

CLAY COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
8:30 AM, TUESDAY, OCTOBER 14, 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

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

Request Approval of Voting Delegates for the Annual AMC Conference

By consent, the Board approved the voting delegates for the annual AMC Conference to include Clay County Commissioners Kevin Campbell, Jenny Mongeau, Paul Krabbenhoft, David Ebinger, and Ezra Baer, Clay County Administrator Stephen Larson, Clay County Highway Engineer Justin Sorum, and Clay County Planning & Zoning Director Matt Jacobson.

Citizens to be Heard

Commissioner Mongeau stated she and County Administrator Stephen Larson received a citizen concern regarding the new cannabis business in Baker, MN. Commissioner Mongeau stated she would like these comments entered and included in the official record.

Commissioner Campbell stated the concerns that are raised in this letter can be raised through the Public Hearing process through the Planning Commission.

Cannabis Dispensary Variance Approvals in Baker, MN

Tanner Cook, of Barnesville, MN, submitted the following concern to the Board of Commissioners.

Dear Clay County Commissioners,

My family's farmstead in Baker has been our anchor since 1883, when my great-great-great grandfather settled here from England. His son, my great-great grandfather, established the Presbyterian Church that still stands as a cornerstone of this community today. For generations, we've worked this land, raising crops and families with a quiet pride in our rural way of life. My wife and I recently bought our own homestead just outside Baker, leaving behind city life to raise our children in the peace and simplicity of this area—a place where neighbors know each other and the land tells our story.

The proposed cannabis dispensary and grow operation in Baker's grain elevator threatens the very heritage that defines this town. Visit Baker, and you'll see it's not a place for

recreational drug production, sale, or consumption. That old elevator isn't just a building; it's a symbol of our agricultural roots, not a site for a marijuana grow operation and a lounge peddling recreational drugs.

Your zoning ordinances exist to protect our way of life, ensuring places like Baker remain havens for families, not profit-driven ventures. Approving these variances for setbacks and lot size would set a tragic precedent, signaling that no rural corner of Clay County is sacred. It prioritizes one man's ambition – someone not even from Baker, who may not stay once his operation takes hold – over the people who've called this home for generations. Do not place profits over people. This is not simply an economic zone; it's our home. There are countless other places in this county for such businesses; there's no need to force this on our small town.

Please deny these variances and the conditional use permit. Protect Baker's heritage, honor our community's values, and keep our rural life intact for the families who live here and the generations to come.

Approval of Payment of Bills and Vouchers

On motion by Commissioner Ebinger, seconded by Commissioner Krabbenhoft, and unanimously carried, the Board approved the bills and vouchers totaling \$1,954,407 from 187 vendors. There were 125 warrants issued under \$2,000 (\$60,478) and the following 62 were over \$2,000.

Blue Cross Blue Shield Minnesota	\$ 390,603	North American Benefits Company	\$ 5,142
High Point Networks, LLC	\$ 358,074	JT Lawn Service	\$ 5,052
Internal Revenue Serv	\$ 266,650	River Valley Forensic Services, PA	\$ 5,050
Turner Sand & Gravel Inc.	\$ 187,940	Farmers Coop Oil Co	\$ 4,992
West Central Regional Juvenile Center	\$ 68,214	Pomp's Tire Service, Inc.	\$ 4,945
Moorhead Public Service	\$ 63,561	Otter Tail Public Health	\$ 4,797
Enterprise FM Trust	\$ 47,924	Rob Bentz Lock & Key, LLC	\$ 4,458
Norman County Auditor-Treasurer	\$ 47,870	Association Of Minnesota Counties	\$ 4,275
Red River Regional Dispatch Center	\$ 43,293	Verizon 386550144-00004	\$ 4,221
Mn Dept Of Revenue	\$ 36,851	Barnesville C-Store	\$ 4,215
Trinity Services Group, Inc.	\$ 34,889	Axon Enterprises, Inc.	\$ 4,125
VEBA Select Account	\$ 32,029	ANJAAM HOLDINGS, LLC	\$ 4,090
Kvalvog/Raymond	\$ 22,000	Wegner Psychological & Therapeutic Svc	\$ 3,750
Lakeland Mental Health Center, Inc.	\$ 20,284	Mn Unemployment Insurance	\$ 3,698
Mn State Auditor	\$ 18,213	Petro Serve USA-SW	\$ 3,296
City of Ulen	\$ 13,400	CoreLogic	\$ 3,256
NACO	\$ 13,023	Med-Tech Resource Inc.	\$ 3,238
Clay Co Public Health	\$ 12,454	Lereta, LLC	\$ 2,999
Treas Of Ulen City	\$ 11,327	General Equipment & Supplies Inc.	\$ 2,643
Department Of Corrections	\$ 10,800	Becker County Public Health	\$ 2,561
Amazon Capital Services	\$ 10,377	Clay County Sheriff	\$ 2,500
Otis Elevator, Inc.	\$ 9,917	Fuchs Sanitation Inc	\$ 2,485
Braun Intertec Corp	\$ 9,619	Fargo Freightliner	\$ 2,375
Nitzkowski, Inc.	\$ 9,588	Bob Barker (Sheriff)	\$ 2,342
Dakota Plains Mechanical, Inc.	\$ 8,785	State of MN Health Care Savings Plan	\$ 2,323
MN Counties Computer Coop	\$ 8,384	SHI International Corp	\$ 2,322
Petro Serve Usa-Hwy	\$ 7,907	The Carpet Garage	\$ 2,269
RDO Equipment Co.	\$ 7,000	Fidelity Security Life	\$ 2,263
LELS	\$ 5,642	Wex Bank (fleet)	\$ 2,219
Valley Mortuary Transportation	\$ 5,631	Uline	\$ 2,114

Services

Sabin C Store

\$ 5,590

Pete's Gas & Service

\$ 2,050

Request Approval of 2026–2027 Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) Biennial Service Agreement (BSA)

Social Services Director Quinn Jaeger requested approval of the 2026-2027 Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) Biennial Service Agreement (BSA) and stated every 2 years, counties are required to submit a Biennial Service Agreement to the Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) to outline the administration and service delivery of the MFIP and Diversionary Work Program (DWP). The BSA serves as a county's formal plan to meet the statutory requirements of Minnesota Statutes Chapter 256J and associated administrative rules.

The 2026–2027 BSA includes updated service models, partnerships, and performance strategies. However, it is important to note that DWP will only be in effect through March 2026, as the program is being phased out statewide. After that point, all new referrals will be served solely through MFIP. This plan also met the requirements for public review and transparency. As part of the development process, Social Services held a 30-day public comment period by posting the draft plan on our website. The 2026–2027 BSA continues Clay County's efforts to deliver proactive, person-centered employment supports across MFIP, and provides services to low-income working families and teen parents. It was created in partnership with Rural MN CEP. MN DHS requires formal County Board approval prior to submission.

The BSA outlines use of our existing MFIP Consolidated Fund allocation. This grant allocation funds our Emergency Assistance dollars, approximately \$139,000 in administrative revenue, and an additional \$64,730 for in home services for families under 200% of the federal poverty level. Approval of the BSA will have no additional levy impacts.

On motion by Commissioner Ebinger, seconded by Commissioner Krabbenhoft, and unanimously carried, the Board approved the 2026–2027 Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) Biennial Service Agreement and authorized submission to the Minnesota Department of Human Services.

Notice of Intent to Sell Fargo-Moorhead Area Excess Flood Diversion Project Land

County Administrator Stephen Larson stated in 2019, the City of Moorhead and Clay County entered into the Minnesota Land Acquisition Joint Powers Agreement, creating the Moorhead Clay County Joint Powers Authority (MCCJPA). The Minnesota Land Acquisition Joint Powers Agreement authorizes the City of Moorhead and Clay County to work collaboratively to maximize efficiencies with respect to property acquisition in Minnesota for the Project. North Dakota also has a government entity, the Cass County Joint Water Resource District, that handles property acquisitions. The Metro Flood Diversion Authority (MFDA) has adopted a policy that states it will review the inventory of real property purchased to determine if it continues to be needed to complete the Fargo-Moorhead Area Flood Diversion Project. If the land is no longer needed, it will be declared "excess land" by the MFDA Executive Director and can be made available for sale, lease, or exchange in accordance with the policy. Member entities of the governing boards have the first opportunity to acquire the excess lands. Entities have 30 days from the receipt of the notification to provide an intent to purchase. The excess land in question today is located in Minnesota - OIN 1834.

Discussion ensued regarding the process of repurchasing excess lands.

On motion by Commissioner Baer, seconded by Commissioner Ebinger, and unanimously carried, the Board approved to notify the MFDA stating that Clay County does not have any interest in purchasing the property located at OIN 1834.

Mr. Larson asked if in the future these items could be placed on the consent agenda, and then in the event that the Board wished to discuss it further, it could be pulled to the regular agenda. Commissioner Campbell stated the only time he feels it would be an interest to this Board would be if that property was bordering a county or state road. Commissioner Mongeau stated because it's on the Minnesota side, for the public's awareness, she would prefer these items to be on the regular agenda. Commissioner Baer agreed with Commissioner Mongeau.

Request Approval to Adjust the Clay County Board of Commissioners Meeting Schedule

Mr. Larson requested approval to adjust the Clay County Board of Commissioners meeting schedule to the following:

- The December 2, 2025 Clay County Board of Commissioners meeting will be moved from 5 p.m. to 8:30 a.m.,
- The December 2, 2025 Truth in Taxation meeting will be moved to December 16, 2025, at 6 p.m.,
- The December 16, 2025 Clay County Board of Commissioners meeting will be moved from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., and
- December 30, 2025 will be added to the Clay County Board of Commissioner Meeting Schedule at 8:30 a.m. to ensure that the Auditor/Treasures Office can pay the bills to end the year.

Discussion ensued regarding virtual technology.

On motion by Commissioner Baer, seconded by Commissioner Ebinger, and unanimously carried, the Board approved to adjust the Clay County Board of Commissioners Meeting Schedule to the following: the December 2, 2025 Clay County Board of Commissioners meeting will be moved from 5 p.m. to 8:30 a.m., the December 2, 2025 Truth in Taxation meeting will be moved to December 16, 2025, at 6 p.m., the December 16, 2025 Clay County Board of Commissioners meeting will be moved from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., and December 30, 2025 will be added to the Clay County Board of Commissioner Meeting Schedule at 8:30 a.m. to ensure that the Auditor/Treasures Office can pay the bills to end the year.

2026 Budget Discussion

Commissioner Mongeau stated last week she attended the FMWF Chamber Public Policy meeting and after some discussion with Chamber personnel, it was brought to her attention that last year, this Board actually allotted them \$100,000 and this year we allocated \$85,000. Commissioner Mongeau wanted to bring this to the full Board for further discussion as there was some confusion regarding the allocation for the joint ask by the Chamber and the EDC in previous years.

The Board stated the intent wasn't to cut the Chamber's allocation for 2026.

Mr. Larson stated if there is a consensus on this, he can bring this back next week for approval. Commissioner Campbell stated please bring this back next week.

Mr. Larson stated he had a couple more items to discuss. One being the licensing increase through the State of Minnesota, which is a new revenue that Mr. Jaeger briefly mentioned last week. Additional information was received and there will be an additional \$59,000 to that, which will help offset the levy. The other item is the cost of Paid Family Medical Leave (PFML) and the potential for a reduction in expenses for when employees are out on PFML. The current budget does not include this because of the unknown of when the program will be utilized.

Discussion ensued regarding lost revenue due to PFML.

2025 Clay County Employee United Way Campaign Presentation

Rita Rueckert, United Way Employee Campaign Coordinator, Clay County staff James O'Donnell, LaRae Goeden, Kirstin LePard, and United Way Resource Development Manager Madison Maides provided the Board with a presentation on the 2025 Clay County Employee United Way Campaign. The 2025 United Way Campaign will begin on October 20, 2025, and close on November 14, 2025.

Discussion ensued regarding the 2024 campaign, special events, school supply drive, Gobble it Up for United Way, and what's to come for the 2025 campaign.

Ms. Maides discussed the 2025 campaign and stated as you know United Way is committed in understanding the local needs of families and supporting over 40 programs across 30 different non-profit organizations within Cass and Clay counties. United Way knows that poverty is not just one thing. Today in our community, families are struggling with housing, hunger, childcare, and family sustaining jobs, all at the same time. United Way focuses on three main areas: preparing children to succeed, strengthening families, and preventing hunger and homelessness. Ms. Maides thanked the Board and Clay County for their support and partnership.

Committee Reports/County Administrator Update/Discussions

- Commissioner Ebinger reported on meetings for Rural Cities & County meeting; Beyond the Yellow Ribbon; and met with Rory Beil and Stephen Larson regarding the new Partnership4Health Community Health Board.
- Commissioner Krabbenhoft reported on meetings for Rural Cities & County meeting; first meeting with Winthrop & Weinstein Lobbyist Tom Hanson; SWCD; Extension Committee; PRTF/NSJD small group; Adult Mental Health LAC; and BRRWD.
- Commissioner Mongeau reported on meetings for Highway Tracking; first meeting with Winthrop & Weinstein Lobbyist Tom Hanson; FMWF Chamber Public Policy meeting; and Rural Cities & County meeting.
- Commissioner Baer reported on meetings for Rural Cities & County meeting; Wild Rice Watershed District; SWCD; and WCRWD special meeting.
- Commissioner Campbell reported on meetings for Highway Tracking; Rural Cities & County meeting; and WCRWD special meeting.
- County Administrator Stephen Larson reported on meetings for Highway Tracking; Rural Cities & County meeting; County Management; first meeting with Winthrop & Weinstein Lobbyist Tom Hanson; met with Rory Schmitz regarding a local vendor; worked with Lori Johnson on the budget; met with Commissioner Krabbenhoft on a series of issues;

PRTF/NSJD small group; met with Rory Beil and Commissioner Ebinger regarding the new Partnership4Health Community Health Board; WCRWD special meeting; working with Jacobs to re-submit our MMB bonding request; and did hear back from the state auditor, we'll hear an update from her on November 18, 2025.

- Assistant County Administrator Darren Brooke reported on meetings for Rural Cities & County meeting; met with Rory Schmitz; worked on union negotiations; County Management; Corrections negotiations; LEC office staff negotiations; Union costing sheets; Detox 3rd negotiations; and 2026 budget estimate.

On motion by Commissioner Ebinger, seconded by Commissioner Mongeau, and unanimously carried, the Board approved Commissioner Baer to move from an alternate to a full voting member for Partnership4Health Community Health Board with Becker and Clay County, effective immediately.

On motion by Commissioner Ebinger, seconded by Commissioner Mongeau, and unanimously carried, the Board approved to make Commissioner Krabbenhoft an alternate for the Cass-Clay Homeless Coalition.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 9:40 a.m.

Kevin Campbell, Chair
County Board of Commissioners

Stephen Larson, County Administrator