

MOWER COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS WORK SESSION

April 2, 2024

The Mower County Board of Commissioners in and for the County of Mower, Minnesota, met in a Work Session on April 2, 2024 at 1:00 p.m. at the Government Center, 201 1st Street NE, in Austin, Minnesota.

All members present, viz: Chair John Mueller, Vice-Chair Polly Glynn, Mike Ankeny, Dan Sparks and Jerry Reinartz. Also in attendance were County Attorney Kristen Nelsen and County Administrator Trish Harren Gjersvik.

The meeting was opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

SEMCAC Executive Director Jennifer Hengel and Head Start Director Tara Blom provided the Board with a New Facility Status Update. As the Board is aware, the purchased building was unfit for a new SEMCAC facility and will be demolished this spring. The plans for the new facility and have been worked and reworked based on construction estimates but will be a facility to bring all their current programming of outreach, head start, senior dining, and energy and housing assistance into one facility. Construction is estimated to start in early 2025 for a facility that will include space for both head start and early head start, crisis assistance, senior nutrition, office space and a multi-purpose room. Unfortunately the cost of construction has not allowed for space for a day care program. SEMCAC continues efforts to obtain additional funding for the project. The site plan allows for future expansion as programs grow and funding becomes available.

Public Works Accountant Sarah Belden presented information to the Board regarding the Equipment Operators Winter Projects. It was a summary of the work the department was able to do due to fewer snow events. Some examples include that instead of plowing for 1655 hours, staff hauled seal coat chips in preparation for the 2024 road construction season. The lack of snow cover has allowed for early patching and crack-filling road surfaces, removal of brush and tree trimming along culverts, bridges, guardrails and ditches. The staff has even been able to do early shoulder reclaiming. The department has remained very busy and has made progress in preparing for the construction season.

Public Works Director Michal Hanson provided information pertaining to the MnDOT I-90 Bridge Projects in Austin for the 2024 and beyond construction seasons. Mr. Hanson shared the timeline along with MnDOT's detour plans and routes during the I-90 bridge projects. The MnDOT I-90 bridge projects are 1) I-90 Bridge Replacement at Oakland Avenue (tentatively 4/19/24 – 8/21/24); 2) I-90 Bridge Replacement over Cedar River and I-90 Bridge "redeck" at 6th Street (June 2024 – October 2024); 3) I-90 Bridge Replacement at 4th Street (Summer/Fall 2024 for approximately 12 months); 4) I-90 Bridge Work – Westbound Cedar River Bridge (2025) and 5) I-90 Bridge Replacement at 14th Street (2026). A Detour Agreement will be brought to the Board on April 9 for approval.

Deputy County Administrator Matthew Verdick provided the Board with a Housing Tax Abatement program update. Application data was reviewed from the start of the program in 2016 to the present. The program is considered a success by adding 263 new housing units with an added value for new construction over \$73 million. A new social media video advertising campaign has been estimated to have reached over 4049 people in its first month.

The Board briefly discussed some building matters and the status of acquiring the land to extend the bike trail the four miles from Taopi to the Iowa border, and inquired about any response from Red Rock Township to the Board's action on the impassable road petition. It was reported that Red Rock Township has taken action to vacate 228th Street and 574th Avenue. Commissioner Mueller reported that the Fair Board is working on a plan to add lighting at the main entrance to the fairgrounds.

The work session concluded at 2:15 p.m.

THE MOWER COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

BY: John S. Mueller Chairperson

Attest:

By: Justin Hana Gysik
Clerk/Administrator