

CLAY COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

8:30 AM, TUESDAY, JULY 15, 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, Jenny Mongeau, 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.

Approval of Agenda

Commissioner Campbell mentioned that County Administrator Stephen Larson would like to make a comment on the consent agenda item regarding Riparian Aid Funds.

Mr. Larson stated earlier this year the Board took a look at the Riparian Aid Funds and designated those dollars to specific categories for funding. Throughout that discussion, it was determined that the Board would be notified if these funds were spent. Currently two Commissioners sit on this committee and moving forward the plan would be to reach out to them to see if they would support the utilization of funds based on the criteria that the Board has established. If they did approve of the funding, rather than bringing the committee together and paying per diem, this would be brought through the consent agenda. This would allow for documentation on which category the funds are being spent on.

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

Request Approval to Utilize Riparian Aid Funds for Weed Control

By consent, the Board approved to utilize \$5,040.59 in Riparian Aid Funds for a Weed Control Project - County-Owned Land Maintenance

Donation from Jon Kverno to the Sheriff's Office K9 Program

By consent, the Board approved the donation from Jon Kverno to the Sheriff's Office K9 Program in the amount of \$15.00.

Commissioner Campbell recognized the donation and stated that the contributions to the K9 program are always appreciated.

Minnesota Lawful Gambling LG220 Application for Exempt Permit - Clay County Pheasants Forever

By consent, the Board approved the Minnesota Lawful Gambling LG220 Application for Exempt Permit - Clay County Pheasants Forever.

Citizens to be Heard

There were no citizens to be heard.

Approval of Payment of Bills and Vouchers

On motion by Commissioner Mongeau, seconded by Commissioner Krabbenhoft, and unanimously carried, the Board approved the bills and vouchers totaling \$841,837 from 120 vendors. There were 85 warrants issued under \$2,000 (\$40,795) and the following 35 were over \$2,000.

Department Of Corrections	\$ 255,619	Advantage Court Reporting, LLC	\$ 4,992
Hough, Inc	\$ 113,085	Trinity Services Group, Inc.	\$ 4,983
Regents Of The Univ Of MN	\$ 69,780	Klein Mccarthy & Co Ltd	\$ 4,307
Turner Sand & Gravel Inc.	\$ 64,360	Sabin C Store	\$ 4,126
Moorhead Public Service	\$ 56,909	MN Counties Intergovernmental Trust	\$ 4,101
Red River Regional Dispatch Center	\$ 43,293	Medical Pharmacy (PH)	\$ 3,973
Enterprise FM Trust	\$ 37,458	Farmers Coop Oil Co	\$ 3,951
Advanced Striping & Sealcoating, Inc.	\$ 22,105	Fitzgerald Construction Inc.	\$ 3,892
City Of Fargo	\$ 13,230	All Season's Lawncare	\$ 3,700
Nitzkowski, Inc.	\$ 8,365	Keller Diesel Service	\$ 3,543
High Point Networks, LLC	\$ 8,226	Clay Trail Alliance	\$ 3,186
Pomp's Tire Service, Inc.	\$ 7,859	Nereson Automotive Inc.	\$ 2,991
Verizon-386550144	\$ 7,364	Pete's Gas & Service	\$ 2,800
Petro Serve Usa-Hwy	\$ 7,162	Clay County Sheriff	\$ 2,500
Amazon Capital Services	\$ 7,092	Barnesville C-Store	\$ 2,498
Forum Communications Printing	\$ 6,841	Petro Serve USA-SW	\$ 2,143
Information Systems Corp	\$ 6,555	Tricorne Audio, Inc.	\$ 2,012
RTVision Inc.	\$ 6,027		

Approval of Minutes from July 1, 2025

On motion by Commissioner Baer, seconded by Commissioner Ebinger, and unanimously carried, the Board approved the minutes from July 1, 2025.

Request Approval to Hire a Full-Time Deputy Sheriff Due to a Resignation

Sheriff Mark Empting requested approval to hire a full-time Deputy Sheriff due to a recent resignation. The current assignment for the departing deputy is the School Resource Officer for the Ulen-Hitterdal School District. This position would be open to current employees and then the new deputy would be moved into the position that is open after filling the School Resource Deputy role with current staff.

On motion by Commissioner Ebinger, seconded by Commissioner Baer, and unanimously carried, the Board approved to hire a full-time Deputy Sheriff.

Request Approval of the Purchase of Cradlepoints for the Sheriff's Office

Sheriff Empting requested approval to purchase Cradlepoints for the Sheriff's Office. Cradlepoints is equipment for the squad cars, which will increase efficiency for the Sheriff's Office, the County Attorney's Office, Technology Services, and Court Administration.

Cradlepoints is a NetCloud mobile router for the squad car, which allows videos to be uploaded from anywhere within the County. By doing this, deputies will not need to come back to the Law Enforcement Center to ensure their videos are uploaded in the system at the end of their shift. The video will automatically be uploaded into the system once the video is stopped, and will allow office staff to have the video immediately in the morning for the County Attorney's Office or Court Administration. It will also increase the internet speed in patrol units which will better

serve the deputies in the rural area. If this transition is made, it could eliminate the Verizon SIM cards that are currently in the patrol unit computers.

Sheriff Empting stated the cost to upfit each squad car is \$2,231.12, resulting in a total cost of \$51,315.76. No additional funds are being requested as there's approximately \$74,251 available due to staff turnover. And with the removal of the Verizon SIM cards, there is a potential savings of roughly \$12,000.

Chief Deputy Chris Martin discussed the net savings for the 2025 fiscal year resulting in almost 75,000.00, which is well above the amount needed to cover the costs of this equipment for the next 5 years. Commissioner Campbell asked if there was an advantage in paying for the 5 years in advance. Sheriff Empting stated that it was the only option available.

Technology Services Director, Rory Schmitz, stated that he spoke with other counties who currently use Cradlepoints and received positive feedback.

On motion by Commissioner Mongeau, seconded by Commissioner Baer, and unanimously carried, the Board approved the purchase of Cradlepoints for the Sheriff's Office.

Request Approval to Hire Motor Grader Operator

County Engineer Justin Sorum requested approval to hire a Motor Grader Operator for the Highway Department due to a recent resignation. This is a budgeted position and per union policy this position will have to be posted internally for 5 days.

On motion by Commissioner Krabbenhoft, seconded by Commissioner Baer, and unanimously carried, the Board approved to hire a Motor Grader Operator for the Highway Department, with backfill.

Request Approval to Replace Registered Nurse Position in Public Health

Public Health Administrator Kathy McKay requested approval to replace a Registered Nurse position in Public Health, and stated this is a position in the Adult Health programs where assessments and case management services are provided under contract with the Health Plans.

Commissioner Baer asked how many open nursing positions there were for Public Health. Ms. McKay stated with this request, there are 6 nursing positions that need to be filled.

Commissioner Campbell asked about hiring LPNs. Ms. McKay stated LPNs cannot be used in the Adult Health programs area.

On motion by Commissioner Baer, seconded by Commissioner Ebinger, and carried, with one descending vote (Commissioner Mongeau), the Board approved to advertise and hire a full-time Registered Nurse position for Public Health

Budget Presentation - Barnesville Ambulance

Barnesville Ambulance Director Averil Whiteford provided the Board with a presentation and presented the 2026 budget request for the Barnesville Ambulance.

Ms. Whiteford discussed the establishment of the Barnesville Ambulance, volunteer Emergency

Medical Technician (EMT), the Medical Director, staff, community education provided, 24/7 911 response and advance life support (ALS) availability, peer support offerings, local special events covered, continuing education services, upkeep of emergency sirens, mutual aid to Sanford and Pelican Rapids Ambulance, the primary service area, and calls for service by area.

Discussion ensued regarding paid positions.

Commissioner Baer asked if the Barnesville Ambulance covers anything in Otter Tail County. Ms. Whiteford stated there is nothing official that the Barnesville Ambulance covers in Otter Tail County but potentially a ½ mile area closer to Rothsay, MN. Commissioner Mongeau asked how that could be seeing that the ambulance helps with Pelican Rapids rescue. Ms. Whiteford stated that it's only if they request help. This is set by the state, and for the primary service areas (PSA), ambulance services need to have mutual aid agreements with one another that allow other ambulance services into your territory. Ms. Whiteford provided scenarios as to what this could look like. Commissioner Mongeau asked if there was any discussion with Sanford on realignment of the PSA, giving the response periods that were discussed. Ms. Whiteford stated there have been discussions with Sanford regarding realignment which they have no interest in due to the increased costs. Commissioner Mongeau asked if there was a reimbursement rate in the event that Sanford asked for help in coverage. Ms. Whiteford stated there is a reimbursement rate only if you were to do an intercept. If an ambulance just covers someone's call, that ambulance would get paid out for that call entirely and have to do the billing.

Commissioner Baer asked how many of the total number of calls from the previous year were transported to a hospital. Ms. Whiteford stated roughly 270 of the calls were transported. There are a variety of reasons for not transporting people to the hospital, some of which include refusal and self-transporting or the patient no longer needing the care. The Barnesville Ambulance does a lot of on-scene care which doesn't get reimbursed. Ms. Whiteford stated ambulances are considered transportation services, not medical services. Therefore, the ambulance is not able to bill for medical services rendered, and can almost only bill for transportation, which doesn't cover the more expensive calls, such as diabetic emergencies.

Discussion ensued regarding billing, funding, legislation, and discounted medical supplies.

Ms. Whiteford further discussed funding received in 2024 and 2025 from the City of Barnesville, Clay County, and Townships, the number of calls based on the day of the week, the top 5 reasons for medical intervention in 2024, most common treatments, and the financials.

Discussion ensued regarding appropriated funds by entity, the struggle to find volunteers, the difference in funding between Sanford Ambulance and Barnesville Ambulance, dispatch services, and funding.

The Board thanked Ms. Whiteford for her presentation and extended their appreciation for the partnership with the Barnesville Ambulance.

Budget Presentation - Clay Soil & Water Conservation District

Clay Soil & Water District Manager Kevin Kassenborg presented the Clay Soil & Water Conservation Districts (SWCD) 2026 budget and discussed expenses including salaries, health insurance, annual dues, office expenses, employee training, and new purchase of no-till drill. Revenues include SWCD Aid, BWSR grants, Aquatic Invasive Species funds, well monitoring

program, feedlot matching funds, tree program and the no-till drill program. Overall, looking at a 2.3% increase from the 2025 budget.

Discussion ensued regarding reserves.

Budget Presentation - Assessor's Office

County Assessor Jill Murray presented the Assessor's Office 2026 budget and discussed revenues include fee billing to townships & cities. Expenditures include staffing, steps, licensure, continuing education, notice of valuation statements, other professional services, printing and publishing, office supplies, other professional services, and CPI insert to envelope, tax court petitions filed on 2024 assessment.

Discussion ensued regarding tax court filings, and education for residents when changes come to how ag land is assessed.

BREAK

The Board took a break from 10:02 a.m. to 10:09 a.m.

Budget Presentation - Facilities Department

Facilities Director Joe Olson presented the Facilities Department 2026 budget and stated his budget consists for the Courthouse budget which covers the buildings/grounds/maintenance & operations of the Courthouse, Law Enforcement Center (LEC), Correctional Facility, Department of Motor Vehicle (DMV), Storage Facility, Government Center, Withdrawal Management/Detox Facility (WMDF), and Safety. And the Family Service Center (FSC) Operating budget, which includes the central services mail room, Building Manager, and building, grounds & maintenance.

Mr. Olson discussed Courthouse budget revenues including miscellaneous refunds for the Courthouse and miscellaneous refunds for the WMDF. Expenditures include salaries regular, other professional services, awn supplies, building repair & maintenance, and equipment repair & maintenance for the LEC.

Mr. Olson stated not much will change in regard to the FSC operating budget.

Discussion ensued regarding Fund 19, and depreciation.

Presentation of Local Impacts of Federal Reforms to SNAP and Medical Assistance (MA)

Social Services Director Quinn Jaeger presented the local impacts of Federal Reforms to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Medical Assistance/Medicaid (MA).

Mr. Jaeger discussed the context and background of the H.R. 1 – The “Big Beautiful Bill”, overview of federal reforms including reduced services, higher local administrative costs, increase in denied services, and increased workload for county staff, and implementation changes. Who Medicaid serves was discussed and the percentage of those in Clay County, MA proposed service changes including new work requirements, and additional eligibility renewals.

Commissioner Campbell asked if annual eligibility renewals are as time sensitive as the initial application. Financial Assistance Supervisor Mikala Wodarek stated the applications have a longer timeline for processing, whereas renewals need to be done by the end of the month or

the case will close, therefore, renewals are more time sensitive. The work involved for processing an application and processing a renewal are very similar, but is dependent on how many changes an individual has during the renewal process.

Mr. Jaeger further discussed MA proposed fiscal impact including federal reductions, and the impact and administrative burden for Clay County, investment in health care infrastructure,

Discussion ensued regarding the timeline requirements, and Medicaid services and long-term care, and assets.

Mr. Jaeger continued discussing the proposed service changes to SNAP, proposed fiscal impact to SNAP, SNAP payment error rates (PER) cost share.

Discussion ensued regarding error rates.

Mr. Jaeger stated what this bill means for Clay County is a significant loss in federal funding, unfunded mandates, risk to local health infrastructure, and counties cannot opt out.

Clay County 2026 Budget Update

Mr. Larson and County Auditor-Treasurer Lori Johnson provided the board with an update on the 2026 budget, and discussed the summary of 2026 Tax Levy by Funds, new requests, and fund balance comparison.

Discussion ensued regarding the Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA), insurance, fund balance, and new construction.

Commissioner Mongeau discussed looking at reducing or cutting appropriations to external agency requests.

Committee Reports/County Administrator Update/Discussions

- Commissioner Ebinger reported on meetings for RRRDC Prep meeting; NW Emergency Communication Board; Emergency Services Dispatch; Beyond the Yellow Ribbon; and Clay County Fair - Government Day.
- Commissioner Krabbenhoft reported on meetings for Clay SWCD; and BRRWD.
- Commissioner Mongeau reported on meetings for Resource Recovery Center; AMC Research Committee; and Clay County Fair - Government Day.
- Commissioner Baer reported on meetings for Wild Rice Watershed District; Clay SWCD; Clay County Fair - Government Day; and Morken Township Picnic.
- Commissioner Campbell reported on meetings for RRRDC Prep meeting; Resource Recovery Center; Small Cities meeting regarding Dispatch Fees; and Lakes Country Service Coop.
- County Administrator Stephen Larson reported on meetings for RRRDC Prep meeting; Management; Pre-Budget meeting for the Attorney's Office; Resource Recovery Center meeting; Small Cities meeting regarding Dispatch Fees; Pre-Budget meeting for WCRJD; Clay County Fair - Government Day; Pre-Budget meeting for Corrections; met with Anna Moore on a series of HR issues; reminder, the Clay County EDC/EDA meeting is this afternoon from 1-2:30 p.m. and the Chamber Legislative Wrap-Up is on Thursday, July 17, 2025, from 4:30-5:30 p.m. at the LEC.

- Assistant County Administrator Darren Brooke reported meetings for Judicial Security Law; County Management; Pre-Budget meeting for the Attorney's Office; Resource Recovery Center meeting; met with Anna Moore regarding Benefits; met with Steve Larson and Kimberly Savageau regarding online sales credit cards; met with Rory Schmitz regarding hosting data for Partnership4Helath; Union costing sheets; Pre-Budget meeting for Corrections; MnCCC; MetLife demo on Paid Family Medical Leave; and on Thursday, July 17th have the first Union Negotiations for Highway and Correctional Sergeants.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 11:31 a.m.

Kevin Campbell, Chair
County Board of Commissioners

Stephen Larson, County Administrator