

FALL RIVER COUNTY APPROVED MINUTES OF MARCH 27, 2020

The Fall River Board of County Commissioners met in special session on March 27, 2020. Present: Joe Allen, Joe Falkenburg, Heath Greenough, Paul Nabholz, Deb Russell and Sue Ganje, Auditor.

The Pledge of Allegiance was given, and the meeting called to order at 9:00 a.m.

The agenda was reviewed for conflicts; none were noted. ALL MOTIONS RECORDED IN THESE MINUTES WERE PASSED BY UNANIMOUS VOTE, UNLESS OTHERWISE STATED. The full context of the meeting can be found on the county website under Commissioners at <http://fallriver.sdcountries.org>, or under Fall River County Commission, SD at <http://www.YouTube.com>.

Motion made by Nabholz, seconded by Russell, to approve the agenda as written.

Chairman Falkenburg opened the meeting to talk of the COVID-19 Emergency. Discussion was held on information he received during Governor Noem's March 26, 2020 conference call to all Commission Chairpersons in the state. Social distancing of 6 feet between people should be followed, along with cleaning protocols. This will include no more than 10 people in any room of the courthouse at one time, including commission meetings. The Commissioners have the authority to close the courthouse and other county facilities to the public, with recommendations to post phone and contact numbers on doors, etc. Discussion was held on procedures to be taken for individuals coming into the courthouse (checking temperatures and compiling a list of individuals). If the county closes county facilities, all the phone numbers and email addresses of the offices in the Courthouse will be posted, and people will be encouraged to do business by phone, online or mail if possible. If needed, face to face appointments can be made. Expect restrictions to continue, possibly for an extended time, we are at the beginning now.

Brian Ahrendt, State's Attorney, spoke on behalf of the office supervisors, discussed the need to flatten the curve, changes that the UJS has put into place, Governor Noem's Executive order and the CDC and Department of Health guidelines. All counties in the state have had restrictions. It needs to be clear that offices are still working and providing needed services. The hope is to make the transition as easy as possible and keep the employees and public safe.

Chairman Falkenburg read the emergency resolution out loud.

Nabholz expressed concerns of closing the courthouse to the public, which causes more panic, and he provided statistics on who was more at risk, the risk of the virus compared to the flu and other statistics, and asked the board to postpone the decision to close the county facilities until the April 7, 2020 meeting. Russell spoke that the employees dealing face to face with members of the public needed to be considered. Allen approved of the resolution. Greenough agreed with Nabholz on a lot of the statistics but needs to also consider employees. Falkenburg noted the need to review at each meeting.

More discussion followed.

Motion made by Allen, seconded by Russell, to approve the following resolution:

FALL RIVER COUNTY RESOLUTION NO. 2020-9

AN EMERGENCY RESOLUTION TO ADDRESS A PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS BY IMPLEMENTING CERTAIN MEASURES WHICH HAVE BEEN DEEMED NECESSARY TO SLOW THE COMMUNITY SPREAD OF CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19).

WHEREAS, the Fall River County Commission has the authority to pass Resolutions, per SDCL§7-8-20 (10), for the purpose of promoting the health, safety, morals and general welfare, of the community and the promotion of health and the suppression of disease; and

WHEREAS, an outbreak of the disease COVID-19, which is caused by the novel coronavirus, has been confirmed in more than 100 countries, including the United States; and

WHEREAS, COVID-19 is a severe respiratory disease transmitted by person-to-person contact, or by contact with surfaces contaminated by the virus. In some cases, especially among older adults and persons with serious underlying health conditions, COVID-19 can result in serious illness requiring hospitalization, admission to an intensive care unit, and death; and

WHEREAS, the World Health Organization (WHO), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services have declared the outbreak of COVID-19 as a public health emergency; and

WHEREAS, on March 13, 2020, the President of the United States declared a national emergency in response to the global pandemic of COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, on the same day, Governor Kristi Noem, issued Executive Order 2020-04 which declared a state of emergency to exist in the State of South Dakota in response to the spread of COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, a case of COVID-19 has been confirmed in Western South Dakota; and

WHEREAS, the CDC and health experts have recommended social distancing to slow the spread of COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, social distancing is a method of slowing down or stopping the spread of a contagious disease by reducing the probability of contact between infected persons and those not infected in order to minimize disease transmission; and

WHEREAS, in response to the need to implement social distancing all schools in the state have been closed for at least two weeks; and

WHEREAS, on March 16th, 2020, the White House issued guidance recommending that social gatherings of more than ten people be avoided and

WHEREAS, the failure to successfully implement social distancing will likely result in higher numbers of infected individuals and has the potential to overwhelm the capacity of the County's health care providers; and

WHEREAS, it is important that control measures be taken to reduce or slow down the spread of COVID-19 in order to protect the health and safety of the County's residents, especially for seniors and those with underlying health conditions that make them particularly vulnerable to COVID-19.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Fall River County Commission that:

1. Effective immediately, all Fall River County Facilities are closed to the general public. County and Unified Judicial System offices will continue to operate and conduct business by mail, email, online, by phone or by arranging to work face-to-face/in person on a case-by-case basis.
2. Effective immediately, in cases when a member(s) of the public displays symptoms of COVID-19, as specified by the South Dakota Department of Health, the County offices are directed to refuse face-to-face/in person service and encourage the individual(s) to seek medical attention as specified by public health authorities.
3. This Resolution shall be reviewed at each upcoming commission meeting, and appropriate action will be taken as needed.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this Resolution is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, safety, and welfare of Fall River County and shall become effective Monday, March 30th, 2020, and is designed to cause the least amount of disruption to the public.

Dated this 27th day of March, 2020.

ATTEST:
/s/Sue Ganje
Fall River County Auditor

/s/Joe Falkenburg
Fall River County Board of Commissioners

By roll call vote, Nabholz voting no, all others voting yes, motion carries.

Falkenburg asked for consideration for the highway department to stagger the workers' starting times. The board agreed.

Public comment was heard by Troy Goettsch, who questioned the continuity of plans.

Motion made by Nabholz, seconded by Greenough, to adjourn at 10:03 a.m.

/s/Joe Falkenburg
Joe Falkenburg, Chairman
Board of Fall River County Commissioners

ATTEST:
/s/ Sue Ganje
Sue Ganje, Fall River County Auditor