

GRAND FORKS COUNTY SPECIAL MEETING – March 25, 2009 – 1:00pm

Topic: Grand Forks County Flooding

The Board met pursuant to adjournment with Commissioners Murphy, Knauf, Schmisek and Pic present. Commissioner Murphy participated via telephone from his home.

Jim Campbell, Emergency Management Director, addressed the board regarding a current update on the flood information for Grand Forks County. The current flood forecast is predicted at 50 to 53 feet by next Monday or Tuesday.

The County's current policy for sand and sandbags was discussed and whether or not it should be changed.

Todd Feland, Director of Public Works, said the City of Grand Forks would be willing to open Sandbag Central. If Sandbag Central is opened up it would be staffed by volunteers. The volunteers would fill sandbags and the filled sandbags could be picked up by residents that need bags.

Mr. Campbell handed out an estimate of the cost to open Sandbag Central, to fill 200,000 sandbags and contract four people to run it for 28 hours. The estimate is \$53,590. They don't know if that estimate is correct because they don't know if 200,000 sandbags is the correct number or if Sandbag Central would only run 28 hours. Additional costs would be for County Personnel and if approved the cost to transport filled sandbags.

Mr. Campbell asked what direction the Commission would like the Emergency Management Office to go. We could stay with our policy of one load of sand delivered to people or we could open it up and go to unlimited amount of sand delivered to people or Sandbag Central could be opened and filled sandbags could be delivered.

Todd Feland, Public Works Director said the City of Grand Forks will be making 5,000 to 6,000 bags for themselves just for emergency operations and they will be making those this afternoon so sometime there after they would be open for activities for the surrounding areas. Mr. Feland said Emergency Management or the EOC should continue to be the point of contact for volunteers on what to do and where to go as they are currently doing and also ordering the materials. Mr. Feland said the City of Grand Forks is ready to help and be part of the positive action.

Steve Wasvik, 6721 Lake Drive, said he appreciates everything that is being discussed today. Mr. Wasvik said they could do some trucking of sandbags themselves and contractors could be used. The biggest thing now is where to put the all the volunteers that have so graciously offered to help them and where to safely put them.

Jim Campbell said we did receive a Presidential Disaster Declaration this morning. That does not cover any cost for sandbagging or assistance to private residences.

Tyler Grandstrand, UND Student Body President, said if you could get transportation coordinated we could have volunteers to help with sandbagging in Grand Forks County.

Todd Feland said the Commission could request the City help with transportation for volunteers from a central location to specific neighborhoods with buses. Mr. Feland said he would help coordinate this activity.

The Commission discussed what the transportation of the filled sandbags would involve. It will be a judgment call when a transport is done. Commissioner Knauf asked Mr. Campbell if we had a list of contractors that could transport the filled sandbags. Mr. Campbell said yes he could get three quotes in an hour and they would go with the cheapest quote.

Commissioner Pic asked Mr. Onstad for an estimate on how far west we could potentially have requests for sandbags to be delivered to personal property. Mr. Onstad said from his experience his guess would be the Mekinock area.

Moved by Schmisek, seconded by Pic, to rescind the previous motion approved on 3/17/09 "to provide one load of sand and sandbags to Grand Forks County residents at no charge and allow the Emergency Management Director to exceed that amount with written documentation from the Grand Forks County Highway Department or the Grand Forks City Fire Chief regarding the perceived threat of flooding. If written documentation is not received a fee will be charged for each additional load of sand. " And to request that Grand Forks City open Sandbag Central and ask Emergency Operation Center (EOC) to be responsible for ordering the sand and to get quotes from Contractors and contract for hauling. If a Memorandum of Understanding is needed that Mr. Welte and Mr. Swanson would work to put that together. The appropriate administrative official, Mr. Campbell or a member from Grand Forks City add the necessary details to accomplish what we are trying to accomplish. Motion carried on roll call vote with Knauf, Murphy, Schmisek and Pic voting aye.

Moved by Pic, seconded by Schmisek, to approve four County staff to assist at the Emergency Management Center, three to coordinate the volunteers and to answer the phones to coordinate where the sandbags should be delivered and a financial person to track all expenses. And to not exceed \$500,000 from the Emergency Management Fund and pay to transport volunteers. Motion carried on roll call vote with Knauf, Murphy, Schmisek and Pic voting aye.

It was agreed that Ed Nierode would notify County employees that they would be allowed time off to assist with the flood relieve efforts in Grand Forks County without being charged vacation.

Moved by Murphy, seconded by Pic, to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 1:45pm.

William Murphy, Chairman
Grand Forks County Commission

Debbie Nelson, County Auditor