

CLAY COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
8:30 AM, TUESDAY, JULY 28, 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, and Kevin Campbell. 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 Krabbenhoft, and unanimously carried, the Board approved the agenda with the amendment to agenda item #2 to interview four candidates instead of three.

Approval to Refill a Case Aide Position

By consent, the Board approved to refill the Case Aide position with backfill if there's internal interest.

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 Campbell, and unanimously carried, the Board approved the bills and vouchers totaling \$895,523 from 102 vendors. There were 75 warrants issued under \$2,000 (\$29,446) and the following 27 were over \$2,000.

Border States Paving, Inc.	\$ 637,533	Glacier Dust Control Inc.	\$ 5,056
Clay Co Public Health	\$ 40,278	Hunt Electric Corporation	\$ 4,348
Becker County Public Health	\$ 19,944	Office of MNIT Services	\$ 4,280
West Central Regional Juvenile Center	\$ 19,500	Verizon-386550144	\$ 4,170
Department Of Corrections	\$ 18,900	Green View Inc.	\$ 3,735
Northwestern MN Juvenile Center-Secure	\$ 15,805	Houston Engineering Inc	\$ 3,613
Code 4 Services, Inc	\$ 13,496	Ramsey County Finance	\$ 3,140
Advanced Business Methods	\$ 13,323	Sanford Health	\$ 3,000
NetCenter Technologies	\$ 11,372	Sign Post	\$ 2,530
Leighton Enterprises Inc.	\$ 8,499	Amazon Capital Services	\$ 2,258
WEX Bank	\$ 7,433	Dakota Plains Mechanical, Inc.	\$ 2,225
TrueNorth Steel	\$ 6,043	Fidlar Technologies	\$ 2,078
Pillar/Allison	\$ 6,000	Disposal Services Inc	\$ 2,040
Fevig Oil Co	\$ 5,469		

Approval of Minutes from July 14, 2026

On motion by Commissioner Krabbenhoft, seconded by Commissioner Baer, and unanimously carried, the Board approved the minutes from July 14, 2026.

Interviews for Two Appointments/Reappointments to the Buffalo-Red River Watershed

District Board

Commissioner Mongeau stated the Clay County Board of Commissioners accepted letters of interest for the appointment of two (2) managers to a three-year term on the Buffalo-Red River Watershed District (BRRWD) Board. The three-year term will expire on August 31, 2029. The Board will be interviewing four candidates: Steve Lindas, Joel Hildebrandt, Amos Baer, and Curt Stubstad.

County Attorney Brian Melton stated he reviewed Minnesota Statute 103D.311 regarding the manager qualifications which states that a person may not be appointed as a manager who is not a voting resident of the watershed district, and/or is a public officer of the county, state or federal government except that of a Soil and Water Conservation supervisor may be a manager. Therefore, the candidates today should indicate if they are on a different board and if they would intend to step down from their current board, if they were appointed today.

Commissioner Mongeau invited Steve Lindas to the front to start the interviews. Mr. Lindas introduced himself and stated he is a Clay County resident and lives in Moorhead. He is currently serving on the Moorhead Public Service Commission. Commissioner Mongeau asked Mr. Lindas what experience he would bring to the BRRWD Board of Managers. Mr. Lindas stated he would bring a scientific lens through physics and ecology, as well as his experience with the City of Moorhead, and the Planning Commission. Mr. Lindas stated over the last two years he was in Washington D.C. getting educated on the federal side of government and how federal money is allocated spent. In addition, he has some farming background. Commissioner Mongeau asked why he wants to be a Watershed Manager. Mr. Lindas stated he spoke with outgoing manager Gerry Van Amburg who said he learned a lot and thought that continuing to bring the scientific lens to the BRRWD would be beneficial. When asked about the philosophy on managing drainage, Mr. Lindas stated water is important and too much can be detrimental to ecology and farming practices. Commissioner Mongeau asked if Mr. Lindas had any personal experience with a Watershed Board in the past. Mr. Lindas stated he has not had any experience in the past. When asked about the FM Diversion project and if he would support those efforts to achieve completion of the project, Mr. Lindas stated the focus would be to obtain the required funding for the completion of that project.

Candidate Joel Hildebrandt introduced himself and stated he's lived in Eglon Township for 18 years. Commissioner Mongeau asked what experience he would bring to the BRRWD Board of Managers. Mr. Hildebrandt stated the experience he would bring would be a lifetime of utilizing conservation practices on the land, from growing up in Pope County, MN to central Wisconsin to western North Dakota and then back to Minnesota. He's held leadership roles in other counties as well as Clay County. Mr. Hildebrandt stated he is on the Clay County Planning Commission and would not intend to step down if he were considered today. Commissioner Mongeau asked if he would like to continue with the interview. Mr. Hildebrandt stated yes. When asked why he wanted to be a Watershed Manager, Mr. Hildebrandt stated he has a lifetime of experience and practical knowledge of how projects can be done to effectively manage water and when possible, to enhance the quality of water. Commissioner Mongeau asked about the philosophy on managing drainage. Mr. Hildebrandt stated there is a time and a place for it. We need to balance the needs of agriculture with the needs of everyone who lives in the watershed and he's a big proponent of tiling. Mr. Hildebrandt indicated that he has not had any direct experience with the watershed in the past. When asked about the FM Diversion project and if he would support those efforts to achieve completion of the project, Mr. Hildebrandt stated he's not sure how to answer that since the project completion is right around

the corner.

Candidate Amos Baer introduced himself and stated he's lived in Eglon Township for over 60 years. He runs a poultry operation in eastern Clay County, and he's served the County through a variety of Board and offices. Commissioner Mongeau asked what experience he would bring to the BRRWD Board of Managers. Mr. Baer discussed his experience in working cooperatively with farmers from Iowa, Minnesota, North Dakota, and South Dakota. And that ability to work with several entities is how he could benefit the BRRWD Board. When asked why he wanted to be a Watershed Manager, Mr. Baer stated he has the time and the expertise to serve. Commissioner Mongeau asked what Mr. Baer's philosophy on managing drainage was. Mr. Baer stated drainage is beneficial for all parties. What has to be kept in focus is the upstream and downstream effects of water management. Commissioner Mongeau asked if Mr. Baer had any personal experience with a Watershed Board in the past. Mr. Baer stated yes that he's had experience on a Watershed Board, it was when he was on the Township Board and it was a positive experience. When asked about the FM Diversion project and if he would support those efforts to achieve completion of the project, Mr. Baer stated his focus would be on seeing a speedy completion and getting it done with quickly.

Commissioner Campbell asked if Mr. Baer believed that upstream and downstream effects could be mitigated. Mr. Baer stated he believes so. The biggest success would be if both parties benefited.

Candidate Curt Stubstad introduced himself and stated he's been a lifelong resident of Elmwood Township near Sabin, MN. Commissioner Mongeau asked what experience he would bring to the BRRWD Board of Managers. Mr. Stubstad stated he's currently serving on the BRRWD, and he's learned a lot, and it's been an eye-opening experience. There's been more diplomacy and conciliation than he originally thought there'd be because everyone has an opinion on where the water should go and how it should go there. And to try and take all that into consideration and reach agreements that make the majority of the people happy has been a challenge. When asked why he wanted to be a Watershed Manager, Mr. Stubstad stated with the issues we've run into, there are projects that need to be run to completion, and he feels the experience that he brings after having served on the Watershed Board, he's hoping to bring these projects to fruition. Mr. Stubstad also discussed the collaboration between the watershed and the state. Commissioner Mongeau asked what Mr. Stubstad's philosophy on managing drainage was. Mr. Stubstad stated natural drain passageways and to work on the technology to keep roads from sloughing. Commissioner Mongeau asked if Mr. Stubstad had any personal experience with a Watershed Board in the past. Mr. Stubstad stated that yes, he's had personal experience with the Watershed Board on both sides, from being a manager to also having Watershed projects on his property. When asked about the FM Diversion project and if he would support those efforts to achieve completion of the project, Mr. Stubstad stated he had the opportunity to go on a tour of the whole project and have a better understanding of the project. There are things we can do through the permitting process to make sure we're working within the boundaries of the agreements that have been set forth with the Diversion. And of course, continue efforts in securing funding.

Commissioner Mongeau thanked all the candidates for their time and their willingness to continue to lend their time and talents to make Clay County a better place.

On motion by Commissioner Campbell, seconded by Commissioner Krabbenhoft, and unanimously carried, the Board approved to reappoint Curt Stubstad to a 3-Year term on the

Buffalo-Red River Watershed District Board.

Commissioner Krabbenhoft stated he believes all candidates are well qualified but the individual who has the broadest knowledge of all things concerned in farm operations is Amos Baer.

Commissioner Campbell discussed the Watershed boundaries and the natural flow of water and how almost all of it goes to the Red River and a significant portion of our Watershed can have an impact on the City of Moorhead. Regardless of who is appointed to these positions, needs to take that into consideration.

Commissioner Baer stated candidate Amos Baer is his uncle and there is no financial connection between the two of them but does feel that he is one of the more qualified candidates.

On motion by Commissioner Krabbenhoft, seconded by Commissioner Campbell, and unanimously carried, the Board approved to appoint Amos Baer to a 3-Year Term on the Buffalo-Red River Watershed District Board.

Request Approval of a Five-Year Public Safety Camera System Modernization Agreement with Axon Enterprise, Inc.

Sheriff Mark Empting stated the Clay County Sheriff's Office is requesting approval to enter into a five-year agreement with Axon Enterprise, Inc. to modernize the Sheriff's Office's public safety camera systems by replacing its aging body-worn cameras and in-car camera systems while implementing the latest generation of Axon technology and digital evidence management services for both the Law Enforcement and Corrections Divisions.

The Sheriff's Office's current body-worn cameras and in-car camera systems are reaching the end of their useful service lives and are experiencing increasing maintenance costs, battery degradation, equipment failures, and technology limitations. Rather than replacing individual components independently, the Sheriff's Office is proposing a comprehensive modernization project that replaces both body-worn cameras and in-car camera systems with a fully integrated Axon ecosystem.

The Sheriff's Office evaluated available public safety camera systems and determined that Axon Enterprise, Inc. provides the most comprehensive and fully integrated solution to meet the County's operational needs. By combining Axon body-worn cameras, Axon Fleet in-car camera systems, and the Evidence.com digital evidence management platform, the Sheriff's Office will utilize a single, secure ecosystem for capturing, storing, managing, and sharing digital evidence.

This integrated approach improves efficiency, reduces administrative workload, enhances officer safety, simplifies training and technical support, and positions the Sheriff's Office with a scalable technology platform for future public safety needs. In addition, implementation of Evidence.com positions the Sheriff's Office to seamlessly integrate with the Clay County Attorney's Office as it transitions to Axon Justice, creating a more efficient and secure digital evidence workflow between law enforcement and prosecutors. This interoperability will improve case preparation, streamline evidence sharing, reduce administrative duplication, and enhance the overall criminal justice process from initial incident through prosecution.

Body-worn cameras and in-car camera systems have become essential tools for documenting law enforcement and correctional operations, preserving evidence, supporting criminal investigations and prosecutions, increasing transparency, protecting employees from false complaints, and strengthening public confidence.

One of the most significant benefits of the proposed agreement is the establishment of a predictable technology replacement life cycle. Under the agreement, all Axon body-worn cameras will be replaced every 30 months, ensuring deputies and correctional officers continue to utilize current, reliable equipment throughout the contract term. In addition, the agreement includes Axon's Technology Assurance Plan (TAP) for the Axon Fleet in-car camera system, providing a complete hardware refresh in Year 5. This life cycle management strategy reduces maintenance costs, minimizes equipment failures, and prevents technology from exceeding its expected service life.

The Sheriff's Office proposes entering into a five-year agreement with Axon Enterprise, Inc. for the replacement of all body-worn cameras and in-car camera systems, together with software licensing, docking equipment, cloud-based digital evidence management, unlimited evidence storage, technology refreshes maintenance, technical support, training, and historical data migration.

Sheriff Empting stated the five-year total for the jail would be \$229,489.20 and the five-year total for Law Enforcement would be \$533,866.20, resulting in a total of \$763,355.40. The Sheriff's Office currently has \$143,610.79 available within the Body Camera Internal Service Fund. These funds will be applied towards the cost of the project. Discussion ensued regarding funding, the Internal Service Fund, and the lifespan of these items.

On motion by Commissioner Campbell, seconded by Commissioner Baer, and unanimously carried, the Board approved the Clay County Sheriff's Office to enter into a five-year Public Safety Camera System Modernization Agreement with Axon Enterprise, Inc. for the replacement of body-worn cameras, replacement of the Sheriff's Office in-car camera systems, implementation of integrated digital evidence management services, and associated software, storage, maintenance, support, and technology refreshers in the amount of \$763,355.40 effective November 1, 2026, for both the Sheriff's Office and the Correctional Facility.

On motion by Commissioner Campbell, seconded by Commissioner Baer, and unanimously carried, the Board authorized the use of \$143,610.79 from the Sheriff's Office Body Camera/In-car Camera Internal Service Fund toward the project, with the remaining costs to be budgeted through future Sheriff's Office operating budgets over the five-year agreement.

Budget Presentation - Withdrawal Management/Detox

Withdrawal Management/Detox Director Troy Amundsen and Detox RN Supervisor Andrew Loewe presented the 2027 budget for the Withdrawal Management/Detox Facility (WMDF) program and discussed revenues including self-pay, Medical Assistance, Veterans Administration, Social Services contract, and PMAP/Medical Assistance. Expenditures include new requests, salaries, health insurance, PERA, prisoner board, gas and oil, other professional services, and medical consultant.

Discussion ensued regarding Moorhead Public Service utilities, and depreciation.

Commissioner Campbell asked how many months Detox was open in 2025. Mr. Amundsen stated 12.

The Board thanked Mr. Amundsen for his presentation.

BREAK

The Board took a break from 9:41 a.m. to 9:46 a.m.

Budget Presentation - West Central Regional Juvenile Center

Juvenile Detention Director James O'Donnell presented the 2027 budget for the West Central Regional Juvenile Center (WCRJC) for both the Secure and Non-Secure Units.

Mr. O'Donnell discussed revenues for the Secure Unit including board and care of juveniles – non member, board and care of juveniles – revenue, board and care of juveniles – Clay County, and miscellaneous reimbursement. Discussion ensued regarding the non-member rates. Expenditures include salaries regular, salaries part time, salaries overtime, PERA, postage, heating, other professional services, treatment costs, travel & expenses, conference, building rent, building insurance, office supplies, equipment over \$500, internal service, miscellaneous, and capital improvements

Mr. O'Donnell discussed revenues for the Non-Secure Unit including board and care, state and federal grants, and miscellaneous reimbursement. Expenditures include staffing, training, printing and publishing, utilities, heating, equipment repair and maintenance, building rent, workers compensation, office supplies, health supplies, auto repair and maintenance, equipment, Internal Service, and miscellaneous. Discussion ensued regarding board and care.

Request Approval to Refill the Detox/WM Director Position Due to Retirement + Possible Reorganization

County Administrator Stephen Larson requested approval to refill the Withdrawal Management/Detox (WMD) Director position due to retirement, effective August 21, 2026, and to approve the possible reorganization of the program. If the Board were to approve the reorganization and move the detox program back under the umbrella of Public Health, the Public Health Director would be reclassified to Grade 28 Step 5, and the WMD Director title would change to the WMD Manager with a wage change to reflect Grade 22 Step 1. Discussion ensued regarding how this would impact the budget.

On motion by Commissioner Campbell, seconded by Commissioner Krabbenhoft, and unanimously carried, the Board approved to move the Withdrawal Management/Detox program to Public Health permanently and increase the Public Health Director to Grade 28 Step 5, and hire a Withdrawal Management/Detox Manager at Grade 22, with backfill.

Committee Reports/County Administrator Update/Discussions

- Commissioner Krabbenhoft reported on meetings for Adult Mental Health LAC Annual Meeting; Historical & Cultural Society; CAPLP Finance; CAPLP Board meeting; and Cass-Clay Food Commission.
- Commissioner Campbell reported on meetings for Personnel Issues Committee; PLMSW; FM Diversion Land Management; SWAC; MCCJPA; FM Diversion Authority Board; WCRWD; and Personnel Issues Committee.

- Commissioner Baer reported on meetings for Planning Commission; Criminal Justice Advisory Board; Community Health Improvement Partnership; and WCRWD.
- Commissioner Mongeau reported on meetings for Churches United Roundtable; Glyndon Township meeting; Greater FM EDC Business Attraction work group; NACo Annual Conference; Personnel Issues Committee; FM Diversion Land Management; FM Diversion Debris Removal & Restoration Sub-Committee; SWAC; City of Moorhead RRC contract; Barnesville Community Picnic; MCCJPA; met with concerned citizens on land use proposals within the county; Lakeland Mental Health Center Board of Directors; and Personnel Issues Committee.
- County Administrator Stephen Larson reported on meetings for Personnel Issues Committee; met with Brian Melton and MCIT; Board Prep with Sarah Hellem; MACA Technical Days; WCRWD; Pre-Budget meeting for the Sheriff's Office; Personnel Issues Committee; met with Brian Melton and Sheriff Empting regarding a series of County issues.
- Assistant County Administrator Darren Brooke reported on meetings for Personnel Issues Committee; MACA Technical Days; met with Pemberton Law Firm to discuss personnel matter; Planning Commissioner/Board of Adjustment; met with Kimberly Savageau; and Personnel Issues Committee.

Closed Session: County Attorney, as permitted by MS section 13D.05, subdivision 3 (b) attorney-client privilege to discuss potential litigation.

On motion by Commissioner Baer, seconded by Commissioner Krabbenhof, and unanimously carried, the Board approved to go into closed session at 10:57 a.m. for attorney-client privilege to discuss potential litigation permitted by MS section 13D.05, subdivision 3 (b).

On motion by Commissioner Baer, seconded by Commissioner Krabbenhof, and unanimously carried, the Board came out of closed session at 11:33 a.m.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 11:33 a.m.

Jenny Mongeau, Chair
County Board of Commissioners

Stephen Larson, County Administrator