



NEWS RELEASE

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Beltrami County Jail Location Selected

Bemidji, MN – On Wednesday, August 23rd, 2023 the Beltrami County Board of Commissioners held a special meeting to discuss the location of the new Beltrami County Jail. The Commission met in closed session in accordance with State law for property acquisition discussions. Upon returning to open session, the Board voted unanimously to move forward with the Nymore/Crown Property as the location for the new Beltrami County Jail.

The Nymore/Crown Property site is 9.2 acres on the north side of Pioneer Street west of Railroad St SE and has access to both roadways. The property is upland, level, has very few trees, no wetland/shoreline issues and has access to in street water and sewer utilities. The property is zoned ‘general industrial’ which does not conflict with the moratorium recently imposed by the Greater Bemidji Area Joint Planning Board for jail construction on residentially zoned properties. Thanks to a generous donation from the Fankhanel Family, the property will cost the county \$0.00 (zero). This donation has saved the County hundreds of thousands of dollars. The donation agreement outlines that the property can only be used for the jail and construction must be started within five years.

Commissioner John Carlson said, “I want to thank John Fankhanel and family for their generous donation.” Commissioner Joe Gould added, “I would also like to thank staff for going above and beyond lately, our Administrator, consultants, Sheriff, staff, and everyone who has been part of the process... it has been a lot of work for a lot of people. Thank you to the citizens for coming forward and letting us know their thoughts and opinions and offering suggestions.” Commissioner Tim Sumner remarked, “The current facility does not have adequate space needed for programming and special religious ceremonies. My hope is with the new jail we can provided some of these programs and cultural programming.”

The Minnesota Department of Corrections issued a notice to Beltrami County several years ago requiring that substantial investments be made to the current jail as a condition of continued operation of the facility. Committed to mitigating these deficiencies, Beltrami County staff and Commissioners have been working for several years studying and planning for a new County Jail. Working with consultants and engineers, seven options were reviewed and it was determined the best solution was to replace the current jail.

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