

**OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS OF THE EMERGENCY MEETING  
OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
OF THE COUNTY OF ST. LOUIS, MINNESOTA,  
HELD ON MARCH 18, 2020**

The Board of County Commissioners of the County of St. Louis, Minnesota, held an emergency meeting on this 18<sup>th</sup> day of March 2020, at 12:02 p.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 Boyle, supported by Commissioner Nelson, moved to consider a resolution to declare a State of Local Emergency; the item had not been to Committee of the Whole. The motion passed; seven yeas, zero nays.

Commissioner Nelson, supported by Commissioner Musolf, moved that the St. Louis County Board of Commissioners hereby declares that a State of Local Emergency exists; that the County Administrator or his designee(s) are directed to request and coordinate all necessary aid from local, state and federal government; that the County Board delegates to the County Administrator authority to exercise the emergency powers outlined in Minnesota Statutes § 12.37 for the duration of this Local Emergency; that all St. Louis County ordinances, rules, and policies that may inhibit or prevent prompt response to COVID-19 are suspended for the duration of the local emergency, in the sole discretion of the St. Louis County Administrator or designee, but any such suspension by the County Administrator shall be timely reported to the Chair of the County Board; and further, that the Chair

of the St. Louis County Board directs the County Administrator to ensure a formal Request for Board Action be put forward to a meeting of the Board of County Commissioners, as required by law, to obtain consent for the continuation of the local emergency. After further discussion, the motion passed; seven yeas, zero nays. Resolution No. 20-137.

Commissioner Boyle, supported by Commissioner Nelson, moved to consider a resolution to change the March 24, 2020 Board meeting location; the item had not been to Committee of the Whole. The motion passed; seven yeas, zero nays.

Commissioner Nelson, supported by Commissioner Musolf, moved that the St. Louis County Board will adjust its 2020 Board Meeting Schedule to substitute the meeting location of its March 24, 2020 meeting from the Morse Town Hall, Ely, MN to the Virginia GSC building, Virginia, MN. County Attorney Rubin stated that because of the pandemic, Commissioners are allowed to call in to the meeting. Because of this, the meeting must be broadcasted simultaneously to the public. The Duluth location was suggested because PACT TV would meet the broadcast requirements. After further discussion, the motion passed; seven yeas, zero nays. Resolution No. 20-138.

Human Resources and Administration Director Jim Gottschald provided the Board with an update of support for St. Louis County employees and operations during the COVID-19 emergency. Director Gottschald said that county in-person services would be suspended on both March 19 and March 20; some in-person services would be restored on Monday, March 23.

The Board recessed at 12:51 p.m. At 12:56 p.m., the Board reconvened with all members present.

Public Health and Human Services Director Linnea Mirsch gave the Board a presentation regarding the challenges that Public Health and Human Services is facing due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Safety and Risk Management Director Joe Austin provided the Board with an overview of work being done to secure public areas.

Arrowhead Regional Corrections (ARC) Executive Director Wally Kostich provided the Board with an update of changes made at ARC in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Director Kostich indicated that the county offices have restricted face-to-face meetings.

### **Commissioner Discussion**

Commissioner Nelson expressed concern not only for St. Louis County staff, but also for small business owners and families throughout St. Louis County. Commissioner Nelson urged Commissioners to work with legislators to look for ways to provide relief for small business owners and families, including property tax relief.

Commissioner Olson said that the county should prioritize reducing the spread of the disease and need to work to get staff mobile and out of the building. Commissioner Olson asked that the Board receive regular updates that includes action items and inquired about a plan for the jail and for the homeless. Commissioner Olson also thanked staff and encouraged everyone to take advantage of

remote meetings.

Commissioner Jewell recommended that a procedure be developed to address a situation in which someone tests positive within the workforce.

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

Kevin Gray, County Administrator, submitting a Resolution Declaring a State of Local Emergency in St. Louis County.—61242

Kevin Gray, County Administrator, submitting Board Letter No. 20-98, Reschedule Location for March 24, 2020 County Board Meeting.—61243

Linnea Mirsch, Public Health and Human Services Director, submitting a Powerpoint handout Public Health & Human Services: Significant Challenges.—61244

County Attorney Mark Rubin submitting Meetings Attended by Telephone due to COVID-19 Pandemic.—61245

**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, Federal, state, and local public health authorities have identified the public health threat posed by COVID-19, which may be spread from person to person; 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 the response to COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, Minn. Stat. § 12.29 gives authority to the Chair of the St. Louis County Board of Commissioners to declare a local emergency in St. Louis County for a period of three days, after which a meeting of the Board of County Commissioners will be needed to resolve to continue the local emergency; and

WHEREAS, A declaration of local emergency invokes St. Louis County's disaster plans, including response and recovery aspects, and authorizes aid and assistance under those plans, pursuant to Minn. Stat. § 12.29; and

WHEREAS, The St. Louis County Board finds that the COVID-19 pandemic, the potential for outbreak in St. Louis County, and the need for extraordinary and immediate measures to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the public and St. Louis County residents and employees will not be resolved in the immediate future.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the St. Louis County Board of Commissioners hereby declares a State of Local Emergency exists.

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the County Administrator or his designee(s) are directed to request and coordinate all necessary aid from local, state and federal governments.

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the County Board delegates to the County Administrator authority to exercise the emergency powers outlined in Minn. Stat. § 12.37 for the duration of this Local Emergency.

RESOLVED FURTHER, That all St. Louis County ordinances, rules, and policies that may inhibit or prevent prompt response to COVID-19 are suspended for the duration of the local emergency, in the sole discretion of the St. Louis County Administrator or designee, but any such suspension by the County Administrator shall be timely reported to the Chair of the County Board.

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Chair of the St. Louis County Board directs the County Administrator to ensure a formal Request for Board Action be put forward to a meeting of the Board of County Commissioners, as required by law, to obtain consent for the continuation of the local emergency.

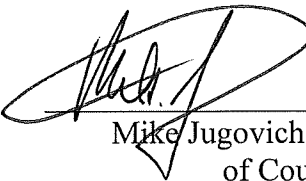
Unanimously adopted March 18, 2020. No. 20-137

**BY COMMISSIONER NELSON:**

RESOLVED, That the St. Louis County Board will adjust its 2020 Board Meeting Schedule to substitute the meeting location of its March 24, 2020 meeting from the Morse Town Hall, Ely, MN to the St. Louis County Government Services Center, Liz Prebich Room, 201 South 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue West, Virginia, MN.

Unanimously adopted March 18, 2020. No. 20-138

At 2:32 p.m., March 18, 2020, Commissioner Musolf, supported by Commissioner Nelson, moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed; five yeas, zero nays, two absent (Boyle, McDonald).



Mike Jugovich, Chair of the Board  
of County Commissioners

Attest:



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

(Seal of the County Auditor)