

REGULAR SESSION OF THE MOWER COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

December 30, 2025

The Mower County Board of Commissioners in and for the County of Mower, Minnesota, met in Regular Session December 30, 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 (9:01). Also in attendance were County Administrator Matthew Verdick and County Attorney Kristen Nelsen.

The meeting was opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Commissioner Mueller arrived.

Motion made by Commissioner Sparks, seconded by Commissioner Ankeny, to approve the agenda adding: under Highway business Resolution to approve Local Bridge Replacement Program Grant Agreement Grant Terms and Conditions SP No. 050-607-043 and under Human Resources businesses the following items Amend Personnel Policy D131 Earned Sick and Safe Time; Amend Personnel Policy D150 Family Medical Leave Act Policy; and Adopt Personnel Policy 151 Minnesota Paid Leave and under General Business to Amend employment contract with Matthew Verdick to delete section regarding residency in paragraph 9. Motion carried unanimously.

The Oath of Office was administered to appointed Auditor-Treasurer Scott Felten.

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

1. Approve Minutes of December 15 Budget & Levy Hearing and December 16 board meeting;
2. Acknowledge the Receipt of Electronic Fund Transfer Payment Reports
3. Resolution to approve the Allzin for Alzheimers LG240B MN Lawful Gambling Application to Conduct Excluded Bingo on 2/22/26 at Lansing Corners

Date: December 30, 2025

Res. #75-25

RESOLUTION

On motion of Commissioner Reinartz, seconded by Commissioner Sparks, the following Resolution was passed and adopted by the Mower County Board of Commissioners at a meeting held December 30, 2025 at the Government Center, Austin, Minnesota.

WHEREAS, on December 30, 2025 the Allzin For Alzheimers presented a request for a Minnesota Lawful Gambling LG240B Application to Conduct Excluded Bingo at the Lansing Corners Bar & Grill located at 27017 HWY 218, Austin, MN on February 22, 2026.

BE IT RESOLVED THAT, the Mower County Board of Commissioners hereby approves Allzin For Alzheimers' Minnesota Lawful Gambling LG240B Application to Conduct Excluded Bingo at the Lansing Corners Bar & Grill located at 27017 HWY 218, Austin, MN on February 25, 2024.

Passed and adopted this 30th day of December, 2025.

Motion carried unanimously.

Accounting Technicians Lisa Conway (29 years) and Debra Sherman (27 years) were recognized upon their retirement with appreciation.

Human Resources Director Kristina Kohn provided a department update. The discussion covered several key operational updates. The health program focused on employee education, which is progressing with minor challenges. A significant achievement was the reconciliation of retirement accounts. Recruitment and hiring have slowed due to a 60-day hold on open positions, with attrition being used to reduce FTE counts. Minnesota Paid Leave took effect on January 1, bringing new mandates and interpretation changes; AMC is addressing these through webinars, and MetLife is prepared to accept applications. Union negotiations for new contracts will start in early 2026. Despite reduced HR staffing, the team remains small but highly dedicated, consistently doing what it takes to get the job done and taking pride in their accomplishments.

Motion made by Commissioner Reinartz, seconded by Commissioner Ankeny, to maintain the use of Policy B130, Recruitment and Selection, and to approve the annual staffing levels for 2026 for all departments as on file in Human Resources and summarized as follows:

Department	Qty	Department	Qty
Administration	4	Health & Human Services	103.2
Attorney	15.8	Highway	28.25
Bldg. Maintenance	5	Human Resources	3
Commissioners	5	Land Records/Taxpayer Services	15
Community Corrections	13.75	Recycling/Solid Waste	2.2
Emergency Management	1	Sheriff	73
Environmental Services	3.3	Technology Services	6
Finance	4.25	Vet Services	2
GIS	3		
Approved Staff Count FTE			287.75

Motion carried.

Motion made by Commissioner Ankeny, seconded by Commissioner Mueller, to set 2026 non-union salaries with a 2.0% increase above the 2025 rate along with applicable anniversary step increases on the wage scale. Motion carried.

Date: December 30, 2025

Res. #76-25

RESOLUTION

On motion of Commissioner Ankeny, seconded by Commissioner Reinartz, the following Resolution was passed and adopted by the Mower County Board of Commissioners at a meeting held December 30, 2025, at the Government Center, Austin, Minnesota.

BE IT RESOLVED THAT; the annual salary for the elected official of County Attorney for Mower County payable in bi-weekly installments, be set as follows for 2026:

County Attorney
as of 01/01/2026.....\$191,314.59

Passed and approved this 30th day of December, 2025.

Date: December 30, 2025

Res. #77-25

RESOLUTION

On motion of Commissioner Sparks, seconded by Commissioner Ankeny, the following Resolution was passed and adopted by the Mower County Board of Commissioners at a meeting held December 30, 2025, at the Government Center, Austin, Minnesota.

BE IT RESOLVED THAT; the annual salary for the elected official of County Sheriff for Mower County payable in bi-weekly installments, be set as follows for 2026:

County Sheriff
as of 01/01/2026.....\$163,615.38

Passed and approved this 30th day of December 2025.

Date: December 30, 2025

Res. #78-25

RESOLUTION

On motion of Commissioner Mueller, seconded by Commissioner Reinartz, the following Resolution was passed and adopted by the Mower County Board of Commissioners at a meeting held December 30, 2025, at the Government Center, Austin, Minnesota.

BE IT RESOLVED, that the annual salary for the elected official of County Commissioner for Mower County payable in bi-weekly installments, be set as follows for 2026:

County Commissioner
as of 01/01/2026.....\$26,165.04

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the 2026 Chair of the Board receive an annual bonus of \$500.00 payable at year end.

Passed and approved this 30th day of December 2025.

The following resolution was adopted to provide minimum salary information for anyone interested in running for an elected position in the next election.

Date: December 30, 2025

Res. #79-25

RESOLUTION

On motion of Commissioner Sparks, seconded by Commissioner Mueller, the following Resolution was passed and adopted by the Mower County Board of Commissioners at a meeting held December 30, 2025 at the Government Center, Austin, Minnesota.

BE IT RESOLVED THAT; the minimum salaries for elected officials for Mower County be set as follows for 2026:

- 1) County Sheriff.....\$124,791.22
- 2) County Attorney.....\$141,714.84
- 3) County Commissioner\$26,165.04

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that said salaries are set in a manner to be consistent with other Mower County employees and their pay equity evaluation system.

Passed and approved this 30th day of December, 2025

Date: December 30, 2025

Res. #80-25

RESOLUTION

On motion of Commissioner Ankeny, seconded by Commissioner Reinartz, the following Resolution was passed and adopted by the Mower County Board of Commissioners at a meeting held December 30, 2025, at the Government Center, Austin, Minnesota.

BE IT RESOLVED that effective January 1, 2026, a Commissioner per diem for in-county meetings, noticed special events and Board approved meetings be set as follows:

Less than 2 hours:	\$50
2 – 4 hours:	\$75
Over 4 hours or Two or more meetings on same day:	\$100

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that effective January 1, 2026, a Commissioner per diem for Out-of-County meetings, noticed special events and Board approved meetings be set at one hundred dollars (\$100) *(if meeting held virtually, per diem in accordance with in-county per diems)*

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that effective January 1, 2026, a per diem of one hundred fifty dollars (\$150) be set for the Rural MN Energy Board and Minnesota Rural Counties working committees. *(if meeting held virtually, per diem in accordance with in-county per diems)*

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that effective January 1, 2026, a per diem of one hundred fifty dollars (\$150) be set for meetings requiring overnight stays *(day with the overnight)*.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that effective January 1, 2026, a per diem for the following non-county board working committees: Extension Committee, Planning Commission, Board of Adjustment, Mower County Community Health Services Advisory Committee, State C.H.S. Advisory Committee, Joint Powers Boards, Personnel Board of Appeals and all regional or state boards, be set as follows:

Less than 2 hours	\$50
2 – 4 hours	\$75
Over 4 hours or Two or more meetings on same day	\$100

Passed and approved this 30th of December, 2025.

Motion made by Commissioner Mueller, seconded by Commissioner Sparks, to table the following Human Resources policy actions to a future work session for further discussion:

Motion to adopt Policy B101 Tennesen Advisory/Wage Disclosure/Data Practices

Motion to amend Personnel Policy B105 Statement of Policy (EEOP)

Motion to amend Personnel Policy B110 Employee Relations

Motion to amend Personnel Policy B140 Employee Personnel Records

Motion to amend Personnel Policy B150 Personnel Data Changes

Motion to amend Personnel Policy B200 Dispute Resolution

Motion carried unanimously.

Motion made by Commissioner Sparks, seconded by Commissioner Mueller, to amend Personnel Policy D131 Earned Sick and Safe Time policy by amending the "Overview" and "Procedures paragraph 3. Documentation" sections of the policy as follows:

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, a~~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 a~~ 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.

AND

3. Documentation:

- o If your absence extends for more than ~~two (2) free~~ consecutive days, you may be required to provide ~~a doctor's note or other supporting documentation verifying your need to take sick leave~~ medical documentation supporting medical leave, court records or related documentation, or when documentation cannot be obtained within a reasonable time and without added expense, you may be required to provide a statement consistent with statute verifying that you are using or have used ESST for a qualifying purpose.

~~The County will not require an employee to disclose details related to domestic abuse, sexual assault, or stalking or the details of the employee's or the employee's family member's medical condition. In accordance with state law, the County will not require an employee using ESST to find a replacement worker to cover the hours the employee will be absent.~~

- ~~o For any non-family care related leave, documentation of the relationship to the individual receiving care will be required.~~

Motion carried unanimously.

Motion made by Commissioner Reinartz, seconded by Commissioner Ankeny, to amend Personnel Policy D150 Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) Policy by amending the second paragraphs under the sections "Pay and Benefits:" and "Return to Work" as follows:

2nd paragraph amendment under “Pay and Benefits:”

Minnesota law allows for paid and unpaid parental leave ~~of up to six weeks;~~ this leave runs concurrently with FMLA and does not extend the maximum of 12 weeks of FMLA leave. ~~for which the employee is eligible.~~

AND

2nd paragraph amendment under “Return to Work”

An employee returning from a leave of 12 weeks or less shall be entitled to be restored to the same position or an equivalent position to the one the employee held at the time the leave began. If an employee would otherwise have been subject to layoff, the employee is treated in the same manner as if the employee had been working.

Motion carried unanimously.

Motion made by Commissioner Mueller, seconded by Commissioner Sparks, to adopt the following Personnel Policy D151 Minnesota Paid Leave and all noted changes during discussion have been verified and included:

Policy D151 Minnesota Paid Leave

Effective January 1, 2026, eligible employees may qualify for paid leave pursuant to the Minnesota Paid Leave (“MPL”) law, which provides for partial wage replacement to eligible employees. Mower County will deduct the employee's portion of the premiums for MPL from the employee's wages. Employees may, but are not required to, use their accrued paid leave to “top off” the partial wage replacement benefits provided under MPL. The combined leave benefit of the partial wage replacement and any supplemental paid leave shall not exceed an employee's regular wage or salary.

Eligible employees may apply for MPL benefits based on qualifying events for medical care related to pregnancy, childbirth, bonding leave, family care, military family leave, safety leave, or the employee’s own serious health condition as set forth in Minnesota law. Paid leave will be administered through the State of Minnesota or a private equivalent insurance plan, as determined by the County Board. Information regarding the Board's election shall be provided to employees on an annual basis or may be requested from the Human Resources Department.

When an employee's need for MPL is foreseeable, the employee must provide at least 30 days advance notice to Mower County. If 30 days' advance notice is not practicable because of a lack of knowledge of approximately when leave will be required to begin, a change in circumstances, or a medical emergency, notice must be given as soon as practicable. Notice must be given in writing to the Human Resources Department. An employee requesting leave taken intermittently shall provide a schedule of needed workdays off as soon as practicable and must make a reasonable effort to schedule the intermittent leave so as not to disrupt unduly the operations of Mower County. Intermittent leave may be taken in fifteen (15) minute increments. The portion of an employee’s leave entitlement which may be taken intermittently is limited to 480 hours per benefit year.

During the period when an employee is receiving MPL benefits, Mower County will continue group insurance coverage, including health insurance, for the employee and any dependents as if the employee was not on leave, provided that the employee continues to pay any employee share of the cost of such benefits.

Employees will accrue paid time off only on any portion of the leave period that is paid by Mower County through the use of accrued paid leave. No paid time off will be earned on MPL wage replacement benefits.

MPL shall run concurrently with FMLA leave and any other applicable leaves under Minnesota law when taken for the same qualifying purpose.

Motion carried unanimously.

Motion made by Commissioner Ankeny, seconded by Commissioner Mueller, to amend the employment contract between Mower County and County Administrator Matthew Verdick by removing in section 9. the first paragraph and the first two words of the second paragraph as follows:

9. RELOCATION AND EXPENSES

~~It is a requirement of this position that the County Administrator establish and maintain residency within Mower County. The Employee shall establish such residency no later than December 31, 2026. In recognition of uncertainties in the housing market, the Chair of the County Board is authorized to grant extensions of this deadline in increments of up to six (6) months, as deemed appropriate. Once residency is established, the Employee shall continue to reside in Mower County for the duration of their employment. Failure to comply with this requirement may result in termination of employment, which shall be considered termination for cause.~~

~~As such,~~ The County agrees to reimburse the Employee for reasonable expenses...

Motion carried unanimously.

Motion made by Commissioner Mueller, seconded by Commissioner Reinartz, to approve the Health & Human Services accounts payable totaling \$165,679.26. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion made by Commissioner Mueller, seconded by Commissioner Ankeny, to approve the following Commissioner warrants for payment December 31, 2025:

Vendor Name	Amount	Vendor Name	Amount
Ancom Communications	3100.00	KRIS Engineering Inc	32786.76
Andersen, Inc./Earl F.	2571.90	MacQueen Equipment, Inc.	2038.32
Austin Police Department	13474.80	Marco Technologies LLC	2602.81
Baudoin Oil Company	42475.35	Midwest Monitoring & Surveillance	3306.25
Bustad Dozing & Excavating Inc	14750.00	Minnesota Counties Computer Cooperative	16340.55
Damel Corporation Morem Tree Service	5070.00	Muzik's Muddin' LLC	15825.00
Dustin Smith Manufacturing, LLC	8440.00	Northland & Companies	3922.88
Flaherty & Hood, P.A.	43334.00	Phoenix Supply	6332.85
Force America Distributing, LLC	2938.33	Pro-West & Associates, Inc.	3400.00
Frontier Precision, Inc	6908.00	ProPhoenix Corporation	64368.00
Hanson Tire Of Austin Inc	6900.00	Rohl Electric and Services LLC	8732.84
Hemess Construction Co	2825.00	Southern Lock & Glass	2077.72
Jones Haugh & Smith Inc	4975.00	Ziegler, Inc	3218.54
Joseph Company, Inc/The	10475.00	58 payments less than 2000	38813.71
		Final Total:	372003.61

Motion carried unanimously.

Motion made by Commissioner Mueller, seconded by Commissioner Sparks, to approve the annual subscription renewal quote from CivicPlus for NextRequest data request software effective 1/1/26 – 12/31/26 (\$7,544.88). Motion carried unanimously.

Motion made by Commissioner Reinartz, seconded by Commissioner Ankeny, to accept the 2024 Emergency Management Performance Grant for \$21,183.00. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion made by Commissioner Sparks, seconded by Commissioner Ankeny, to authorize application for the 2025 Emergency Management Performance Grant. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion made by Commissioner Reinartz, seconded by Commissioner Ankeny, to approve the Lynx quote #PRGR860 for the purchase of a new panic button system for the County \$27,724.04 but also authorized additional panic devices with a thorough review of larger square footage departments needing additional devices for emergency alert. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion made by Commissioner Mueller, seconded by Commissioner Sparks, to approve the request of Austin Utilities for an easement on county-owned property located in Section 33 T103N R18W, the SW ¼ and SW ¼ sections, to re-route an existing overhead line that has been causing many outages due to the abundance of overhang from nearby trees. The new route will run through the proposed easement and will also be an overhead distribution line. Austin Utilities will cut/trim some trees along the proposed route for the new distribution line to allow proper working conditions for installation. Motion carried unanimously.

Date: December 30, 2025

Res. #81-25

RESOLUTION

On motion of Commissioner Ankeny, seconded by Commissioner Reinartz, the following Resolution was passed and adopted by the Mower County Board of Commissioners at a meeting held December 30, 2025 at the Government Center, Austin, Minnesota.

WHEREAS, Mower County has applied to the Commissioner of Transportation for a grant from the Minnesota State Transportation Fund related to Bridges No. 50604 and 50605; and

WHEREAS, the Commissioner of Transportation has given notice that funding for this project is available; and

WHEREAS, the amount of the grant has been determined to be \$256,504.60 by reason of the lowest responsible bid;

NOW THEREFORE, be it resolved that Mower County does hereby agree to the terms and conditions of the grant consistent with Minnesota Statutes, section 174.50, and will pay any additional amount by which the cost exceeds the estimate and will return to the Minnesota State Transportation Fund any amount appropriated for the project but not required. The proper County officers are authorized to execute a grant agreement and any amendments thereto with the Commissioner of Transportation concerning the above-referenced grant.

Passed and approved this 30th day of December, 2025.

Motion made by Commissioner Sparks, seconded by Commissioner Mueller, to approve the Clifton Larson Allen Statement of Work for preparation of the Annual Affordable Care Act reporting (\$2,075). Motion carried unanimously.

Motion made by Commissioner Ankeny, seconded by Commissioner Reinartz, to approve the 2026-2030 Capital Improvement Plan. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion made by Commissioner Mueller, seconded by Commissioner Sparks, to amend the Credit Card and Charge Account Policy as follows:

Amend Section IV. Approval and Use of Credit Cards and Charge Accounts subparagraph 3. As follows:

3. The credit card can also be used for approved department budgeted expenditures noting this is limited in total by department pursuant to this policy. **County credit cards shall be used solely for expenditures that serve a legitimate public purpose and are directly related to official county business. All charges must be necessary, reasonable, and appropriate for carrying out county operations or programs. Personal, political, or non-county-related expenses are strictly prohibited.**

And

at the end of Section IV. include **“Solid Waste Administrator”** in the list of officials approved for a County Credit Card.

Motion carried unanimously.

Motion made by Commissioner Mueller, seconded by Commissioner Ankeny, to approve the 2026 fee schedule. The fee schedule is on file in the office of the County Finance and Administration. Motion carried unanimously.

Date: December 30, 2025

RES. #82-25

**RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING UOCAVA BALLOT BOARD FOR THE 2026
ELECTION YEAR (ENCOMPASSING ALL ELIGIBLE ELECTIONS)**

On motion of Commissioner Sparks, seconded by Commissioner Reinartz, the following Resolution was passed and adopted by the Mower County Board of Commissioners at a meeting held December 30, 2025 at the Government Center, Austin, Minnesota.

WHEREAS, Mower County is required by Minnesota Statutes 203B.23 to establish a Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA) Ballot Board effective December 30, 2025 for the full 2026 Election year for all eligible elections; and

WHEREAS, this Board will bring uniformity in the processing of accepting or rejecting returned absentee ballots issued under Sections 203B.16 to 203B.27 in Mower County; and

WHEREAS, the UOCAVA Ballot Board will consist of a sufficient number of election judges as provided in Sections 204B.19 to 204B.22 or deputy county auditors trained in the processing and counting of absentee ballots, as provided in Section 203B.121;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT, the Mower County Board of Commissioners hereby directs the Mower County Auditor-Treasurer to establish a UOCAVA Ballot Board that would consist of a sufficient number of election judges or deputy auditors to process ballots issued under Sections 203B.16 to 203B.27 that implement the United States Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act.

Passed and approved this 30th day of December, 2025.

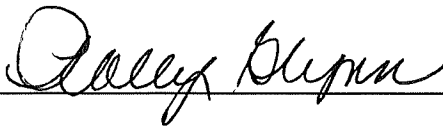
Motion made by Commissioner Ankeny, seconded by Commissioner Sparks, to approve the agreement with Election Systems & Software, LLC for Ballot on Demand System effective 1/5/2026 – 1/5/2027. Motion carried unanimously.

Under Committee Reports Commissioner Ankeny reported he attended the Commissioner's hosted cupcake party on 12/16, building committee on 12/17 and on 12/22, and 4-H/Extension Committee meeting on 12/18. Commissioner Reinartz reported he attended the Commissioner's hosted cupcake party on 12/16 and a Senior Center meeting on 12/18. Commissioner Mueller reported he attended the Commissioner's hosted cupcake party on 12/16, building committee on 12/17 and on 12/22, and finance committee on 12/18. Commissioner Glynn reported she attended the Commissioner's hosted cupcake party on 12/16.

The Board briefly discussed the proposed 2026 committee appointments to be designated by the Chair.

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 11:24 a.m. The next meeting is scheduled for January 6, 2025 at 1:00 p.m.

THE MOWER COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

BY:  Chairperson

Attest:
By: 
Clerk/Administrator