REGULAR SESSION OF THE MOWER COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

March 24, 2026

The Mower County Board of Commissioners in and for the County of Mower, Minnesota, met in Regular Session March, 2026 at 8:00 a.m. at the Government Center in Austin, Minnesota.

All members present, viz: Chair Dan Sparks, Vice-Chair Mike Ankeny (Remote), Jerry Reinartz, John Mueller and Polly Glynn. Also in attendance were County Administrator/Clerk Matthew Verdick and County Attorney Kristen Nelsen.

The meeting was opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

At 8:01 a.m. the Board entered into closed Session under attorney-client privilege as well as labor negotiations, pursuant to MS §13.D05 subd 3(b). The Board ended the closed session and recessed at 8:50 a.m. and reconvened at 9:00 a.m.

Motion made by Commissioner Glynn, seconded by Commissioner Mueller, to approve the agenda. Motion carried unanimously.

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

1. Approve Minutes of March 10, 2026
2. Acknowledge the Receipt of Electronic Fund Transfer Payment Reports
3. Commissioner warrants for payment:

Vendor Name	Amount	Vendor Name	Amount
Association Of Minnesota Counties	2407.00	Heartland Girls Ranch	11757.20
Austin Alano Society	2397.00	Imperial Dade	4393.50
Baudoin Oil Company	32914.17	Midwest Monitoring & Surveillance	2891.00
CDW Government	7080.67	Nexus-Mille Lacs Family Healing	16504.32
Cedar Valley Services, Inc	22798.50	Office Of MNIT Services	2989.79
Chateau Recovery Center, LLC	16631.43	Old 218	4774.00
Commissioner of Transportation	3331.39	Olmsted County	2100.00
Consolidated Correctional Foodservice	21390.08	Rohl Electric and Services LLC	3156.04
Department Of Corrections	26460.00	Sheriff Houston County	7604.17
Erickson Engineering Co., LLC	5052.50	Tiny's Body Shop	5533.45
Fjetland/Tara	2970.00	Village Ranch Inc	7607.32
Goodhue County	3717.00	72 Payments less than 2000	36476.31
		Final Total:	**252936.84**

4. Reappoint Mike Merten to his 6th 3-year term as Cedar River Watershed District Board Manager effective 5/1/26 - 4/30/29
5. Approve Seasonal Liquor License for Deer Creek Speedway, LLC for period 4/1/2026 - 10/31/2026
6. Approve Seasonal Liquor License for Chateau Speedway 1956, LLC for period 5/1/2026 - 9/30/2026
7. Approve 2025 Account Adjustments

Motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Mike Ankeny remotely re-joined the meeting.

The Board recessed at 9:05 a.m. for the purpose of a public hearing regarding the Intention of Mower County to Adopt (Renew) 0.5% Local Option Sales Tax for Road & Bridge projects.

County Engineer Mitch Wenum reviewed the Transportation Improvement Plan for use of the local options sales tax for the road and bridge projects and recommended approval.

No one spoke for or against the renewal of the 0.5% Local Option Sales Tax for Road & Bridge projects.

The Chair closed the Public Hearing at 9:14 a.m. regarding adopting/renewing the 0.5% Local Option Sales Tax for Road & Bridge projects and reconvened its regular session.

Date: March 24, 2026 **Res. #25-26**

RESOLUTION

On motion of Commissioner Glynn, seconded by Commissioner Mueller, the following Resolution to adopt the 2026-2035 Transportation Improvement plan and amend the use of the Transportation Sales tax was passed and adopted by the Mower County Board of Commissioners at a meeting held March 24, 2026 at the Government Center, Austin, Minnesota.

WHEREAS, Mower County's transportation infrastructure is a vital part of the county's economy and has a direct impact on future economic development, and

WHEREAS, previous generations have invested in the establishment and maintenance of the Mower County highway system, and

WHEREAS, funding for highway systems in Minnesota has remained stagnant and is failing to keep pace with growing demand and is failing to provide the resources necessary to maintain that system and preserve the investment, and

WHEREAS, on August 1, 2017, the Mower County Board of Commissioners imposed a ½ percent transportation sales tax as provided for in Minnesota Statutes 297A.933; and

WHEREAS, section 297A.993 further provides that after a public hearing a county may, by resolution, dedicate the proceeds of the tax for new listed projects, and

WHEREAS, on Tuesday, March 24, 2026 the Mower County Board of Commissioners held a public hearing regarding the 2026-2035 Transportation Improvement Plan and the use of transportation sales tax.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Mower County 2026-2035 Transportation Improvement Plan is approved and adopted.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED those proceeds of transportation sales tax are additionally dedicated exclusively to payment of the capital costs of any and all transportation projects within the Mower County 2026-2035 Transportation Improvement Plan.

Passed and approved this 24th day of March, 2026. The Commissioners voted as follows: Commissioner Ankeny aye; Commissioner Reinartz aye; Commissioner Mueller aye; Commissioner Glynn aye; Commissioner Sparks aye. Adopted 5-0.

County Engineer recommended increasing the wheelage tax from $10 to $20 to generate revenue for road projects reducing the impact on the levy.

Date: March 24, 2026 **Res. #26-26**

RESOLUTION

On motion of Commissioner Glynn, seconded by Commissioner Ankeny, the following Resolution was passed and adopted by the Mower County Board of Commissioners at a meeting held March 24, 2026 at the Government Center, Austin, Minnesota.

WHEREAS, the 2013 Legislative session approved legislation authorizing counties to levy a wheelage tax; and

WHEREAS, June 25, 2013, the Mower County Board of Commissioners approved and adopted Resolution #44-13 imposing a $10 Wheelage Tax effective January 1, 2014; and

WHEREAS, section 163.051 provides that counties may collect wheelage tax at the rate of up to $20 per year; and

WHEREAS, the estimated revenue is projected to provide a service benefit to the citizens of Mower County.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Mower County Board of Commissioners hereby approves increasing the Wheelage Tax from $10 to $20 effective January 1, 2027.

Passed and approved this 24th day of March, 2026. The Commissioners voted as follows: Commissioner Ankeny aye; Commissioner Reinartz aye; Commissioner Mueller aye; Commissioner Glynn aye; Commissioner Sparks aye. Adopted 5-0.

Motion made by Commissioner Mueller, seconded by Commissioner Glynn, to approve the UKG (the Human Resources Information System (HRIS) for payroll and human resources functions) renewal Quote #Q-384469 providing for a user increase from 275 to 300 for a term effective 4/1/26 through 12/31/26 (approximately $62,205.88). The Commissioners voted as follows: Commissioner Ankeny aye; Commissioner Reinartz aye; Commissioner Mueller aye; Commissioner Glynn aye; Commissioner Sparks aye. Motion carried 5-0.

Motion made by Commissioner Glynn, seconded by Commissioner Mueller, to approve a one-year renewal for the DebtBook software that simplifies tracking software subscriptions and leases effective 2/28/26 – 2/27/27 ($11,500). The Commissioners voted as follows: Commissioner Ankeny aye; Commissioner Reinartz aye; Commissioner Mueller aye; Commissioner Glynn aye; Commissioner Sparks aye. Motion carried 5-0.

Motion made by Commissioner Ankeny, seconded by Commissioner Reinartz, to approve the 10-year Reagan Outdoor Advertising Lease Agreement effective 10/1/25 – 9/30/35 for the billboard at the Public Works campus ($1650 annually years 1-5 and $1,815 annually years 6-10 with automatic year-to-year renewal unless terminated with 90 days' notice. The Commissioners voted as follows: Commissioner Ankeny aye; Commissioner Reinartz aye; Commissioner Mueller aye; Commissioner Glynn aye; Commissioner Sparks aye. Motion carried 5-0.

Motion made by Commissioner Glynn, seconded by Commissioner Reinartz, to approve the Health & Human Services accounts payable totaling $223,775.67. The Commissioners voted as follows: Commissioner Ankeny aye; Commissioner Reinartz aye; Commissioner Mueller aye; Commissioner Glynn aye; Commissioner Sparks aye. Motion carried 5-0.

Motion made by Commissioner Glynn, seconded by Commissioner Reinartz, to adopt Personnel Policy B101 Tennessen Advisory/Wage Disclosure/Data Practices effective March 24, 2026. The policy is as follows:

Section B101
Tennessen Advisory/Wage Disclosure/Data Practices

In accordance with the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act (MGDPA), the County is required to inform employees of their rights as they pertain to any private information that the County collects from them. During the course of County employment, an employee will likely be asked to provide information that is classified by the MGDPA as either private or confidential. Private data is information that generally cannot be given to the public but can be given to the subject of the data. Confidential data is information that generally cannot be given to either the public or the subject of the data. Much of the data the County has about individual employees, however, is classified as public according to the MGDPA. All public data is available for inspection and copying by members of the public, with or without the employee's consent.

"Government data," as defined by Minn. Stat. § 13.02, means all data collected, created, received, maintained, or disseminated by the County, regardless of physical form, storage medium, or conditions of use. Data about individuals are classified as *public*, *private*, or *confidential*; data not on individuals are classified as *public*, *nonpublic*, or *protected nonpublic*. These classifications determine whether data can be accessed or shared.

All employee and personnel-related data collected, created, received, maintained or disseminated by the County constitute "government data" as defined in Minn. Stat. § 13.02, subd. 7, regardless of the form or storage medium.

The County Administrator is designated as the Responsible Authority under Minn. Stat. § 13.02, subd. 16, and the Human Resources Director (or designee) is designated as the Data Practices Compliance Official under Minn. Stat. § 13.05, subd. 13. The Compliance Official is responsible for monitoring County compliance with the Data Practices Act, providing training, responding to requests and challenges, and ensuring appropriate classification, access, security and retention of data.

Employees may only access private, confidential or nonpublic data when their job assignment reasonably requires such access, and the access, use, and dissemination of government data must be in accordance with statute, rule and County policy. Any access, use or disclosure that is not authorized by law is strictly prohibited and may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

In the event of a security breach involving private or confidential data, the County will follow the requirements of Minn. Stat. § 13.055, to provide notice to affected individuals, investigate the breach, document the incident and take corrective action.

Employee records are maintained in a location designated by the Human Resources Director or designee. Personnel data is kept in personnel files, finance files, and benefit/medical files. Information about employees requested by the

County may be used for the following purposes: (1) administer employee salary, pension, and benefit programs; (2) process payroll, including accounting for wages and fringe benefits and to justify any reimbursed expenses; (3) complete state and federal reports, including equal opportunity and affirmative action reports; (4) evaluate the employee's job performance, eligibility, and abilities; (5) distinguish the employee from other applicants and employees and identify the employee in the correct personnel file; (6) determine the employee's eligibility for employment or promotion, and make employment decisions about the employee's performance; (7) contact the employee or other significant persons in the case of an emergency; (8) make decisions regarding the employee's eligibility for leave, including medical leaves and leaves created by statute; (9) make decisions regarding the employee's eligibility for workplace accommodations, including accommodations for workplace disabilities; (10) comply with workers compensation requirements in the event of an injury; and (11) provide information during workplace investigations. All such information may also be used and disclosed for other purposes consistent with applicable law, including, but not limited to, performance evaluations, determinations regarding pay, applications for different positions, and other matters that involve a review of the employee's personnel file and past performance.

Federal law permits government agencies to require individuals to provide their social security number for the administration of any tax. Please be aware that when an employee is asked to give his or her social security number on a revenue form, this collection is mandated by law. This information will be shared with the Minnesota Department of Revenue, the Internal Revenue Service, and security tax programs. In most other cases, the disclosure of an employee's social security number is voluntary.

Any information an employee is asked to provide may be shared with individuals within the County whose job duties reasonably require access, as well as individuals outside of the County whose duties require access, such as insurance vendors, consultants, attorneys, and retirement plan employees. Such data may also be shared with other agencies authorized by law to receive specific data.

If litigation arises, data may be provided in documents filed with the court which are available to members of the public. If reasonably necessary to discuss data at a County Board meeting, such data may be available to members of the public. To the extent that some or all of data provided by the employee is part of the basis for a final decision on disciplinary action, that information may also be available to the public.

All employee data will be received, retained and disseminated according to the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act.

WAGE DISCLOSURE PROTECTIONS

The County does not require non-disclosure by an employee of their wages as a condition of employment. The County shall not take any adverse employment action against an employee for disclosing or discussing the employee's own wages or another employee's wages, which have been disclosed voluntarily.

The County shall not retaliate against an employee for asserting rights or remedies under this section. An employee may bring a civil action against the County for a violation of this section. If a court finds that the County violated this section, the court may order reinstatement, back pay, restoration of lost service credit, if appropriate, and the expungement of any related adverse records of an employee who was the subject of the violation.

DATA PRACTICES ACT CAUTION

All data collected, received, or maintained by the County, including data collected, received, or maintained by County employees are governed by the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act (MGDPA). All employees must exercise extreme care to maintain data in accordance with the provisions of that law.

Employees may only access private, confidential or non-public data when they have a legitimate work-related purpose for doing so. The County Administrator, as the Responsible Authority for government data for the County with consultation from the County Attorney when needed, shall be consulted regarding the appropriateness of access to any private, confidential or non-public data.

Employees who improperly access, view, obtain or disclose private, confidential or non-public data shall be subject to disciplinary action, including discharge from employment.
Employees shall never release any private or confidential data to any non-County employee (including, but not limited to, employees' families, friends, and spouse) or to any County employees who do not have an **official need to know** the information.

If an employee is uncertain whether data is public or private or whether the data can be released, accessed or discussed, the employee must consult with the County Administrator, County Attorney or their Department Head.

NO EXPECTATION OF PRIVACY

Employees shall have no expectation of privacy in any County property, including desks, vehicles, filing cabinets, work product, computer storage, email, voice mail, phone systems, or other County property, vehicles, devices or electronic storage media of any kind except as required by law for legally privileged materials.

The Commissioners voted as follows: Commissioner Ankeny aye; Commissioner Reinartz aye; Commissioner Mueller aye; Commissioner Glynn aye; Commissioner Sparks aye. Motion carried 5-0.

Motion made by Commissioner Glynn, seconded by Commissioner Mueller, to table amending Personnel Policy B105 Statement of Policy (EEOP) to a future date. The Commissioners voted as follows: Commissioner Ankeny aye; Commissioner Reinartz aye; Commissioner Mueller aye; Commissioner Glynn aye; Commissioner Sparks aye. Motion carried 5-0.

Motion made by Commissioner Mueller, seconded by Commissioner Ankeny, to amend Personnel Policy B110 Employee Relations effective March 24, 2026 by amending the "Policy Statement" section and deleting the section entitled "Commitment" as follows:

Policy Statement:

~~The policy of Mower County is to be fair and honest with its personnel and to respect the individual rights of all employees.~~ The County shall continue to strive to achieve mutual respect in working relationships **and to provide a work environment where employees can be successful, and the public can be served effectively**.

~~Commitment:~~

~~Mower County is committed to the philosophy that it is a distinction to serve one's fellow citizens as a governmental official or employee. In fulfilling one's duties as an official or employee, tact, patience, diplomacy and understanding go hand-in-hand with an employee's demonstrated competency in his/her line of work. Mower County Commissioners and the management team are committed to providing a work environment where employees can be successful, and the public can be served effectively.~~

The Commissioners voted as follows: Commissioner Ankeny aye; Commissioner Reinartz aye; Commissioner Mueller aye; Commissioner Glynn aye; Commissioner Sparks aye. Motion carried 5-0.

Motion made by Commissioner Mueller, seconded by Commissioner Glynn, to amend Personnel Policy B140 Employee Personnel Records effective March 24, 2026 by amending the "Data Practices" section and deleting the "Accessibility of Personnel Records" section as follows:

Data Practices:

Data classified as public pursuant to the Minnesota Data Practices Act may be viewed upon request within a reasonable amount of time in compliance with Chapter 13. Copies may be provided upon request and payment of fees in accordance with Chapter 13 and the County's Data Practices policy.

~~The following personnel information on all present and former employees, except for present employees involved in undercover law enforcement, is considered public and available for viewing by any interested person: Examples include but are not limited to:~~

- ~~Name~~
- ~~Actual gross salary and salary range~~
- ~~Actual gross pension~~
- ~~Value and nature of employer paid benefits~~
- ~~Additional compensation over and above base salary~~
- ~~Job title~~
- ~~Job description~~
- ~~Dates of first and last employment~~
- ~~Status and final outcome of any disciplinary action, including supporting documentation taken against an employee of Mower County~~
- ~~Contract fees~~
- ~~Education and training background~~
- ~~Previous work experience~~
- ~~Work location~~
- ~~Work telephone number~~
- ~~Badge number~~
- ~~City and county of residence (full address is prohibited)~~

- ~~Honors and awards received~~
- ~~Data which accounts for the employee's work time~~

~~The data concerning the employee who is placed in the personnel file and which is not listed above as public is considered private data.~~

~~This data will be shared with the employee and those members of County staff who need it to process the application, update the personnel record, evaluate work performance, and if the employee has a disability, provide the necessary accommodations~~

Employees may review the contents of their personnel files upon request to the Human Resources Department, including both private and public data.

Private data on employees may be shared with members of County staff who have a work assignment that reasonably requires access to the data.

In addition, the following persons or organizations are authorized by state or federal law to receive private data if they so request: The Bureau of Census; Federal, State, and County Auditors, the State Department of Human Services in regard to locating parents who have deserted their children; the Department of Human Rights; Federal Officials investigating the compliance with Affirmative Action and Equal Employment Opportunities; Labor organizations to the extent that the County determines the release of personnel data is necessary to conduct elections, notify employees of fair share fee assessments, and implement the provisions of the Minnesota Labor Relations Statute; and labor organizations and the Bureau of Mediation Services to the extent ordered or authorized by the Director of the Bureau of Mediation Services.

~~Accessibility of Personnel Records:~~

~~The Human Resource Director will be responsible for the maintenance and security of employee personnel files. Responsibility includes initiating new files and monitoring and filing data, which is to become a part of the personnel files.~~
~~Only management staff directly responsible for the supervision of the employee or representatives of the employer who have a legitimate reason and permission of the Human Resource Director to review the information in a file is allowed to do so. Only one file will be kept, all information shall be transferred to the official file. With reasonable advance notice, an employee may review material in his/her personnel file but only in the Human Resource office and in the presence of a representative of the Human Resource Director. An employee may inquire, at any time, what data is kept on him/her and what the classification such data holds.~~

The Commissioners voted as follows: Commissioner Ankeny aye; Commissioner Reinartz aye; Commissioner Mueller aye; Commissioner Glynn aye; Commissioner Sparks aye. Motion carried 5-0.

Motion made by Commissioner Glynn, seconded by Commissioner Reinartz, to note that Personnel Policy B150 Personnel Data Changes had been reviewed and affirms the content of the policy is effective March 24, 2026 without revision:

Policy Statement:

It is the responsibility of each employee to promptly notify the Human Resource Director of any changes in personnel data. This would include such things as, personal mailing addresses, telephone numbers, number and names of dependents (for insurance purposes), individuals to be contacted in the event of an emergency, educational accomplishments and other such status reports. This data should be accurate and current at all times.

The Commissioners voted as follows: Commissioner Ankeny aye; Commissioner Reinartz aye; Commissioner Mueller aye; Commissioner Glynn aye; Commissioner Sparks aye. Motion carried 5-0.

Motion made by Commissioner Glynn, seconded by Commissioner Mueller, to repeal Personnel Policy B191 Legal Representation for Elected Officials and Department Heads effective March 24, 2026. The Commissioners voted as follows: Commissioner Ankeny aye; Commissioner Reinartz aye; Commissioner Mueller aye; Commissioner Glynn aye; Commissioner Sparks aye. Motion carried 5-0.

Motion made by Commissioner Glynn, seconded by Commissioner Ankeny, to amend Personnel Policy B200 Dispute Resolution Procedure effective March 24, 2026 as follows:

Policy Statement:

The County will provide a ~~structured~~ process whereby ~~any~~ employees may bring forth concerns regarding any alleged violation of the personnel policies as it applies to them, including~~, but not limited to, personnel policy language or policy application, conditions of employment, and/or~~ any disciplinary action issued against the employee. Complaints of harassment, offensive conduct, and/or violence, should be reported in accordance with the procedure outlined in policy C120 **Offensive Conduct, Sexual Harassment and Violence.**

Nothing in this policy shall be construed as altering the at-will nature of employment.

Limitations:

Employees who are subject to a collective bargaining agreement are excluded from exercising the dispute resolution procedure as ~~subsequently~~ outlined below. Additionally, employees serving in a probationary employment status are also excluded from this procedure.

Elected officials, and the chief deputy or principal assistant of any elected official~~, and department heads~~ are also excluded from the dispute resolution procedure.

~~Step IV of the grievance procedure may only be exercised by employees under the jurisdiction of the County Personnel Department; exclusions are noted in Minnesota Statute 375.58 subdivisions 2 and 3.~~
~~It is not the intention of the County Board, by establishing the dispute resolution procedure herein, to grant an aggrieved employee a second opportunity to litigate an issue, which has already been litigated in any other administrative or judicial proceeding. The County's Classification Plan stated herein is expressly excluded from this complaint procedure.~~

~~Employees or appointing authorities with complaints under Minnesota Statutes 375.56 to 375.71 should present their complaint directly to the Human Resources Director.~~

This process shall not permit an employee a second opportunity to litigate an issue, which has already been litigated in any other administrative or judicial proceeding. The County's Classification Plan stated herein is expressly excluded from this complaint procedure.

Procedure:

The intent of this procedure is to allow employees access to all levels of management and to promptly handle concerns in a fair and consistent manner.

Step I:
An employee should present his or her concern to the immediate supervisor, as soon as practicable, but preferably not longer than five (5) **calendar** days in instances ~~where a specific~~ **following the occurrence of the** event ~~causes the concern~~. It will be the responsibility of the supervisor to meet with the employee and investigate the concern. After the investigation of the concern is completed, the supervisor will give an oral response to the employee within ~~five (5) working~~ **ten (10) calendar** days from the time the concern was initially presented. A written summary of the concern and subsequent discussion that occurs between parties should be ~~placed in the employee's personnel file~~. **provided to the employee and maintained in the Human Resources Department.**

Step II:
If the employee is unsatisfied with the outcome in Step I, the employee may appeal to the Department Head. The appeal request must be in writing and be presented to the Department Head within ten (10) ~~working~~ **calendar** days of the receipt of the supervisor's response. The appeal request must include the nature of the concern, the facts on which the concern is based, the specific provisions of the rules, regulations, or policies allegedly violated (if applicable), and the remedy requested.

The Department Head will meet with the employee and investigate the concern. After the investigation is completed, the Department Head will give a written response to the employee within five (5) ~~working~~ **calendar** days of the receipt of the employee's appeal request. **A copy of the response will be maintained in the Human Resources Department.**

Step III:
If an employee is not satisfied with the outcome of Step II, then the employee should present a written appeal request, with the contents as described in Step II, to the Human Resource Director within ten (10) ~~working~~ **calendar** days from the receipt of the Department Head's written response. The Human Resources Director and/or his or her designee will investigate the complaint and issue a written response to the employee within fifteen (15) ~~working~~ **calendar** days of the receipt of the employee's written appeal request.

The decision of the Human Resources Director will be final, except in cases involving involuntary termination of employment for reasons other than a layoff.

Step IV:
An employee who has been terminated from the county may appeal his or her case to the County Board of Commissioners by submitting a written request to the County Administrator's Office within seven (7) calendar days of the receipt of the written decision from the Human Resources Director.

A hearing before the County Board of Commissioners will be held at the next regularly scheduled meeting from the day of receipt of such request. **The County Board may designate a committee of the Board to hear the appeal and issue a decision.** Other than cases involving the termination of a veteran ~~or merit system employee~~, the County Board of Commissioners **or designated committee** will take action as deemed appropriate ~~by the Board.~~ **and such decision shall be final.**

Procedural Limitations:
While the steps outlined above are sufficient in most situations that occur, in cases where the supervisor or the department head is the reason for utilizing this procedure, employees should begin the process at the next step (Step II or Step III, depending on the circumstance). In cases where the Human Resources Director is the cause for utilizing this procedure, employees should follow the Step III procedures and bring their concern to the County Administrator. **If the County Administrator is the cause for utilizing this procedure, employees should follow the Step IV procedures and bring their concern to the County Board of Commissioners.**

The Commissioners voted as follows: Commissioner Ankeny aye; Commissioner Reinartz aye; Commissioner Mueller aye; Commissioner Glynn aye; Commissioner Sparks aye. Motion carried 5-0.

Motion made by Commissioner Glynn, seconded by Commissioner Reinartz, to amend Personnel Policy F140 Small Appliance Usage policy effective March 24, 2026 by deleting all current language and replacing it with the following new language:

Section F140
Small Appliance Usage

Introduction

Mower County recognizes that employees may wish to make their workspace comfortable and convenient by bringing small appliances into the workplace. However, personal electrical appliances can create safety hazards, increase energy usage, overload electrical circuits, interfere with building systems, or disrupt the workplace.

To ensure a safe, consistent, and energy-efficient environment, Mower County restricts the use of personal appliances on County property. Department-provided appliances located in designated breakrooms or common areas should be used whenever possible. Employees generally do not need personal appliances such as refrigerators or coffee makers at individual workstations when shared appliances are available.

This policy establishes clear guidelines for which appliances are permitted, which require approval, and which are prohibited.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees, independent contractors, volunteers, any individual representing the County in any capacity, and any individual who uses County property for workspace.

Questions regarding this policy should be directed to the Facilities Director.

If provisions in a contract or agreement governing the use of County facilities conflict with this policy, the terms of the contract or agreement control.

Policy Statement:

Personal appliances are generally prohibited unless they are listed as permitted or receive prior approval from the Facilities Director based on a demonstrated business need.

Whenever possible, employees should use department-provided appliances located in designated breakrooms or common areas rather than bringing personal appliances into individual workspaces.

All permitted appliances must meet the following requirements:

- Be compliant with Underwriters Laboratory (UL) or another nationally recognized testing laboratory safety standard.
- Be subject to routine safety inspections conducted by Facilities staff or department leadership.
- Be powered down at the end of each workday for fire safety and energy conservation.
- Be kept clean and properly maintained by the individual or department responsible for the appliance.
- Be operated according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- Be plugged directly into a permanent electrical outlet. Power strips and extension cords may not be used with appliances.
- Be removed immediately if any damage or malfunction is observed.

Mower County is not responsible for theft or damage to personal property. Personal items brought into the workplace may not be covered under MCIT coverage.

Appliances Permitted Without Approval (Outside Breakrooms)

The following small appliances may be used at individual workstations without approval:

- Personal desk fans smaller than 6 inches in diameter
- Coffee cup warmers

Appliances That Require Facilities Director Approval:

The following appliances may only be used with prior approval from the Facilities Director and must be located in a shared office space or common area, unless a specific business need exists:

- Coffee pots
- Pod-type coffee makers
- Microwaves
- Refrigerators
- Crock pots or slow cookers (only for one day use)
- Space heaters (must be corded and approved models)

Employees who believe a specific appliance is necessary for work purposes must obtain authorization from the Facilities Director before bringing the appliance into the building.

Space Heater Considerations

Space heaters can pose fire and electrical hazards and are typically not energy efficient. Additionally, heaters placed near HVAC thermostats can interfere with the building's heating and cooling systems, causing temperature imbalances throughout the building.

Space heaters may also overload electrical circuits and trip breakers, disrupting building operations. For these reasons, space heaters are generally discouraged and require Facilities Director approval.

Prohibited Appliances

The following appliances are not permitted for personal use outside designated breakrooms or approved common areas due to fire risk, electrical load concerns, or energy inefficiency:

- Dehumidifiers
- Humidifiers
- Air purifiers

- Potpourri burners or incense devices, or any other devices that admit aroma
- Hot plates
- Non-corded space heaters

This list is not exhaustive. The County reserves the right to prohibit additional appliances if they pose safety, energy, or operational concerns.

Enforcement

Facilities staff will conduct routine inspections of small appliances located in office areas to verify compliance with this policy.

Any appliance found to be non-compliant must be unplugged and removed from the building.
If the appliance is a personal item brought from home, the owner is responsible for removing it. Appliances originally purchased by the County may be removed and disposed of by Facilities if necessary.

Employees may also be required to remove an appliance if it:

- Creates a safety hazard
- Violates this policy
- Disrupts workplace operations
- Interferes with building systems
- Negatively impacts other employees

The Commissioners voted as follows: Commissioner Ankeny aye; Commissioner Reinartz aye; Commissioner Mueller aye; Commissioner Glynn aye; Commissioner Sparks aye. Motion carried 5-0.

Under Committee Reports the Commissioner Ankeny reported that he attended County Board on 3/10 and Personnel Committee on 3/16. Commissioner Reinartz reported he attended the collaborative meeting on 3/17 and a Senior Center meeting on 3/19. Commissioner Mueller reported that he attended Finance Committee on 3/10; SE EMS joint powers board meeting in Rochester on 3/12; Workforce Development meeting on 3/12; Building Committee on 3/17; Extension Committee on 3/17; Township Association meeting in Adams on 3/19; and Building Committee on 3/23. Commissioner Glynn reported she attended SWCD meeting on 3/11; a virtual meeting with the state HHS on 3/12; Personnel Committee on 3/16; Township Association meeting in Adams on 3/19 and a Grand Meadow City Council meeting on 3/23. Commissioner Sparks reported that he attended Finance Committee on 3/10, AMC legislative update on 3/23 and Rural MN Energy Board virtual meeting on 3/23.

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 10:13 a.m. The next meeting is scheduled for April 7 at 1:00 p.m.

THE MOWER COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

BY: Dan Sparks

Chairperson

Attest:

By:

Clerk/Administrator