

PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Date: December 19, 2023

9:00 a.m.

Place: Commissioners Room, Courthouse, Caledonia, MN

Members Present: Dewey Severson, Eric Johnson, Robert Burns, Bob Schuldt, and Greg Myhre

Others Present: Interim Auditor/Treasurer Polly Heberlein, Reporter Charlene Selbee, Reporter Rose Korabek, Finance Director Carol Lapham, Board Clerk/EDA Director Allison Wagner, Recorder Mary Betz, Human Resources Director Theresa Arrick-Kruger, Environmental Services Director Martin Herrick, Public Health and Human Services Director John Pugleasa, IT Director Andrew Milde, Deputy Auditor/Treasurer Eliana Babinski, Sheriff Brian Swedberg, Engineer Brian Pogodzinski, Highway Maintenance Specialist Alex Goergen, Highway Sign Specialist Adam Heberlein, Highway Maintenance Specialist Chris Frank, Highway Maintenance Specialist Randy Hongerholt, and Highway Maintenance Specialist James Sweet

Presiding: Chairperson Severson

Call to order.

Pledge of Allegiance.

Prior to any motions being made it was requested that Consent Agenda Items 3 and 4 were removed from the Consent Agenda and instead added to Action Items. The items were to consider hiring Lori Ollendieck, as a probationary 0.8 FTE Environmental Services Clerk, B21 Step 3, effective 01/02/2024, conditioned upon successful completion of a background check, and consider hiring Eric Boldt as a 1.0 FTE, Probationary Highway Maintenance Specialist, B23, Step 6, effective 01/02/2024, conditioned upon successful completion of a background check. Motion was made by Commissioner Myhre, seconded by Commissioner Burns, motion unanimously carried to approve the agenda with the changes.

Motion was made by Commissioner Myhre, seconded by Commissioner Schuldt, motion unanimously carried to approve the meeting minutes from December 12, 2023.

Public Comment:

None.

APPOINTMENTS

None.

CONSENT AGENDA

Motion was made by Commissioner Burns, seconded by Commissioner Myhre, motion unanimously carried to approve the consent agenda.

- 1) Re-appoint Bonnie Giesler to serve on the County Extension Committee. Her next term would be 1/1/24-12/31/26.
- 2) Hire Jenna Nelson, as a probationary 1.0 FTE Deputy Auditor/Treasurer - License Center B22, Step 1 effective 01/02/2024, conditioned upon successful completion of a background check.
- 3) This item was moved to Action Items.
- 4) This item was moved to Action Items.
- 5) Amend Nicole Lemke's start date as probationary Child Support Officer, from 01/02/2024 to 01/03/2024, condition upon successful completion of a background check.
- 6) Initiate a competitive search for a 1.0 FTE Deputy Recorder, B21.

ACTION ITEMS

File No. 1 – Commissioner Myhre moved, Commissioner Johnson seconded, motion carried unanimously to accept the bid from Nick Hoscheit for renting crop land that surrounds the new taxi-lanes at the airport and enter into a two year lease. Only one bid was received. The bid was on 5.69 acres in the amount of \$205.00 per acre totaling \$1,166.45 annually.

File No. 2 – Commissioner Burns presented the board with options for the County to purchase three vehicles for Public Health and Human Services. Commissioner Burns moved, Commissioner Myhre seconded, motion carried unanimously to purchase two Chevy Equinox's from Sleepy Hollow and one Dodge Journey from Tri State Auto Outlet pending each vehicle came with a warranty. The total cost for the vehicles would be \$64,990.00 and would be paid with ARPA funds.

File No. 3 – Commissioner Myhre moved, Commissioner Johnson seconded, motion carried unanimously to approve amendment to the current SE Regional Crisis Center Governance Agreement.

File No. 4 – Commissioners discussed Attorney Samuel Jandt's 2024 salary proposal and memorandum. Human Resources Director Kruger presented the proposal on behalf of Jandt as he was unable to attend the meeting. Jandt was requesting his current salary of \$124,425.60 be increased to a salary of \$135,000 for 2024. The requested increase would be around 8.5%. A 3% increase had been budgeted in the preliminary budget. Kruger said there had been previous years where the Attorney's salary had remained unchanged. Commissioner Johnson said he wanted the rate increase to be fair at 3% along with what other non-represented employees and staff were receiving. Commissioner Myhre moved, Commissioner Johnson seconded, motion failed two to

three to increase Attorney Jandt's 2024 salary by 3%. Commissioners voted by roll. Commissioners Severson, Burns, and Schuldt voted no to the 3%. Commissioners Johnson and Myhre voted yes. Commissioner Burns said he wanted to propose a compromise. Commissioner Burns moved, Commissioner Schuldt seconded, motion carried three to two to increase Attorney Jandt's salary to \$132,513.26. This would be a 6.5% increase or an additional \$8,087.66. The Commissioners voted by roll. Commissioners Severson, Burns, and Schuldt voted yes. Commissioners Johnson and Myhre voted no.

File No. 5 – Commissioners discussed with Sheriff Brian Swedberg his 2024 salary proposal and memorandum. Sheriff Swedberg was requesting his current salary of \$113,042.50 be increased to a salary of \$125,000 for 2024. He said this was based off his years of experience and training with the Sheriff's office. He had also compared the current pay of Sheriffs with similar populations. Elected official's salaries were not based on a grid system, however grids could be used as a guide. The Sheriff position was currently stepped out. A 3% increase to the Sheriff's salary had been budgeted in the preliminary budget for 2024. Commissioner Myhre moved, Commissioner Johnson seconded, motion failed two to three to increase Sheriff Swedberg's 2024 salary by 3% to \$116,433.78. The Commissioners voted by roll. Commissioners Johnson and Myhre voted yes. Commissioners Severson, Burns, and Schuldt voted no to the 3% increase. Commissioner Johnson said the Sheriff knew what the salary for the position was when he ran in the election for Sheriff. Commissioner Burns moved, Commissioner Schuldt seconded, motion carried three to two to increase Sheriff Swedberg's salary by 6.5%. The salary for 2024 would be 120,390.26. The Commissioners voted by roll. Commissioners Severson, Burns, and Schuldt voted yes. Commissioners Johnson and Myhre voted no.

File No. 6 – Commissioners discussed setting their annual compensation amount. Commissioner Burns said he suggested a zero percent increase. The amount in 2023 had been \$19,586.83 in addition to meetings and mileage. Commissioner Myhre said he thought the Commissioners should get an increase as others at the County were getting increases. He also said future people may not want to run for office for such a low amount. Commissioner Burns moved, Commissioner Severson seconded, motion failed two to three to keep the Commissioners annual compensation the same for 2024. The Commissioners voted by roll. Commissioners Burns and Severson voted yes. Commissioners Johnson, Schuldt, and Myhre voted no. Commissioner Johnson moved, Commissioner Myhre seconded, motion carried three to two to increase the Commissioners compensation amount by 3% for 2024. The Commissioners voted by roll. Commissioners Johnson, Schuldt, and Myhre voted yes. Commissioners Severson and Burns voted no.

File No. 7 – Commissioner Johnson moved, Commissioner Burns seconded, motion carried unanimously to approve 2023 budget amendments.

File No. 8 – Commissioners discussed with Human Resources Director Kruger and Environmental Services Director Martin Herrick, hiring Lori Ollendieck, as a probationary 0.8 FTE Environmental Services Clerk, B21 Step 3, effective 01/02/2024, conditioned upon successful completion of a background check. Commissioner Johnson asked what step the

previous person in the position had started at. Kruger said she would need to go back and look, but that the current candidate had years of experience working as a City clerk and with government. Commissioner Johnson said the person in the position previously had, had previous experience working at Houston County prior to working in the zoning office, but had started at a different step. Commissioner Burns said if a step was offered and the candidate did not negotiate there would be no reason to consider a higher step. Commissioner Burns moved, Commissioner Severson seconded, motion carried unanimously to hire Lori Ollendieck, as a probationary 0.8 FTE Environmental Services Clerk, B21 Step 3, effective 01/02/2024, conditioned upon successful completion of a background check.

File No. 9 – Commissioners discussed with Human Resources Director Kruger and County Engineer Brian Pogodzinski hiring a 1.0 FTE, Probationary Highway Maintenance Specialist, B23, Step 6, effective 01/02/2024, conditioned upon successful completion of a background check. Kruger said there were Highway Department employees who had opposed the step offered. Commissioner Burns said he thought the step was too high. The candidate had twenty years of experience in the industry. Commissioner Johnson said the candidate would bring value to the County. He said he wanted the County to get the best possible employee for the job. There was nothing in the union contract stating someone could not be hired at a Step 6. Commissioners Burns moved, Commissioner Myhre seconded, motion carried four to one to deny the request to hire Eric Boldt as a 1.0 FTE, Probationary Highway Maintenance Specialist, B23, Step 6, effective 01/02/2024, conditioned upon successful completion of a background check. Commissioner Johnson voted no. After the motion passed Kruger and Pogodzinski were asked to go back and renegotiate with the candidate to see if they would consider a lower step.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Commissioners discussed the 2024 budget with Finance Director Lapham. The final budget and levy for 2024 would be set at the December 26th 2023 board meeting.

Commissioners discussed recent meetings they had attended and upcoming meetings including a Solid Waste Meeting with La Crosse County.

Commissioner Johnson said he wanted to thank Ed Hammell and Larry Hafner for their service on the Planning Commission. He said they had both served consecutive three year terms and were currently termed out. There would be vacancies on the Planning Commission that would need to be filled.

Chairperson Severson said he wanted to thank County Assessor Luke Onstad and Interim Auditor/Treasurer Polly Heberlein for their work. He said Onstad had done a good job educating the public about taxation. Severson said he had heard a compliment that Heberlein was going “above and beyond” her duties. He said the County had great employees overall.

Commissioner Johnson said the County needed to work on a Sick and Safe Time Policy. He said the County needed to have a new policy by January 1, 2024. Mandatory paid leave would also need to be implemented by the County starting in 2026.

Public Comment:

None.

There being no further business at 11:10 a.m. a motion was made by Commissioner Burns, seconded by Commissioner Schuldt motion unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting. The next meeting would be a regular meeting on December 26, 2023.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

HOUSTON COUNTY, MINNESOTA

By: _____
Dewey Severson, Chairperson

Attest: _____
Polly Heberlein, Interim Auditor/Treasurer

**HOUSTON COUNTY
AGENDA REQUEST FORM
December 26, 2023**

Date Submitted: 12/21/2023

By: Carol Lapham, Finance Director

CONSENT AGENDA REQUEST

APPOINTMENT REQUEST

2023 Employee Recognition Awards

ACTION REQUEST

Requesting approval of 2023 budget amendments to accurately reflect various revenues and expenditures and fund balance usage of the Recorder's Technology fund and the Compliance fund and amendments to the Road & Bridge 2023 budget.

Requesting designation of County Revenue, Road & Bridge, Public Health and Human Services as the 2024 major funds and Debt Service and Capital Projects as minor funds.

Adopt 2024 Tax Levy Resolution 23-49

Adopt 2024 Operating Budget Resolution 23-50

<u>Reviewed by:</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> HR Director <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Finance Director <input type="checkbox"/> IS Director <input type="checkbox"/> County Attorney <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Svcs	<input type="checkbox"/> Sheriff <input type="checkbox"/> Engineer <input type="checkbox"/> PHHS (indicate other dept)
<u>Recommendation:</u>		
<u>Decision:</u>		

2023 Employee Recognition Awards

35 Year Awards

David J Bauer	8/8/1988	
Mary A Zaffke	2/27/1992	Includes Non-Consecutive

30 Year Award

Julie A Renk	6/1/1993	
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25 Year Awards

Holly S Felten	10/19/1998	
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20 Year Awards

Christopher C Tuveson	3/24/2003	
Julie K Von Arx-Abnet	11/17/2003	

15 Year Awards

Anthony T Dockter	8/4/2008	
William L Hargrove	7/1/2008	
Brian K Pogodzinski	9/22/2008	

10 Year Awards

Erin E Cognac	1/2/2013	
Kirby K Fitzpatrick	11/18/2013	
Michelle L Herman	1/2/2013	

<u>Reviewed by:</u>	<u> XX </u>	HR Director	<u> </u>	County Sheriff	<u> </u>
	<u> </u>	Finance Director	<u> XX </u>	County Engineer	<u> </u>
	<u> </u>	IS Director	<u> </u>	PHHS	<u> </u>
	<u> XX </u>	County Attorney	<u> XX </u>	Other (indicate dept)	<u>Interim Auditor/Treasurer</u>
	<u> </u>	Environmental Svcs			

Recommendation:

Decision: