

REGULAR SESSION OF THE MOWER COUNTY  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

July 27, 2021

The Mower County Board of Commissioners in and for the County of Mower, Minnesota, met in Regular Session July 27, 2021 at 9:00 a.m. at the Government Center in Austin, Minnesota.

All members present, viz: Polly Glynn, Chair  
Jerry Reinartz  
Mike Ankeny  
Jeff Baldus  
John Mueller  
Trish Harren, County Administrator

The meeting was opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Motion made by Commissioner Ankeny, seconded by Commissioner Reinartz, to approve the agenda. Motion carried.

Jill Cordes, County Recorder, was recognized for retirement from Mower County with 22 years of service.

Angela Lipelt and Valerie Sheedy from Environmental Services provided the Board with a report on the status of enforcement pertaining to noncompliance in terms of such items as buffers, solid waste, holding tanks, septic, floodplain. (Non-inclusive list) A tracking sheet has been developed to track violations, communications with the property owner and corrective actions. The status of certain solid waste non-compliance issues were noted. Approximately seven parcels are targeted for clean-up assessment actions if their non-compliance continues.

Angela Lipelt presented a request from Dominik Bunne for a waiver of penalty fee for setback violations. Mr. Bunne purchased the property and the previous owner did not disclose the violations. Mr. Bunne will correct the violations and pay the variance fee but is requesting a waiver of the penalty fee. Ms. Lipelt supports his request.

Motion made by Commissioner Mueller, seconded by Commissioner Baldus, to approve the request of Dominik Bunne for the waiver of the \$1200 penalty on setback violations on parcel 09.035.0100 as long as steps are taken to commence correcting the violations within 90 days. Motion carried. (This is a non-precedent setting action by the Board concerning waiver of penalties.)

The Board recessed at 9:48 a.m. for the purpose of a public hearing.

The Chair called the Public Hearing to order at 9:48 a.m. in regard to a Housing Tax Abatement request of Bigelow & Lennon, applicant, to construct a single-family home Lot 4, Block 2 Nature Ridge's 2<sup>nd</sup> Addition, Austin, Minnesota.

County Administrator Trish Harren reviewed the application and recommended approval.

Randy Lennon of Bigelow & Lennon was present on spoke on his own behalf. No one else spoke for or against the Bigelow & Lennon housing tax abatement application.

The Chair closed the Public Hearing at 9:51 A.M. in regard to a Housing Tax Abatement request of Bigelow & Lennon, applicant.

The County Board reconvened its regular session at 9:51 a.m.

**Date: July 27, 2021**

**Res. #51-21**

**RESOLUTION APPROVING TAX ABATEMENT  
FOR CERTAIN PROPERTY PURSUANT TO MINN. STAT. 469.1813**

On motion of Commissioner Ankeny, seconded by Commissioner Baldus, the following Resolution was passed and adopted by the Mower County Board of Commissioners at a meeting held July 27, 2021 at the Government Center, Austin, Minnesota.

WHEREAS, Minnesota Statute 469.1813 gives authority to the County of Mower to grant an abatement of property taxes imposed by the County if certain criteria are met; and

WHEREAS, in addition to the statutory requirements, Mower County has adopted the Tax Abatement Policy for new construction of Single and Multi-family homes which includes criteria which must be met before an abatement of taxes will be granted; and

WHEREAS, Nature Ridge Properties of Austin, Co. (Seller) is the owner of certain property within Mower County, legally described as follows:

Lot 4, Block 2, Nature Ridge 2<sup>nd</sup>, Austin, MN (PIN 34.467.0090)

WHEREAS, Bigelow & Lennon Construction (Buyer) has made application to Mower County for the abatement of taxes as to the above-described parcel; and

WHEREAS, Notice having been duly given, a public hearing was held on July 27, 2021 before the Mower County Board of Commissioners, on said application.

WHEREAS, Nature Ridge Properties of Austin, Co. (Seller) and Bigelow & Lennon Construction (Buyer) have met the statutory requirements outlined under Minnesota Statute 469.1813 Subdivision 1(1) and Subdivision 2(i) as well as Mower County's criteria for tax abatement;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF MOWER COUNTY, MINNESOTA:

1. Mower County does, hereby grant an abatement of Mower County's share of real estate taxes upon the above-described parcel for the construction of the single-family home.
2. The tax abatement will be for no more than five years commencing, in the tax year the property realizes a value increase over original value due to construction of the housing project. Partially constructed housing may result in an abatement in the first abatement year that may be significantly less than the following years. This will still be considered one of the five years of eligible abatement. In the event construction has not commenced within one year of approval, the abatement is eliminated and the property owner will need to reapply in accordance with this policy.
3. The County shall provide the awarded abatement payment following payment of due real estate taxes annually. One single payment shall be made to the owner of record at the time of the payment, by December 30<sup>th</sup> of that calendar year.
4. The real estate taxes to be abated shall be for up to the full amount of the real estate taxes collected due to the added tax base of the newly constructed housing/home annually. The current value of the property is not eligible for the abatement, will not be abated as part of this program and is further defined as the "original value." Any eligible abatement years are calculated on the tax increase due to a value increase over the original value.

Passed and approved this 27<sup>th</sup> day of July, 2021.

Health & Human Services Director Crystal Peterson provided Community Health updates. Mower County Covid-19 cumulative cases are at 4776 with 33 deaths. There has been an increase in cases locally with some hospitalizations. The Delta variant has not yet been detected in samples tested from Mower County. Public Health has done some vaccinations at Riverland and at a local business and is returning to Gerard to administer a second dose. There has been an increase to the Local Public Health Block Grant for a total grant of approximately \$220,000. Lastly, the department worked with Workforce Development on a survey for a possible grant through Workforce Development. (statewide funding available).

Motion made by Commissioner Reinartz, seconded by Commissioner Ankeny, to approve the Health & Human Services accounts payable totaling \$224,125.32. Motion carried.

Veteran Service Officer Rod Streich requested authorization to submit the annual County Veterans Service Office Operational Enhancement Grant in the amount of \$10,000. VSO Streich also reported that sixty additional veterans have signed up for service earned benefits in the last year.

**Date: July 27, 2021**

**Res. #52-21**

**RESOLUTION**

On motion of Commissioner Ankeny, seconded by Commissioner Mueller, the following Resolution was passed and adopted by the Mower County Board of Commissioners at a meeting held July 27, 2021 at the Government Center, Austin, Minnesota.

BE IT RESOLVED by Mower County that the County enter into a Grant Agreement with the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs (MDVA) to conduct the following Program: **County Veterans Service Office Operational Enhancement Grant Program**. The grant must be used to provide outreach to the county's veterans; to assist in the reintegration of combat veterans into society; to collaborate with other social service agencies, educational institutions, and other community organizations for the purposes of enhancing services offered to veterans; to reduce homelessness among veterans; and to enhance the operations of the county veterans service office, as specified in Minnesota Statutes 197.608 and Minnesota Laws 2021, 1<sup>st</sup> Special Session, Chapter 12, Article 1, Section 37, Subdivision 2. This Grant should not be used to supplant or replace other funding.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED by Mower County that Polly Glynn, Chair of the County Board, be authorized to execute the FY2022 Grant Contract for the above-mentioned Program on behalf of the County.

Passed and approved this 27<sup>th</sup> day of July, 2021.

Motion made by Commissioner Baldus, seconded by Commissioner Reinartz, to approve the request of the Sheriff's office for out-of-state travel for staff to attend the Police Fleet Expo. Motion carried.

Motion made by Commissioner Mueller, seconded by Commissioner Baldus, to accept a donation of squad tires from the MN Soybean Association for the Sheriff's department. Motion carried.

Motion by Commissioner Baldus, seconded by Commissioner Mueller, to approve the following list of surplus property for disposal and/or auction:

<u>Quantity</u>	<u>Item</u>	<u>Department</u>
2	Squad computer units	Sheriff
	Donation to Grand Meadow & Brownsdale	

Motion carried.

Auditor-Treasurer Scott Felten is preparing tax-forfeited parcels for sale. As part of the process, by resolution of the Board, the lands need to be affirmed as non-conservation land and applicable townships and cities need to be given sixty days to approve the parcels of land for sale. Mr. Felten presented resolutions for the Board's approval.

**Date: July 27, 2021**

**Res. #53-21**

**RESOLUTION**

On motion of Commissioner Reinartz, seconded by Commissioner Ankeny, the following Resolution was passed and adopted by the Mower County Board of Commissioners at a meeting held July 27, 2021 at the Government Center, Austin, Minnesota.

**WHEREAS**, the County Board of Commissioners of the County of Mower, State of Minnesota, desires to offer for sale certain parcels of land that have forfeited to the State of Minnesota for non-payment of real estate taxes and,

**WHEREAS**, said parcels of land have been reviewed by the County Board of Commissioners and have been classified as non-conservation land as provided for in Minnesota Statutes 282.01,

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Mower County Board of Commissioners hereby certifies that all parcels of land indicated on the Mower County Auditor-Treasurer's Certified List of Tax-Forfeited Lands #2021-1 on file for review in the Auditor-Treasurer's office, have been viewed and comply with the provisions of Minnesota Statutes 282.01, Subd. 1-8, and 282.018. In addition, the County Board of Commissioners hereby certifies that the staff of the Soil and Water Conservation Board of the district in which the land is located has reviewed the following list of Tax-Forfeited Lands and has identified any and all non-forested marginal land and wetland by letter on file in the office of the Mower County Auditor-Treasurer:

02.042.0180	22.003.0223	27.001.0970	34.165.0680	34.365.1750	34.790.0410
08.035.0040	25.004.0210	31.003.0050	34.240.0010	34.600.0040	34.795.1010
11.013.0060	26.001.0960	34.095.0090	34.340.0170	34.600.0500	34.860.0220
21.001.0930	27.001.0610	34.095.0240	34.365.1140	34.600.0940	34.916.0221

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, which the Mower County Board of Commissioners hereby requests approval from the municipalities named in the Auditor-Treasurer's Certified List within 60 days of notice for the Sale of Lands.

Passed and approved this 27<sup>th</sup> day of July, 2021.

**Date: July 27, 2021**

**Res. #54-21**

**RESOLUTION**

On motion of Commissioner Ankeny, seconded by Commissioner Mueller, the following Resolution was passed and adopted by the Mower County Board of Commissioners at a meeting held July 27, 2021, at the Government Center, Austin, Minnesota.

**WHEREAS**, the County Board of Commissioners of the County of Mower, State of Minnesota, desires to offer for sale certain parcels of land that have forfeited to the State of Minnesota for non-payment of real estate taxes, and,

**WHEREAS**, said parcels of land have been reviewed by the County Board of Commissioners and have been classified as non-conservation land as provided for in Minnesota Statutes 282.01,

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** , that the Mower County Board of Commissioners hereby certifies that all parcels of land indicated on the Mower County Auditor-Treasurer's Certified List of Tax-Forfeited Lands #2021-1 on file for review in the Auditor-Treasurer's office, have been viewed and comply with the provisions of Minnesota Statutes 282.01, Subd. 1-8, and 282.018.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Mower County Board of Commissioners hereby requests approval from the cities of Adams, Austin, Brownsdale, Grand Meadow, LeRoy, Lyle, and Sargeant, and the townships of Austin, Lansing, and Lyle, within 60 days' notice, for the Sale of Lands.

Passed and approved this 27<sup>th</sup> day of July, 2021.

The Auditor-Treasurer requested the Board approve the sale of 33' permanent public infrastructure easement to the City of Austin on tax-forfeited parcel 08.035.0040. A discussion followed.

Motion made by Commissioner Reinartz, seconded by Commissioner Baldus, to table the request to approve sale of 33' permanent public infrastructure easement to the City of Austin on tax forfeited parcel 08.035.0040. Motion carried.

The Board recessed at 10:38 a.m. and reconvened at 10:42 a.m.

Motion made by Commissioner Baldus, seconded by Commissioner Reinartz, to approve the minutes of July 13, 2021. Motion carried.

Motion made by Commissioner Ankeny, seconded by Commissioner Baldus, to approve the following Commissioner warrants for payment:

<u>Vendor Name</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Vendor Name</u>	<u>Amount</u>
180 Degrees, Inc.	6,506.34	LSQ Funding Group, LLC	2,871.53
American Solutions For Business	21,127.67	Mayo Clinic	10,684.15
Anoka County Corrections	34,700.00	Midwest Monitoring & Surveillance	2,402.00
AUSTIN AUTOMOTIVE LLC	3,614.86	Mower County Soil & Water Cons	4,009.24
Baudoin Oil Company	21,502.70	Nexus-Mille Lacs Family Healing	6,061.20
Beckleys	5,686.75	Nickelson Painting	5,302.00
Cedar Valley Services, Inc	55,464.62	Office Of Mn It Services	5,447.81
Department Of Corrections	3,910.00	Olmsted County Community Services	4,852.00
Donnelly Law Firm, PLLC	3,036.66	RDO Vermeer, LLC	7,359.84
Dude Solution Inc.	3,002.79	Rochester Sand And Gravel, Inc	15,246.00
Erickson Engineering Co., LLC	7,316.00	US Prisoner Transport	2,062.50
Government Management Group Inc	5,250.00	Ziegler, Inc	2,202.06
Kiesler's Police Supply Inc	4,285.10	74 Payments less than 2000	32,386.31
Lexipol LLC	35,383.50	<b>Final Total:</b>	<b>311,673.63</b>

Motion carried.

Motion made by Commissioner Reinartz, seconded by Commissioner Mueller, to approve the application of Richard Groth for a fireworks/pyrotechnic special effects display on August 20, 2021 (Rain Date: 8/21/21) contingent upon all other entity approvals. Motion carried.

Office of Governor Walz and Lt. Governor Flanagan proclaimed July 27, 2021 as County Staff Appreciation Day in recognition of exceptional service in response to the pandemic. The County Board wishes to affirm that proclamation and add their sincere appreciation to Mower County staff.

**Date: July 27, 2021**

**Proclamation #01-21**

## **Proclamation** **Of County Staff Appreciation Week**

On motion of Commissioner Mueller, seconded by Commissioner Reinartz, the following Proclamation was unanimously passed and adopted by the Mower County Board of Commissioners at a meeting held July 27, 2021 at the Government Center, Austin, Minnesota.

**WHEREAS**, staff serve as the cornerstone of county government, dedicating their time, skills, and expertise for the benefit of their neighbors; and

**WHEREAS**, during the Covid-19 Pandemic, county staff went above and beyond expectations, taking on personal risk and finding creative ways to continue delivering essential services to the citizens of our county; and

**WHEREAS**, in addition to their regular duties, many county staff were called upon and accepted new and challenging responsibilities such as participating in the Emergency Operations Center; delivering food to seniors to keep them safe at home; successfully managing an unprecedented presidential election; retooling local public health education outreach to flatten the Covid curve; hosting a mass testing site; and distributing nearly \$2 million in Covid relief funds to local business and non-profits; and

**WHEREAS**, county staff continue their exemplary work, assisting with recovery through vaccination roll outs and preparing for the American Rescue Plan's multi-year recovery effort; and

**WHEREAS**, the work of county staff over the past year and a half have kept the doors of the county open and our community safer, healthier, and productive throughout months of unparalleled global transition; and

**WHEREAS**, the Association of Minnesota Counties requested the Office of Governor Walz and Lt. Governor Flanagan proclaim July 27, 2021 as County Staff Appreciation Day and their request was granted;

**NOW, THEREFORE**, we, the Mower County Board of Commissioners, proclaim July 27, 2021 – August 2, 2021 as County Staff Appreciation Week and extend our thanks to the staff

of our county and express deep gratitude for their commitment to excellence in public service during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Passed and approved this 27<sup>th</sup> day of July, 2021.

Under Committee Reports it was noted that Personnel will be meeting this week to review 2022 personnel requests. The Finance Committee will be meeting next week to discuss 2022 budgets. The Environmental Achievement Award recognition program will be reviewed at that time. There wasn't any Building Committee business. Commissioner Glynn reported that she and Commissioner Mueller attended the Rural Energy Board. The major topic of discussion was the disposal of decommissioned windmills. It is a developing issue and the Energy Board is pushing for legislative action. Several commissioners had attended the Celebration of Life held for Commissioner Gabrielson indicating it was a nice event in memory of Tim. Commissioner Mueller reported he has been attending Township meetings and noted that the Townships are excited about the possibility of receiving direct ARPA funds.

Under Miscellaneous Business, the County Administrator represented the request of Scott Ohm for the donation of his property to the County.

Motion made by Commissioner Mueller, seconded by Commissioner Ankeny, to accept the donation of parcel 34.410.0459 located in the Lewis Park Addition Block 4, Austin, MN from Scott Ohm. The Commissioners voted as follows: Commissioner Baldus aye, Commissioner Ankeny aye, Commissioner Mueller aye, Commissioner Reinartz nay, and Commissioner Glynn aye. Motion carried 4 – 1.

Motion made by Commissioner Reinartz, seconded by Commissioner Ankeny, to adjourn the meeting at 11:05 a.m. Motion carried. The next meeting is scheduled for August 3, 2021 at 1:00 p.m.

**THE MOWER COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

**BY:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Chairperson**

**Attest:**

**By:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Clerk/Administrator**

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