

CLAY COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
8:30 A.M., TUESDAY, MAY 3, 2022
Rooms A/B, 3rd Floor, Courthouse
MINUTES

The Clay County Board of Commissioners met in regular session with the following Commissioners present: Jenna Kahly, Frank Gross, Jenny Mongeau (at 10:00 a.m.), Kevin Campbell, and David Ebinger. Others present: County Administrator Stephen Larson, County Attorney Brian Melton, and Sr. Administrative Asst. Colleen Eck

CALL TO ORDER

Vice-Chair Gross called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

On motion by Commissioner Campbell, seconded by Commissioner Kahly, and unanimously carried, the Board approved the agenda.

CONTRACT FOR LEGAL SERVICES WITH FREMSTAD LAW OFFICE AS COURT APPOINTED ATTORNEY

By consent the Board approved the Contract for Legal Services with Fremstad Law Office as Court Appointed Attorney.

EMPLOYEE RECOGNITIONS

The following employees were recognized: Lisa Kunze, 20 years, Assessor's Office; and Joe Olson, 15 years, Maintenance.

CITIZENS TO BE HEARD

There were no citizens who wished to be heard.

APPROVAL OF PAYMENT OF BILLS AND VOUCHERS

On motion by Commissioner Ebinger, seconded by Commissioner Kahly, and unanimously carried, the Board approved the payment of bills and vouchers totaling \$1,210,068 from 123 vendors. From that total, 92 warrants issued were under \$2,000 (\$31,935) and the following 31 were over \$2,000:

First Western Bank and Trust	\$440,768	Clay Co. Treasurer	\$16,039
Department of Corrections	\$186,323	Trinity Services Group, Inc.	\$15,404
Mn PERA	\$141,274	Streicher's	\$11,250
Clay Co Social Services	\$ 72,345	The Retrofit Companies, Inc.	\$ 7,923
Mn State Auditor	\$ 56,637	Consensus Council	\$ 6,750
High Point Networks, LLC	\$ 29,740	Brock White Co LLC	\$ 6,720
Clay Co. Public Health	\$ 24,275	City of Barnesville	\$ 5,000
Prairie Lakes Solid Waste Authority	\$ 24,124	City of Glyndon	\$ 5,000
Magic Fund	\$ 23,898	Felton First Responders, Inc.	\$ 5,000
Otter Tail Co. Public Health	\$ 18,386	Hawley Emergency Response Team	\$ 5,000
Becker Co. Public Health	\$ 18,061	Sabin-Elmwood Fire District	\$ 5,000
ADDvantage Triton LLC	\$ 16,429	Ulen Rescue	\$ 5,000
Historical & Cultural Society	\$ 16,148	Wells Fargo	\$ 3,261

Ramsey Co. Med Examiner	\$ 2,910	Wilkin Co Public Health	\$ 2,215
Legal Services of Northwest Mn	\$ 2,785	Thomson Reuters	\$ 2,054
Accurate Controls, Inc.	\$ 2,417		

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM APRIL 19, 2022

On motion by Commissioner Kahly, seconded by Commissioner Campbell, and unanimously carried, the Board approved the Minutes from April 19, 2022.

REQUEST TO FILL FOUR VACANCIES FOR FT CORRECTIONAL OFFICERS

Correctional Facility Administrator Kari Tuton and Asst. Administrator Kate Johnson informed the Board that they would like to fill four Correctional Officer positions following one promotion and three resignations. The department is currently down nine officers. They have three candidates undergoing background checks and five more were recently hired and are in training. Since Ms. Tuton and Ms. Johnson have been in these lead positions, they have conducted 27 interviews. They and the Sheriff are recruiting at the colleges and will be a part of the alumni emails that get sent out. The Career Academy is a future possibility for recruits. All Clay County inmates have also been brought back to this facility after being housed in other counties due to shortages.

Sheriff Empting announced that this is National Correctional Officer Week and thanked all the amazing Correctional Officers, both past and present, for all their work.

On motion by Commissioner Campbell, seconded by Commissioner Ebinger, and unanimously carried, the Board approved the request to fill four vacancies for FT Correctional Officers.

UPDATE ON AVIAN FLU

Emergency Manager Gabe Tweten stated the highly pathogenic avian influenza first appeared in the state in March. The current strain is H5N1. There are no confirmed cases in Clay County, but it is probably just a matter of time. Forty-four Counties have confirmed infections. The current wet and cool weather pattern is perfect for spreading the disease. It is mainly spread through migratory birds. Commercial flocks are particularly vulnerable to the disease. After the avian flu is found in a domestic flock, the flock is depopulated by staff from USDA and Mn Board of Animal Health, the area is sanitized, allowed to sit for a period of time, then rechecked before it can then be repopulated. For issues with backyard flocks, the Mn Board of Animal Health should be contacted for instructions. There is a lot of water used with this sanitization process. Mr. Tweten has reached out to several contacts on water sources in the event it is needed for sanitization. Signs of the avian flu include less water consumption, heads drooping, and some dying birds. Commercial barns already have tight bio procedures in place. It is important at this time to keep wild birds out of the coops. Small songbirds usually are not a problem with spreading the disease. The latest information will be posted on the County website.

REQUEST TO FILL VACANCY FOR SOCIAL WORK POSITION IN BEHAVIORAL HEALTH DIVISION

Social Service Director Rhonda Porter and Supervisor Kirstin Wegenast addressed the Board. They received one resignation with that employee’s end date on May 15. The position conducts alcohol and drug assessments and is required to have a Licensed Alcohol and Drug Counselor (LADC) license. There is no one in their current pool who carries that certification.

On motion by Commissioner Campbell, seconded by Commissioner Kahly, and unanimously carried, the Board approved filling a vacancy for a Social Work Position in the Behavioral Health Division.

PROCLAMATION(S) FOR FOSTER CARE MONTH AND CHILD CARE PROVIDERS APPRECIATION DAY

Supervisor Jessica Mickelson read the Foster Care Month Proclamation. Gail Burnside extended thanks to all their foster parents. She noted they went above and beyond during COVID with foster kids. They have sent all the foster homes a free day pass to the Red River Zoo. Clay County has 75 foster kids in 68 homes with 32 of them being relatives. There are 15 more homes in the process of being licensed. They have been recruiting for more foster homes over the last few years and have scheduled some upcoming recruitment events. There is a Movie Night coming up and Kids’ Fest in Moorhead. They are offering free training for first aid and CPR. The qualifications include being 21 and older, and may have any housing situation (own, rent, apartments, etc.) and can be single, married, etc. There are also respite care opportunities available.

On motion by Commissioner Campbell, seconded by Commissioner Kahly, and unanimously carried, the Board proclaimed May 2022 as Foster Care Month.

The Proclamation for Child Care Provider Appreciation Day in Clay County was also delivered. Clay County has 134 Child Care Provider homes and seven more in the process of being licensed. A lot of recruitment and ARPA funds have helped increase the numbers. New brochures were distributed.

On motion by Commissioner Campbell, seconded by Commissioner Kahly, and unanimously carried, the Board proclaimed May 6th, 2022, as Child Care Provider Appreciation Day.

ANNUAL REPORT FROM LOCAL ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR CHILDREN’S MENTAL HEALTH

Social Services Supervisor Michelle Thordal and Jeremy Braseth from Lakeland Mental Health were present. They are both on the Board for the Local Advisory Council (LAC) for Children’s Mental Health. Ms. Thordal was elected chair to the LAC last month. They are working to get a parent or two on the council as well. They have distributed more “Who do you Call” and “Parenting Tips” brochures throughout the community. They conduct an annual survey, but only received a handful of responses this time. Commissioner Kahly developed a QR code for people to be able to have access on their phones. They will have a billboard ad during this first week of May.

Mr. Braseth provided the results from the professional survey results. Transportation, payments with un-insured, and wait lists are always issues. During COVID they conducted a lot of meetings via Zoom, and free buses were running during that time. He can help folks apply for Medical Assistance; can offer interpreter services; and if someone is in crisis can provide fast track case management.

Commissioner Kahly read the Mental Health Month Proclamation for 2022. Commissioners Kahly, Campbell and Ebinger provided positive comments and support for the LAC. Efforts have begun on developing a Mobile Mental Health Unit. The program would integrate mental health response with emergency responses.

On motion by Commissioner Ebinger, seconded by Commissioner Campbell, and unanimously carried, the Board proclaimed May 2022 as Mental Health Month in Clay County.

ANNUAL REPORT / PROCLAMATION FROM LOCAL ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR ADULT MENTAL HEALTH

Alison Wolbeck and Ann Burrell, Co-Chairs for Clay County Adult Mental Health Local Advisory Council, appeared before the Board. Leslie Funk from Lakeland Mental Health was also present. They thanked the Board for the investment and ongoing support. The County’ investment provides for some stipends and ongoing education related to mental health services. They are meeting in-person again and moving forward. They highlighted areas from their annual report, touching upon housing needs and the need for a 24/7 effective Crisis Stabilization Unit. At times, clients are sent to Detroit Lakes and Fergus Falls. They are generally kept in-state because of funding. Their recommendations for senior citizens were shared:

- Fund a task force of public and non-public members to be formed to evaluate methods.
- Expand Senior Linkage services to family caregivers by internet and 'hard copy.'
- Increase usage of assistive devices and technology skills for elderly consumers.
- Provide training, education, compensation, and respite services for family caregivers.

Tamara Vance came before the Board and provided her personal story of ending up in this area and how the facilities and people involved with mental health helped her through her struggles.

On motion by Commissioner Kahly, seconded by Commissioner Ebinger, and unanimously approved, the Board approved the current Clay County Adult Mental Health LAC membership list.

ANNUAL REPORT FROM “A PLACE FOR HOPE: RECOVERY AND WELLNESS CENTER”

Executive Director Darrell Vasvick with a Place for Hope: Recovery and Wellness Center. He noted they are involved with FirstLink 211 calls and with 701-235-SEEK suicide hotline. They started a foodbank area and have provided a huge amount of food distribution. They have eight new members and meals are cooked there every day. The center has members, visitors, volunteers, and a board. They recently accepted folks from Sabin. Their website is: aplace4hope.org. He thanked the Board for their support.

Commissioner Mongeau arrived at this time – 10:00 a.m.

REQUEST FOR APPROVAL TO SEND LETTER OF SUPPORT FOR FEDERAL CAPITAL PROJECT FUNDS - LAKE AGASSIZ REGIONAL LIBRARY

County Administrator Stephen Larson stated Liz Lynch from Lake Agassiz Regional Library contacted him about Federal Capital Project Funds to be allocated to the State of Minnesota if the State is willing to include libraries as a priority. The Lake Agassiz Regional Library building in Moorhead is over 50 years old. These funds could be particularly helpful for current/future renovations and construction needs. Costs for these needs are the responsibility of the cities in which the library is located.

Commissioner Kahly is employed by the library and is recusing herself from voting due to any possible conflict of interest. Lake Agassiz Regional Library is a seven-county library system. The local needs are huge. State funds were dropped from \$2 million down to \$1 million this year.

On motion by Commissioner Gross, seconded by Commissioner Ebinger, and carried, the Board approved sending a Letter of Support (with two additions as discussed) for Federal Capital Projects Funds for Lake Agassiz Regional Library. Commissioner Kahly recused herself from the vote.

REQUEST TO FILL VACANCIES FOR TWO JUVENILE WORKER POSITIONS IN NON-SECURE UNIT

Juvenile Center Superintendent James O'Donnell stated that two resignations are being processed. Both employees are leaving in good faith and moving on.

On motion by Commissioner Campbell, seconded by Commissioner Gross, and unanimously carried, the Board approved the request to fill vacancies for two juvenile worker positions in the West Central Regional Juvenile Center non-secure unit with backfill as needed.

REQUEST TO FILL VACANCY FOR TECHNICIAN POSITION FOR DETOX

Public Health Administrator Kathy McKay and Detox Director Troy Amundsen received a resignation from a full-time technician in the Detox Program. The technicians assist the nursing staff with essential duties for client care.

On motion by Commissioner Gross, seconded by Commissioner Kahly, and unanimously carried, the Board approved filling a vacancy for a technician position for the Detox Program.

UPDATE ON COVID-19

Public Health Administrator Kathy McKay and her team provided a brief update on COVID-19. New cases over the last three weeks in Clay County were at 29, 70, and 81 this week. MN, Cass County, and ND also had an increase in cases. They reported that antiviral treatments for COVID are readily available, are most effective in the first five days, and require a doctor's order. Those with higher health risks are great candidates for the treatment. The local healthcare systems are managing well but have also had a bit of an uptick. The public was advised to get their second booster when they are eligible to do so. Vaccine breakthrough is 10.6% in the state, but the rate of hospitalizations and deaths with breakthrough cases is very low. Vaccines for children under five may be available in June. The Vault testing site plans to run through June.

REQUEST TO FILL VACANCY FOR SOLID WASTE MANAGER

County Administrator Stephen Larson stated that Kirk Rosenberger submitted his notification of retirement as the Clay County Solid Waste Manager. His final workday is scheduled for June 17th, 2022. The request is to begin advertising immediately upon approval. There are significant ongoing projects in Solid Waste. The Personnel Issues Committee has met to discuss the scope of the position. Chair Mongeau commented that Mr. Rosenberger has been a staunch supporter of County needs at the State Capital.

On motion by Commissioner Gross, seconded by Commissioner Campbell, and unanimously carried, the Board approved filling the vacancy for the Solid Waste Manager.

COMMITTEE REPORTS/COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR UPDATE/DISCUSSIONS

- Commissioner Kahly reported on a Moorhead Planning Commission meeting and Greater F-M Chamber's Day at the Capital.
- Commissioner Gross attended a retirement event for Sharon Walz.
- Commissioner Campbell reported on meetings for Prairie Lakes Municipal Solid Waste Authority; Personnel Issues Committee; Solid Waste Advisory Committee; and Moorhead Clay County Joint Powers Authority.
- Commissioner Ebinger reported on meetings for FM Diversion Finance Committee; Greater F-M Chamber's Day at the Capital; and FM Economic Development Council issues.
- Commissioner Mongeau reported on meetings for Prairie Lakes Municipal Solid Waste Authority; Solid Waste Advisory Committee; Personnel Issues Committee; Resource Recovery Facility Construction Update; Mayor Carlson and Dan Mahli on local needs; and SCORE funding request. She had a phone conversation with Senator Eken; and toured with Rep. Fischbach at the Career Academy.
- Administrator Larson reported on meetings for Personnel Issues Committee; Solid Waste Advisory Committee; Moorhead Clay County Joint Powers Authority; County Attorney; Management; Local Administrators re: regional dispatch; legislation discussions; tour at landfill; Solid Waste issues and punch list; and attended a Spring Prairie Hutterite Colony meeting and tour.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:16 a.m.

Jenny Mongeau, Chair
County Board of Commissioners

Stephen Larson, County Administrator