

## AGENDA

### **REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF ST. LOUIS COUNTY, MINNESOTA**



**Tuesday, May 10, 2011, 9:30 A.M.**

**County Board Room, Second Floor  
St. Louis County Courthouse  
100 N. 5th Avenue West  
Duluth, Minnesota**

**STEVE O'NEIL, Chair  
Second District**

**FRANK JEWELL  
First District**

**CHRIS DAHLBERG  
Third District**

**MIKE FORSMAN  
Fourth District**

**PEG SWEENEY  
Fifth District**

**KEITH NELSON, Vice-Chair  
Sixth District**

**STEVE RAUKAR  
Seventh District**

County Auditor  
Don Dicklich

County Administrator  
Kevin Gray

County Attorney  
Mark Rubin

Clerk of the Board  
Patricia Stolee

The St. Louis County Board of Commissioners welcomes you to this meeting. This agenda contains a brief description of each item to be considered. The Board encourages your participation. If you wish to speak on an item contained in the agenda, you will be allowed to address the Board when a motion is on the floor. If you wish to speak on a matter which does not appear on the agenda, you may do so during the public comment period at the beginning of the meeting. Except as otherwise provided by the Standing Rules of the County Board, no action shall be taken on any item not appearing in the agenda.

When addressing the Board, please sign in at the podium and state your name and address for the record. Please address the Board as a whole through the Chair. Comments to individual Commissioners or staff are not permitted. The St. Louis County Board promotes adherence to civility in conducting the business of the County. Civility will provide increased opportunities for civil discourse in order to find positive resolutions to the issue before the Board. Tools of civility include: pay attention, listen, be inclusive, do not gossip, show respect, be agreeable, apologize, give constructive criticism and take responsibility [County Board Resolution No. 560, adopted on September 9, 2003]. Speakers will be limited to five (5) minutes.

**\*\*In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, those requiring accommodation for this meeting should notify Property Management 72 hours prior to the meeting at (218)725-5085.\*\***

All supporting documentation is available for public review in the County Auditor's Office, 100 North 5th Avenue West - Room No. 214, St. Louis County Courthouse, Duluth, MN, during regular business hours 8:00 A.M. - 4:30 P.M., Monday through Friday. Agenda is also available on our website at <http://www.stlouiscountymn.gov/GOVERNMENT/BoardofCommissioners.aspx>

**AGENDA**  
**St. Louis County Board**  
**May 10, 2011**  
**Page 2**

9:30 A.M. Pledge of Allegiance  
Roll Call

AT THIS TIME CITIZENS WILL BE ALLOWED TO ADDRESS THE BOARD ON ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA. [Speakers will be limited to 5 minutes each.]

FOR ITEMS ON THE AGENDA, CITIZENS WILL BE ALLOWED TO ADDRESS THE BOARD AT THE TIME A MOTION IS ON THE FLOOR.

CONSENT AGENDA: Approval of business submitted on the Consent Agenda.

**REPORTS OF BOARDS AND COMMITTEES**

**Public Works & Transportation Committee – Commissioner Forsman, Chair**

1. Highway project bid awarded to **Hoover Construction Co.**, Virginia, MN, on their low bid of **\$5,599,994.89** for SP 69-604-060, CP 9282, Grading, Aggregate Base, Curb & Gutter, and Bituminous Surfacing on County State Aid Highway 4 near Markham, MN. **[Tabled from the April 12, 26, & May 3, 2011, meetings. Without recommendation.] {11-124R}**

**Central Management & Intergovernmental Committee - Commissioner Raukar, Chair**

2. Establish a “Blue Ribbon” Assessment Practices Review Panel to examine the current county assessment functions and develop a five year strategic plan. **[Without recommendation.] {11-179}**



Hawkinson Construction Co. Inc. Grand Rapids, MN	\$568,680.17
Northland Constructors of Duluth, LLC Duluth, MN	\$579,455.97
Hardrives, Inc. Rogers, MN	\$588,394.55

- 2. Project:** MP 48-1019, CP 1019  
**Location:** CSAH 48 (Taft Road) from CR 223 (Munger Shaw Road) to Bridge 69534 (Over Cloquet River) in Fredenberg MN; length 4.78 mi  
**Traffic:** 784  
**PQI:** 2.5  
**Construction:** Culverts, Bituminous Pavement Reclamation, Bituminous Surfacing, Aggregate Shouldering  
**Funding:** Fund 200, Agency 203105, Object 652800  
**Anticipated Start Date:** July 1, 2011  
**Anticipated Completion Date:** September 23, 2011  
**Engineer's Estimate:** \$1,469,066.73

**BIDS:**

<b>KGM Contractors, Inc. Angora, MN</b>	<b>\$1,297,240.57</b>	<b>(-\$171,826.16, -11.70%)</b>
Ulland Brothers, Inc. Cloquet, MN	\$1,309,380.00	
Hawkinson Construction Co. Inc. Grand Rapids, MN	\$1,333,353.13	
Northland Constructors of Duluth, LLC Duluth, MN	\$1,397,470.54	
Hardrives, Inc. Rogers, MN	\$1,412,295.55	
Knife River Materials Bemidji, MN	\$1,629,390.40	

- 3. Project:** SP 69-604-060, CP 9282  
**Location:** CSAH 4 from CSAH 108 to 0.7 miles north of CR 340 in Markham, MN, length 4.17 mi  
**Traffic:** 884  
**PQI:** 2.5  
**Construction:** Grading, Aggregate Base, Curb & Gutter, Bituminous Surfacing  
**Funding:** Fund 220, Agency 220173, Object 652700  
**Anticipated Start Date:** April 25, 2011  
**Anticipated Completion Date:** October 28, 2011  
**Engineer's Estimate:** \$5,530,899.20

**BIDS:**

<b>Hoover Construction Co. Virginia, MN</b>	<b>\$5,599,994.89</b>	<b>(+\$69,095.69, +1.25%)</b>
KGM Contractors, Inc. Angora, MN	\$5,647,442.18	
Ulland Brothers, Inc. Cloquet, MN	\$5,912,000.00	
Hoffman Construction Co. Black River Falls, WI	\$7,632,232.12	

**RECOMMENDATION:**

It is recommended that the St. Louis County Board authorize the award of bids as follows:

MP 43-21430, CP 21430 to Ulland Brothers, Inc. of Cloquet, MN in the amount of \$473,945.00 payable from Fund 200, Agency 203242, Object 652800

MP 48-1019, CP 1019 to KGM Contractors, Inc. of Angora, MN in the amount of \$1,297,240.57 payable from Fund 200, Agency 203105, Object 652800

SP 69-604-060, CP 9282 to Hoover Construction Co. of Virginia, MN in the amount of \$5,599,994.89 payable from Fund 220, Agency 220173, Object 652700

**BY COMMISSIONER \_\_\_\_\_**

**WHEREAS**, bids have been received by the County Auditor for the following project:

SP 69-604-060, CP 9282 located on CSAH 4 from CSAH 108 to 0.7 miles north of CR 340 in Markham, MN.

**WHEREAS**, bids were opened in the County Board Room at 10:00 a.m., April 4, 2011, and the low responsible bidder determined.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the St. Louis County Board approves the award on the above project to the low bidder:

<u>LOW BIDDER</u>	<u>ADDRESS</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
Hoover Construction Co.	P.O. Box 1007 302 South Hoover Rd. Virginia, MN 55792	\$5,599,994.89

**RESOLVED FURTHER**, that the appropriate county officials are authorized to approve the Contractor's Performance Bonds and to execute the bonds and contract for the above listed project payable from Fund 220, Agency 220173, Object 652700.



A discussion about the proposed “Blue Ribbon” Assessment Practices Review Panel was held at a County Board Workshop on April 19, 2011. The proposed panel will consist of 13 members representing various regions and jurisdictions within St. Louis County, with each commissioner appointing one member, and with another six members appointed as “at-large” members. The following individuals have been contacted and have agreed to be appointed to serve on the panel.

**Commissioner Appointees:**

Commissioner Jewell	District 1:	John Heino	Duluth, MN
Commissioner O’Neil	District 2:	John Gellatly	Duluth, MN
Commissioner Dahlberg	District 3:	John Vigen	Duluth, MN
Commissioner Forsman	District 4:	Roger Skraba	Ely, MN
Commissioner Sweeney	District 5:	Jim Aird	Proctor, MN
Commissioner Nelson	District 6:	Dawn Cole	Eveleth, MN
Commissioner Raukar	District 7:	Frank Bigelow	Hibbing, MN

**At-Large Appointees:**

Jan Jackson	Kelsey, MN
Bruce Sandberg	Hibbing, MN
Rick Pulek	Virginia, MN
Steve Abrahamson	Tower, MN
Jerry Palmquist	Chisholm, MN
Jim Fisher	Zim, MN

The panel will be co-chaired by members chosen from the northern and southern parts of the county. Staff assistance will be provided to the panel, and mileage and meal costs will be reimbursed at the conus rate. Meetings will rotate between the north and south halves of the county.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

It is recommend that the St. Louis County Board authorize the creation of a “Blue Ribbon” Assessment Practices Review Panel to examine the county assessment functions and develop a five year strategic plan to build upon a county-wide assessment strategy that is timely, uniform, and fair.

**BY COMMISSIONER** \_\_\_\_\_

**WHEREAS**, assessing property values is an essential component of Minnesota’s property tax system, with property assessments defining the tax base and consequently who pays what share of the overall property tax levy; and

**WHEREAS**, the St. Louis County Board of Commissioners believes that the county’s property valuation system must be constructed to be timely, uniform, and fair for all of its citizens; and

**WHEREAS**, in order to establish a solid foundation for the future, the St. Louis County Public Records and Property Valuation Director and the County Assessor recommend that the St. Louis County Board establish a “Blue Ribbon” Assessment Practices Review Panel to examine current county assessment functions and develop a five year strategic plan to build upon a county-wide assessment strategy that is timely, uniform, and fair.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the St. Louis County Board authorizes the establishment of a “Blue Ribbon” Assessment Practices Review Panel charged with completing a thorough countywide analysis of property assessment functions, and preparing a comprehensive strategic plan for presentation to the County Board by December 1, 2011, that will construct a timely, uniform, and fair property valuation model for St. Louis County.

**RESOLVED FURTHER**, that the Assessment Practices Review Panel will consist of thirteen (13) members representing various regions and jurisdictions within St. Louis County, with each commissioner appointing one member, and another six members appointed by the County Board as “At-Large” members.

**RESOLVED FURTHER**, that the Assessment Practices Review Panel will be co-chaired by members chosen from the northern and southern parts of St. Louis County and will be provided with staff assistance, mileage and meal reimbursement at the conus rate, and will conduct regular meetings rotating between the north and south halves of the county.

**RESOLVED FURTHER**, that the following individuals are appointed by the St. Louis County Board to the “Blue Ribbon” Assessment Practices Review Panel:

**Commissioner Appointees:**

Commissioner Jewell	District 1:	John Heino	Duluth, MN
Commissioner O’Neil	District 2:	John Gellatly	Duluth, MN
Commissioner Dahlberg	District 3:	John Vigen	Duluth, MN
Commissioner Forsman	District 4:	Roger Skraba	Ely, MN
Commissioner Sweeney	District 5:	Jim Aird	Proctor, MN
Commissioner Nelson	District 6:	Dawn Cole	Eveleth, MN
Commissioner Raukar	District 7:	Frank Bigelow	Hibbing, MN

**At-Large Appointees:**

Jan Jackson	Kelsey, MN
Bruce Sandberg	Hibbing, MN
Rick Pulek	Virginia, MN
Steve Abrahamson	Tower, MN
Jerry Palmquist	Chisholm, MN
Jim Fisher	Zim, MN

# **St. Louis County**

## **“Blue Ribbon” Assessment Practices Review Panel**

April 19, 2011 County Board Workshop

### **Background**

Assessing property values is an essential component of Minnesota’s property tax system. Property assessments define the tax base and consequently who pays what share of the property tax levy.

If some properties’ valuations are too high, those property owners will pay more than their fair share of property taxes. Conversely, if some properties’ valuations are too low, those owners will pay less than their fair share. When property is valued correctly in all jurisdictions, the property tax burden is distributed equitably, as defined by the Legislature.

In St. Louis County, cities and townships either employ, contract with local assessors or the County Assessor’s office for property assessment services. All unorganized townships are assessed by the St. Louis County Assessor. The City of Duluth, a city of the first class, appoints a city assessor who has the same powers and duties of the County Assessor.

The St. Louis County Assessor strives to have a property valuation system that is equitable and fair. There are, however, challenges in meeting this goal, such as:

- The size and complexity of land applications in St. Louis County
- Continued budget demands and aid reductions for St. Louis County, cities, and townships
- Ever changing property assessment and classification legislation
- New rules and policies from the Minnesota Department of Revenue
- An aging contract appraiser work force
- Lack of timely completion, consistency, and accuracy by some local contract appraisers’ property assessments, along with limited enforcement capabilities available to the county
- Annual and unknown shifts in workload due to townships switching between local contract appraisers and county appraisers
- The need to obtain local assessors’ paper based assessment information to include in the county Geographic Information System (GIS)
- Increase in the number of appeals to the County Board of Appeal and Equalization and tax court cases due to perceived market value changes

### **Opportunities:**

- St. Louis County GIS allows desk top, in-depth analysis of land parcels using new technology tools like field mobile data devices.
- Communication tools such as the internet can be used for on-line information, enhance customer service and build property owner awareness and education.
- The ability now exists to digitize paper based records and electronically access the records in the field.
- Government jurisdictions are increasing in willingness to explore shared services and partnerships.

In order to establish a solid foundation for the future, the St. Louis County Public Records and Property Valuation Director and the County Assessor recommend that the St. Louis County Board authorize the creation of a “**Blue Ribbon**” **Assessment Practices Review Panel** to examine the county assessment functions and develop a five year strategic plan to build upon a county-wide assessment strategy that is **timely, uniform, and fair**.

### **Goals of the “Blue Ribbon” Assessment Practices Review Panel:**

- Complete a thorough countywide analysis of property assessment functions
- Review state statutes that govern property assessment and classification
- Review the current property valuation and assessment model that uses city, contract, and county assessors
- Recommend areas of opportunity to share services and create partnerships with other government jurisdictions
- Review technology tools and recommend areas of opportunity to streamline service delivery
- Prepare a comprehensive strategic plan to the St. Louis County Board by December 1, 2011 that will build upon a goal of a timely, uniform and fair property valuation model

The Assessment Practices Review Panel will consist of 13 members representing various regions and jurisdictions within St. Louis County, with each commissioner appointing one member, and another six members appointed as “At-Large” members.

The panel will be co-chaired by panel members chosen from the northern and southern parts of St. Louis County. Staff assistance will be provided to the panel, and mileage and meal costs will be reimbursed. Meetings will rotate between the north and south halves of the county. Some meeting times and dates may fluctuate depending upon the schedules of the members.