

MOWER COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS WORK SESSION

September 3, 2024

The Mower County Board of Commissioners in and for the County of Mower, Minnesota, met in a Work Session on September 3, 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, Deputy County Administrator Matthew Verdick, County Administrator Trish Harren Gjersvik (remote).

The meeting was opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Finance Manager Loni Swenson, Deputy Administrator Matt Verdick and County Administrator Trish Harren presented the Finance Committee's recommended budget and levy for 2025. Following Finance Committee meetings with departments and outside agencies, the initial projected levy increase was at a staggering 30.881%. The Finance Committee worked diligently with the departments and staff to find savings, revenue and ideas for how to manage some services more efficiently. As well, a formula error was uncovered. Some budget increases that could not be adjusted were the negotiated 2% pay increase for 2025, an 8% health insurance increase and a sizable increase in workers compensation and liability insurance premiums (\$200,000 liability and \$63,000 worker's comp). County Program Aid was decreased for 2025. Some requested 2025 budget requests are being adjusted to 2024 expenditure levels as department budgets allow. In the end, the Finance Committee is presenting a recommendation for discussion a 2025 preliminary levy of \$26,252,538 which is an increase of 4.99% over the 2024 levy. Following a brief discussion the Board thanked the departments and staff for working so hard to bring a proposed 2025 levy number that the entire board could support. An action item to set the preliminary 2025 levy will be on the next Board agenda.

Under other discussion, County Administrator Trish Gjersvik informed the Board that the Mower County Veterans Services will be assisting Dodge County Veterans Services for approximately 2-3 weeks to bridge a time gap from the resignation of the Dodge County VSO and their new hire.

Commissioner Glynn reported that businesses along Main Street in LeRoy are struggling due to the Hwy 56 road project which impacts access to their businesses. Possible options for financial assistance for these businesses are trying to be determined. The Development Corporation of Austin has been contacted for assistance in discovering possible resources.

The work session concluded at 1:29 p.m.

THE MOWER COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

BY: John T. Mueller Chairperson

Attest:

By: Luis Cejczyk
Clerk/Administrator