

HAND COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

415 West 1st Avenue, Mail slot 7 & Suite 203
MILLER, SOUTH DAKOTA 57362-1346
(605) 853-2182

<http://hand.sdcounties.org/commissioner>
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MINUTES OF THE JULY 19, 2022 MEETING

The Hand County Planning and Zoning Commission was not called to order because the items for discussion were not ready for review.

The Hand County Board of County Commissioners met in special session in the commission chambers of the courthouse on Tuesday July 19, 2022 at 7:00 P.M. Chairman Greg Palmer called the meeting to order with commissioners Jim Eschenbaum, Daniel Jensen and Jim Jones being present. Commissioner Luke Wernsmann arrived later. The meeting was live streamed on YouTube and linked on the County's Facebook page.

On Hand Development Corporation executive director, Kecia Beranek, met with the commission to provide an update on their activities. Beranek explained how the On Hand board is organized and the general purpose. She also discussed how she, as director, is attempting to visit every business in the county and is presently at 71 visits. Kecia explained that all lots in the Miller Industrial Park were now purchased and On Hand is looking at more lots to offer. Beranek also explained that the ground to the east of the Miller football field was purchased by On Hand and they are exploring the development of the property and options on how to fund construction of the utility infrastructure.

Avera-Hand County Memorial Hospital administrator, Matt Campion, and former administrator, Bryan Breitling, met with the commission to report on the transition from Breitling to Campion. Breitling explained he has been assigned to other facilities but would remain closely tied to Hand County and to Campion. After the introductions concluded, Breitling renewed his (their) request for consideration in using the ARPA funds towards the purchase of a new ambulance. The current estimated cost of an ambulance is \$284,000.

The **expansion of the discretionary property tax formula** was next on the agenda. Recent changes in state law allow counties to offer discretionary formula savings to certain residential properties. Previously, Hand County offered discretionary to, primarily, business and ag related properties. The expansion, if approved, would offer a graduated property tax formula. The hope is that it would stimulate housing improvements.

The commission discussed the options and ultimately decided to have the resolution mocked up for review at the next meeting and then determine the next course of action.

Devyn Gortmaker tendered his resignation of employment from the Highway Department effective July 11, 2022. Gortmaker had been with the department for 13 months. The resignation was accepted upon motion of Jensen & Eschenbaum, and passed.

A brief discussion ensued about whether to grant Jeff Hargens permission to advertise the position. It was informally decided to wait on advertising as Hargens felt they had enough staff at the present time.

Brad Stango with **Ulteig Engineering** was present with highway superintendent Jeff Hargens to discuss several resolutions regarding bridge structures. The five resolutions were reduced to three resolutions due to an error by the auditor in providing the resolution information to the Miller Press in time.

Commissioner Luke Wernsmann arrived during this presentation, approximately 7:31 P.M.