

## **CLAY COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

**8:30 AM, TUESDAY, MAY 13, 2025**

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, Ezra Baer, Kevin Campbell, and David Ebinger. Others present: County Administrator Stephen Larson, County Attorney Brian Melton, Assistant County Administrator Darren Brooke, and Senior Administrative Assistant Sarah Hellem.

#### **Call to Order**

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

Commissioner Campbell stated Commissioner Mongeau is currently in St. Paul on this Board's behalf working on some important legislation.

#### **Approval of Agenda**

On motion by Commissioner Baer, seconded by Commissioner Ebinger, and unanimously carried, the Board approved the agenda.

#### **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 \$882,465 from 173 vendors. There were 133 warrants issued under \$2,000 (\$58,851) and the following 40 were over \$2,000.

|                                        |            |                                      |          |
|----------------------------------------|------------|--------------------------------------|----------|
| Internal Revenue Serv                  | \$ 270,266 | Sabin C Store                        | \$ 5,496 |
| Regents Of The Univ Of MN              | \$ 89,050  | LELS                                 | \$ 5,060 |
| Advanced Correctional Healthcare, Inc. | \$ 63,182  | Clay County Social Services          | \$ 4,914 |
| Red River Regional Dispatch Center     | \$ 43,293  | Solutions Behavioral Health PC       | \$ 4,721 |
| Moorhead Public Service                | \$ 41,986  | The Title Team                       | \$ 4,140 |
| Enterprise FM Trust                    | \$ 38,700  | Sanford Health                       | \$ 4,138 |
| Mn Dept Of Revenue                     | \$ 35,932  | Diamond Drugs Inc.                   | \$ 3,284 |
| VEBA Select Account                    | \$ 31,457  | River Valley Forensic Services, PA   | \$ 2,950 |
| Game One                               | \$ 28,332  | Psychlogics                          | \$ 2,710 |
| Trinity Services Group, Inc.           | \$ 20,887  | Wex Bank (fleet)                     | \$ 2,648 |
| NACO                                   | \$ 14,310  | Bank Forward                         | \$ 2,598 |
| Forum Communications Printing          | \$ 13,509  | Farmers Coop Oil Co                  | \$ 2,523 |
| Nitzkowski, Inc.                       | \$ 10,292  | Johnson/Rollie                       | \$ 2,500 |
| American Solutions For Business        | \$ 10,002  | Barnesville C-Store                  | \$ 2,432 |
| Rob Bentz Lock & Key, LLC              | \$ 9,678   | Pete's Gas & Service                 | \$ 2,351 |
| Department Of Corrections              | \$ 9,000   | State of MN Health Care Savings Plan | \$ 2,277 |
| Eckberg Lammers, P.C.                  | \$ 9,000   | Petro Serve USA-SW                   | \$ 2,271 |
| Hawley Township                        | \$ 7,500   | Clay County Landfill                 | \$ 2,248 |
| Nurse-Family Partnership Inc.          | \$ 6,880   | Galls, LLC - 5287110                 | \$ 2,204 |
| Petro Serve Usa-Hwy                    | \$ 6,778   | Mezclada                             | \$ 2,100 |

### **Request Approval of Addendum 2 to the Metro Street Crimes Unit Agreement of Joint Exercise of Peace Officer Duties**

Sheriff Mark Empting recognized that this week is National Police Week and it's a time to honor those who made the ultimate sacrifice. There will be a memorial service in Fargo, ND sometime this week.

Sheriff Empting requested approval of Addendum 2 to the Metro Street Crimes Unit Agreement of Joint Exercises of Peace Officer duties and stated this is an update to the current agreement that's in place. The previous agreement referred to allowing the Joint Exercise of Peace Officer Duties as mutual aid, which this team is not. The team is more proactive in nature and these updates will reflect that within the agreement along with current administrative signatures for all entities involved. This has been reviewed by the Clay County Attorney's Office for approval.

Commissioner Campbell asked if the members of this agreement remain the same. Sheriff Empting confirmed and stated it consists of Fargo, Moorhead, West Fargo, Cass County, Clay County and the U.S. Marshals.

On motion by Commissioner Ebinger, seconded by Commissioner Baer, and unanimously carried, the Board approved addendum 2 to the Metro Street Crimes Unit Agreement of Joint Exercise of Peace Officer Duties.

### **Request Approval to Order 10 Vehicles from Enterprise Leasing for 2026**

Sheriff Empting requested approval to order 10 vehicles from Enterprise Leasing for 2026 and stated 5 of these vehicles would be a new lease from Enterprise Leasing and the other 5 would be replacing and renewing current leases from Enterprise Leasing.

Sheriff Empting stated the available internal services funds are \$253,914.61 and the estimate through Enterprise is \$136,332.69. Discussion ensued regarding the price comparison from 2024 to 2025.

Commissioner Campbell asked if the numbers provided were estimates or actual quotes. Sheriff Empting these are estimated numbers and are less than what they were last year. Commissioner Campbell asked if the proceeds from the sale of the 5 vehicles would go back into the internal service fund. Sheriff Empting stated that is correct. Commissioner Campbell discussed the fit-up cost and asked any equipment would be transferred to the new leases. Sheriff Empting stated we try to use as much equipment as possible.

Discussion ensued regarding the Internal Service Fund (ISF).

Commissioner Ebinger asked what the cost was if it wouldn't be a full equipment transfer. Sheriff Empting stated if it's not a complete transfer it would be anywhere between \$15,000 to \$18,000. Cameras, radios, radar and things of that nature can usually be transferred, but pieces such as the push bumpers and cages are vehicle specific.

Commissioner Campbell discussed the 3 year leasing of vehicles and asked if that becomes a line item within the budget, opposed to a dollar amount that's set aside for internal service fund. Mr. Larson stated that was correct. When the County trades in leased vehicles, if there's equity in that lease, those funds do go back into Internal Service. Commissioner Campbell stated there's no additional dollars in the budget for ISF, other than for equipment. Mr. Larson

confirmed that was correct.

Commissioner Baer asked if this would take all the Sheriff's vehicles to a leasing status. Sheriff Empting indicated it wasn't all the vehicles yet, but a good majority will be leased.

Commissioner Krabbenhoft asked if the Sheriff had seen any savings throughout the years while utilizing the leasing process. Sheriff Empting stated there is a slight savings in ISF. Commissioner Krabbenhoft discussed how Tahoes were the desired vehicle in the past and asked if the Sheriff was receiving the desired product. Sheriff Empting stated Tahoes are starting to get easier to acquire, however, the Sheriff's Office is still 5 vehicles to come in this year.

On motion by Commissioner Ebinger, seconded by Commissioner Krabbenhoft, and unanimously carried, the Board approved the purchase of 10 vehicles from Enterprise Leasing for 2026 for the Sheriff's Office and for 5 vehicles to be sold at auction.

Mr. Larson stated on an annual basis the Sheriff's Office, from a training perspective, has a compliance review from Minnesota Post Board, and this week, a notification was received that the Sheriff's Office passed their review. Mr. Larson stated that Clay County is fortunate to have skilled professional men and women in the Sheriff's Office and this shows the great work that they do.

### **Request Approval of the Yearly Supply Bids**

County Engineer Justin Sorum requested approval of the Yearly supply bids which were opened on May 7, 2025, for Corrugated Metal Culverts, Furnishing Bituminous Asphalt, Rental of Construction Equipment.

Mr. Sorum and Commissioner Campbell provided further details as to why all bids are approved, and discussed rented equipment.

Commissioner Baer asked if these are approved for a full calendar year. Mr. Sorum stated that was correct.

On motion by Commissioner Baer, seconded by Commissioner Ebinger, and unanimously carried, the Board approved the yearly supply bids as presented in the packet.

### **Request Approval of Gravel Bids**

Mr. Sorum requested approval of the gravel bids and stated bids were opened for annual graveling, on May 7, 2025. Two bids were received and it's recommended to move forward with the bid from Turner Sand and Gravel for townships 1-30.

Mr. Sorum stated there were 3 Townships, Highland Grove, Hawley, and Tansem, that tried to go on the bid with the County, but Turner Sand and Gravel didn't bid on any of those, so it's all County work on this contract. Commissioner Campbell asked if the Townships are on their own for their own bids. Mr. Sorum stated that was correct.

On motion by Commissioner Krabbenhoft, seconded by Commissioner Baer, and unanimously carried, the Board approved the gravel bid from Turner Sand and Gravel for Townships 1-30.

### **Request Approval to Purchase Four (4) Pickups for the Highway Department**

Mr. Sorum requested approval to purchase 4 pickups for the Highway Department from Nelson Auto Center. The 3 ½ ton pickups (Ford) are utilized by the Engineering Technicians, and the ¾ ton (GMC) is used by our Road Foreman. All 4 existing pickups will be handed down to the maintenance department, and at a later date.

Mr. Sorum stated once it's confirmed that these pickups will be received, he will come back to the Board asking approval to sell some of the older 2-wheel drive pickups that the Highway Department currently has.

Commissioner Campbell asked Mr. Sorum to discuss the pricing in further detail. Mr. Sorum stated unit 105, 107, and 119 are the ½ ton pickups and the cooperative purchasing price with tax would be \$52,913.81 each. And unit 114 is the ¾ ton pickup and the cooperative purchase price with tax would be \$59,445.16. The Internal Service Fund (ISF) is short by \$578.28, with tax, but that will be offset after the other vehicles are sold, and that money will go back into the ISF.

Discussion ensued regarding when it's determined to purchase new vehicles, the upgrade from an XL to an XLT, and leasing versus purchasing.

Commissioner Baer asked how it was determined to go through Nelson Auto Center. Mr. Sorum stated it's because Nelson Auto Center offers cooperative purchasing.

On motion by Commissioner Krabbenhoft, seconded by Commissioner Ebinger, and unanimously carried, the Board approved the purchase of 4 pickups from Nelson Auto Center. \$52,913.81 each for Units 105, 107, 119, and \$59,445.16 for Unit 114.

### **Risk Management and MCIT Presentation**

Facilities Director Joe Olson presented the Risk Management Policy and discussed the purpose, the history, categories of risk management, the Clay County Administrators Group, and quarterly risk assessments.

MCIT Risk Management Consultant, Joe Cieminski provided the board a presentation on the Minnesota Counties Intergovernmental Trust (MCIT) and discussed benefits from risk sharing pool, how Commissioners make a difference, mitigating claims, and moderate reinsurance costs and premiums.

Commissioner Campbell asked if those reinsurance rates are based on what might be happening throughout the country versus claims that are specific to County Governments in Minnesota. Mr. Cieminski stated reinsurance is purchased from the private market and it is affected by what's going on in the world overall.

Mr. Cieminski continued, discussing how total insured values continues to climb, enhanced coverage in 2025, rates anticipate expenses, dividends reflects actual experience and this year it's based on work compensation, cyber claims increases 2 years in a row, how workers' compensation claims affect county's contribution, claims from 2020 - 2024, and valuable advice, resources and programs that are available.

Commissioner Krabbenhoft asked if claims correlate to the growth of employees. Mr. Cieminski

stated in terms of workers' compensation, yes it can.

### **West Central Initiative Update**

West Central Initiative (WCI) Director of Development Rebecca Lynn Peterson and Director of Business & Economic Development Greg Wagner presented an update on their efforts throughout the community/region.

Ms. Peterson discussed the programs that WCI provide, loans distributed since 1986, grants distributed since 1986, the number of jobs created or retained and business impacted since 1986, and a brief overview of the annual report.

Mr. Wagner discussed the economic development of WCI including lending and economic development programs, Main Street Economic Revitalization Program, Promise Act Program, loans to Clay County businesses, partnerships, and the comprehensive economic development strategy.

Commissioner Krabbenhoft discussed his appreciation for the work WCI does and that he's glad to be a part of it.

Commissioner Campbell discussed how Mr. Wagner has been involved in the West Central Regional Water District (WCRWD) and how having clean water is for all residents is important and critical.

### **Request Approval to Fill Part-Time Victim/Witness Coordinator Position**

County Attorney Brian Melton requested approval to fill a part-time Victim/Witness Coordinator Position due to a recent resignation and stated this is a budgeted position.

On motion by Commissioner Ebinger, seconded by Commissioner Baer, and unanimously carried, the Board approved to fill the part-time Victim/Witness Coordinator position.

### **Request Approval of the 2026 Budget Timeline**

Mr. Larson requested approval of the 2026 Budget Timeline and stated this timeline is established each May for the upcoming budget cycle.

|   |                                                                                               |                                                           |
|---|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | Preliminary budget discussions with the County Board. Set budget parameters.                  | Tuesday, May 13, 2025                                     |
| 2 | Budget sheets provided to Departments by the Auditor's Office:                                | Friday, May 23, 2025                                      |
| 3 | Deadline to turn in budget requests to the Auditor's Office:                                  | Friday, June 13, 2025                                     |
| 4 | Budget compiled and forwarded to the County Administrator's Office:                           | By Thursday, July 3, 2025                                 |
| 5 | Presentations to the County Board. Review of budget with individual departments, as necessary | July/August                                               |
| 6 | Set Preliminary Levy Per Statute:<br>*On or Before September 30 <sup>th</sup> of each year    | September 30, 2025                                        |
|   | County Board Action by:                                                                       | Tuesday, September 23, 2025                               |
| 7 | Public Meeting Regarding Budget Information<br>Truth in Taxation                              | Tuesday, December 2, 2025, 5:00 p.m.<br>(TNT – 6:00 p.m.) |
| 8 | Adoption of Final Levy and Year 2026 Budget                                                   | Tuesday, December 16, 2025                                |

Commissioner Campbell asked the Board to reserve September 30, 2025, at 8:30 a.m. in the event that there needs to be another meeting.

On motion by Commissioner Krabbenhoft, seconded by Commissioner Ebinger, and

unanimously carried, the Board approved the 2026 budget timeline.

## **BREAK**

The Board took a break from 9:45 a.m. to 9:50 a.m.

## **Clay County Budget Update**

Mr. Larson provided the Board with a budget updated and discussed the ½ Cent Sales Tax update, summary of revenues and expenditures from 2024, the 2024 fund balance comparison, and the 2025 year to date summary of revenues and expenditures.

Discussion ensued regarding restricted use of the sales tax funds, investing excess sales tax funds, ARPA funds, debt retirement for Law Enforcement Officers, Public Health enterprise fund, enterprise funds, and investments and the general fund.

Assistant County Administrator Darren Brooke discussed the Bargaining Units and contract negotiations will begin in June/July.

Discussion ensued regarding the unknown for health insurance/benefits, and Paid Family Medical Leave.

## **Committee Reports/County Administrator Update/Discussions**

- Commissioner Baer reported on meetings for Clay County Collaborative; and Beyond the Yellow Ribbon.
- Commissioner Ebinger reported on meetings for met with Mike Rietz, Dan Mahli, Shelly Carlson, Commissioner Nelson (Becker County) Commissioner Jacobson (Norman County) regarding a lease agreement for LARL space; and Beyond the Yellow Ribbon.
- Commissioner Krabbenhoft reported on meetings for Clay County Collaborative; SWCD; AMC Legislative update; and BRRWD.
- Commissioner Campbell reported on meetings for Highway Tracking.
- County Administrator Stephen Larson reported on meetings for Highway Tracking; met with administrative groups from Clay County on rural cities and dispatch; met with Dan Mahli, Derrik LaPoint, and Peyton Mastera regarding the casino project; spoke Niel Gulsvig from Cass County and Josh Stevenson from Cass County (MN) regarding the tribe in their area and their procedures and operation with the tribe; met with Robert Wilson and Dan Mahli regarding budget discussions and legislative impacts; met with Mark Sloan and Joe Olson on a capital planning document; AMC Legislative update; AMC District 4 meeting will be on June 6, 2025, in Fergus Falls; Clay County is currently under a red flag warning; and Clay County, the City of Moorhead, and Downtown Moorhead Inc. received an award for Outstanding Achievement in Economic Development for the work being done on DG Fuels by the Trade & Industry Development magazine.
- Assistant County Administrator Darren Brooke reported on meetings for met with Technology Services and HR regarding personnel action forms; AMC Legislative update; met with Josh Heggem regarding negotiations discussions; and meeting with HR regarding personnel issues.

**Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 11:06

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Kevin Campbell, Chair  
County Board of Commissioners

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Stephen Larson, County Administrator