

MOWER COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
WORK SESSION

December 1, 2022

The Mower County Board of Commissioners in and for the County of Mower, Minnesota, met in a Work Session on December 1, 2022 at 9:35 a.m. at the Government Center, 201 1st Street NE, in Austin, Minnesota.

All members present, viz: Chair Jeff Baldus, Vice-Chair Mike Ankeny, John Mueller, Jerry Reinartz and Polly Glynn. Also in attendance were County Attorney Kristen Nelsen, County Administrator Trish Harren and Executive Assistant Denise Barthels

The Chair called the meeting to order.

The Board discussed the proposed 2023 budget and levy. The preliminary levy increase is 1.9%. The Finance Committee is recommending staying at that level rather than lowering the levy increase.

The Board discussed a proposal to lease parcel 02.071.0040 located in Riverwood Estates Subdivision to Derek & Corrine Hjelman. This parcel is adjacent to their property. Mower County is unable to sell the property because it was purchased with FEMA funding as part of a flood mitigation project. However, Mower County can lease the property if there is a conservation plan approved by the MnDNR. The Hjelman's have developed a conservation plan that has been reviewed and approved by the MnDNR. Commissioners suggested a long-term lease such as twenty years with a 30-day notice of termination by either party. Staff will prepare a lease agreement and bring it forward for Board approval at a later meeting.

Assistant Public Works Director – Environmental Services Valerie Sheedy provided the Board with an update concerning solid waste violations. Some parcel owners are proceeding with the clean-up on their own. Some will need to be scheduled for clean-up with the costs assessed to the parcel. One parcel will need to be re-noticed.

Tim Ruzek from the Soil and Water Conservation District provided the Board with a brief update on the Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) work plan for 2023. The canoemobile continues to be a successful use of funds. In other updates it was noted that Hormel is doing repairs on the Ramsey dam. As part of the project they are contributing to building a fishing platform located at the MnDNR access.

Commissioner Glynn shared a complaint she had received concerning a parcel of land that is desired to be split. The landowners have been working on the check list requirements since March of 2022 and need to complete the split before the end of the year. They are frustrated that the process has dragged out so long. Now that cold weather has arrived it is more difficult to get the soil borings for the septic site determinations and they can't be used for soil verification. It was noted that in accordance with the septic ordinance, two viable sites must be identified prior to the split. It was suggested that the ground can be blanketed to

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thaw it enough to get some preliminary soil boring. The Board discussed finding ways to assist in getting the borings completed. County Administrator Trish Harren and Assistant Public Works Director Val Sheedy agreed to follow up on the matter.

The Board briefly discussed whether to extend the application deadline for the Planning Commission / Board of Adjustment. It was noted that two applications have been received and will be reviewed for possible appointment.

The work session concluded at 10:36 a.m.

THE MOWER COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

BY: Jeff Baldus Chairperson

Attest:

By: Trish Harren
Clerk/Administrator

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