

Traverse County Commission
Regular Board Meeting
September 17, 2024

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. by Commission Chair Mark Gail. Other Commissioners present were Jerrel Olson, Dwight Nelson, Chad Metz, and Kayla Schmidt. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. The agenda was approved unanimously, with the following additions, Fiscal Host Request for Wheaton-Dumont Early Childhood Task Force Childcare, upon a motion by Schmidt and second by Metz. There was no conflict of interest expressed. The September 3, 2024, Board minutes and Budget workgroup minutes were unanimously approved upon a motion by Olson and second by Nelson.

Highway Department

Chad Gillespie, County Engineer, and Brian Koch, Highway Supervisor appeared before the Board with a department update. Gillespie informed the Board that the CSAH 4 inspection was done with the State Aid Engineer. The State Park Road Account Project Meeting was held. Gillespie gave updates on the following projects: CSAH 15 and Bridge.

Viking Library System

Erin Smith, Viking Library Director, appeared before the Board with the 2023 Annual Report and the 2025 budget request. Viking Library System offers 2 bookmobile stops in Traverse County every other week, 1299 items were circulated at those stops in 2023. The Horizon online library catalog provides access to library materials throughout the six-county Viking Library System, Douglas, Grant, Otter Tail, Pope, Stevens and Traverse. 15,366 items were rotated through delivery in Traverse County in 2023. Jacquie Peebles, Wheaton Community Library Director gave an update on the Wheaton Library and Bernice Piechowski gave an update on the Browns Valley Library. The Viking Library System is requesting a 0% funding increase for 2025 the amount of the request is \$37,294.00. Upon a motion by Metz and Second by Schmidt, the budget request was approved unanimously.

Attorney

County Attorney Matt Franzese appeared before the Board to discuss the quote on hiring Midwest Geological Consultants for a licensed Geotech engineer and licensed hydrologist to work with Riverview on the filling in of the water basin. Olson made a motion to approve the proposal to provide professional hydrologist inspection services from Midwest Geological Consultants, with Riverview paying the cost, seconded by Metz and approved unanimously. Upon a motion by Olson and second by Metz there was unanimous approval for the reimbursement agreement, subject to any changes Franzese deems appropriate, for Riverview to pay for Midwest Geological Consultants inspection services in regards to the hydrologist inspection services.

Auditor/Treasurer

Auditor/Treasurer Kit Johnson appeared before the Board with a department update. Johnson discussed absentee voting which starts on Friday. Johnson attended a meeting with IT from the State of Minnesota to discuss cyber security. Upon a motion by Olson and second by Schmidt the Minnesota Counties Computer Cooperative Board Ratification Statement was approved unanimously. Johnson reached out to multiple appraisers regarding Prairieview Place. He received one quote, back from Appraiser Ryan Besler from Diversified Realty out of the Twin Cities, for an insurance-based appraisal in the amount of \$6,000.00. There is currently an eight-week turnaround. Upon a motion by Nelson and second by Schmidt the quote for \$6,000.00 was unanimously approved. The Truth in Taxation date was set for December 4, 2024, at 6:00 p.m. Currently, the levy increase over 2024 is at 16.57%. Johnson went over the changes made since the last discussion and the fund balance as of the end of 2023, he explained that we are above the State Auditor's recommendation. There was discussion surrounding

the jail budget, Schmidt would like to contact other counties that house the same inmates that Traverse does and ask for them to increase their rates as well. Olson said that we should put together a task force to take charge of this. Olson made a motion to use \$500,000 out of the general fund reserves and set the preliminary levy at a 9.39% increase over 2024, net levy of \$7,613,727.79, second by Nelson and approved 4-1 with Schmidt opposed. Upon a motion by Olson and second by Nelson the West Central Initiative 2025 budget request of \$2,750.00 was approved 4-1 with Schmidt opposed.

County Coordinator

Upon motion by Olson and second by Nelson the following bills were approved unanimously.

COUNTIES PROVIDING TECHNOLOGY	\$5,409.72
DEPT OF HUMAN SERVICES ECPN	\$5,656.55
TRI COUNTY COOP OIL ASSOC	\$2,224.22
TRITECH SOFTWARE SYSTEMS	\$62,178.57
CHAMBERLAIN OIL COMPANY	\$3,082.72
CHS	\$2,057.05
TRAVERSE COUNTY	\$2,500.00
NOLAN LAW OFFICES	\$2,590.00
RURAL MN CEP	\$6,424.02
TRAVERSE COUNTY COLLABORATIVE	\$11,828.00
PLACEMENTS	\$29,219.90
OSA	\$7,351.00

Per M.S. 375.12, the number of claims totaling \$2,000.00 or less were 50 in the amount of \$23,844.51.

The list of Social Services donations from January 2024 until August 2024 for the amount of \$565.00 was approved unanimously upon a motion by Olson and second by Metz.

Minnewaska contacted Lisa Zahl, County Coordinator, and asked if the Commissioners would be interested in allowing pets at Prairieview Place. Minnewaska does not allow them at any of their other facilities. The consensus of the Board was not to allow pets to live at Prairieview Place. Morris Electronics gave the Commissioners a quote for four individual in-ear devices for those who have trouble hearing at the Board meeting. The Commissioners agreed that they didn't like the idea. Zahl will reach out and ask for another option. Upon a motion by Nelson and second by Schmidt the reappointment of John Nerenz to the Housing and Redevelopment Board from October 5, 2024 – October 4, 2029, was approved unanimously. Dianne Reinart asked the Board for an early retirement request. Schmidt made a motion to allow Reinart to retire at the end of February 2025 with the County paying her health insurance at the same rate as an active employee until the age of 65, second by Metz and approved 4-1 with Olson opposed. The 2025 renewal for Sr. Gold and Medicare Rx for retirees came back with an average of 1% increase over 2024. Upon a motion by Nelson and second by Metz the Sr. Gold and Medicare Rx renewal was approved unanimously. There was a discussion regarding a meeting with Horizon Public Health regarding Cannabis education, ordinances, and policy. Discussion also took place regarding a survey that was received from the Legislative Auditor regarding DNR land acquisitions. Franzese will set up a meeting in the Courts on Monday, September 23 at 10:00 a.m. to discuss DNR land acquisitions. The Wheaton-Dumont Early Childhood Task Force Child Care has received a grant from West Central Initiative to use the Strategic Child Care Supply Plan Process to develop goals and action steps to combat the daycare crisis in the Wheaton Area. They need a fiscal host for the grant money to pay the project manager one time per month. Johnson has contacted the State Auditors who said that there could potentially be an administrative cost to the County as the County would be required to report this activity. They said that we should check with our County Attorney to see if the County would have the authority to hold funds and act as a fiscal agent for an entity that is not local

government. Franzese is looking to see if the County would have the authority to do this. This will be discussed when information is received. Schmidt made a motion to accept the Browns Valley Law Enforcement Contract renewal for 3 years for \$60,000.00 per year, second by Metz followed by discussion. Schmidt rescinded the motion seconded by Metz and approved unanimously. This will be tabled until more information is available.

Public Comment Period

It was mentioned that the Board should consider increasing the cost for out-of-town inmates in the Jail to cover the costs of housing them. Another comment made was regarding the dairies and windmills and that they can be revenue streams for the county and they should be considered.

Gail adjourned the meeting at 12:06 p.m.

Lisa Zahl, County Coordinator

Mark Gail, Chair