

# COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE ST. LOUIS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

November 2, 2021

Location: Government Services Center, Duluth, Minnesota

Present: Commissioners Jewell, Boyle, Grimm, McDonald, Musolf, Nelson and Chair Jugovich

Absent: None

Convened: Chair Jugovich called the meeting to order at 9:41 a.m.

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## CONSENT AGENDA

Boyle/McDonald moved to approve the consent agenda. The motion passed. (7-0)

- Minutes of October 26, 2021
- Cancellation of Forfeiture List for Board Approval [21-473]
- Abatement List for Board Approval [21-474]
- St. Louis County Unorganized Territory Polling Places for 2022 [21-475]
- Right of Way Easement Across State Tax Forfeited Land to John A. Wilson (54-12) [21-476]
- Special Sale to Asbach in Kugler Twp (410-0024-00560) [21-477]
- Special Sale to United States Steel Corporation in Ness Twp (470-0010-03860) [21-478]

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## Finance & Budget Committee

Nelson/Jugovich moved that the St. Louis County Board authorizes the appropriate county officials to execute a seven-year contract as approved by the St. Louis County Attorney with Paymentus to provide an online and IVR payment solution for property taxes, no additional funding from the Auditor budget is required. [21-479]. The motion passed. (7-0)

Nelson/Jewell moved to approve the 2021 third quarter budget changes. [21-480]. The motion passed. (7-0)

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## Public Safety & Corrections Committee

Grimm/Boyle moved that the St. Louis County Board authorizes the reallocation of one vacant 1.0 FTE Deputy Sheriff position (Position code 0955-086), Deputy Sheriff Pay Plan, Pay Grade R20 Step 1), to a 1.0 FTE Deputy Sheriff Sergeant (Deputy Sheriff Supervisory Pay Plan, Pay Grade T24B Step 1), in the St. Louis County Sheriff's Office, resulting in an annual increase of approximately \$10,596 for the position. [21-481]. St. Louis County Sheriff Ross Litman commented that the workload for the taskforce is immense; the number of opioid overdoses and deaths are skyrocketing. At the halfway point of this year, we already exceeded the total number of opioid deaths compared to 2020. After further discussion, the motion passed. (7-0)

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## Central Management & Intergovernmental Committee

Jewell/Boyle moved that the Committee of the Whole will convene a closed session on November 2, 2021, for the purpose of discussing the proposed settlement and litigation strategy relating to *Slaughter v. St. Louis County*, Case No. 21-cv-795 (SRN/LIB), in accord with Minn. Stat. § 13D.05, subd. 3(b). No other pending public business will be discussed at this closed session. The motion passed. (7-0)

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## COMMISSIONER DISCUSSION ITEMS AND REPORTS

Commissioner Nelson noted that this weekend is the opening of the Minnesota firearms deer hunting season and encouraged everyone to have a safe weekend. Commissioner Nelson said that the season has a tremendous economic impact to St. Louis County and the State of Minnesota.

Commissioner Boyle mentioned that the City of Duluth and various school districts were holding an election today and encouraged citizens to vote.

Commissioner McDonald spoke on behalf of the City of Orr and thanked the Board for their support and financial assistance for the rebuild of the Bog Walk.

Chair Jugovich said that he was pleased everyone had a safe Halloween and was not aware of any incidences.

At 10:01 a.m., the Committee convened a closed session. At 10:34 a.m., the Committee re-convened with all members present.

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## Time Specific Presentations

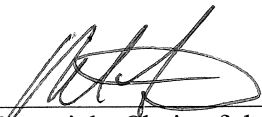
St. Louis County Communications Director Dana Kazel gave a presentation regarding the 2021 Upper Midwest Regional Emmy Award for the production of “COVID-19 Vaccines: Finding Answers.” Director Kazel commented that the project began in February and was a collaboration between local media, healthcare providers, and St. Louis County Public Health staff. The goal was to let people know where and when they could get vaccinated, inform the public about the safety of the various vaccines, address vaccine hesitancy concerns and answer COVID-19 related questions.

St. Louis County Public Health Director Amy Westbrook gave the Board an update regarding the COVID-19 pandemic. Director Westbrook said that St. Louis County is still in a high transmission rate based on the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) categories; defined as 50 per 100,000 cases over a 14-day period. Director Westbrook commented that they have seen a lot of community transmission in September and October and noted that October was the third highest month for cases and hospitalization since the pandemic started. The county is currently at a 72% vaccination rate.

Terri Heaton, of Baker Tilly, gave the Board a presentation regarding the recent \$25,650,000 issuance of General Obligation Capital Improvement Bonds. Ms. Heaton said that overall strong management, comprehensive financial policies and long-term planning are key factors in the county achieving the AA+ rating. Seven bids were received; the lowest bid was 1.8449% received from Piper Sandler & Company. St. Louis County Auditor Nancy Nilsen reiterated the importance of ensuring the county is

financially sound. Auditor Nilsen thanked the Board for their support and acknowledged the efforts of Administration, Public Works Director Jim Foldesi and Finance Director Cristen Cristensen.

At 11:25 a.m., McDonald/Nelson moved to adjourn the Committee of the Whole meeting. The motion passed. (7-0)



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Mike Jugovich, Chair of the County Board



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Phil Chapman, Clerk of the County Board