

CLAY COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
8:30 AM, TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 2023
Meeting Room A / B – 3rd Floor – Courthouse
MINUTES

The Clay County Board of Commissioners met in regular session with the following Commissioners present: Paul Krabbenhoft, Frank Gross, Jenny Mongeau, Kevin Campbell, and David Ebinger. Others present: County Administrator Stephen Larson, County Attorney Brian Melton, HR Director/Asst. Administrator Darren Brooke, and Administrative Assistant Sarah Hellem.

Call to Order

Commissioner Gross called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

Approval of Agenda

On motion by Commissioner Mongeau, seconded by Commissioner Ebinger, and unanimously carried, the Board approved the agenda with the movement of item 3 (Reappointment of Ezra Baer to Second Term on Planning Commission) to 9:00 a.m.

Renew Lease Agreement Between Clay County and Clay County HRA - Family Service Center

By consent the Board approved to renew the lease agreement between Clay County and the Clay County HRA.

Citizens to be Heard

There were no citizens to be heard.

Approval of Payment of Bills and Vouchers

On motion by Commissioner Krabbenhoft, seconded by Commissioner Ebinger, and unanimously carried, the Board approved the bills and vouchers totaling \$1,878,136 from 95 vendors. There were 66 warrants issued under \$2,000 (\$25,394) and the following 29 were over \$2,000.

Knife River Materials Inc.	\$ 913,598	Elan Financial Services	\$ 6,631
Construction Engineers, Inc.	\$ 302,521	MN Department of Transportation	\$ 5,656
Klein McCarthy & Co Ltd	\$ 282,038	City of Pelican Rapids	\$ 4,989
Turner Sand & Gravel Inc.	\$ 77,550	Green View Inc.	\$ 3,796
Wheels Powersports	\$ 49,317	Code 4 Services, Inc	\$ 3,522
Northern Improvement Co	\$ 39,110	Lutheran Social Service Of Mn	\$ 2,910
Network Cabling Services, Inc.	\$ 30,645	City Of Dilworth	\$ 2,896
Department Of Corrections	\$ 27,890	Office of MN IT Services	\$ 2,870
MN Counties Computer Coop	\$ 20,247	Liberty Tire Recycling, LLC	\$ 2,720
Road Machinery & Supplies Co.	\$ 17,069	BDT Mechanical, LLc	\$ 2,716
Vanguard Appraisals, Inc.	\$ 15,812	The Retrofit Companies Inc.	\$ 2,649
Turnkey Corrections	\$ 9,456	Frazee Vergas Public Schools	\$ 2,566

Stantec Consulting Services, Inc.	\$	9,208	TrueNorth Steel	\$	2,511
Braun Intertec Corp	\$	7,428	Fevig Oil Co	\$	2,377
			Moorhead Public Service	\$	2,029

Approval of Minutes from September 12, 2023

On motion by Commissioner Campbell, seconded by Commissioner Mongeau, and unanimously carried, the Board approved the minutes from September 12, 2023.

Request Approval to Advertise and Hire New Deputy Positions

Sheriff Mark Empting and Chief Deputy Sheriff Chris Martin requested approval to advertise and hire two new deputy positions for the Sheriff's Office. Sheriff Empting discussed when advertising at steps 1-5, it produces a low applicant pool. To be more competitive and attract more candidates, it would be helpful to advertise for steps 1-7 instead. A discussion with Mr. Larson would take place if an applicant was hired and worthy of a higher step.

Commissioner Campbell asked if this item went through the Personnel Issues Committee (PIC). Sheriff Empting stated this was brought to PIC on September 18, 2023.

Commissioner Mongeau stated this item was presented at PIC and throughout the conversation it was also made aware that there will be a wage study coming but to also recognize that the County needs to be creative in the recruitment process. Applicants are not guaranteed to start at step 7. Sheriff Empting stated the step would still be based on the applicant's experience.

Commissioner Campbell asked how current staff who are below a step 7 would feel if a new applicant came in at a higher step. Sheriff Empting stated that discussion has taken place and the current staff are aware of the current circumstances regarding recruitment and employment. Sheriff Empting has also spoke with Union Steward Deputy Fildes and he addressed his union regarding this issue.

Commissioner Ebinger asked if an applicant would need to have corresponding time and experience that would be equivalent to a higher step, if they are hired in at a step 6 or 7. Sheriff Empting stated that was correct.

Commissioner Mongeau made clarification that the motion should reflect advertising steps 1-7.

On motion by Ebinger, seconded by Krabbenhoft, and unanimously carried, the Board approved to advertise and hire for two new deputies advertising at steps 1-7 and for funds to come from the Public Safety funds provided by the legislature.

Request Approval to Replace an Eligibility Worker in the Financial Services Division in Social Services

Social Services Director Rhonda Porter requested approval to replace an Eligibility Worker in the Financial Services Division. This this position is assigned duties on the health care team. With the public health care unwinding activities and the caseload demands, reassigning the duties onto existing staff would not be doable. This is a budgeted position.

On motion by Commissioner Krabbenhoft, seconded by Commissioner Ebinger, and unanimously carried, the Board approved to replace the Eligibility Worker position in the Financial Services Division, with backfill if there is any internal interest.

Request Approval to Hire a FT Deputy Auditor - Motor Vehicle

County Auditor-Treasurer Lori Johnson requested approval to hire a full-time Deputy Auditor position for the Motor Vehicle Department with backfill if necessary.

Commissioner Campbell asked if this was for the most recent retirement. Ms. Johnson indicated it wasn't and that it was just a recent resignation, but that the Motor Vehicle Department will have another retirement happening in December. She will return to present that to the Board at a later date.

On motion by Commissioner Campbell, seconded by Commissioner Ebinger, and unanimously carried, the Board approved to hire a full-time Deputy Auditor with backfill for the Motor Vehicle Department.

Request Approval to Adjust a Part-Time Position to a Full-Time Position

Public Health Administrator Kathy McKay requested approval to adjust a part-time position to a full-time position. This is a case aide position that works in adult health programs. This position was budgeted as a 0.8 for 2023 and the hope is to move this position to a 1.0 for the last quarter of 2023. The salary expenses that were budgeted for 2023 were not utilized, therefore, it would be budget neutral if this was moved to a 1.0. This position is budgeted as a 1.0 FTE for 2024.

Commissioner Gross stated this was discussed at PIC and due to the shortage of nurses it was recommended to move this position to a 1.0 FTE for the remainder of 2023.

On motion by Commissioner Campbell, seconded by Commissioner Mongeau, and unanimously carried, the Board approved to move 0.8 Case Aide to 1.0 FTE for the last quarter of 2023.

Request Approval to Advertise for a Social Worker for the Adult Health Program

Ms. McKay discussed the difficulty surrounding recruitment for Registered Nurses and therefore looked into the possibility of utilizing a Social Worker in one program area. It's suggested to add this discipline to the advertising to see if there is a better chance of getting someone hired. This would alleviate two nurses who are in the assessment area.

Commissioner Gross asked what would happen if Registered Nurses would be hired down the road. Ms. McKay stated being able to recruit Registered Nurses would be the ideal scenario and by adding this discipline we'll hopefully see some recruitment.

Commissioner Kevin asked if the Social Worker would need certain credentials or an emphasis on this particular area. Ms. McKay stated the applicant would have to have a Bachelor's degree in Social Work but they are not required to be licensed. Commissioner Campbell asked if the types of assessments being conducted in Public Health are different than the assessments being conducted in the Social Services Department. Ms. McKay stated in this particular area, the assessments that will be conducted are very similar to those being done with Social Services. However, in Case Management, it's different because there are more medical pieces being dealt with.

Commissioner Ebinger questioned why the Social Worker wouldn't need to be licensed. Ms. McKay stated licensing is not required in the County sector.

Commissioner Gross asked if this would be a staffing addition. Ms. McKay stated there are three vacancies and this position would hopefully fill one of those.

Commissioner Campbell asked in terms of the demand for assessments in Public Health, does that exceed what one employee would do. Ms. McKay stated if we are unable to recruit further Registered Nurses, then hiring a second Social Worker would be considered. Commissioner Campbell clarified and stated the amount of work involved in assessments involves more than one full-time position. Ms. McKay agreed.

On motion by Commissioner Krabbenhoft, seconded by Commissioner Campbell, and unanimously carried, the Board approved to add Social Worker to the advertisement for open positions in Adult Health.

Reappointment of Ezra Baer to Second Term on Planning Commission

Planning & Zoning Director Matt Jacobson requested approval to reappoint Ezra Baer to a second term for the Planning Commission. This was recommended by the Planning Commission and Mr. Baer is currently the Chair of the Planning Commission and the Board of Adjustment and does a great job at running affective meetings.

Commissioner Mongeau stated that Mr. Baer is always well educated and prepared for the items that are brought forth at the Planning Commission meetings and is a great representative for the County, but particularly the Townships, which is a helpful viewpoint to have.

Mr. Baer stated if he gets reappointed, he plans to continue doing his best on the Board and to hopefully make citizens happy.

Commissioner Gross echoed Commissioner Mongeau's remarks and stated Mr. Baer does a great job at running those meetings.

Commissioner Campbell agreed with the other Commissioners comments and stated with his expanded knowledge, Mr. Baer is a key component of not only the Planning Commissioner but also with the Development Code updates. He has grasped this area of the County and is a good representative of rural Clay County, which is very important for that Board.

Commissioner Krabbenhoft thanked Mr. Baer for his efforts and stated this recommendation received a unanimous vote at the Planning Commission meeting.

On motion by Commissioner Mongeau, seconded by Commissioner Campbell, and unanimously carried, the Board approved to appoint Ezra Baer to a second three year term on the Planning Commission.

Committee Reports/County Administrator Update/Discussions

- Commissioner Krabbenhoft reported on meetings for the Planning Commission; Historical & Cultural Society; Greater Fargo Moorhead EDC; and Metro COG Policy Board.
- Commissioner Mongeau reported on meetings for Clay County Website Re-design; Metro COG Policy Board; and Lakeland Mental Health Center.
- Commissioner Campbell had no meetings to report on.
- Commissioner Ebinger reported on meetings for 403 Technical Workgroup for Emergency Communication Network; Greater Fargo Moorhead EDC; and Lake Agassiz Regional Library Board.

- Commissioner Gross reported on meetings for Partnership4Health CHB.
- County Administrator Stephen Larson reported on meetings with City of Fargo Administrator Mike Redlinger; MCCJPA pre-meeting; Risk Management; met with Sheriff Empting on a series of issues; and met with City of Moorhead staff Dr. Bob Zimmerman and Mike Rietz on a series of shared issues.

Mr. Larson stated with Flu season approaching, Public Health is providing flu shots and asked if the Board would be interested in receiving the vaccination at an upcoming meeting. Commissioner Campbell stated he would be interested in doing so at the October 10, 2023, Board meeting.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 9:25 a.m.

Frank Gross, Chair
County Board of Commissioners

Stephen Larson, County Administrator