

Traverses County Commission  
Regular Board Meeting  
December 21, 2021

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. by Chairman Dave Salberg. Other Commissioners present were Todd Johnson, Kayla Schmidt, Tom Monson, and Mark Gail. The pledge of allegiance was recited. A motion was made by Monson and second by Schmidt to approve the agenda, passed unanimously. There was a motion by Monson and second by T. Johnson to approve the December 14, 2021 minutes, discussion followed with the motion passing 4-1 with Salberg voting against. The minutes from the December 15, 2021 Truth in Taxation Meeting were approved unanimously upon motion by T. Johnson and second by Schmidt. There were no public comments.

**Highway Department**

Chad Gillespie, County Engineer and Brian Koch, County Maintenance Supervisor appeared before the Board with a department update. Gillespie provided the Board with a list of the Wingmen the highway department has for seasonal work and the corresponding wages. Gillespie explained the increase to the Non-CDL wage scale. Gillespie reported that there were no changes to the budget from prior meetings.

**Soil and Water District**

Sara Gronfeld appeared before the Board with a department update. Gronfeld reported that the feedlot inspections are complete and re-registrations are underway. The One Watershed One Plan policy committee meeting will meet in January. Gronfeld asked the Board for a volunteer to sit on the Upper Minnesota One Watershed One Plan policy planning committee. T. Johnson asked for the opportunity to serve since his district is the only one impacted. Upon motion by T. Johnson and second by Monson the Joint Powers Agreement between SWCD and Traverse County was approved unanimously.

**Auditor/Treasurer**

Kit Johnson appeared before the Board with a department update. K. Johnson informed the Board that in subdivision 2 of the Minnesota Statute 375A.1205 it requires Auditor/Treasurers to inform the Board, in writing, 104 days in advance if they intend to run in an upcoming election. K. Johnson let the Board know he plans to run in 2022. K. Johnson and Schmidt attended the Wheaton City Council meeting where they discussed redistricting. The Wheaton City Council are in favor of proceeding with K. Johnsons' proposal that alters all five of the districts. K. Johnson informed the Board that there is an opportunity for grant dollars through the Help America Vote Act. This grant may issue up to \$20,000 plus \$.29 per each person of voting age and that the funds can be used for security updates and accessibility issues. K. Johnson provided the Board with two proposals for refinancing the Traverse Care Center Bonds. Upon motion by Gail and second by Monson the motion to approve the Northland Securities proposal was passed unanimously. K. Johnson went on to ask for a motion to change the Probation department from the general revenue fund to their own fund, as this was a recommendation from the State Auditors. The motion was made by Schmidt and a second by Monson, the motion passed unanimously. K. Johnson also requested that funds in the amount of \$175,000 be advanced from the county's general fund to the new probation fund for operational costs for 6 months. Upon motion by Monson and second by T. Johnson the motion passed unanimously. K. Johnson informed the Board that he spoke with Philip Deal, Wheaton Dumont Coop Elevators General Manager, and due to the inactivity of progress with the WDCE new construction they would like to put the abatement on hold. K. Johnson has spoken with County Attorney Matt Franzese and he advised that the Board could pause the abatement through a resolution which will be drawn up by K. Johnson for consideration at a future meeting. K. Johnson informed the Board that they are at a 4.57% levy increase over 2021, discussion took place. T. Johnson would like to use reserves to bring the increase to 0%. Gail said that that in the

past when that was done the following years need to have bigger increases to make up for it so he believes that there should be some type of increase made. T. Johnson made a motion to use reserves to pay the levy down to a 0% increase, there was no second, the motion failed. Monson made a motion to keep the levy increase at 4.57%, second by Schmidt, discussion followed. T. Johnson felt that the Board could do better than that. Salberg would like to see the increase over 2021 around 3.5%. K. Johnson informed the Board that they are currently using \$92,500.00 from the reserves to get at a 4.57% increase over 2021. If they use another \$92,500.00 more for a total of \$185,000.00 they would be at a 3.04% increase of 2021. Gail made a motion to use reserves to set the levy at \$6,198,333.40 a 3.04% increase over 2021, second by T. Johnson, discussion followed. The motion passed unanimously. Traverse county remains among the lowest in the state for levies.

**Lisa Zahl, County Coordinator**

A motion was made by Monson with second by Schmidt to approve the bills, the motion passed unanimously .

DILLON’S LAWN & LANDSCAPING	\$5,830.00
DOUGLAS COUNTY PUBLIC WORKS	\$3,603.31
MIDSTATES EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLY	\$27,906.60
HORMANN/MARK	\$2,000.00
TRAVERSE COUNTY SOIL & WATER SERV	\$103,860.00
WEST CENTRAL REGIONAL JUVENILE CTR	\$4,300.00

Per M.S. 375.12, the number of claims totaling \$2,000.00 or less were 30, amounting to \$16,420.95

Pursuant to statue 13D.03 the meeting will be closed for labor negotiation strategy, the meeting was closed at 10:57 a.m. upon motion by Schmidt and second by Monson, the motion was passed unanimously. At 11:12 a.m. upon a motion by Schmidt and second by T. Johnson and approved unanimously the meeting was reopened. The result of the closed meeting was the discussion of strategy for labor negotiations. Upon a motion by T. Johnson and second by Schmidt a 2.75% increase and applicable step increase, as listed in attachment A, were approved unanimously for the elected and non-union employees. The Executive Committee met to discuss the distribution of the American Rescue Plan. Zahl reported that there is approximately \$158,000.00 remaining. The Committee chose to hold any action until they received direction from the Board, inquiring as to whether the funds should be used for private or public needs. T. Johnson asked about directing proceeds to the county’s ambulance services, Zahl said she would research the criteria. No decisions were made at the time of the meeting. The Executive Committee discussed the extension of Covid sick leave that is due to expire at the end of 2021, it is their recommendation not to extended it. Schmidt made the motion to discontinue Covid sick leave effective January 1, 2022, second by Monson, discussion took place, the motion passed unanimously. Zahl provided the Board with the annual report for Rural Minnesota CEP, Inc.

Salberg gave a brief overview of his Western Probation Services Committee Meeting.

Salberg adjourned the meeting at 11:25 a.m.

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Lisa Zahl, County Coordinator

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Dave Salberg, Chairman