

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE ST. LOUIS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

May 12, 2020

Location: Government Services Center, St. Louis River Room, Duluth, Minnesota

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

Absent: None

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

Note: Commissioners Frank Jewell, Patrick Boyle, Beth Olson and Paul McDonald participated by WebEx.

CONSENT AGENDA

McDonald/Jewell moved to approve the consent agenda. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed. (7-0)

- Minutes of May 5, 2020
- Application for Blue Plus Grant Funds for General Assistance for Individuals Experiencing or at Risk of Experiencing Homelessness Award [20-179]
- Cooperative Agreement with the Minnesota Department of Transportation for Improvements to CSAH 101 (Eveleth) [20-180]
- Lawful Gambling Application (French Township) [20-181]
- Abatement List for Board Approval [20-182]
- Request for Authorization to Apply for Innovative Prosecution Solutions in Combating Violent Crime Initiative Grant [20-183]

Public Works & Transportation Committee

McDonald/Nelson moved to award a bid to KGM Contractors, Inc., Angora, MN, in the amount of \$2,492,531.13, for project CP 0000-449099 (LOW) (PRIME); CP 0000-449100 / SAP 069-030-048 (TIED) (PRIME); CP 0000-447673 / SAP 069-030-047 (TIED) (PRIME); CP 0000-430506 (TIED) (PRIME); CP 0000-513126 (TIED), Bituminous Seal Coat, Fog Seal, and Pavement Markings, for various locations in St. Louis County, Chisholm, Duluth and Hermantown. [20-184]. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed. (7-0)

Finance & Budget Committee

Jugovich/Musolf moved that the St. Louis County Board hereby delegates its authority under Minn. Stat. § 279.01 to the County Auditor/Treasurer to abate penalties for late payments made for the first half of current year property taxes due by May 15, 2020, but paid by July 15, 2020, for qualifying taxpayers: that those who are experiencing significant economic hardship due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the Governor's Emergency Executive Orders 20-01 through 20-49, excepting individuals and businesses with escrowed property or payments through Automatic ACH payments, properties classified as Utility,

or for properties that have had a delinquent property tax payment within the last 10 years; that no refunds will be authorized for property taxes paid; and that the County Auditor/Treasurer, or their designee, is directed to undertake such actions and request such assistance as needed to accomplish this Resolution action to the extent practicable and allowed by law. This abatement consideration applies only to current year property tax payments originally due May 15, 2020, but received by July 15, 2020, and that property owners may seek reduction or abatement of any other property tax costs, penalties, or interest through the regular procedures provided for in Minn. Stat. § 375.192. Consistent with the approved COVID -19 abatement application, if the first one-half of property taxes (due May 15, 2020) are not paid by July 15, 2020, then no abatement of penalties will occur. [20-185]. St. Louis County Auditor/Treasurer Nancy Nilsen said that the only option available for the county to provide tax relief to taxpayers is to waive late fees. Auditor Nilsen said that the deadline to apply for a COVID-19 penalty abatement is May 31, 2020, and that qualifying taxpayers must provide an explanation that they are experiencing economic hardship due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Commissioner Nelson commented that the Department of Finance indicated that COVID-19 is not a natural disaster. Because of this, the county's authority to provide property tax relief to taxpayers is limited to current state statute, which only gives the Board authority to waive late fees. After further discussion, a roll call vote was taken and the motion passed. (7-0)

Central Management & Intergovernmental Committee

Jewell/Olson moved to appoint the following individuals to serve as the Special Board of Appeal and Equalization for Assessment Year 2020: John Vigen, Duluth, Commissioner District #1; John Doberstein, Duluth, Commissioner District #2; Sherri Puckett, Duluth, Commissioner District #3; Leonard Cersine, Ely, Commissioner District #4; Tim Peterson, Hermantown, Commissioner District #5; Dawn Cole, Town of Fayal, Commissioner District #6; and Frank Bigelow, City of Hibbing, Commissioner District #7; and that the Special Board of Appeal and Equalization is: delegated all powers and duties of the County Board of Appeal and Equalization; to report the results of their deliberations back to the St. Louis County Board in the form of minutes kept by the Clerk of the County Board; directed to hold at least one meeting day in the St. Louis County Courthouse, Duluth, and one day at the St. Louis County Courthouse in Virginia, Minnesota; to be compensated at the rate of \$200 per meeting day and be reimbursed for mileage and expenses at the current county rate; and directed to convene at 10:00 A.M., June 16, 2020, in the Commissioner's Conference Room, St. Louis County Courthouse, Duluth, MN. [20-186]. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed. (7-0)

Jewell/Jugovich moved to reappoint Kenneth Butler as a full member to the Civil Service Commission for a three-year term ending May 6, 2023. [20-187]. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed. (7-0)

The Committee recessed at 10:16 a.m. At 10:26 a.m., the Committee reconvened with all members present.

Jewell/Olson moved to direct Administration to meet the conditions of any subsequent Governor emergency orders and, if necessary, adjust the 2020 Board Meeting Schedule to revise the location of its May 26, 2020 meeting from the Buhl Senior Center, Buhl, MN, to the Liz Prebich Room at the Government Services Center, Virginia, MN. [20-189]. Deputy Administrator Brian Fritsinger said that he and IT Director Jeremy Craker visited the Buhl Senior Center and they had concerns regarding the technology available at the Senior Center. Commissioner discussion focused on how to safely accommodate the large number of people that are expected to comment on the refugee resettlement resolution and cartway hearing at the May 26, 2020 Board meeting. Commissioner Nelson suggested that consideration of the refugee resolution be postponed to a later date, since the resolution is no longer

relevant. Commissioner Jewell requested a point of order regarding clarification on considering a resolution that has been tabled. Assistant County Attorney Kim Maki responded that according to Robert's Rules, a Commissioner who voted on the prevailing side could move to reconsider a previously tabled resolution at any time. Commissioner Jewell ruled that discussion regarding the refugee resettlement resolution was out of order. The Committee recessed at 10:52 a.m. At 11:00 a.m., the Committee reconvened with all members present. Deputy Administrator Fritsinger clarified that the resolution does not move the meeting to Virginia; it gives Administration the flexibility to move the meeting to Virginia if necessary. After further discussion, a roll call vote was taken and the motion passed. (6-1, Nelson)

Public Safety & Corrections Committee

Olson/McDonald moved to authorize the conversion of seven (7) current .5 FTE Corrections Officer positions to 1.0 FTEs, for a total complement increase of 3.5. [20-188]. St. Louis County Sheriff Ross Litman said that the staffing change will benefit the jail division by helping them to retain staff. After further discussion, a roll call vote was taken and the motion passed. (7-0)

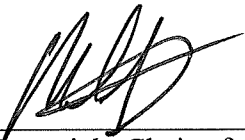
COMMISSIONER DISCUSSION ITEMS AND REPORTS

Commissioner Jewell commented on a letter regarding Western Lake Superior Sanitary District's (WLSSD) dumping of municipal solid waste - leachate into Lake Superior; the letter was distributed to Commissioners for signatures and submission to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA). Commissioner Jewell questioned the accuracy of the information in the letter and said that submission of the letter could create unintended issues. Commissioner Jewell said that he felt the letter was an attack on the City of Duluth.

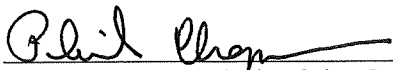
Commissioner Boyle commented on a possible bonding bill in the next week or two.

Chair Jugovich read an email from Kimberly Nerhaugen requesting that the property tax payment deadline be extended; the letter was inadvertently missed during the citizen comment portion of the Board meeting.

At 11:29 a.m., Commissioner Musolf, supported by Commissioner Olson, moved to adjourn the Committee of the Whole meeting. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed. (7-0)



Mike Jugovich, Chair of the County Board



Phil Chapman, Clerk of the County Board