

WORK MEETING MINUTES

Beltrami County Board of Commissioners
February 21, 2023
3:00 pm

Meeting to be held in the County Board Room
County Administration Building, 701 Minnesota Avenue NW
Bemidji, MN

A link to the [livestream](#) will be available on the Board Meeting Agendas and Minutes page of the County Website.

Present: Commissioner Craig Gaasvig, Commissioner John Carlson, Commissioner Tim Sumner, and Commissioner Richard Anderson. Commissioner Joe Gould was absent.

1. Call to Order

Richard Anderson called the meeting to order at 3:00 pm

2. Introduction of New Employees

Chris Muller introduced a new Communications Officer, Jaleah Mix, this makes Dispatch fully staffed at this time. Anne Lindseth introduced newly promoted, Curt Anderson, to the position of Economic Assistance Division Director.

3. Identify Future Work Meeting Topics

- Update from NW Juvenile Training Center

4. Ending of Emergency SNAP (E-SNAP)

Economic Assistance Division Director, Curt Anderson summarized the Federal declaration ending Emergency SNAP services. During the COVID Pandemic, Minnesota received a waiver from the Federal Government to temporarily provide extra Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits. Federal officials have declared the end date for these additional benefits at the end of February 2023.

Beginning in April households will receive the standard household monthly benefit only, which considers income, expenses and deductions the recipient may have.

5. Paul Bunyan Drug Taskforce Update

Captain Joe Kljeszyk presented the latest Paul Bunyan Drug Task Force drug and opioid trends on narcotics and fentanyl in Beltrami County.

Fentanyl has become the most problematic and deadly drug on the streets. Statistics show unprecedented increases in volume of drugs, arrests, seizures, overdoses and deaths in the past ten years. Captain Kljeszyk stressed the fact that the current state of our communities is beyond law enforcement to control; it will require community involvement and we must 'face it together'.

6. Keep it Clean Initiative

Robyn Dwight, of the Keep it Clean Committee and representative for Upper/Lower Red Lake described the initiative as a grassroots, locally led initiative driven in large part by active Upper Red Lake Association members with support from County staff through the Beltrami Soil & Water Conservation District. The Keep It Clean initiative is mostly a public messaging initiative to encourage ice anglers to clean up after themselves and not leave their garbage and human waste on the ice. Over the years, this has been a growing problem not only on Upper Red Lake with the growth of the ice fishing industry.

There is a growing need for:

- Increased awareness of the human waste problem
- Collaboration on solutions
- Better infrastructure
- More resources
- Enforceable rules and regulations
- Community and organizational partnerships

There is currently a draft bill at the Legislature to address the garbage and other waste on the ice waiting to be jacketed and moved forward.

7. 2022 Property Tax Assessment Review

County Assessor Joe Skerik, reviewed the 2022 assessments for pay in 2023 and how the assessment process works. Property values change all the time based on sales data, which is then used to determine property values to follow that market. 2022 values were at an all time high; resulting in significant property tax increases for pay 2023. Currently 2023 values are stabilizing, but the market is still increasing.

Mr. Skerik encouraged Commissioners to take the on line tax assessment training when it is available.

8. County-Township Road Maintenance Agreements

Highway Engineer, Bruce Hasbargen updated the Board regarding the history of the Highway Department assisting Townships with road maintenance. Mostly summer blading and winter snowplowing, but also help with other activities like mowing, patching, and steaming culverts, engineering services, sale of materials, and contracted services.

The Highway Department would like to put a written agreement in place to cover these activities, effective this spring prior to the summer blading season. A draft agreement is included here and will be reviewed by the County Attorney prior to implementation. A

comprehensive review of charges for services has also been done, and is included for approval on the Regular Agenda.

After some discussion, it was decided by the Board to move this item to the Regular Agenda for further discussion.

9. Border to Border JP Agreement

Highway Engineer, Bruce Hasbargen introduced Karen Cladas from the DNR. Ms. Cladas reviewed the project that the State has been working on for a few years to establish a route for highway licensed 4-wheel drive vehicles to travel through the northern portion of the state from the North Dakota border in the west to Lake Superior in the east. The intent is to provide an opportunity for people to explore nearly 800 miles of northern Minnesota.

The Proposed Joint Powers Agreement between Beltrami County and the DNR includes responsibilities of the DNR and the County, as the Road Authority.

Members of the Board expressed concerns regarding the route and the impact it may have. They reiterated their guarded position on this project, as they did several years ago when it was first presented (in 2015).

Ms Cladas also clarified, the intent scope of the project is to install signage and encourage use of the current roads, to promote tourism and appreciation for the northern part of Minnesota.

10. Administrator's Report

This item was moved to the Regular Agenda due to time constraints.

11. Other Business Items

a) Review Bills

b)

12. Review Agenda for the February 21, 2023 Regular Board Meeting

The following items were added to the Regular Agenda:

- County-Township Road Maintenance Agreement and Fees
- Administrator's Report

13. Adjourn

The Work Session was adjourned at 5:04 p.m.