

**MOWER COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
WORK SESSION**

February 2, 2021

The Mower County Board of Commissioners in and for the County of Mower, Minnesota, met in a Work Session on February 2, 2021 at 1:29 p.m. at the Government Center, 201 1st Street NE, in Austin, Minnesota.

All members present, viz: Polly Glynn, Chair
Jerry Reinartz
Mike Ankeny
Jeff Baldus
District One Seat Vacant
Trish Harren, County Administrator

The Board discussed the continued presence of the cement barricades at the entrances. The Board was informed that bollards have been researched and will be installed to replace the cement barricades at the building entrances.

Commissioner Baldus reported on the weekly Emergency Operations Center meetings. The discussions and planning have primarily switched from COVID case numbers to vaccination clinics.

There was a brief discussion concerning communications and interviews with KAUS. There is a desire that KAUS generate more news stories instead of replaying County interviews numerous times.

County Administrator Trish Harren provide the Board with an update on the Business Relief Grant Program. The deadline for applications is February 15. To date, 57 applications have been submitted. The committee will review applications following the closing of the grant deadline and funds are planned for distribution before month end.

There was a discussion concerning burning permits. Burning permits are issued by the Department of Natural Resources which has given authority to the County to issue permits on their behalf. The County issues permits for a \$20 fee. On January 1, 2021 this County service was relocated from Taxpayer Services to Environmental Services with the new on-line permitting software. With the change the County was made aware that some Townships have been issue burning permits without authority from the county and have been offering the service without a fee. Staff was directed to meet with the Townships issuing burning permits to discuss the change and the county's preference to be the sole burning permit issuer.

Senior Center President Ken Kroupa appeared before the Board to provide an update on the meal service expanded program due to the pandemic. SEMCAC assists with the meal program. During the pandemic crisis the Hormel Foundation has also assisted by purchasing meals from local restaurants. Before the pandemic the Senior Center served approximately

200 meals per day. During the height of the pandemic the Senior Center was serving approximately 950 meals per day. The Senior Center Board is seeking feedback on the program as they will need to determine how to continue following the pandemic when external funding sources are no longer available.

County Administrator Trish Harren noted that the City of Austin had questions regarding the new County transfer station facility and yard waste compost facility fees. The City was wondering the County would consider waiving the fees. The Board concurred that these new fees are necessary to defray the expenses related to licensing and inspecting the facilities.

County Administrator Trish Harren informed the Board that two quotes have been received for a review of Finance functions for procedures and efficiencies. One quote was for approximately \$15,000 - \$20,000 and the other for approximately \$4,500.

Finance Manager Donna Welsh provided the Board with a report / review of UBS Financials. The report indicates the County's average modified investment earnings are 3.73% and the average effective maturity is 4.4%. The Board expressed appreciation to Ms. Welsh for her prudent investing that is returning this high of a yield during a time of unprecedented low interest rates.

Information Systems Manager Jeff Kasak provided the Board with a 2020 Technology Department update that included an overview of the activities of the department in response to the pandemic which included moving employees to telecommuting and updating software programs. These activities were in addition to the regular planned activities of data base conversion, and other software program updates such as Manatron, IFS financial, SSIS social welfare and Vanguard for the assessors. As well, a new website was launched. There was also discussion of consideration of adopting an email retention policy.

The work session concluded at 3:26 p.m.

THE MOWER COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

BY: _____
Chairperson

Attest:

By: _____
Clerk/Administrator

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