

Traverse County Commission
Regular Board Meeting
September 5, 2023

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m. by Commission Chair Kayla Schmidt. Other Commissioners present were Mark Gail, Dwight Nelson, Jerrel Olson and Chad Metz. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Olson moved to approve the agenda, Metz second the motion and it was passed unanimously. No conflicts of interest were expressed. The August 15, August 23 and August 25 Board minutes were unanimously approved upon a motion by Olson and second by Nelson.

Highway Department

County Engineer Chad Gillespie and Brian Koch, Highway Maintenance Supervisor, appeared before the Board with a department update. Gillespie gave the Board the equipment list and pickup mileage for the Highway Department. The 2025 Federal project ATP Protect Grant for CSAH 15 is getting recommended for funding. If it gets recommended, we are looking at approximately \$74,144.00 worth of improvements beyond the original project. Gillespie gave the Board a flood repair update. The CSAH 15, 2024 Grading Project plans are 90% complete, the last permit is in the process. Gillespie plans to apply for a LRIP Grant for this project.

Law Enforcement Center

Sheriff Trevor Wright appeared before the Board with a department update. Wright reported that the average jail occupancy for August was 67.28%. Wright said that they received many compliments about their presence at the fair. We have two Deputy Sheriff candidates going through the background check, Kristen Meyer, full-time and Trevor Mishler, part-time. Wright asked for approval to hire these two pending their background check, Metz made the motion with a second by Gail and it was approved unanimously. We are waiting on another candidate to take their POST test.

Soil and Water Conservation District

Sara Gronfeld appeared before the Board with a department update. Gronfeld reported that 3 septic system permit applications were received. One upgrade grant application was received for the remaining 2023 funds. An application for 2024 grant funding was submitted to MPCA. The Upper Minnesota River planning process, the draft plan 60-day comment period is open until September 22.

Viking Library System

Erin Smith, Director, appeared before the Board with the 2022 Annual Report and the 2024 budget request. Viking Library System offers 2 bookmobile stops in Traverse County every other week. 931 items were circulated at those stops in 2022. The Horizon online library catalog provides access to library materials throughout the six-county Viking Library System, Douglas, Grant, Otter Tail, Pope, Stevens and Traverse. 14774 items were rotated through delivery in Traverse County in 2022. Bernice Piechowski appeared before the Board to give an update on the Browns Valley Library. The Viking Library System is requesting a 0% funding increase for 2024 the amount of the request is \$37,294.00.

Treatment Court

Peggy Kuschel, Drug Court Coordinator, appeared before the Board. In 2023 Traverse County contributed \$7,500.00 toward the Drug Court Surveillance Officer position, Kuschel is asking the Board for the same amount in 2024. Kuschel explained that the MN Department of Corrections, DOC, has given funds to each Probation Office and they are hoping that these funds can go towards the Surveillance Officer position but the DOC hasn't given direction if those funds can be spent towards this.

Kuschel is requesting \$7,500.00 from Traverse County to fund the Surveillance Officer position if these funds can't provide the financial assistance. Kuschel explained that the main role of this position is to complete home visits and provide additional support for the drug court participants. This helps the Probation Unit as the caseload of the Probation Officers is great.

Planning and Zoning

Zoning Administrator, Ben Oleson, appeared before the Board. The Board wanted to discuss the permit fees that we have in place. Schmidt looked at permit fees at other counties and the fees are all over the board. Schmidt asked if this was something that the Wind and Solar Subcommittee could look into. The general consensus of the Board is to have the Wind and Solar Subcommittee look into the wind and solar permit fees and the Planning and Zoning Committee will look into all the fees. There was discussion regarding the CUP application fees, they will research this through the committees as well.

Auditor/Treasurer

Auditor/Treasurer Kit Johnson appeared before the Board with a budget review. We are currently at a 19.58% increase over 2023. In the budget session the Commissioners present went department by department and made a few changes but not many. There were some Departments that were going to get the Board more information and Johnson reminded them that we can use reserves to bring the levy down too. We are required to set the preliminary levy by the end of September, we can either set it at the next meeting in September or have a special meeting by the end of September.

Board Chair Schmidt left the meeting and Vice-Chairman Gail stepped in.

County Coordinator

Upon motion by Nelson and second by Olson the following bills were approved unanimously.

Commissioner of Transportation	\$6,874.07
Larson Oil, Inc	\$14,069.00
Schmitz, Todd	\$15,892.50
Braun Intertec Corporation	\$2,033.06
Election Systems & Software, Inc.	\$2,040.00
Fleet Services	\$6,503.78
Hometown Planning	\$2,620.00
Northland Business systems, Inc.	\$10,972.50
Rainbow Rider	\$12,813.08
Traverse County Probation	\$17,070.40
West Central Regional Juvenile Ct	\$8,049.00

Per M.S. 375.12, the number of claims totaling \$2,000.00 or less was 42 totaling \$11,326.28.

Lisa Zahl, County Coordinator, informed the Board that Jodi Hormann's appointment for the HRA Board is up on October 4, 2023. Hormann has expressed interest to the Board that she would like to be reappointed. Upon a motion by Nelson and second by Olson, Jodi Hormann was reappointed for a 5-year term beginning October 4, 2023 and passed unanimously 4 – 0.

An ordinance regarding cannabis use and sales in Traverse County was discussed. Ann Stehn, Director of Public Health, appeared before the Board to let the Commissioners know that Horizon Public Health is

here if we have any questions regarding this and they will look into any questions we have. Because this is all so new there isn't much direction yet. They are expecting example language for ordinances possibly by late September. The Board would like to see putting a Use Ordinance into place and possibly a moratorium for the sale of cannabis. County Attorney, Matt Franzese, will do some research and bring information to the next meeting.

Public Comment

There were no public comments.

Committee Reports

Olson reported on Counties Providing Technology.

Gail adjourned the meeting at 10:13 a.m.

Lisa Zahl, County Coordinator

Kayla Schmidt, Chair