

MOWER COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS WORK SESSION

August 6, 2024

The Mower County Board of Commissioners in and for the County of Mower, Minnesota, met in a Work Session on August 6, 2024 at 1:00 p.m. at the Government Center, 201 1st Street NE, in Austin, Minnesota.

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

The meeting was opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

The cannabis committee has been working to develop an ordinance to regulate the sale of cannabis and related products. Assistant Public Works Director Valerie Sheedy presented a first preliminary draft of the ordinance that will become effective January 1, 2025. The county currently has two ordinances in place related to cannabis. One regulates public use, and the other is a moratorium on new retail establishments. The moratorium sunsets on December 31, 2024. The county has jurisdiction over municipalities that do not have their own ordinances and who have delegated the authority to the county. The City of Austin is adopting its own ordinance. The committee will be reaching out to townships and the other towns in the county to see if they plan to adopt their own or to have the county regulate on their behalf. Regulation includes enforcement and conducting compliance inspections. Some key decisions for the County Board to make include fees, number of registrations to allow (the county must allow a minimum of one per 12,500 residents), and distance of buffer zones around public places such as schools and parks.

Doug Host of Clifton Larson Allen provided the Board with the 2023 Audit Exit Presentation. During the 2023 audit three federal expenditure programs were reviewed without issues. A few weaknesses in internal controls were noted. These are annual notations that the county is unable to address due to the small number of employees in the A/T Office and Finance Department that does not allow for complete segregation of all duties. It is recommended the county have five months of expenses in reserves. Mower County averages 8 months.

County Administrator Trish Harren Gjersvik provided an American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds update. Mower County has received \$8,440,604 in ARPA funds and associated grants. To date the County has spent \$6,010,274.98 of the funds across six funding priorities: Covid Response, Economic Supports, Mental Health, Broadband, Housing and Infrastructure. Of the remaining balance \$2,260,714.24 is committed to the broadband projects, the recycling center expansion, etc. There remains \$169,615.76 left in uncommitted ARPA funding.

COMMISSIONERS' RECORD MOWER COUNTY, MINNESOTA

It was noted that the ribbon cutting on the New Fair Square and the Opening Ceremony of the 2024 Fair is 5 pm. It is also National Night Out which will be from 4-7 pm at Veterans Park.

The work session concluded at 2:14 p.m.

THE MOWER COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

BY: John D. Mueller Chairperson

Attest:

By: Christa Hansen Gustik
Clerk/Administrator