

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE ST. LOUIS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

October 24, 2023

Location: Rice Lake City Hall, Rice Lake, Minnesota

Present: Commissioners Harala, Grimm, McDonald, Musolf, Nelson, and Chair Boyle

Absent: Commissioner Jugovich

Convened: Chair Boyle called the meeting to order at 9:52 a.m.

CONSENT AGENDA

McDonald/Musolf moved to approve the consent agenda. The motion passed. (6-0, Jugovich absent)

- Minutes of October 10, 2023
- Authorization to Contract with Department of Human Services for the Northeast Minnesota Project to End Long-Term Homelessness and Hearth Connection [23-426]
- Addition of Cook County to Existing Joint Powers Agreement for Non-Emergency Medical Transportation [23-427]
- Acceptance of Grant Funds from the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Victims of Crime Transforming Grant and Enter into Contract with Minnesota Elder Justice Center [23-428]
- Cooperative Agreement with Lake County for the 2024 Maintenance Striping Project, CP 0000-475841 [23-429]
- Cooperative Agreement with Cook County and Lake County for the 2024 State Aid Pavement Marking Project, SAP 069-030-049, CP 0000-475845 [23-430]
- DNR Lease Agreement (LMIS000475) for Parcel Adjacent to Linden Grove Public Works Facility [23-431]
- Abatement List for Board Approval [23-432]
- Cancellation of Forfeiture List for Board Approval [23-433]
- Award of Bids: 5931C (CP 0000-815719) Jean Duluth Building Erection [23-434]
- Lincoln Park Children and Families Collaborative, American Rescue Plan Act Revenue Loss Funding [23-435]
- Certification of Property Assessed Clean Energy (MinnPace) Financing for Energy Improvements - Happy Rock, LLC [23-436]
- Certification of Property Assessed Clean Energy (MinnPace) Financing for Energy Improvements - Whole Foods Co-op, Inc. [23-437]
- Resolution of Minnesota Department of Transportation's Property-Damage Claim [23-438]
- Ratification of Resolution of Progressive Direct Insurance Company's Property-Damage Claim Arising from Accident in March 2023 [23-439]
- Resolution of Progressive Direct Insurance Company's Property-Damage Claim Arising from Accident in June 2023 [23-440]
- Professional Services Agreement with Pigeonly, Inc. [23-441]
- Right-of-Way and Utility Easement Across State Tax-Forfeited Land to ALLETE, Inc., d/b/a Minnesota Power (Unorg. Twp 53-15) [23-442]

- Acceptance of FY2024/2025 Natural Resources Block Grant from Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources [23-443]

Finance & Budget Committee

Nelson/Harala moved that the St. Louis County Board approves two miscellaneous electrical service contracts for the period commencing October 1, 2023, through September 30, 2028, with Hunt Electric Corporation and PEC Solutions, LLC to complete miscellaneous electric projects under \$50,000 for various County departments on an as-needed basis. [23-444]. The motion passed. (6-0, Jugovich absent)

Nelson/Harala moved that the St. Louis County Board authorizes 2024 monthly premium rates for the self-insured employee and retiree health insurance plan featuring \$400 Single/\$800 Family Deductibles and \$1,200 Single/\$2,400 Family Out-of-Pocket Caps at Enhanced In-Network providers (Tier 1); \$800 Single/\$1,600 Family Deductibles and \$2,400 Single/\$4,800 Family Out-of-Pocket Caps at Standard In-Network providers (Tier 2); \$1,200 Single/\$2,400 Family Deductibles and \$6,000 Single/\$12,000 Family Out-of-Pocket Caps at Out-of-Network providers as follows: SINGLE COVERAGE: \$982.25, FAMILY COVERAGE: \$2,281.29; that the 2024 stop-loss rate payable to Blue Cross Blue Shield of Minnesota of \$17.47 per contract per month is approved; that a 2024 per contract per month administrative service fee of \$45.27 payable to Blue Cross Blue Shield of Minnesota is approved; that the 2024 monthly premium rate for the self-insured employee dental coverage is approved to the amount of \$43.78; that the voluntary employee-paid dependent dental plan is transitioned from fully-insured to self-insured status with similar coverages for deductibles, coinsurances and annual maximum benefits as the employee coverage effective January 1, 2024, at the following monthly premium rates: SPOUSE ONLY COVERAGE: \$52.56, ONE CHILD COVERAGE: \$36.37, SPOUSE + CHILD(REN) COVERAGE: \$92.21; that the 2024 per contract per month administrative service fee of \$3.60 payable to Delta Dental Plan of Minnesota is approved; and further, authorizes the appropriate county officials to execute a contract for administrative services of the medical and dental plans for the time period covering January 1 – December 31, 2024, as set forth above. [23-445]. Commissioner Nelson commented that he moved the resolution with a 0% rate increase instead of the recommended 4% rate increase because he believes the fund balance is in good shape. Jim Gottschald, Director of Administration and Human Resources, commented that if the Board approves a 0% rate increase, this will be the fourth year that health insurance rates have not increased. Director Gottschald provided the Board with a brief overview of the health insurance plan and said the employee-paid dependent dental plan will be transitioned to the self-insured status. St. Louis County Auditor Nancy Nilsen said she is comfortable when the fund balance is between \$18 and \$20 million and would be supportive of the 0% increase because the current fund balance is approximately \$19 million. After further discussion, the motion passed. (6-0, Jugovich absent)

Nelson/Boyle moved that the St. Louis County Board authorizes the appropriate county officials to enter into service contracts with Bill Thompson, Matthew Miller, and Rachel Weis to provide parent representation in Children In Need of Protection (CHIPS), Termination of Parental Rights (TPR), transfer of legal and physical custody, permanent custody to the agency, temporary legal custody to the agency, and Long Term Foster Care (LTFC) placement matters for southern St. Louis County for the period of November 1, 2023, to December 31, 2025; authorizes the appropriate county officials to enter into service contracts with Miranda Ridlon of Cope and Peterson, Ltd. and Karl Sundquist to provide parent representation in Children In Need of Protection (CHIPS), Termination of Parental Rights (TPR), transfer of legal and physical custody, permanent custody to the agency, temporary legal custody to the agency, and Long Term Foster Care (LTFC) placement matters for northern St. Louis County for the period of November 1, 2023, to December 31, 2025; approves the monthly rate of \$8,260.15 each for the

service providers for southern St. Louis County and the monthly rate of \$5,909.41 each for the service providers for northern St. Louis County for the period of November 1, 2023 – December 31, 2024; approves a 3% cost of living adjustment for the contract period of January 1, 2025 – December 31, 2025; authorizes three (3) one-year contract extensions for the periods of January 1, 2026, to December 31, 2028, with optional cost of living adjustments to be determined for the time periods of 2026 through 2028; authorizes a \$450 per month per parent attorney service provider when supporting the court-operated Safe Babies program; authorizes a one-time payment in the amount of \$8,000 to Miranda Ridlon and a one-time payment in the amount of \$8,000 to Karl Sundquist for their parent attorney legal representation services associated with the court operated Safe Babies program in northern St. Louis County from January 1, 2022, through October 31, 2023; and further, authorizes the appropriate county officials to apply for Federal Title IV-E reimbursements through the Independent Parent Legal Representation Program through the Minnesota Department of Human Services to offset costs associated with the parent attorney program. Funds to provide these services will be payable from Fund 100, Agency 104020, Object 530725 and Fund 100, Agency 104020, Object 626100. [23-446]. Director Gottschald provided the Board with a brief overview of the agreements and noted that the resolution authorizes three (3) one-year contract extensions through 2028. Commissioner Harala noted that one of the attorneys represented the biological parent of her son and asked if she should recuse herself from the vote. County Attorney Kim Maki commented that the Standing Rules of the Board provides guidance that a commissioner can abstain from voting on a resolution if they have a direct personal or financial interest in a contract; Attorney Maki did not think there was a conflict of interest. After further discussion, the motion passed. (6-0, Jugovich absent)

Nelson/Musolf moved that the St. Louis County Board approves the revised budget framework plan dated October 17, 2023, for the use of American Rescue Plan Act funds; that the County Board may adjust this budget at any time as program and project opportunities are identified that positively impact the County; and further, that Administration is directed to develop the appropriate programs for each of these categories and to present those proposed project/program details back to the Board via future resolutions prior to distributing funds or initiating any related project/program guidelines. [23-447]. Deputy Administrator Brian Fritsinger provided an overview of the framework and noted that there is approximately \$532,000 remaining in the fund. A point of personal privilege was taken at 10:38 a.m. At 10:44 a.m., the Board reconvened with all members present except Commissioner Jugovich. After further discussion, the motion passed. (6-0, Jugovich absent)

McDonald/Nelson moved that the St. Louis County Board authorizes the County to identify and claim the maximum amount of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) revenue loss that it can under U.S. Treasury rules both retrospectively and prospectively; and further, that the County Attorney and staff are authorized to amend agreements with all sub-recipients previously approved by the Board to reflect a change from the ARPA categorical eligibility funding to the use of revenue loss funding. [23-448]. Deputy Administrator Fritsinger commented that there are two options to determine the amount of revenue loss: recipients may elect to receive a standard allowance of \$10 million or recipients may calculate actual revenue loss according to the formula in the final rule. The County opted to calculate actual revenue loss because they knew it would exceed \$10 million. Based on the calculation, the total \$54,536,596 ARPA funding awarded to the County can be classified as revenue loss which will simplify the agreements and grant process for recipients and the County. The motion passed. (6-0, Jugovich absent)

Central Management & Intergovernmental Committee

Grimm/Boyle moved that the St. Louis County Board approves the amended St. Louis County Civil Service Rules and hereby directs Human Resources to recalculate step placement of employees affected by the new Rule 4.5A amendment retroactively to January 25, 2022, payable from the departments' funds of the affected employees. [23-449]. Director Gottschald commented that the bargaining units did not oppose the adoption of the rules but wanted to discuss the phase-in of pay plans. The motion passed. (6-0, Jugovich absent)

Grimm/McDonald moved that the County Auditor is authorized to advertise and accept applications for the current vacant position on the Planning Commission with a term expiring December 31, 2024; and further, approves the appointment of Andrea Zupancich as a full member to the St. Louis County Board of Adjustment for a term expiring December 31, 2025. [23-450]. Nelson/McDonald moved to amend the motion and appoint Andrea Zupancich to the Board of Adjustment and the Planning Commission. Commissioner Nelson noted that Ms. Zupancich originally applied for both committees, but another individual was selected by the Board for the Planning Commission. Deputy Administrator Fritsinger commented that Administration typically works with the Auditor's office to advertise for open positions. Clerk Chapman indicated that the advertising timeframe could be modified based on Board direction. Commissioner Grimm commented that she was concerned about being consistent and setting precedence for appointments and that she would be voting against the amendment. Chair Boyle indicated that he was supportive of appointing Ms. Zupancich to the Board of Adjustment, but the Board should be transparent and follow the normal process for the Planning Commission appointment. After further discussion, a roll call vote was taken and the amendment passed (4-2, Boyle, Grimm nay, Jugovich absent). After further discussion, the motion as amended passed. (6-0, Jugovich absent)

Grimm/Harala moved that the St. Louis County Board approves the new Planning and Zoning Director assigned to Grade A28 (\$104,894 - \$143,728) of the Management Compensation Plan; approves allocation of a new 1.0 FTE Planning and Zoning Director to be located in the Virginia Government Services Center, payable from the Fund, Agency, and Object as created and assigned by County Administration and the County Auditor's Office; and further, approves the split of the Planning and Economic Development Department into two distinct departments and the reassignment of personnel as deemed appropriate by the County Administrator and Deputy County Administrator: 1) Economic and Community Development; 2) Planning and Zoning. [23-451]. The motion passed. (6-0, Jugovich absent)

Grimm/McDonald moved that the Committee of the Whole will convene a closed session on October 24, 2023, for the purpose of discussing *Demars v. St. Louis County* and *Sporleder v. State* in accordance with Minn. Stat. § 13D.05, subd. 3(b). No other pending public business will be discussed at this closed session. [23-452]. Attorney Maki noted that during the closed session, the Board would be discussing litigation regarding Demars and Sporleder. The motion passed. (6-0, Jugovich absent)

Public Safety & Corrections Committee

Harala/Musolf moved that the St. Louis County Board authorizes the addition of a 0.25 Emergency Communications Specialist position, resulting in an annual increase of approximately \$11,719.50, to be budgeted and accounted for in Fund 100, Agency 135001, Object 610100. [23-424]. The motion passed. (6-0, Jugovich absent)

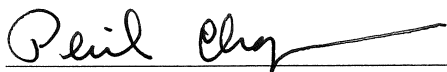
Commissioner Discussion Items and Reports

Chair Boyle commented that he and Commissioner Nelson were in Washington, D.C., last week and had productive meetings regarding the Northern Lights Express (NLX) project and with AmTrack.

At 11:45 a.m., Boyle/Grimm moved to adjourn the Committee of the Whole meeting. The motion passed. (6-0, Jugovich absent)



Patrick Boyle, Chair of the County Board



Phil Chapman, Clerk of the County Board