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Velva area Voice

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Rural Development Cooperatives and Grocery stores unite

Reporter Heather Tudor

On January 20th, 2025, the Velva City Commission met with some Velva Community Planning and Zoning members as well as Ellen Huber, ND Rural Electric Cooperative Director; Shad Vedaa, and his father Shawn Vedaa, Vedaa Consulting, and several community members to discuss what could be a really good thing that may be able to put the old Dot's Pretzel's building in Velva, ND to use once again.

The topic of discussion was how to establish a Food Hub that would service approximately a 100 miles radius, plus help eight to ten community's residents to have access to fresh, healthy food and also ensure the rural grocery stores are able to stay operational. With tough economic times for everyone these days, ND residents

may not have funds they once had to buy good groceries and that economic hardship effect trickles down to other community businesses and affects the community well-being as a whole.

"Right now, we have eight other communities within a 100 miles radius that are interested in this project" states Ellen Huber, so with that stated, this Food Hub would potentially bring in a few more jobs to the community, possibly more later on but the stakeholders would need to gauge that need after everything is fully operational."

This project would be fully funded by a 12.6-million-dollar grant from the Bush Foundation, and the building to use would respectfully be donated by the owners.

"We're only expecting one or two trucks coming into town to deliver goods to this location and to truck items out to other locations. It won't be busy all day long like it was when Dot's Pretzels was distributing at their highest capacity" states Shawn Vedaa.

Some Planning and Zoning Committee members asked about property taxes if they decided to rezone the building from residential commercial C1 to commercial C3. Huber mentioned that they plan to run under a 501 C3 non-profit status and may possibly see about applying for property tax exemption, but ultimately it will be left up to the producers and/or stockholders which direction they want to go and when the stockholders take over operations, they would be responsible for prop-

erty taxes. As the Co-operative is not interested in holding onto this property for a lengthy period of time.

The organization would like to improve the esthetic of the building and also add a noise buffer of some sort to help keep the noise of the trucks to a minimum. "This building will be equipped with freezers, refrigerators, and ambient storage allowing the grocery stores the ability to buy in bulk, which in turn will potentially bring more sale prices to the consumer. But ultimately there is still a lot of planning that needs to be done. But we're excited for this to happen and really think this will be a good thing for the Velva community" states Vedaa.

Word on the Street

VELVA COMMUNITY FOOD PANTRY:

February 17, March 17, April 21, May 19, June 16, July 21, August 18, September 15, October 20, November 17, December 15

The food pantry is open from 5:45-7:15pm in the Fellowship Hall of OVLC, Main Street. The pantry is short of these items: canned meats, canned fruit, personal hygiene products and laundry pods and can be dropped off at OVLC Mon.-Fri. 9am-3pm.

JOINT MEETING:

Annual meeting for Velva Community Development Corporation and Souris Valley Care Center, Inc. will be Monday, February 2 at the Verendrye meeting room at 7pm.

Rezoning buildings, Lead Service Lines, and Contractor licensing

Reporter Heather Tudor

The Velva City Commission met on Tuesday, January 20th, 2025, on account of Martin Luther King Jr Day on Monday, at the Velva City Hall at 7:00pm.

Commissioners present were Mike Schreiner, Mary Liz Davis,

Dave Keller, and Gene Jenson. Other City officials present were City Assessor Chery Bourdeau, Auditor Jenny Johns, City Engineer Emma Lavachek, Sheriff Trey Skager, Deputy David Dewanz, Public Works Leo Walter.

First item on the agenda was approval of a recommendation made by the Planning and Zoning Committee.

Commissioner Dave Keller made a motion to approve the recommendation made by the Planning and Zoning Committee to rezone the Dot's Pretzel's building from C1 to C3 zoning with requiring the installation of a buffer strip to be added eventually with approved permit. Commissioner Jenson seconded the motion, motion carried.

Next on the agenda was approval of the sales tax funds grant request distributed to the Star City Golf Course through the VCDC for \$31,430.25 for irrigation pump(s) repair, as presented by Tracy Krueger representing the Velva Community Development Corporation.

Commissioner Keller made a motion to approve the VCDC request of \$31,430.25. Commissioner Jenson seconded the motion, motion carried.

Next was approval of the regular and special Commission meeting minutes. There was a regular meeting on December 15th and a special meeting on December 16th,

2025. Commissioner Davis made a motion to approve the minutes of said meetings. Commissioner Zietz seconded the motion, motion carried.

Then there was the approval of the bills and payroll. Total bills payout was \$49,725.15 as stated by Commission President Mike Schreiner. Commissioner Davis made a motion to approve total bills, Zietz to second the motion, motion carried.

Under the Reports of the President tab on the agenda, Mr. Schreiner mentioned last summer when the city had a heavy storm, do the Commissioners want to be notified via group text message/ email if something happens or someone gets hurt. Commissioners seemed to agree that they would like to be notified of things happening within the city in the event of a storm or some other event happening.

A question arose regarding emergency procedures, should licensed contractors in the event of an emergency have to come to city hall and present current contractor license to city officials and get approval/pass issued by the city to ensure community residents don't get taken advantage of by "crooked" individuals posing as licensed contractors. Commissioner will think about this and possibly discuss it more at a later meeting time.

Next on discussion was what do the Commissioners think of implementing a "Eagle Award" for community members who chose to make Velva look good? Zietz made a motion to spend a minimal amount of money if needed for an award for residents who are nominated by others for making the City of Velva look good. Jenson to second the motion, motion carried.

There were no complaints and/or citations. Deputy David Dewanz approached the Commission with a proposal. Mr. Dewanz brought it to the Commissions attention that there is a Memorial Highway on ND Highway 200 for fallen police officers. There is a group that is trying to put highway signs up for all the police officers killed in the line of duty with the officers' names on them. "Velva has dubious pleasure of being the only city in the county that has lost an officer" mentioned.

Dewanz. Mr. Dewanz has been contacted by The ND Peace Officer Memorial Program at the ND Heritage Center and State Museum to see if the City of Velva would be interested in purchasing a highway sign that would go right at the intersection of Hwy 41/200 by Turtle Lake. The officer's name that belongs to Velva was William Walter Hansen, who was killed on September 27th, 1950. Mr. Hansen was only 45 years old when he

was electrocuted as he picked up a live wire which had fallen onto the ground. He was killed instantly as it was a high voltage Ottartail power line that had fallen during some high winds. Two businessmen saw it happen, Mr. Virgil Christiansen and Mr. John Geigla were first on the scene. Dr. T.E.McGauvran of Minot, who had an office in Velva had arrived a few minutes later. The two businessmen, Dr. McGauvran and members of the resuscitation squad tried to revive Mr. Hansen but were not successful. Mr. Hansen left behind his wife, a daughter and two young sons. Mr. Dewanz reported that the cost for two signs, to be placed on each side of the highway, would be \$370 in total. Mr. Keller made a motion to purchase the "end of watch" signs that will be placed on the Fallen Officers Memorial Highway at the intersection of Hwy 41/200 by Turtle Lake. Mr. Jenson seconded the motion, motion carried.

Next was reports of the Commissioners, Mrs. Davis reported that the ND League of Cities Spring Conference will be March 18 – 20th in Dickinson, ND. Mr. Keller reported that the Fireman's Meeting discussed anhydrous tanks that will be coming through Velva this summer. The City of Grand Forks

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