

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE ST. LOUIS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

December 12, 2023

Location: Floodwood Fair Building, Floodwood, Minnesota

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

Absent: None

Convened: Chair Boyle called the meeting to order at 10:25 a.m.

CONSENT AGENDA

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

- Minutes of November 28, 2023
- Host County Contract with Lutheran Social Services for Emergency Shelter Services [23-518]
- CY 2024 Supported Family Time Services [23-519]
- Agreement for Advanced Construction (1055409) with the Minnesota Department of Transportation for CP 0009-565027, SP 069-609-050 [23-520]
- Authorization to Accept Local Bridge Replacement Program (LBRP) Grant Funds for Construction of Bridge 69L10 (County Bridge 257) (CP 0851-570567, SAP 069-598-075) [23-521]
- Detour Agreement with the Minnesota Department of Transportation for Detouring MNTH 1 Traffic onto CSAH 77 (Angus Rd/Co Rd 77) and CSAH 115 (Hwy 115/Ashawwa Rd) under MnDOT Project No. SP 8821-352 and MnDOT Detour Agreement No. 1055353 [23-522]
- Detour Agreement with the Minnesota Department of Transportation for Detouring US 2 Traffic onto CSAH 13 (Midway Rd), CSAH 48 (2nd Ave/Lavaque Rd) and CSAH 56 (Morris Thomas Rd) under MnDOT Project No. SP 6908-66 and MnDOT Detour Agreement No. 1055240 [23-523]
- Joint Powers Agreement (239622) with Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MnDNR) for Maintenance Activities Associated with the Prairie Lake Water Level Control Structure [23-524]
- Authorization to Apply for the Active Transportation Program Grant for the Rock Ridge Dr and Park Ridge Dr (CSAH 102) Sidewalk Project – CP 0102-833621 [23-525]
- Authorization to Apply for the Transportation Alternatives Program Grant for the Rice Lake Rd (CSAH 4) Trail Project– CP 0004-490685 [23-526]
- Authorization to Apply for the Transportation Alternatives Program Grant for the 40th Avenue West (CSAH 91) Bike and Pedestrian Improvements – CP 0091-442363 [23-527]
- Authorization to Accept Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) Grant Funding for CP 0009-689681 [23-528]
- Award of Quotes: Public Works Countywide Improvements Project – Septic System Installation [23-529]
- Authorization to Enter into a Subgrant Agreement with South St. Louis Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) for Replacement of Bridge 127 on West Rocky Run Crossing
- Maple Grove Road (CSAH 6) – CP 0006-834778 [23-530]

- Abatement List for Board Approval [23-531]
- Penalty & Interest Abatement List for Board Approval [23-532]
- Cherry Township Baseball Field Expansion, American Rescue Plan Act Revenue Loss Funding [23-533]
- Crane Lake Water & Sanitary District Sewer Treatment System Installations Project, American Rescue Plan Act Revenue Loss Funding [23-534]
- 2023-24 State/Federal Lobbying Services Contract – Costin Group [23-535]

Health & Human Services Committee

McDonald/Harala moved that the St. Louis County Board appoints and reappoints the following individuals to the Public Health and Human Services Advisory Committee for two-year terms beginning January 1, 2024:

District 1: Reappoint Kaitlin Erpestad and Pam Kramer, terms to expire 12/31/2025

District 2: continue to seek appointees for 2 vacancies

District 3: Appoint David Schreyer, term to expire 12/31/2025

District 4: Appoint Rachel Phillips, term to expire 12/31/2025

District 5: Reappoint Gina Marsalla, appoint Christine Koosman, terms to expire 12/31/2025

District 6: Reappoint Loretta Bickford, appoint Darin Harder, terms to expire 12/31/2025

District 7: Appoint Jeff McNickle, term to expire 12/31/2025

At Large: Reappoint Nathaniel Coward, appoint Lauren Pipken, terms to expire 12/31/2025

Fond du Lac: Nathan Sandman, no term limits

Bois Forte: Terry Defoe, no term limits. [23-536]. The motion passed. (7-0)

Public Works & Transportation Committee

McDonald/Jugovich moved that the St. Louis County Board authorizes the appropriate County officials to enter into a grant agreement, and any amendments, with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources; and further, authorizes a Cooperative Agreement, and any amendments, with Voyageur Country ATV Club for construction of a trail shelter project, privy project, and work on various trail segments. This project is identified as CP 0000-809883. Funds for this project will be receipted into Fund 220, Agency 220757, Object 530819. [23-537]. Commissioner McDonald commented that the Voyageur Country ATV Club is one of the premier ATV clubs in the country. Commissioner Harala noted that Commissioner Grimm has been involved in meetings discussing the potential to connect West Duluth to the Buffalo House. After further discussion, the motion passed. (7-0)

Jugovich/Nelson moved to award a bid to Mesabi Bituminous, Inc., Gilbert, MN, in the amount of \$386,010.00 for project CP 0000-766648, ATV and Mesabi Trail Improvements on the Chisholm to Hibbing ATV Trail located approximately 1 mile SE of Chisholm. [23-538]. The motion passed. (7-0)

Finance & Budget Committee

Nelson/Boyle moved that the St. Louis County Board approves the Capital Improvement Plan as updated for the years 2024 through 2028; and further, that County staff are hereby authorized to do all things and take all other actions as may be necessary and appropriate to carry out the Capital Improvement Plan in accordance with any applicable laws and regulations. [23-539]. Commissioner Harala temporarily stepped out of the meeting from 10:39 a.m. to 10:42 a.m. St. Louis County Budget & Improvement Manager BreAnn Graber said the Capital Improvement Plan focuses on projects that are \$100,000 or more and on maintaining the County's AA+ bond rating. The motion passed. (7-0)

Nelson/Harala moved that the St. Louis County Board approves the 2024 Budget Resolution for eventual adoption at the December 19, 2023 County Board meeting. [23-539]. Chair Boyle temporarily stepped out of the meeting from 10:58 a.m. to 10:59 a.m. County Administrator Kevin Gray noted that the budget is \$491,590,952 with a 2.93% levy increase. Budget & Improvement Manager BreAnn Graber provided the Board with an overview of the budget. After further discussion, the motion passed without recommendation. (7-0)

Central Management & Intergovernmental Committee

McDonald/Boyle moved that the St. Louis County Board reappoints William (Tom) Coombe, Steve Filipovich, and Daniel Manick to the St. Louis County Planning Commission with terms expiring December 31, 2026; and further, reappoints William (Tom) Coombe to the St. Louis County Board of Adjustment with a term expiring December 31, 2026. [23-541]. The motion passed. (7-0)

Musolf/Harala moved that the St. Louis County Board hereby reappoints Doug Hoffbauer to the Cooperative Extension Committee for a three-year term ending December 31, 2026; and further, authorizes the County Auditor to advertise and accept applications to fill three vacant positions on the St. Louis County Cooperative Extension Committee. [23-542]. The motion passed. (7-0)

Grimm/Harala moved that the St. Louis County Board approves the new St. Louis County Earned Sick and Safe Time (ESST) Policy; and further, directs the Human Resources Department to provide notice of the county's ESST policy by: 1) supplying employees who have county email with an electronic copy of the policy; 2) by posting this policy on the county's intranet site; 3) by posting a copy of the policy at work locations where employees do not have access to county email; and 4) by incorporating the policy into new hire communications. [23-543]. Human Resources and Administration Director Jim Gottschald noted that the policy will be effective January 1, 2024, and will mostly affect temporary employees of St. Louis County. The motion passed. (7-0)

Boyle/Grimm moved that the St. Louis County Board authorizes the creation and execution of a two-year contract with the St. Louis County Historical Society for \$531,998 in 2024 and \$461,998 in 2025 (with no project specific funding). The contract is contingent on the following items (of which will be detailed in more depth as part of the actual contract): Submittal of quarterly reports — with programmatic and financial components (including fundraising and grant writing efforts); Displays of artifacts/artwork; Participation in the Museum Assessment Program through the American Alliance of Museums (if the St. Louis County Historical Society is not successful in getting into the Museum Assessment Program, they would be expected to contract with a consultant to help lead a strategic planning process in 2024 identify strengths/weaknesses, determine priorities, review structure, etc.); and Community and Affiliate Outreach. [23-544]. Budget & Improvement Manager BreAnn Graber noted that the two-year contract gives the opportunity for new leadership to participate in the Museum Assessment Program and diversify revenue streams. Chair Boyle requested that the St. Louis County Historical Society Director give the Board an update after they complete the Museum Assessment Program. After further discussion, the motion passed. (7-0)

Nelson/Harala moved that the St. Louis County Board reaffirms its priorities for its 2024 Capital Appropriations request as follows: 1) Integrated Solid Waste Management Campus – Phase II; 2) St. Louis County Heritage & Arts Center Asset Renovation; 3) Voyageur National Park Clean Water - Ash River; and further, approves its other priorities for legislative language changes and/or actions as follows: 1) Language and funding allocation associated with the change in statutory language associated

with tax-forfeit properties and related items; 2) A legislative fix to the funding awarded in 2023 for the Clarity Urgent Care Behavioral Health Center; 3) Seeking commitment to roles and sustainable funding associated with the 48-hour rule; and 4) The 2024 legislative platform incorporates the AMC and MICA legislative platform priorities. [23-545]. The motion passed. (7-0)

Harala/McDonald moved that the St. Louis County Board approves the amendments to the Standing Rules and Bylaws of the County Board as set forth in Alternative #2; and further, rescinds Resolution No. 378 of July 11, 2023, and any other resolutions previously adopted by the County Board that pertain to the Standing Rules and Bylaws. Per Article I, Section 6 of the Rules and Bylaws, all amendments shall become effective immediately upon approval of the Board. [23-546]. Administrator Gray said the Attorney's Office and Administration have committed to revisiting the Board Standing Rules and Bylaws every year. County Attorney Kim Maki provided an overview of proposed changes and noted that the Board will provide opportunity for public comment from 9:30 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. before the regularly scheduled board meetings. If the number of citizens desiring to comment exceeds the number able to be heard within the comment period, additional public comment will be allowed after the conclusion of all County business conducted for the day. Chair Boyle commented that the last time the Standing Rules and Bylaws were updated, the Board held a workshop to thoroughly discuss; this process is different. Chair Boyle said he needed additional time to regarding changes to how citizens will be heard. Commissioner Grimm said she would be voting against alternative #2 because changes to the public comment process would require the public to wait until the end of the meetings to provide comment if there was not enough time from 9:30 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. After further discussion, a roll call vote was taken; the motion passed without recommendation. (5-2, Boyle, Grimm nay)

Commissioner Discussion Items and Reports

Commissioner McDonald said the Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Task Force will be meeting tomorrow (December 13th) in Mountain Iron, from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., to hear challenges that communities are facing regarding emergency medical services. Written comments can be submitted by visiting the Range Association of Municipalities and Schools (RAMS). Commissioner McDonald provided an update regarding the Tyler v. Hennepin County legislative fix. The task force is working on a draft that can be presented to the legislators on February 12, 2024.

Commissioner Nelson presented a letter from CHUM thanking him for his work as Chair of the St. Louis & Lake Counties Regional Rail Authority and for the Rail Authority's effort to provide residents of the Steve O'Neil Apartments to ride the Christmas City Express for free. Commissioner Harala read the letter into the record.

Commissioners held a discussion regarding a recent article published in the Duluth News Tribune regarding funding for the Northern Lights Express (NLX) project. Commissioners expressed concern that the article implied that the amount of funding announced by the Federal Railroad Administration will delay the project. Administrator Gray commented that he spoke with Bob Manzoline, Executive Director of the St. Louis and Lake Counties Railroad Authority, and Director Manzoline confirmed that the project is on track. Commissioner Nelson commented that the initial \$500,000 of funding was awarded is for Step 1 and additional funding will be coming. Commissioner Nelson noted that funding is allocated to projects based on what step they are on in the process and said the NLX Alliance will be submitting a letter to the editor to clarify the funding allocation process.

At 12:15 p.m., Nelson/Jugovich moved to adjourn the Committee of the Whole meeting. The motion passed. (7-0)

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Patrick Boyle', written over a horizontal line.

Patrick Boyle, Chair of the County Board

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Phil Chapman', written over a horizontal line.

Phil Chapman, Clerk of the County Board