

**OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS OF THE EMERGENCY MEETING
OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
OF THE COUNTY OF ST. LOUIS, MINNESOTA,
HELD ON MARCH 23, 2020**

The Board of County Commissioners of the County of St. Louis, Minnesota, held an emergency meeting on this 23rd day of March 2020, at 8:36 a.m., at the St. Louis County Courthouse, Duluth, Minnesota, with the following members present: Commissioners Frank Jewell, Patrick Boyle, Beth Olson, Keith Musolf, Paul McDonald, Keith Nelson and Mike Jugovich - 7. Absent: None - 0.

Commissioners Patrick Boyle, Beth Olson, Paul McDonald, and Frank Jewell participated telephonically.

St. Louis County Attorney Mark Rubin said that Commissioners are allowed to call into the meeting by telephone because of the emergency situation. Attorney Rubin outlined five points as to why Commissioners are allowed to attend the meeting by telephone:

- It has been determined that an in-person meeting is not practical or prudent because of the COVID-19 pandemic and the related peacetime emergency declaration made by Governor Walz in accordance with Minnesota Statutes Chapter 12.
- We have ensured that all members of the body participating in the meeting, wherever their physical location, can hear one another and can hear all discussion and testimony offered at today's meeting.
- We have also ensured that members of the public present at the regular meeting location of the body can hear all discussion and testimony and all votes of the member of the body. We have urged the public not to attend this meeting in person because of the COVID-19 pandemic, and have ensured that members of the public can view and monitor the meeting remotely, in real time, by broadcasting the meeting on Public Access Television.
- County Administrator Kevin Gray, Attorney Rubin, and three Commissioners are physically present at the County Board Room located on the second floor of the Duluth Courthouse.
- All votes will be conducted by roll call, so each member's vote on each issue will be identified and recorded.

Commissioner Nelson said that he objected holding this meeting because the items could have been added to tomorrow's Board meeting agenda and expressed concern regarding the limited public notice for this meeting.

St. Louis County Public Health Division Director Amy Westbrook provided the Board with a public health update. Director Westbrook said that there are currently 169 confirmed COVID-19 cases in Minnesota with one reported death. Director Westbrook indicated that St. Louis County had their first confirmed case of COVID-19 over the weekend.

Commissioner Olson, supported by Commissioner Musolf, moved to consider a resolution to direct the County Administrator to achieve minimum staffing levels necessary to accomplish essential-critical infrastructure work during the COVID-19 event. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed; seven yeas, zero nays.

Commissioner Nelson, supported by Commissioner McDonald, moved that effective March 23, 2020, the St. Louis County Board directs the County Administrator to work with all county departments to identify and conduct only essential-critical infrastructure work consistent with the March 19, 2020 guidance issued by the Department of Homeland Security; that the Board authorizes the creation of a COVID-19 agency within each of the departmental budget funds to be used by all departments to track costs associated with the efforts to combat COVID-19 and directs that \$1,000,000 be transferred from Fund 100, Agency 104005, Object 629900, to the newly established agency under Administration, Fund 100, Agency 104019. Human Resources and Administration Director Jim Gottschald provided the Board with a brief overview of the COVID-19 staffing plan update. Director Gottschald said that the plan will be implemented as soon as this afternoon. After further discussion, Commissioner Nelson, supported by Commissioner Boyle, moved to amend the motion and add wording that the staffing plan will remain in effect for a minimum of ninety (90) days. A roll-call vote was taken and the amendment passed; seven yeas, zero nays. St. Louis County Deputy Administrator Brian Fritsinger said that if the board supports the resolution, County Administration will be working with each department to move staff out of the building today. After further discussion, a roll call vote was taken and the motion as amended passed; seven yeas, zero nays. Resolution No. 20-139.

Commissioner Discussion

Commissioner Nelson indicated that he would be bringing forward a resolution to provide a 25% property tax relief for all property tax holders who were closed by Governor Waltz's directive.

Commissioner McDonald said that the County should develop a plan to address people who are snowbirds, cabin owners, and vacation homeowners.

Commissioner Boyle said that a local small business owner has indicated that they could produce personal protective gear (PPG); however, they are unable to until the President enacts the Defense Production Act. Chair Jugovich encouraged Commissioner Boyle to create a letter that can be sent to State and National delegates in support of enacting the Defense Production Act.

Commissioner Jewell said that he supported implementing the staffing plan in place as soon as possible and thanked all of the folks who have worked to respond to the emergency.

Commissioner Nelson recommended that all future news conferences be conducted in writing or by using Skype.

Commissioner Olson cautioned the public that taking unnecessary risks could result in a person contracting the virus, which will affect other people due to the limited amount of hospital beds.

The following Board files were created from documents received at this Board meeting:

Kevin Gray, County Administrator, and Brian Fritsinger, Deputy County Administrator, submitting Board Letter No. 20-123, Directing County Administration to Achieve Minimum Staffing Levels Necessary to Accomplish Essential-Critical Infrastructure Work during COVID-19 Event.—61247

Jim Gottschald, Human Resources and Administration Director, submitting a handout COVID-19 Staffing Plan Update – March 23, 2020.—61248

BY COMMISSIONER NELSON:

WHEREAS, There is an outbreak of respiratory illness, called coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) in a growing number of countries, including the United States; and

WHEREAS, A case of COVID-19 has now been confirmed within St. Louis County; and

WHEREAS, On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization deemed COVID-19 to be a pandemic; and

WHEREAS, On March 13, 2020, President Donald Trump declared a Presidential National Emergency, and Governor Tim Walz declared a Peacetime State of Emergency in Minnesota, to authorize any and all necessary resources to be used in support of COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, On March 18, 2020, the St. Louis County Board declared a State of Local Emergency for St. Louis County; and

WHEREAS, The U.S. Department of Homeland Security issued guidance on March 19, 2020, on continuation of essential-critical infrastructure work and which work constitutes essential-critical; and

WHEREAS, The Minnesota Office of Management and Budget issued a directive on March 20, 2020, to state agencies to not stop services without approval because now more than ever, Minnesotans are relying on critical services provided by government agencies.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That effective March 23, 2020, the St. Louis County Board directs the County Administrator to work with all county departments to identify and conduct only essential-critical infrastructure work consistent with the March 19, 2020 guidance issued by the Department of Homeland Security.

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Board authorizes the creation of a COVID-19 agency within each of the departmental budget funds to be used by all departments to track costs associated with the efforts to combat COVID-19 and directs that \$1,000,000 be transferred from Fund 100, Agency 104005, Object 629900, to the newly established agency under Administration, Fund 100, Agency 104019.

RESOLVED FURTHER, That county departments are directed to define and implement strategies necessary to achieve minimum on-site staffing levels which serve essential-critical infrastructure work.

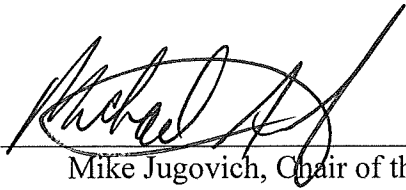
RESOLVED FURTHER, That County Administration and county departments are directed to make use of any and all available Federal and State COVID-19 leave pay options as well as county paid leave options.

RESOLVED FURTHER, That County Administration and county departments are directed to implement operational strategies to achieve minimum on-site staffing levels, including but not limited to mobile work and use of paid and administrative leave, which strategies are subject to change and may be revoked at the discretion of the County Administrator upon consultation with the County Board Chair.


RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Staffing Plan effective March 23, 2020, shall remain in effect for a minimum of ninety (90) days.

Unanimously adopted March 23, 2020. No. 20-139

At 11:01 a.m., March 23, 2020, Commissioner Musolf, supported by Commissioner Nelson, moved to adjourn the meeting. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed; seven yeas, zero nays.


Mike Jugovich, Chair of the Board
of County Commissioners

Attest:


Phil Chapman ~~Nancy Nilson~~, County Auditor - *Deputy*
and Ex-Officio Clerk of the Board
of County Commissioners

(Seal of the County Auditor)