

**Meeting Minutes**  
**NDACo Board of Directors**  
**December 14, 2023**  
**NDACo County Office Building**

President Tenneson called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM and declared a quorum based on the ILG roll call just taken.

Members Present:	Steve Lee	Jayme Tenneson
Steve Forde	Becky Hagel	Tony Grindberg
Lori Hanson	Erica Johnsrud	Kim Jacobson
Dana Larsen	Shirley Murray	Robert Wilson
Nick Moser	Trudy Ruland	Perry Turner
Kelly Palm	Chad Kaiser	Joan Hollekim
Jamee Folk	Wanda Knutson	

Members Absent:	Beau Anderson	Scott Ouradnik
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Also Present: Aaron Birst, NDACo Executive Director  
Genny Dienstmann, NDACo Staff  
Michelle Tabbert, NDACo Staff  
Jeff Eslinger, NDACo Staff  
Donnell Preskey, NDACo Staff  
Linda Svihovec, NDACo Staff

The President asked if there were any requests for changes to the agenda. There were no suggested changes. Johnsrud moved to approve the agenda as printed. The motion was seconded and passed on a voice vote.

The Board Warm-Up Question was proposed, and each Board member was given an opportunity to respond. Board members were asked to limit their responses to two minutes or less. The question was: "What issues do you want to work on in the interim to prepare for the next legislative session?" The comments included:

- Chemical dependency issues are major; we need to do something to help these people. If we don't fix it now, it is only going to get worse.
- My biggest concern with the term limits that have passed, we will have a lot of turnover in the legislature. We need to get to know our legislators, stay in contact with them outside the session as well as during the session. Encourage county members to also reach out to their legislators.
- Mental health and chemical dependency are major issues for our county.
- Unfunded retirement liability and the counties don't get strapped with huge bills to make up the difference. Determine how we close the gap.
- Closing of rural ambulance services; very limited on volunteers.
- Mental health is huge, both juvenile and adult. More juvenile services are needed, and they have nowhere to go.
- Mental health is big issue in our county. There are limited services for the kids, no follow up services.

- Human Service Zones had over 200 bills that affected us. We did a formal three-year strategic plan. We want to play more of an offensive rather than a defensive role during the session. We need to be the voice of the people we serve.
- The last session taking over some of the contract counties for the Clerks of Court. Keeping our eyes open on this issue and seeing if this is an issue that arises next session.
- Behavioral health, particularly in jails. Need more progress in providing more extensive services in this area. I live in a small county; how do we help those counties help fund infrastructure.
- Mental health and chemical dependency challenges in our law enforcement is far above anything else. We have many people in our jails that don't belong there. They need to have mental health services, but it is now extending beyond law enforcement.
- Understanding the needs in the court system; looking at block grants for technology to allow courthouses to provide more diverse services in the court system.
- Dealing with dilapidated buildings and building new buildings. With the regulations and requirements of erecting buildings with the \$200,000 cap, it is too low. I would like to see that cap to \$1M.
- We can't do anything without funding; we need to look at our funding sources. Is there a way we can educate citizens on what options they have like the homestead tax credit. Don't want to burden property taxpayers.
- Property Tax Elimination measure, if it passes, where is the money going to come from. Some will come from gross production tax, we need to educate everyone about this tax, protecting the formula/distribution of these funds. The oil industry is a blessing/curse, we need to sustain that revenue stream.
- The property tax issue and how the Defined Benefit Plan issues are going to be handled.
- Mental health/chemical dependency. Road maintenance is an issue. We are a small county but have a lot of paved road miles. It's expensive, we are looking to grind up pavement and turn it back to gravel.
- Chemical dependency is a top priority. This is personal to me as I have family struggling with this. Our three-year tax year process with selling property, need to look at who the funds should go to.
- Property taxes and mental health are my two top priority issues.

The President next asked for consideration of the Consent Agenda. Hagel moved to approve the Consent Agenda, including the NDACo minutes from the August 24 and October 9, 2023 meetings, the Delegate Council minutes from October 10, 2023, NDACo General Fund checks #38021 through #38124, DJS Account checks #7870 through #7889 and ACH payments made from July to October 2023. The motion was seconded and passed on a voice vote.

The President directed the Board members to the Governance Report, inviting Genny to provide a review of all Board Policies. Board members were asked to review, sign and return the 2023 Conflict of Interest Disclosure Statement before leaving today's meeting. Genny next presented three employee policies for the Board's review and approval. Two have been created/revised to meet the new standards for grant administration through the NDDOT. They are the Employee Travel Expenses policy and the Payroll and

Compensation policy. The third policy is an update on the Emergency/Weather Closings policy. Kaiser made a motion to approve the policies as presented. The motion was seconded and passed on a voice vote.

Tenneson announced his appointments to serve on the Finance Committee and Governance Committee and followed this with a summary of the Board Member Self-Evaluation results and an explanation of this year's Board Governance Appraisal, which Board members who've served for more than a year are asked to complete before leaving the meeting. Board members who have served less than a year were asked to complete the New Board Member Appraisal before leaving the meeting.

Under Administrative Services, Genny continued with an explanation of the new NG9-1-1 bank account that is needed for the new program to collect and distribute 9-1-1 fees. Jason will be reporting later in the meeting on the new program. Lee made a motion to approve the setup of a new checking account for NG9-1-1 fee collections. The motion was seconded and passed on a voice vote.

The President then directed the Board's attention to the 2024 Budget, and Finance Committee Chair Ruland asked Aaron and Genny to explain the proposed budget. Aaron explained the process used to develop and review the budget, and provided a high-level overview of major projects, responding to questions. Moser moved approval of the 2024 NDACo Budget as presented by the Finance Committee. After receiving a second to the motion, it passed on a unanimous voice vote.

Under County Financial Partnerships, Aaron reported on the progress in getting 52 of the 53 counties to sign joint powers agreements for the collection and distribution of 9-1-1 fees. He explained the web-based portal being developed for the telephone service providers to remit payments.

Jeff was invited to present the 2023 Conference Report. Attendance and registrations were highlighted, and the financial results were shared. A summary of conference feedback was noted. Aaron followed with his plans to hold a Commissioner Conference in March of 2024. It is important to provide a conference dedicated to training for commissioners and provide network opportunities as well.

Aaron and Michelle reported on the County Tours conducted in 2023 and plans for County Tours in 2024 and 2025. After concluding the report, the President suggested a short break.

The President asked for the Legislative Services Report. Aaron began with an update on the ballot measure to eliminate property tax and the group that is working together against the measure, which includes NDACo. Efforts are focusing on proactively educating voters on this measure, and at this time no funds will be dedicated for this measure by NDACo to the coalition. Donnell followed with a review of the Special Session held in October and a rundown of the various interim committees that have been assigned "county-related" studies.

Under Old Business, Wilson gave an update on National Participation, providing highlights from the Fall Board Meeting held November 30 – December 2 that he and Perry Turner attended. Perry added some comments regarding his experience at the meeting.

Aaron was asked to lead a discussion on future board meetings. He explained that the meetings were going paperless, with tablets purchased for Board members to use at meetings to view the reports. He explained a request was made for a change in future agendas that may include an invitation to outside speakers from partner organizations or state agencies. The board members will be asked to provide ideas and topics of information they would like to know more about. There was discussion to invite both sides (Rick Becker for the measure and Samantha Holly against the measure) to meet with the Board to discuss their views on the property tax measure. The board provided direction that Aaron and the staff can bring forward recommendations of speakers based on feedback and the staff would schedule those speakers accordingly.

The President and Aaron then reviewed the proposed 2024 Board meeting dates. It was moved by Kaiser to approve the following Board meeting dates for 2024: April 25, August 29, October 21 & 22 and December 12. The motion was seconded and passed on a voice vote.

Having reached the end of the approved agenda, the President reminded everyone of their board meeting evaluation and declared the meeting adjourned at 11:45 AM.

Approved by: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_