

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE ST. LOUIS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

March 8, 2022

Location: Government Services Center, Duluth, Minnesota

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

Absent: None

Convened: Chair McDonald called the meeting to order at 9:59 a.m.

Chair McDonald said that he was moving the Environment and Natural Resources Committee to the top of the regular agenda because there were citizens who would like to speak to an agenda item.

CONSENT AGENDA

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

- Minutes of March 1, 2022
- Application for the Housing with Supports for Adults with Serious Mental Illness Grant [22-110]
- Detour agreement with MnDOT and Carlton County for State Project 8821-336 [22-111]
- Detour agreement with MnDOT and City of Cloquet for State Project 8821-336 [22-112]
- Change order with Hawkinson Construction Company, Inc. (SAP 069-625-024, CP 0025-673937) [22-113]
- Contract for Mine Inspection Services with Itasca County [22-114]
- Updated MOU with Gilbert Police Department [22-115]
- Reclassification of State Tax-Forfeited Lands as Conservation [22-116]
- Repurchase of State Tax-Forfeited Land – Hidden Estates Homeowners Association Non-Homestead [22-117]

Time Specific Presentation

At 10:00 a.m., a presentation regarding diversity, equity, and inclusion was given to the Board. Human Resources and Administration Director Jim Gottschald commented that there has been a commitment from county leadership; several meetings have been held with Board members and Department heads, and many departmental meetings have been held. Mary Garness and Tonia Villegas, Co-Chairs of Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC), provided opening comments. De’Vonna Pittman, Sarah Milnar McLaughlin and Saroeum Earm, of the Center for Economic Inclusion, provided a handout to the Board and reviewed the findings of Phase 1, discovery phase. Director Pittman said that 648 employees participated in 27 workshops over the past few months. Employee workshops were conducted to assess employee understanding of key racial equity concepts and solicit input on the County’s diversity, equity and inclusion vision statement. Phase 1 findings will provide a roadmap for policy and data analysis in Phase 2.

A point of personal privilege was taken at 10:54 a.m. At 11:03 a.m., the Board reconvened with all members present.

Nelson/Boyle moved to reconsider the consent agenda. The motion passed. (7-0) Boyle/Musolf moved to approve the consent agenda and to consider Item #7, Reclassification of State Tax-Forfeited Lands as Conservation [22-116] separately. The motion passed. (7-0)

Environment & Natural Resources Committee

Jugovich/Nelson moved that the St. Louis County Board approves commencement of termination of the contracts for purchase or repurchase of state tax forfeited lands, according to the provisions of Minn. Stat. §§ 282.01, subd. 5, 282.40, and 559.21; and further, that the St. Louis County Auditor is authorized to sell or dispose of any abandoned personal property left remaining on the parcels described after making reasonable effort to provide at least 28 days' notice to the former owner, taxpayer, or any current occupants.[22-118]. Julie Marinucci, St. Louis County Land and Minerals Director, said that the list was impacted by the COVID-19 eviction moratorium and multiple notifications have been sent to contract holders. Director Marinucci commented that approximately ten contract holders owe for back taxes only; payment plans for past due taxes are not an option for contract for deed properties and that the Board has the ability to remove a property from cancellation process. Jason Karjala spoke regarding the status of the property located at 2617 3rd Ave. East in Hibbing. Mr. Karjala said that the property is in his wife's name (Jamie McAdams) and recent health issues have impacted their ability to bring the amount due current. As of January 25, 2022, the past due contract amount was brought into a current status. They have also requested a refund in the amount of \$1,300 for overpayments on other properties that they own. They are planning on applying the \$1,300 refund to the past due tax amount; the refund is expected to take four to six weeks. Mr. Karjala commented that he felt the property was also assessed incorrectly. Commissioner Nelson requested that the Assessor's Department provide an update to the Board prior to the next Board meeting regarding the accuracy of the property assessment and that the Board be provided a past due tax summary that breaks out the past due taxes and penalties. Commissioner Grimm asked that Administration work with appropriate departments to expedite the \$1,300 refund. The motion passed without recommendation. (7-0)

Commissioner Nelson requested that the resolution regarding Reclassification of State Tax-Forfeited Lands as Conservation [22-116] be returned to Administration for additional review and information. Commissioner Nelson questioned why every other lot would be placed in conservation for Upper Duluth St. Louis Ave, lots 32 thru 44, even numbered lots, and was concerned that the final "Resolved Further" authorized the department to add or remove parcels. Director Marinucci responded that even numbered parcels (32 thru 44) is Pontliana Woods, the final "Resolved Further" wording is the same wording that was used in the past and gives the department the ability to make corrections as needed. After further discussion, Commissioner Nelson withdrew his request to have the item returned to Administration. Jewell/Nelson moved that the state tax-forfeited parcels be reclassified as conservation and that the request for approval of the reclassification shall be transmitted by the St. Louis County Land and Minerals Department to the clerk of the municipality or town in which the parcels are located; and further that the reclassification of these parcels will be deemed approved if the county board does not receive notice of the municipality's or town's disapproval of the reclassification of any parcel within 60 days of the date on which this resolution is delivered to the clerk of the municipality or town. [22-116] The motion passed without recommendation. (7-0)

Health & Human Services Committee

Boyle/McDonald moved that the St. Louis County Board makes the following appointments to the Public Health and Human Services Advisory Committee for three-year terms, expiring on December 31,

2025: District 1, Kaitlin Erpestad and Pam Kramer; District 2, Tracy Goulet; District 3, Mary Kirsling; District 5, Gina Marsalla; District 6, Loretta Bickford; and At-Large, Nathaniel Coward. [22-119]. The motion passed. (7-0)

Boyle/Grimm moved that the St. Louis County Board appoints the following to the Opioid Remediation Subcommittee: Greg Anderson, Katie Bauman, Laura Bennett, Joseph Bianco, Elizabeth Bilden, Heather Blue, Pat Conway, Melissa Dybvig, Beth Elstad, Brandon Hankey, Bryan Johnson, Sherry Johnson, Danielle Jones, Branden Mattson, Jessica McCarthy-Nickila, Jeff Polcher, Lisa Prusak, Susan Purchase, Allison Vanneste, Verne Wagner. [22-120]. Public Health and Human Services Director Linnea Mirsch said that she was pleased with the variety of experience and knowledge of subcommittee members and hopes to bring recommendations to the Board in advance of the new fiscal year. After further discussion, the motion passed. (7-0)

Boyle/Jewell moved that the St. Louis County Board authorizes the reallocation of a 1.0 FTE Information Specialist I position (Position code 0413-022, Civil Service Basic Unit Pay Plan, Pay Grade B04) to a 1.0 FTE Information Specialist II (Civil Service Basic Unit Pay Plan, Pay Grade B10) in the Public Health and Human Services Department, resulting in an increase of \$5,324 to be accounted for in Fund 230, Agency 230005, Object 610100. [22-121]. The motion passed. (7-0)

A point of personal privilege was taken at 12:04 p.m. At 12:12 p.m., the Board reconvened with all members present.

Public Works & Transportation Committee

Musolf/Jugovich moved to award a bid to Traffic Marking Service, Maple Lake, MN, in the amount of \$48,869.50 for project CP 0000-395025, SP 069-070-043: 6" Edgeline Striping, Various Locations in St. Louis County. [22-122]. The motion passed. (7-0)

Musolf/Nelson moved to award a bid to TNT Construction Group LLC, Duluth, MN, in the amount of \$296,682 for project CP 0000-649269 (2022 Southeast Crushing), Crushing, Various Gravel Pits in Southeastern St. Louis County. [22-123]. The motion passed. (7-0)

Musolf/Boyle moved to award a bid to Traffic Marking Service, Maple Lake, MN, in the amount of \$512,981.60 for project CP 0000-369670, Maintenance Striping: Reclaim and Overlay, Mill and Overlay, Culvert, Various Locations in St. Louis and Lake Counties. [22-124]. The motion passed. (7-0)

Musolf/Jewell moved that the St. Louis County Board authorizes the appropriate county officials to enter into a permit agreement with the BNSF Railway Company to replace a culvert at the railroad crossing identified as DOT #061254G on CSAH 5 located in the City of Hibbing and Lavell Township with funds payable from Fund 200, Agency 200008, Object 637900. [22-125]. The motion passed. (7-0)

Musolf/McDonald moved to award a bid to Ulland Brothers, Inc., Cloquet, MN, in the amount of \$543,760.00 for project CP 0137-395072, SP 069-070-046, SP 6935-93, Reduced Conflict Intersection, at the intersection of TH 169 and CSAH 137. [22-126]. The motion passed. (7-0)

Musolf/Jugovich moved to award a bid to KGM Contractors, Inc., Angora, MN, in the amount of \$519,016.70 for project CP 0007-369674, SP 069-070-056, SP 6911-40, Reduced Conflict Intersection, at the intersection of TH 33 and CSAH 7. [22-127]. The motion passed. (7-0)

COMMISSIONER DISCUSSION ITEMS AND REPORTS

Commissioner Boyle commented that this is the first time in two years that the Board meeting has been held without mask requirements and encouraged the county to be diligent in following federal and state guidelines going forward; we could see a surge in COVID cases in the upcoming months that may require masks to be worn in the future.

Commissioner Jewell said that last week he met with film industry representatives in Los Angeles and toured a large sound stage with the idea of bringing something similar to northeastern Minnesota. The film industry has displayed a lot of energy and excitement to bring filming opportunities to St. Louis County.

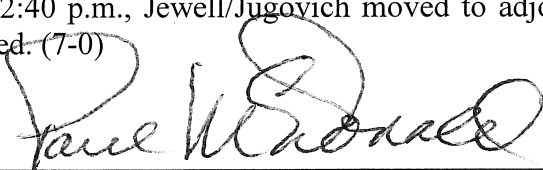
Commissioner Grimm said that today is International Women's Day and this year's theme is "Break the Bias". Commissioner Grimm noted that when she ran for County Board, over half of County Boards in the state did not have women serving on them. Commissioner Grimm acknowledged the women that are serving throughout St. Louis County.

Commissioner Nelson commented about the lack of media coverage regarding the announcement of a proposed municipal solid waste landfill in New Independence Township. If approved, the project could be one of the biggest the county will ever be part of. Commissioner Nelson discussed impacts of Per and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) in Lake Superior. The proposed landfill is a practical solution to the remediation of PFAS in leachate. Commissioner Nelson read a letter of support from Senator David Tomassoni and Representative Dave Lislegard and noted that Senator Tom Bakk also supports the landfill.

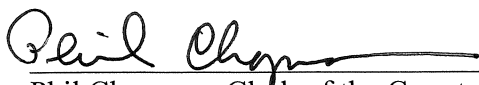
Chair McDonald noted that St. Louis County and Duluth days at the legislature will take place next week.

Commissioner Nelson said that there is a good chance that the Northern Lights Express (NLX) project could get funded.

At 12:40 p.m., Jewell/Jugovich moved to adjourn the Committee of the Whole meeting. The motion passed. (7-0)



Paul McDonald, Chair of the County Board



Phil Chapman, Clerk of the County Board