the camera moving, as the project needed to be completed before winter.

Council member David Parrill told Hewson that since the engineers have been managing the project, if they determine from the data, research, and camera footage that CC Steel is doing its job but simply encountered unexpected site conditions, then he would agree with the additional expense not to exceed \$30,000. The mayor and council members in attendance agreed that the project needed to continue and that the heavier workload justified the added cost. Parrill noted that prices will not be getting any cheaper and that the additional cleaning will result in more effective and less expensive maintenance in the long term. Hewson confirmed, stating, "That's exactly what it is—a different site condition."

Hewson explained that heavy cleaning is required along Railroad Avenue from Second Street South all the way to Ninth Street, where the line crosses the railroad and follows Mirror Lake Road. He further noted that nine remaining trunk lines still need to be cleaned. He said that with the equipment being used, there is no dump time or clean-out time necessary, meaning the incurred costs are solely for inspection and line-cleaning services.

Council members agreed the work must be completed before winter and unanimously approved the additional cleaning expenses, not to exceed \$30,000.