

CLAY COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
8:30 AM, TUESDAY, AUGUST 12, 2025
Meeting Room A / B – 3rd Floor – Courthouse
MINUTES

The Clay County Board of Commissioners met in regular session with the following Commissioners present: 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

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 Mongeau, seconded by Commissioner Ebinger, and unanimously carried, the Board approved the bills and vouchers totaling \$999,375 from 143 vendors. There were 100 warrants issued under \$2,000 (\$44,528) and the following 43 were over \$2,000.

Otter Tail Public Health	\$ 177,515	Sabin C Store	\$ 5,256
Becker County Public Health	\$ 101,120	Wilkin Co Public Health	\$ 4,723
		Bert's Truck Equip of Moorhead,	
Clay Co Public Health	\$ 97,284	Inc.	\$ 4,678
Nelson Auto Center	\$ 96,577	Farmers Coop Oil Co	\$ 4,120
Moorhead Public Service	\$ 70,944	Ott's Quality Painting Inc.	\$ 3,709
Advanced Correctional Healthcare,			
Inc.	\$ 66,341	Butler Machinery Co	\$ 3,570
Ulteig Operations, LLC	\$ 52,022	Innovative Office Solutions, LLC	\$ 3,482
Red River Regional Dispatch Center	\$ 43,293	JT Lawn Service	\$ 3,435
Turner Sand & Gravel Inc.	\$ 38,886	Rob Bentz Lock & Key, LLC	\$ 3,361
Mn State Auditor	\$ 26,691	McKesson Medical Surgical	\$ 3,289
City Of Dilworth	\$ 18,405	Pemberton Law, P.L.L.P.	\$ 3,237
Olympic Sales Inc	\$ 17,400	Deputy Registrar #15	\$ 2,857
Johnson Feed, Inc.	\$ 13,971	Johnson's Auto Repair LLC	\$ 2,838
Braun Intertec Corp	\$ 10,946	Barnesville C-Store	\$ 2,815
MN Counties Computer Coop	\$ 8,069	Dakota Fence, Inc.	\$ 2,765
Code 4 Services, Inc	\$ 7,762	Dean's Bulk Service	\$ 2,328
Nitzkowski, Inc.	\$ 7,362	General Equipment & Supplies Inc.	\$ 2,309
Petro Serve Usa-Hwy	\$ 7,285	Hood Cleaners	\$ 2,200
Halvorson/Derrick	\$ 6,950	Pete's Gas & Service	\$ 2,138
Fuchs Sanitation Inc	\$ 6,834	All Season's Lawncare	\$ 2,100
ANJAAM HOLDINGS, LLC	\$ 6,516	River Valley Forensic Services, PA	\$ 2,050
Axon Enterprises, Inc.	\$ 5,400		

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

Sheriff Mark Empting requested approval to hire a full-time Deputy due to a recent resignation.

This will reflect a savings of \$21,740 to the current 2025 budget, which will in turn decrease the 2026 budget as well.

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

Budget Presentation - Lake Agassiz Regional Library

Lake Agassiz Regional Library Executive Director, Liz Lynch, presented the 2026 budget for the Lake Agassiz Regional Library (LARL). LARL provides library services in seven counties with 22 locations within those counties.

Ms. Lynch discussed the strategic planning process that is completed ever 3 to 5 years, the number of items that were checked out in the past 6 months, e-book check outs, the Clay County locations of Hawley, Barnesville, and Ulen, the construction of the new Moorhead Public Library, the Downtown Moorhead Revitalization Project, and the Institute of Museum & Library Services (IMLS).

Ms. Lynch stated the LARL Board has tried to keep signatory increase requests reasonable and steady over the years. However, unfortunately this has resulted in an environment where frontline staff have not been paid a living wage, and new staff have been difficult to attract. The LARL Board is aware of this, and they have been working on increasing wages.

Commissioner Baer asked how many employees there were across the region. Ms. Lynch stated there are about 80 employees on the payroll, but most of them are not full time. Commissioner Baer asked for the dollar amount that is sitting in reserves. Ms. Lynch stated she didn't have that information at this time, and would provide it at a later date.

Commissioner Campbell asked when the Moorhead Library location will move to the new location. Ms. Lynch stated the hope is to move in the Spring of 2026. Commissioner Campbell asked how that would impact LARL's budget. Ms. Lynch stated LARL is currently in negotiations with the City of Moorhead for a lease agreement for the LARL Headquarters in hopes to be co-located with the Moorhead Public Library within that facility. There would be an increase in the rent for the LARL Headquarters, and there is no rent for the library itself, as it's the city's responsibility. Discussion ensued regarding square footage for the LARL Headquarters.

Lakes & Prairies Community Action Partnership (CAPLP) 2024 Annual Report and 2026 Budget Presentation

Lakes & Prairies Community Action Partnership (CAPLP) Executive Director Lori Schwartz and Economic Empowerment Director Robin Christianson presented the CAPLP annual report for 2024 and the CAPLP budget presentation for 2026.

Ms. Schwartz discussed the Community Assessment Summary, and the 2024 annual report including the four main divisions of CAPLP including Head Start, Child Care Connections, Housing, and Economic Empowerment. Ms. Schwartz further discussed the Community Services Block grant

Ms. Christianson discussed aging services Aging Services include nutrition assistance program for seniors, application assistance & resource navigation, technology/digital literacy help, group workcamp home repair project, age friendly Moorhead initiative, free federal & state income tax

filing, and health insurance counseling. The Rural Routes Transportation Services was discussed including shuttle services, grant funding, restorative practices, marketing, feedback, the number of rides provided from 2022 to current, and partnering with Rural Enrichment and Counseling Headquarters (REACH) in Hawley, MN.

Commissioner Campbell extended his appreciation to CAPLP for providing transportation from the Walmart Bus stop the Clay County DMV and Withdrawal Management/Detox Facility.

Commissioner Campbell asked what the overall percentage increase would be for the aging services request. Ms. Christianson stated that would be a 5% increase which would be used to cover a Cost-of-Living adjustment (COLA), increases to health and dental insurance, and potential merit for staff.

Discussion ensued regarding the rural routes, and the free federal & state income tax filing.

Budget Presentation - Downtown Moorhead Inc.

Downtown Moorhead Inc President/CEO Derrick LaPoint presented the Downtown Moorhead Inc (DMI) budget for 2026 and discussed the establishment of the quarterly Economic Development Committee meetings, Mccara Industrial Park, the Sustainable Aviation Fuel project by DG Fuels, the collaboration between Clay County, City of Dilworth, and the City of Moorhead regarding White Earth Nation Casino, the Downtown Moorhead Revitalization project, border city legislation, and border city challenges.

Commissioner Campbell discussed border city legislation and asked if Mr. LaPoint could talk about this issue at the next Economic Development meeting.

Commissioner Mongeau praised Mr. LaPoint for his efforts at the Capitol this year and for being a phenomenal champion for not only the City of Moorhead, but for Clay County as well.

Discussion ensued regarding the Downtown Moorhead Revitalization project.

BREAK

The Board took a break from 9:45 a.m. to 9:54 a.m.

Budget Presentation - Public Health

Public Health Administrator Kathy McKay, and Financial Manager Brandon Nelson presented the Public Health budget for 2026 and discussed administration, grant funding, Minnesota Department of Health Infrastructure grant, immunization, Flu and disease prevention and control, emergency preparedness, EMS system management, COVID-19 funding, Food Pool and Lodging, Environment services in Wilkin, and Otter Tail counties, onsite sewage treatment systems, demolition landfill inspections, Public Health Clinic, family home visit, Women Infant and Children (WIC), school health, health promotions, tobacco license, Statewide Health Improvement Partnership, child & teen checkup, refugee health, detox & withdrawal management, opioid settlement, case aide, case management, special needs basic care (SNBC), and MN Choices.

Discussion ensued regarding the Community Health Board (CHB) Partnership4Health, COVID-19 funding, environment services provided in Wilkin County, contracts with the school districts for school health, and opioid funding/opioid settlements.

Committee Reports/County Administrator Update/Discussions

- Commissioner Ebinger reported on meetings for Night to Unite Burger Cook Off; and Red River re-route event.
- Commissioner Mongeau reported on meetings for Highway Tracking; met with Stephen Larson, Commissioner Baer, and Hawley Business Alderon and their interest in addition to the facility and potential tax abatement; AMC Webinar regarding understanding federal changes to Medicaid benefits; AMC Research Committee; and worked with Justin Sorum regarding some sluffing on county roads.
- Commissioner Baer reported on meetings for Night to Unite Glyndon/Hawley; met with Stephen Larson, Commissioner Mongeau, and Hawley Business Alderon and their interest in addition to the facility and potential tax abatement; presentation to the City of Hitterdal regarding the West Central Regional Water District.
- Commissioner Campbell reported on meetings for Highway Tracking; Health Insurance, and presentation to the City of Hitterdal regarding the West Central Regional Water District.
- County Administrator Stephen Larson reported on meetings for Highway Tracking; Health Insurance; Department Head Evaluation; Alderon discussion; met with Dan Mahli, Derrick LaPoint, and Peyton Mastera regarding the White Earth Nation Casino; met with Brandon Lunak regarding some shared issues; Red River re-route; met with Darren Brooke regarding a series of issues; submitted the Purdue settlement; MACA District meeting; and Pre-Budget meeting for Social Services.
- Assistant County Administrator Darren Brooke reported on meetings for Health Insurance; MPELRA; and met with Corey regarding the RRC contract.

CLOSED SESSION: County Administrator's Annual Evaluation

On motion by Commissioner Mongeau, seconded by Commissioner Ebinger, and unanimously carried, the Board approved to go into closed session at 10:52 a.m.

On motion by Commissioner Mongeau, seconded by Commissioner Ebinger, and unanimously carried, the Board approved to come out of closed session at 11:43 a.m.

On motion by Commissioner Ebinger, seconded by Commissioner Baer, and unanimously carried, the Board approved the Annual Evaluation of the County Administrator and recommended a step increase.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 11:45 a.m.

Kevin Campbell, Chair
County Board of Commissioners

Stephen Larson, County Administrator