

CLAY COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
8:30 AM, TUESDAY, MARCH 24, 2026
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, 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 Krabbenhoft called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

Approval of Agenda

On motion by Commissioner Ebinger, seconded by Commissioner Baer, and unanimously carried, the Board approved the agenda with the Agenda Addition: Request Approval to Submit for Congressional Directed Funding – West Central Regional Juvenile Center – Non-Secure Juvenile Facility.

Approval to Fill a Vacant Full-Time Custodial Position

On motion by Commissioner Ebinger, seconded by Commissioner Baer, and unanimously carried, the Board approved to fill the vacant Full-Time Custodial position for the Facilities Department.

Citizens to be Heard

There were no citizens to be heard.

Approval of Payment of Bills and Vouchers

On motion by Commissioner Baer, seconded by Commissioner Ebinger, and unanimously carried, the Board approved the bills and vouchers totaling \$423,370 from 85 vendors. There were 58 warrants issued under \$2,000 (\$25,520) and the following 27 were over \$2,000.

City Of Moorhead	\$ 122,985	Team Laboratory Chemical LLC	\$ 4,950
Clay Soil & Water Cons Dept	\$ 70,762	Moorhead Public Service	\$ 4,947
Central Specialties Inc	\$ 37,905	Ehlers	\$ 3,750
Trinity Services Group, Inc.	\$ 30,981	Wegner Psychological & Therapeutic Svc	\$ 3,750
Xcel Energy	\$ 22,271	Best Buy Business Advantage Account	\$ 3,499
Johnson Controls Building Solutions, LLC	\$ 13,960	Dakota Plains Mechanical, Inc.	\$ 3,017
Enterprise FM Trust	\$ 12,364	Sanford Health	\$ 3,000
NetCenter Technologies	\$ 11,894	Office of MNIT Services	\$ 2,880
Diamond Drugs Inc.	\$ 7,776	Johnson's Auto Repair LLC	\$ 2,737
Otter Tail Public Health	\$ 6,609	Thomson Reuters - West 590031	\$ 2,487
Xcel Energy	\$ 6,179	Xcel Energy Inc	\$ 2,315
Jones Law Office	\$ 5,370	Minnkota EnviroServices, Inc.	\$ 2,117
The Retrofit Companies Inc.	\$ 5,219	McKesson Medical Surgical	\$ 2,089
		Wex Bank (fleet)	\$ 2,025

Approval of Minutes from March 10, 2026, and March 17, 2026

On motion by Commissioner Baer, seconded by Commissioner Ebinger, and unanimously carried, the Board approved the minutes from March 10, 2026, and March 17, 2026.

Request Approval to Appoint Michael Butenhoff to the Clay County Extension Committee

Extension Regional Director Cecilia Amadou requested approval to appoint Michael Butenhoff to a 3-year term on the Clay County Extension Committee.

On motion by Commissioner Baer, seconded by Commissioner Ebinger, and unanimously carried, the Board approved to appoint Michael Butenhoff to a 3-year term on the Clay County Extension Committee.

Annual Department Update - Extension

Ms. Amadou introduced her staff including Jillian Patrie, Monique Stelzer, Amelia Landsverk and Jennifer Erhdal. Together, they provided the board with an annual department update and discussed the mission of Extension in Clay County, Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources (ANR), 4-H Youth Development, Youth Development Local Guidance including Program Delivery, Retention, and Growth, 4-H Program Highlights, Community Engagement and ANR, Local Resources, ANR Program Highlights, Partners in Progress, and why Extension matters.

4-H Youth member Monica Wilson discussed her experience with 4-H. And Recently graduated Master Gardener Martha Wheeler discussed her experience with the Master Gardener program.

Commissioner Krabbenhoft thanked Clay County Extension for their presentation and all their continued work.

Request Approval to Apply for the Drug-Free Communities Grant

Health Promotion Director Rory Beil requested approval to apply for the Drug-Free Communities (DFC) grant through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. This grant supports community coalitions working to prevent youth substance use. Over the past several years, Clay County has partnered closely with Dilworth-Glyndon-Felton Schools to strengthen prevention efforts through youth education, Positive Community Norms work, and collaboration with parents, schools, and community partners. Recent student survey data show encouraging reductions in youth tobacco and vaping use in our region, and this grant would allow us to build on that progress. The DFC program would provide up to \$125,000 per year for five years to support coordinated prevention strategies led by local partners. Importantly, the funding is designed to strengthen community coalitions and prevention systems rather than create long-term county financial obligations.

Approval today would allow Clay County Public Health to submit an application in partnership with community stakeholders. If awarded, the grant would expand the ability to support schools, families, and youth in reducing substance misuse and strengthening healthy environments for young people in Clay County.

On motion by Commissioner Ebinger, seconded by Commissioner Baer, and unanimously carried, the Board approved Public Health Staff to apply for the Drug-Free Communities Grant.

Request Approval for the West Central Regional Juvenile Center to Occupy Suite 103C at the Family Service Center

Facilities Director Joe Olson and Juvenile Detention Director James O'Donnell requested approval

for the West Central Regional Juvenile Center (WCRJC) to occupy suite 103C at the Family Service Center (FSC) which is approximately 962 square feet on the first floor of the FSC. This space will be used to support specialized, one-on-one services for children with autism, addressing an important and growing need within Clay County. This transition provides an opportunity to better utilize county-owned space while expanding critical services for children with autism through the WCRJC.

Birthright currently occupies this suite and has been a valued tenant in this space for many years. However, as county space needs have evolved, conversations were had with Birthright about the possibility of relocating to better accommodate both their services and the County's increasing demand for program space. Birthright has since identified an alternative location that meets their needs, and the County will continue to collaborate with them to promote and connect their services.

Discussion ensued regarding the program space and office space needs.

Mr. Olson stated there aren't a lot of fit-up needs for this transition, and funding would come from the WCRJC Enterprise Fund in the amount of \$13,227.50.

Commissioner Baer stated this did go through the Building Committee and was approved to go to the full Board.

On motion by Commissioner Ebinger, seconded by Commissioner Baer, and unanimously carried, the Board approved the occupancy of Suite 103C at the Family Service Center by the West Central Regional Juvenile Center.

Annual Department Update - Social Services: Child & Family Services and Behavioral Health & Adult Protection Divisions

Social Service Director Quinn Jaeger, and Social Services Supervisors Amy Amundsen, Michelle Thordal, and Kirstin LePard, provided the Board with a department update for the Child & Family Services and Behavioral Health & Adult Protection Divisions of Social Services.

Ms. LePard discussed Behavioral Health & Adult Protection Services including Adult Mental Health, Civil Commitment, MN Sex Offender Program (MSOP), Level II's, Adult Targeted Case Management (CM) Rule 79, Pre-Petition Screening Data, Does not Meet Medical Criteria (DNMC)/MSOP Costs, Adult Mental Health Community Partnerships, Substance Use Disorders (SUD), SUD Community Partners, Adult Protection Services Responses, Adult Protection Services (APS) Responses, APS Committees & Partnerships, and what's on the horizon.

Discussion ensued regarding MOSP Provisional Discharges and Direct Care and Treatment (DCT).

Ms. Thordal and Ms. Amundsen discussed Child & Family Services including Provided Services, Intake/Assessment Data, Types of Maltreatment, Number of Kids in Placement and where they're located, 2025 State & Federal Measurements, Prevention Services, Updates in Child Protection, Challenges in Child Protection, and Child Protection Successes in 2025.

Discussion ensued regarding staff retention and internships.

Commissioner Krabbenhoft thanked Ms. LePard, Ms. Thordal, Ms. Amundsen and Mr. Jaeger for all their hard work, dedication, and passion.

BREAK

The Board took a break from 9:59 a.m. to 10:03 a.m.

Request Approval to Submit for Congressional Directed Funding – West Central Regional Juvenile Center – Non-Secure Juvenile Facility.

County Administrator Stephen Larson requested approval to submit an application for Congressional Directed Funding in the amount of \$5,000,000 for the West Central Regional Juvenile Center (WCRJC)/Non-Secure Juvenile Facility (NSJF) which will help with the development of the NSJF project. The application would be provided to Senator Klobuchar and Senator Smith, and the deadline for the application is March 27, 2026.

On motion by Commissioner Ebinger, seconded by Commissioner Baer, and unanimously carried, the Board approved the submittal for Congressional Directed Funding application for the West Central Regional Juvenile Center – Non-Secure Juvenile Facility.

Committee Reports/County Administrator Update/Discussions

- Commissioner Ebinger reported on meetings for Rethink Mental Health & Substance Use Coalition; and FMWF Chamber Civics on Tap.
- Commissioner Baer reported on meetings for Planning Commission; One Watershed One Plan -Wild Rice; and yesterday received mailer from WCRWD.
- Commissioner Krabbenhoft reported on meetings for Moorhead Day at the Capitol; PRTF/NSJ; Association of Township Officers; CAPLP - Washington D.C.; and CAPLP.
- County Administrator Stephen Larson reported on meetings for met with Brian Melton and Sheriff Empting regarding the upcoming public hearing for potential ordinances for deer hunting firearm zones in Clay County; Regional Administrator meeting; Stive Committee; work with DHS for PRTF Funding; met with Brian Melton on a series of issues; worked on Congressional Directed Funding application; Department Head Evaluation prep; Spoke with Sheriff Empting regarding receiving notification from Moorhead Police Chief that Clay County Law Enforcement Deputies will no longer have access to the North Moorhead gun range; AMC Legislative Check-In; met with Commissioner Krabbenhoft on series of issues; and met with Quinn Jaeger on a personnel matter; had an ongoing conversation with Sheriff Empting; and there is no Board meeting next Tuesday, March 31, 2026, as it's the 5th Tuesday of the month, therefore, the next Board meeting will be Tuesday, April 7, 2026, at 5:00 p.m.
- Assistant County Administrator Darren Brooke reported on meetings for Safety Committee; Planning Commission; Strive Committee; met with Jessica Armstrong regarding County Grid placements; Union Negotiation Data; MnCCC; met with Melissa Young regarding personnel issues; worked on budget process; AMC Legislative Update; discussions with Stephen Larson, Quinn Jaeger, Justin Sorum and Jessi Armstrong regarding personnel issues.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 10:24 a.m.

Jenny Mongeau, Chair
County Board of Commissioners

Stephen Larson, County Administrator