

CLAY COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

8:30 AM, TUESDAY, JULY 7, 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, 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 Mongeau 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.

County Board of Appeal & Equalization Minutes from June 16, 2026

By consent, the Board approved the County Board of Appeal & Equalization minutes from June 16, 2026.

Employee Recognitions

The following employees were recognized: Kent Severson for 25 years with Public Health, and Tami Gehrke for 40 years with Social Services.

Citizens to be Heard

There were no citizens to be heard.

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 \$ from 170 vendors. There were 114 warrants issued under \$2,000 (\$51,076) and the following 56 were over \$2,000.

Sellin Bros Inc	\$ 806,779	Solutions Behavioral Health PC	\$ 7,232
Central Specialties Inc	\$ 642,653	WEX Bank	\$ 6,689
Internal Revenue Serv	\$ 292,810	Moorhead Public Service	\$ 6,161
Glacier Dust Control Inc.	\$ 94,008	Stantec Consulting Services, Inc.	\$ 6,114
A & R Roofing Co., Inc.	\$ 88,860	USI Consulting Group, Inc.	\$ 5,850
Earthwork Services Inc.	\$ 84,735	Fidlar Technologies	\$ 5,632
Clay Soil & Water Cons Dept	\$ 74,497	General Equipment & Supplies Inc.	\$ 4,724
Regents Of The Univ Of MN	\$ 72,156	Tom's Gun Sales	\$ 4,722
West Central Regional Juvenile Center	\$ 70,123	Craguns Lodge & Confer Center	\$ 4,475
Clay Co Public Health	\$ 47,775	MN Department of Transportation	\$ 4,244
Mn Dept Of Revenue	\$ 39,142	Advanced Business Methods	\$ 4,210
VEBA Select Account	\$ 36,804	Bob Barker (Wcrjc)	\$ 4,094
Clay County Fair	\$ 32,000	FIRST Insurance Funding	\$ 3,963
Trinity Services Group, Inc.	\$ 30,707	The Retrofit Companies Inc.	\$ 3,777
Pace Analytical Services, Inc.	\$ 28,871	Ramsey County Finance	\$ 3,689

Historical & Cultural Society Of Clay Co	\$ 23,194	Verizon 386550144-00004	\$ 3,608
SeaChange Print Innovations	\$ 22,847	TrueNorth Steel	\$ 3,100
WEX Bank - Sheriff	\$ 21,376	Disposal Services Inc	\$ 3,060
SHI International Corp	\$ 18,934	Sanford Health	\$ 3,000
Becker County Public Health	\$ 18,332	City of Pelican Rapids	\$ 2,721
City Of Barnesville	\$ 17,500	Dakota Plains Mechanical, Inc.	\$ 2,716
NACO	\$ 13,754	State of MN Health Care Savings Plan	\$ 2,548
Berg Auto Body	\$ 13,659	Clay County Sheriff	\$ 2,500
Diamond Drugs Inc.	\$ 13,382	Mn Sheriffs' Association	\$ 2,290
Otter Tail Public Health	\$ 8,728	Acme Tools	\$ 2,244
Town & Country Oil Inc.	\$ 8,186	DGF Schools	\$ 2,204
Wegner Psychological & Therapeutic Svc	\$ 7,710	All Season's Lawncare	\$ 2,100
Election Systems & Software Inc.	\$ 7,614	Amazon Capital Services	\$ 2,025

Approval of Minutes from June 16, 2026, and June 23, 2026

On motion by Commissioner Baer, seconded by Commissioner Campbell, and unanimously carried, the Board approved the minutes from June 16, 2026.

On motion by Commissioner Baer, seconded by Commissioner Campbell, and unanimously carried, the Board approved the minutes from June 23, 2026.

Five-Year Community Impact Update

Public Health Grant Program Coordinator Jason McCoy provided the Board with the five-year community impact update and stated the Positive Community Norms grant has concluded and the final student survey data has been received. Mr. McCoy discussed the changes of student vaping rates from 2019 to 2026.

Commissioner Krabbenhoft extended a huge thank you to Mr. McCoy for this work.

County Administrator Stephen Larson asked Mr. McCoy to share with the Board what his next steps are since this grant ending. Mr. McCoy stated within Public Health there is the Foundational Public Health Responsibilities which will be paying for 0.8 of his time and the other 0.2 of his time will be from the Cannabis and Other Substance Use Prevention Grant.

Commissioner Mongeau thanked Mr. McCoy for all his great work.

Request Approval of State of Minnesota Grant Agreement

County Engineer Justin Sorum requested approval of the State of Minnesota Grant Contract Agreement 292935. This contract agreement is for the Agassiz Recreational Trail (ART) that runs from Ulen to the North County Line. This agreement allows the County to be reimbursed for expenses incurred along the trail, as well as maintenance done by the Mudslingers OHV Group. This is also budget neutral.

On motion by Commissioner Ebinger, seconded by Commissioner Baer, and unanimously carried, the Board approved the State of Minnesota Grant Contract Agreement 292935.

Clay County Board of Commissioners Will Consider Modification to the University of Minnesota Extension Contract - Staffing Levels

Mr. Larson stated Clay County contracts with the University of Minnesota Extension to provide

Extension programming and educational services that benefit residents throughout the county. The partnership supports youth development through 4-H, agriculture and natural resources, and other research-based educational programs that strengthen communities and improve quality of life. Under the current agreement, the University employs Extension staff while the County provides funding for the approved staffing levels and local support. The County currently has a vacant Extension Educator – Youth Development position. As part of the 2026-2027 budget planning process and in response to ongoing budget constraints, a discussion has been requested to determine whether to continue funding the vacant position Extension at 1.0 FTE or reduce the position to 0.80 FTE.

Commissioner Baer asked how long this position has been open for. Extension Regional Director Cecilia Amadou stated that's been open since May 2026. Commissioner Mongeau wanted to be clear that the position hasn't been advertised yet, due to how the University of Minnesota conducts their hiring process.

Commissioner Campbell asked what this positions job duties were. Ms. Amadou stated the position is responsible for managing all the 4-H programing that happens in Clay County. Commissioner Campbell stated he's always been supportive of 4-H but the numbers also have to support it and is curious how 4-H has grown and what the enrollment is compared to previous years. Commissioner Mongeau stated there are reports that were shared during the June Extension meeting that can be provided that speak to the questions being asked. We're seeing enormous stride in the program, and the afterschool program enrollment is over 300 individuals County wide. The reason behind this discussion is we felt that it would be an opportunity for this Board to analyze the status of this position as the County faces a challenging budget.

Commissioner Baer asked if the Extension office could get by with this position being a .5. Ms. Amadou stated that would be very difficult. We'll see a significant impact to the program even at a .8, so moving to a .5 will inevitably stall the growth of the program. Commissioner Baer asked when this position moved from a 1.0 to a 1.8 to a 2.0. Ms. Amadou stated in 2023 the office made a shift in employees, but it didn't have a financial impact. Commissioner Mongeau stated we had seen growth in numbers in the 4-H area, which is why the shifts occurred. Commissioner Krabbenhoft stated he would not support a .5 but he is in favor of .8. 4-H is impactful to the whole community, municipalities, the County fair, and rural Clay County.

Commissioner Mongeau stated it's important to note that with this position being vacant since May, there has been a substantial savings to the County. Mr. Larson stated that is correct. The contract does read that if the position is open, the County will not be billed for the time of the vacancy. Commissioner Mongeau stated if we move forward with refilling the position at a 1.0, we will still see a savings this calendar year, similar to what it would be at a .8 for next year. Mr. Larson stated that was correct.

Commissioner Baer stated he'd like to see the numbers that reflect the growth of the program in comparison to the staffing before making a decision and asked if that data could be received by next week and then make this decision then. Commissioner Mongeau stated that information could possibly be gathered today, but the concern is that if this is not approved today, we're already behind on the Universities advertising process. Therefore, if this isn't approved today, they might not be able to hire for the fall afterschool programming. Commissioner Campbell agreed with Commissioner Baer in wanting to see the data prior to making a decision.

Commissioner Krabbenhoft motioned to amend the contract to rehire the Extension Educator Youth Development (4-H) position at a .8. Commissioner Ebinger seconded. After Discussion, Chair Mongeau requested permission from both Commissioner Krabbenhoft and Commissioner Ebinger to withdraw the motion and second, in order to obtain more information from Ms. Amadou. The motion and second were withdrawn without objection.

Commissioner Mongeau stated this Board will come back to this item at the end of the meeting, so Ms. Amadou has the time to gather the necessary information.

This item was revisited after a majority of the agenda items were covered. Commissioner Mongeau stated that Ms. Amadou was not able to gather the necessary information and would prefer that this item and the 2027 Extension Budget Presentation be tabled until the following meeting.

On motion by Commissioner Krabbenhoft, seconded by Commissioner Baer, and unanimously carried, the board approved to table the agenda item to consider Modification to the University of Minnesota Extension Contract - Staffing Levels until the July 14, 2026, Board of Commissioners meeting.

Extension Budget Presentation for 2027

Commissioner Mongeau stated since this item needs to come after the agenda item regarding the Modification to the University of Minnesota Extension Contract, she would prefer that this item be tabled as well, until the following meeting.

On motion by Commissioner Krabbenhoft, seconded by Commissioner Baer, and unanimously carried, the board approved to table the Extension Budget Presentation for 2027 until the July 14, 2026, Board of Commissioners meeting.

Budget Presentation - Human Resources

Human Resources Director Anna Moore presented the Human Resources budget for 2027 and discussed salaries, health insurance, Paid Family Medical Leave, PERA, Social Security, Medicare, Department Head cell phone, annual subscriptions, Association dues and memberships, advertising, other professional services, training, conferences and workshop registration, travel and expenses, and office supplies.

Commissioner Mongeau asked how the County has budgeted the market study in the past. Mr. Larson stated this has been budgeted through the HR budget, or Fund Balance. The Fund Balance was utilized if the County had already anticipated that the market study would take place, so it wasn't part of the levy. Commissioner Mongeau was curious to see how the Board felt this should be reflected going forward. Commissioner Campbell stated when the County does a wage study it's something that has implications for more than one year, and he would like to see \$30,000 removed from the HR budget and use reserves, which has been done in the past. Commissioners Baer and Ebinger agreed.

Ms. Moore stated overall this would have been a 17.89% increase for 2027, however, with the removal of the market study, that brings the overall increase to 10.66% for 2027. This would be accounting for the increased UKG cost and the fixed cost for salaries and benefits.

Lastly, Ms. Moore provided a brief update on the Paid Family Medical Leave program (PFML).

Discussion ensued.

Budget Presentation - GIS & Communications

GIS & Communications Director Mark Sloan presented the GIS & Communications budget for 2027 and discussed continuing to leave the Communications Coordinator position vacant, there are no new requests, other professional services, and computer software.

Commissioner Mongeau extended her appreciation for the amount of work that this department does to help additional County Departments but also our partners.

Discussion ensued regarding salaries, the vacant position, and the Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA).

Budget Presentation - Planning & Zoning

Planning & Zoning Director Matt Jacobson presented the Planning & Zoning budget for 2027 and stated there will be a 3% increase which is largely driven by personnel costs. Mr. Jacobson discussed online permitting capabilities, modernizing reports, grant funds, and Planning Commission and Board of Adjustment, and training.

Commissioner Baer asked what percentage of permits are being submitted online. Mr. Jacobson stated about 50%.

Discussion ensued regarding training opportunities for the Planning Commission and Board of Adjustment members, salaries and per diem, the fee schedule, and public notices.

Commissioner Mongeau thanked Mr. Jacobson for his thoughtful budget.

BREAK

The Board took a break from 9:51 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.

Request for the Clay County Board of Commissioners to Consider Authorizing WCRWD/AE2S Staff to Continue Evaluating the Potential Addition of Wilkin County to the West Central Regional Water District (WCRWD)

Mr. Larson stated on June 16, 2026, the Wilkin County Board of Commissioners formally submitted a request to the West Central Regional Water District (WCRWD) expressing their interest in joining the District. In the request, Wilkin County identified ongoing drinking water quality concerns affecting rural residents, as well as the long-term infrastructure needs of its communities. The County also recognized the benefits of regionalization, including improved drinking water quality, increased system resiliency, economies of scale, and enhanced opportunities to secure state and federal funding. As part of the request, Wilkin County acknowledged that it would be responsible for all legal, engineering, administrative, and other costs associated with pursuing inclusion into WCRWD, ensuring that no additional costs would be incurred by the existing member counties during the evaluation process. The request also included a Memorandum of Inclusion and the associated goodwill payment previously discussed between Wilkin County and WCRWD.

At the June 29, 2026, Board Meeting, the WCRWD Board considered Wilkin County's request and approved moving forward with the evaluation of the County's inclusion into the District. The Board's action authorized District staff, the Engineer of Survey, and legal counsel to coordinate

with Wilkin County on the legal, engineering, financial, governance, and statutory items necessary to facilitate the proposed expansion.

As part of this process, WCRWD and Wilkin County will work cooperatively to identify funding opportunities, prepare the necessary legal memorandums and agreements, evaluate the financial and operational impacts of expansion, and complete any required engineering analysis. Upon completion of these efforts, the proposed inclusion of Wilkin County will be presented to the Polk, Norman, and Clay County Boards for final consideration. Any addition of Wilkin County to the West Central Regional Water District will remain contingent upon acceptable funding, execution and approval of the necessary legal memorandums and agreements, completion of all required engineering, financial, and statutory requirements, and formal approval by resolution of each participating county board in accordance with Minnesota Statutes Chapter 116A.

Commissioner Campbell stated as mentioned Wilkin County has expressed interest in joining the WCRWD and in order to move forward, each County Board (Clay, Norman, and Polk) will need to pass a resolution to accept this request, in addition to the WCRWD Board itself. Commissioner Campbell stated that he and Commissioner Baer met with a couple of the Wilkin County Commissioners regarding this and they were wondering/concerned what the likelihood of support would be.

Commissioner Ebinger stated he serves on a couple committees with Wilkin County Commissioners and indicated that they're excited about this opportunity. They have the need and certainly meet the criteria.

Commissioner Baer stated he's been communicating with Wilkin County for about a year, and they were waiting for the WCRWD to be certified, which happened in April of 2026, which is why this is coming to light now. Commissioner Campbell stated once this does happen, the way the statute works is that we would have to redo the makeup of the Board.

On motion by Commissioner Baer, seconded by Commissioner Campbell, and unanimously carried, the Board approved the authorization supporting the continued evaluation of Wilkin County's request to join the West Central Regional Water District, acknowledging that Wilkin County has agreed to fund all legal, engineering, administrative, and other costs associated with its proposed inclusion such that no additional costs will be incurred by the existing member counties during the process. This support is contingent upon the identification of acceptable funding, completion and approval of all necessary legal memorandums and associated agreements between Wilkin County, the WCRWD, and Polk, Clay, and Norman Counties, completion of any required engineering, financial, and statutory evaluations, and satisfaction of all applicable requirements under Minnesota Statutes Chapter 116A. The County Board reserves final approval of Wilkin County's inclusion into the West Central Regional Water District until all contingencies have been satisfied, at which time the matter shall return to the County Board for consideration and final action by formal Resolution.

Request Approval of Agreement with Winthrop & Weinstein, P.A. ("Winthrop") to Provide Lobbyist Legislative Services on Behalf of Clay County

Mr. Larson stated the Clay County Board of Commissioners has taken an active role in advocating for the county's legislative priorities at the Minnesota Legislature. Commissioners regularly engage with legislators, testify before legislative committees, and work collaboratively

with the Association of Minnesota Counties and regional partners to advance issues important to Clay County residents. Given the distance between Clay County and the State Capitol, maintaining a consistent presence throughout the legislative session can be challenging. Winthrop & Weinstine, P.A. provides valuable governmental relations services by monitoring legislative activity, identifying opportunities to advance the County's priorities, coordinating meetings with legislators and state agency officials, and providing strategic guidance throughout the legislative process. Their assistance has enabled County Commissioners and staff to participate in key discussions and meetings that would otherwise be difficult to arrange.

The proposed agreement would extend lobbying services with Winthrop & Weinstine, P.A. through calendar year 2027, allowing the County to continue its legislative advocacy efforts and strengthen relationships with state policymakers in support of the Board's adopted legislative priorities.

Commissioner Baer asked if this was budgeted already. Mr. Larson stated yes that this is already in the budget.

On motion by Commissioner Ebinger, seconded by Commissioner Krabbenhoft, and unanimously carried, the Board approved the agreement with Winthrop & Weinstine, P.A. to provide Lobbyist Legislative Services on behalf of Clay County.

Committee Reports/County Administrator Update/Discussions

- Commissioner Ebinger reported on meetings for RRRDC Board of Authority; Partnership4Health CHB; FM Diversion Finance Committee; FM Diversion Authority; Greater FM EDC; and Amy Kobuchar press conference.
- Commissioner Krabbenhoft reported on meetings for Tribal State Relations Training; and CAPLP.
- Commissioner Campbell reported on meetings for PLMSW; RRRDC Board of Authority; Moorhead Wellhead Protection; SWAC; MCCJPA; FM Diversion Authority; and WCRWD.
- Commissioner Baer reported on meetings for Tribal State Relations Training; and WCRWD.
- Commissioner Mongeau reported on meetings for Employee Appreciation Picnic; Planning Commission; FM Diversion Debris-Removal and Restoration Sub-Committee; SWAC; MCCJPA; CAPLP; AMC Board of Directors meeting; Romkey Park Reimagined opening; NACo Public Policy Steering Committee; Soil Health Day with the SWCD, NRCS, and USDA at the Dan Grefsrud Farm; worked on an article with Agri-Pulse; and the Clay County Fair is taking place this week from July 9th to July 12th.
- County Administrator Stephen Larson reported on meetings for the Employee Appreciation Picnic; Pre-Budget meeting for Extension; MCCJPA; WCRWD; Pre-Budget meetings for Technology Services and Highway; met with Darren Brooke and Anna Moore regarding a step 3 union grievance; Loudermill hearing follow up; met with Quinn Jaeger regarding LTSS; met with Commissioner Krabbenhoft; met with Darren Brooke, Troy Amundsen and Anna Moore regarding Detox; and provided nan update on the Red River Communications Reconnect grant.
- Assistant County Administrator Darren Brooke reported on meetings for met with Quinn Jaeger and Anna Moore regarding a new law regarding the Social Worker title; SWAC; met with Chief Deputy Martin on personnel issues; Demonstration of NEMO Q appointment review system; EAC After Action Review of the Picnic; Pre-Budget

meetings for Technology Services and Highway; Step 1 grievance; Data Practices project; step 3 grievance; and Loudermill hearing follow up.

- County Attorney Brian Melton highlighted a Medical Assistance claim that both Social Services and the Attorney's Office worked through together.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 11:02 a.m.

Jenny Mongeau, Chair
County Board of Commissioners

Stephen Larson, County Administrator