

REGULAR SESSION OF THE MOWER COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

February 25, 2025

The Mower County Board of Commissioners in and for the County of Mower, Minnesota, met in Regular Session February 25, 2025 at 9:00 a.m. at the Government Center in Austin, Minnesota.

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

The meeting was opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Motion made by Commissioner Mueller, seconded by Commissioner Reinartz, to approve the agenda adding letter of support for legislation for the state's mental health care system addressed in SF 1402, SF 1561 and SF 0928 under General Business; deleting approval of minutes under the consent agenda; and moving from the consent agenda the approval of the Credit Card & Charge Account amendment to Finance business. Motion carried.

Motion made by Commissioner Ankeny, seconded by Commissioner Sparks, to approve the consent agenda as presented:

1. Acknowledge Receipt of Electronic Fund Transfer Payment Reports
 2. Joint Powers Agreement with the City of Taopi for the regulation of cannabis businesses
 3. ArcaSearch proposal to digitize 2024 Board minutes to the County website (\$454)
- Motion carried.

Investigator Bruce Hemann was recognized for 23 years of service upon his retirement from the County. Family, friends, county co-workers and Sheriff, as well as Austin Police Department, colleagues were present to wish Mr. Hemann farewell.

Public Safety Telecommunicator Supervisor Tracy Hauschildt provided the Board with a department update. Ms. Hauschildt introduced Public Safety Telecommunicator (PST) Stephany Brehmer who has been with the County for six years. PST's are the critical link between people in distress and emergency services. Highlights of Ms. Hauschildt's report included department operational structure and 2024 statistics. To highlight a few statistics, the department received 35,474 9-1-1 calls and 105,398 non-emergency calls with the average call length of 2:15 minutes. The busiest days are Fridays and Mondays with the busiest times between 3pm and 4pm. The department staff is participating in training through the National Emergency Number Association (NENA) for quality assurance and improvement for handling law enforcement, emergency medical service and fire related calls and dispatching.

Motion made by Commissioner Mueller, seconded by Commissioner Reinartz, to approve the State of Minnesota Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force Joint Powers Agreement (5 years effective upon full execution). Motion carried.

Motion made by Commissioner Ankeny, seconded by Commissioner Sparks, to approve the Health & Human Services accounts payable totaling \$164,882.52. Motion carried.

Motion made by Commissioner Reinartz, seconded by Commissioner Mueller, to approve the following Commissioner warrants for payment:

<u>Vendor Name</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Vendor Name</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Austin Automotive LLC	2,092.80	Midwest Monitoring & Surveillance	3,295.50
Austin Community Charitable Fund	12,648.98	Minnesota Counties Intergov'tal Trust	2,184.00
Baudoin Oil Company	6,912.83	MN Department Of Corrections	18,300.00
Central States Wire Prod	3,758.00	Schneider/Thomas A	2,031.00
Development Corp Of Austin	5,000.00	SEMNECB	4,000.00
Erickson Engineering Co., LLC	23,105.00	SEMREX	2,960.00
Harty Mechanical Inc	3,969.46	Sheriff Houston County	7,604.17
Hodsdon/Richard D	2,035.00	The Master's Touch, LLC	9,600.00
Klein McCarthy Architects	33,469.50	TOWMASTER	3,413.76
MCHS SE Minnesota	3,431.00	57 Payments less than 2000	24,187.27
		Final Total:	173,998.27

Motion carried.

Motion made by Commissioner Ankeny, seconded by Commissioner Reinartz to approve the letter of support for legislation related to the state's mental health care system included in SF1402 Medicaid Rates; SF 1561 Solutions to Children Boarding; and SF 0928 School-linked funding, NEMT improvements and aftercare support. Motion carried.

Motion made by Commissioner Ankeny, seconded by Commissioner Sparks, to approve the Memorandum of Agreement with AFSCME #65 for language changes due to exiting the Merit System. Motion carried.

Motion made by Commissioner Ankeny, seconded by Commissioner Reinartz, to amend Personnel Policy D131 "Earned Sick and Safe Time" effective February 25, 2025 by amending multiple sections of the policy. The entire policy as amended is as follows:

D131 EARNED SICK AND SAFE TIME

Purpose of policy. To define the availability, accrual and use of ESST for eligible employees.

Legal references and authority.

MN Statutes §181.9445- 181.9448

Definitions.

Earned Sick & Safe Time (ESST). The law requires employers to provide earned sick and safe paid leave to eligible employees who work in Minnesota.

Family Member.

Employees may use earned sick and safe time for the following family members:

1. their child, including foster child, adult child, legal ward, child for whom the employee is legal guardian or child to whom the employee stands or stood in loco parentis (in place of a parent);
2. their spouse or registered domestic partner;

3. their sibling, stepsibling or foster sibling;
4. their biological, adoptive or foster parent, stepparent or a person who stood in loco parentis (in place of a parent) when the employee was a minor child;
5. their grandchild, foster grandchild or step-grandchild;
6. their grandparent or step-grandparent;
7. a child of a sibling of the employee;
8. a sibling of the parents of the employee;
9. a child-in-law or sibling-in-law;
10. any of the family members (1 through 9 above) of an employee's spouse or registered domestic partner;
11. any other individual related by blood or whose close association with the employee is the equivalent of a family relationship; and
12. up to one individual annually designated by the employee.

Overview.

Beginning January 1, 2024, Minnesota employers must provide employees with up to 48 hours of ESST for care of themselves, their family members, or another designee.

Under the new law, an employee accrues a minimum of one hour of ESST for every 30 hours worked up to a maximum of 48 hours of ESST in 2024; and up to a maximum of 80 hours of ESST thereafter in a calendar year.

An employer with an existing paid leave policy that meets or exceeds this law and does not otherwise conflict with the minimum standards and requirements is not required to provide additional ESST sick and safe time.

Policy.

ESST Eligible Use.

Employees can use their earned sick and safe time for reasons such as:

1. the employee's mental or physical illness, treatment or preventive care;
2. a family member's mental or physical illness, treatment or preventive care;
3. absence due to domestic abuse, sexual assault or stalking of the employee or a family member;
4. to make funeral arrangements, attend a funeral service or memorial or address financial or legal matters that arise after the death of a family member;
5. closure of the employee's workplace due to weather or public emergency or closure of a family member's school or care facility due to weather or public emergency; and
6. when determined by a health authority or health care professional that the employee or a family member is at risk of infecting others with a communicable disease.

The law specifies a weather event exception for certain employees who may not use ESST for absence related to the closure of their workplace or family member's school or care facility due to weather or public emergency. Those exceptions are as follows"

1. Licensed Peace Officers
2. 911 Telecommunicators
3. Correctional Facility Guards
4. Public Employee's with Commercial Driver's Licenses

Procedure:

To ensure proper compliance and to streamline the process, we ask that employees follow the guidelines outlined below prior to utilizing their Sick and Safe Time:

1. Eligibility: All employees are eligible for ESST if they have accrued sick and safe time hours.
2. Notice Requirements:

- If you need to use sick and safe time for an unexpected absence, please notify your supervisor as soon as possible, but no later than two hours prior to your scheduled start time.
 - In the event of a planned medical procedure or health-related absence, we require that you provide at least seven days' advance notice.
3. Documentation:
- If your absence extends for more than three consecutive days, you may be required to provide a doctor's note or other supporting documentation verifying your need to take sick leave.
 - For any non- family care-related leave, documentation of the relationship to the individual receiving care will be required.
4. Utilization of Hours:
- Non-exempt employees will use accrued Sick and Safe Time hours in increments of no less than Fifteen minutes.
 - Exempt employees will use accrued Sick and Safe Time hours for any qualifying purpose expected to last more than 4 hours.
5. Confidentiality: Your medical information or the specifics of your illness will remain confidential, and HR will manage your request with privacy and respect.
6. Emergency Situations: In case of a sudden illness or emergency, please notify your supervisor as soon as possible. The County recognizes the importance of flexibility for emergency situations and will work with you to accommodate your needs.

ESST can only be utilized on a scheduled workday. It cannot be utilized if an employee is "called" or "forced" in and cannot be used to create overtime.

Employment Separation & Rehire.

Upon employment separation, sick/vacation/PTO payout will be subject to the current collective bargaining agreement and/or Mower County policy.

When an employee separates and is rehired within 180 days, they retain their previously accrued and unused ESST hours that were not paid out at separation.

Employees who do NOT accrue sick/vacation or PTO.

ESST Accrual.

An eligible employee will accrue one hour of ESST for every 30 hours worked during a calendar year. The employee is eligible to begin utilizing accrued ESST hours after they have worked 80 hours during that calendar year.

Carry Over.

An employee may carry over any unused ESST from one calendar year to another, up to a maximum of 80 hours. At no time can an employee have more than 80 hours of ESST available for use.

Employment Separation & Rehire.

For employees who do not accrue sick/vacation or PTO, ESST hours are not eligible for payout upon separation.

Motion carried.

Motion made by Commissioner Sparks, seconded by Commissioner Mueller, to amend Personnel Policy D120 "Donation of Hours" effective February 25, 2025 by amending multiple sections of the policy. The entire policy as amended is as follows:

D120 DONATION OF HOURS

Purpose:

It has been the experience of Mower County that at times employees or their family members experience serious illness, injuries or a personal crisis. At times the employee does not have sufficient leave hours available for recovery, treatment or support. Mower County would like to aid these employees through these situations through an employee donation of hours program. This program is designed for these unforeseeable life events; simply being out of leave hours does not qualify the employee for this program.

Policy Statement:

Mower County has created two options for employees to donate leave for their fellow employees in a time of need.

1. A bank will be created for Mower County employees to donate vacation, PTO, or comp time hours for fellow employees who find themselves in this situation.
2. Employees may elect to donate directly to an employee whom Human Resources has identified as qualifying for this program.

Donation Process:

1. An employee who feels they need to apply for these hours will need to have used or be near the end of all his/her sick, vacation, PTO and comp. time banks, and complete the PTO donation request form. Applications will be reviewed by the Human Resource Director. The Human Resource Director may approve or deny requests. Employees may appeal decisions by the Human Resource Director to the County Administrator within 14 calendar days of the Human Resource Director's decision.
2. If the employee wishes to be eligible for direct donation of hours, they must acknowledge on the request document that their name and fact that they are seeking donated time will be released.
3. Recipients of donated time (either from the leave bank or directly) may not receive information regarding the name and amount of time donated.
4. Employees will not make direct requests of any employee to donate time to them either directly or through the donated leave bank.

Donation Process:

1. Employees may donate as many hours as they wish at any time throughout the year so long as the donation hours do not lower their own leave balance to below 80 hours. The employee will need to complete a PTO donation form and submit it to payroll. The employee may also request information on the number of hours accumulated at any given time.
2. If insufficient hours exist in the bank, Human Resource will send a memo to all employees requesting hours be donated to the leave bank. The employees' name and condition will not be released. These donations are totally on a volunteer basis.
3. Employees will be given forms to sign that state the number of hours given. Donations hours must be in whole hour increments.
4. This bank will ensure that hours are available when needed.
5. Donated hours are irrevocable

Confidentiality:

All donation requests and any details of the recipient's situation will be handled with the utmost confidentiality. Employees will not be required to disclose medical or other sensitive information.

Approval and Allocation:

1. Human Resources will review requests for donated leave and approve or deny based on the employee's eligibility and available hours.

2. All donated hours will be allocated to the recipient's PTO balance
3. The Human Resources Director will consider exceptions to this process on a case-by-case basis.

Motion carried.

Motion made by Commissioner Ankeny, seconded by Commissioner Reinartz, to approve the Software License, Maintenance, and Support Services Agreement with Election Systems & Software, LLC effective August 1, 2024 – July 31, 2025 (\$6510). Motion carried.

Motion made by Commissioner Mueller, seconded by Commissioner Reinartz, to set the project letting date to April 2, 2025 at 1:00 p.m. at the office of Public Works and awarded at the County Board of Commissioner's meeting for the following County projects: CP 50-25-03 Seasonal Aggregate, CP 50-25-04 Seasonal Bituminous, and CP 50-25-05 Seasonal Striping. Motion carried.

County Engineer Mitch Wenum presented bid information received for projects SAP 050-601-039, SAP 050-602-034, & CP 50-25-01.

Motion made by Commissioner Ankeny, seconded by Commissioner Sparks, to award the low bid (\$5,496,466.68) of Ulland Brothers, Inc. for the for Cold-In-Place Recycling projects SAP 050-601-039, SAP 050-602-034, & CP 50-25-01 and have the projects commence. Motion carried. Full bid abstract on file in the office of the County Auditor-Treasurer and Public Works Director.

County Engineer Mitch Wenum presented bid information received for projects SAP 050-601-040, SAP 050-610-005, and SAP 050-602-035.

Motion made by Commissioner Mueller, seconded by Commissioner Reinartz, to award the low bid (\$864,690.70) of Asphalt Surface Technologies Corp. for Micro Surfacing projects SAP 050-601-040, SAP 050-610-005, and SAP 050-602-035 and have the projects commence. Motion carried. Full bid abstract on file in the office of the County Auditor-Treasurer and Public Works Director.

Motion made by Commissioner Reinartz, seconded by Commissioner Ankeny, to approve the Road Use and Repair Agreement with Northern States Power County dba Excel Energy for the Pleasant Valley Wind repower project. Motion carried.

Motion made by Commissioner Ankeny, seconded by Commissioner Sparks, to approve the Health & Human Services write-offs of uncollectable accounts receivable balances from 1998 – 2024 in the total amount of \$567,011.68 and also approve 2024 Public Health write-offs of uncollectible accounts receivable totaling \$1,833.34. Detail on file in County Finance. Motion carried.

Motion made by Commissioner Reinartz, seconded by Commissioner Sparks, to approve 2025-2029 Capital Improvement Plan. The entire plan is available in County

Finance and available on the county website <https://www.co.mower.mn.us/565/Capital-Improvement-Plan> Motion carried.

Motion made by Commissioner Mueller, seconded by Commissioner Sparks, to approve amending the Credit Card & Charge Account Policy as follows:

Modify the last paragraph in Section IV. A. 2. as follows:

Per personnel policy "Reimbursement of Travel and Related Expense" ~~No tips or~~ alcoholic beverages are to be included in the credit card billing. ~~when used for meals connected with overnight travel. This is included in personnel policy that tips and alcoholic beverages are not paid by the county.~~ **Tips can be included up to a maximum of 15% of the bill.**

Modify the last section in Section IV. as follows:

For purposes of this Section IV. A., the following Mower County officials are approved for a County Credit Card:

Administrator	Records Specialist
Attorney	Assessor
IT Director	Auditor-Treasurer
GIS Administrator	Public Works Director County Engineer
Sheriff	Human Resources Director
Health & Human Services Director	Chief Deputy Sheriff
Correctional Services Director	Emergency Manager
Building Maintenance Supervisor Facilities Director	Finance Department Employees
Land Records & Taxpayer Services Director	Veterans Service Officer
Deputy Administrator	

Modify the first paragraph in Section IV. C. as follows:

C. All existing and new charge accounts must be approved by the Finance ~~Manager~~ **Director** or designee. Charge accounts may be used for the following purposes:

Modify section VI. As follows:

VI. Documentation: Employee must submit all receipts to ~~County Administrator's~~ **the Finance** office in time for monthly statement to be paid prior to due date. If receipt is not provided, charged item will be charged back to employee through payroll.

The entire policy as amended is available at County Administration. Motion carried.

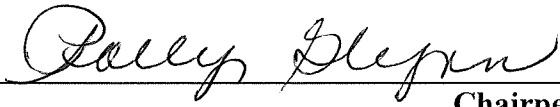
Under Committee Reports it was noted that on 2/18 all five commissioners attended the Urban 3 report. Commissioner Ankeny reported attending a Personnel Committee meeting on 2/11, a Building Committee meeting on 2/18 and the Joint City/County meeting on 2/19. Commissioner Reinartz reported attending the Senior Center meeting on 2/21. Commissioner Sparks reported attending a Personnel Committee meeting on 2/11. Commissioner Mueller reported attending the Comprehensive Plan 2045 meeting in Elkton on 2/13, a Finance Committee meeting and also a Building Committee meeting on 2/18, a Belong Committee meeting and also the Joint City/County meeting on 2/19 and a Mower County Hazmat Mitigation virtual meeting on 2/21. Commissioner Glynn reported attending a Finance Committee meeting on 2/18, an AMC child protection presentation and also a SWCD meeting on 2/19, a Wellness Committee meeting on 2/20 and a One Watershed One Plan meeting on 2/24.

COMMISSIONERS' RECORD MOWER COUNTY, MINNESOTA

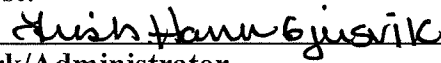
The Chair adjourned the meeting at 10:39 a.m. The next meeting is scheduled for March 11, 2025 at 9:00 a.m.

Following adjournment the Mower County Board of Commissioners gathered in the Government Center parking lot for the dedication of the new Veteran Services Van.

THE MOWER COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

BY: 
Chairperson

Attest:

By: 
Clerk/Administrator