

AITKIN COUNTY BOARD

May 26, 2020

<p>The Aitkin County Board of Commissioners met this 26th day of May, 2020 at 9:02 a.m. at the Aitkin County Government Center with the following members present: Board Chair William Pratt, Commissioners J. Mark Wedel, Laurie Westerlund, Donald Niemi, County Administrator Jessica Seibert, and Administrative Assistant Angie Sahr. Attending via Webex: Commissioner Anne Marcotte.</p>	<p>Call to Order</p>
<p>Motion made by Commissioner Niemi, seconded by Commissioner Westerlund and carried, all members present voting yes to approve the May 26, 2020 amended agenda. Item 3E – Authorize Board Chair Signature on Aitkin Airport Grant.</p>	<p>Approved Agenda</p>
<p>AITKIN COUNTY HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES BOARD MEETING MINUTES May 26, 2020</p>	<p>Health & Human Services Board</p>
<p>Attendance</p>	
<p>The Aitkin County Board of Commissioners met this 26th day of May, 2020, at 9:02 a.m. as the Aitkin County Health & Human Services Board, with the following members present: Commissioners Bill Pratt, J. Mark Wedel, Don Niemi, and Laurie Westerlund. Commissioner Anne Marcotte attended remotely via video and phone. Others present included: H&HS Director Cynthia Bennett, County Administrator Jessica Seibert, Assistant to the County Administrator Angie Sahr, Public Health Supervisor Erin Melz and Financial Assistance Supervisor Jessi Goble, who both attended via video conference, Jennifer Eisenbart, Aitkin Independent Age, and Paul Vold, KKIN, who attended via phone.</p>	
<p>Agenda</p>	
<p>Motion by Commissioner Wedel, seconded by Commissioner Niemi and carried, all members present voting yes to approve the May 26, 2020 Health & Human Services Board agenda.</p>	
<p>Minutes</p>	
<p>Motion by Commissioner Westerlund, seconded by Commissioner Marcotte and carried, all members present voting yes to approve the April 28, 2020 Health and Human Services Board minutes.</p>	
<p>Bills</p>	
<p>Motion by Commissioner Wedel, seconded by Commissioner Niemi and carried, all members present voting yes to approve the bills.</p>	
<p>HHS Staff Acknowledgement</p>	
<p>Commissioner Pratt noted that he had received a letter from the State Commissioner of DHS and in it the Commissioner commended the Aitkin HHS staff for perfect performance in meeting the DHS financial reporting requirements for calendar year 2019.</p>	

He added his congratulations on behalf of himself and the County Board.

Cynthia commented that it takes a team effort for the reports to get in on time and she thanked the Board members for their recognition.

Health & Human Services Director Report, Cynthia Bennett, ACH&HS Director

Directors Update

Cynthia began by noting that the legislative session had ended last week with many frustrations and lack of outcomes.

The session started with COVID-19 focused logistical and process challenges that were quickly addressed through partisan action. There was \$553 million in funding delegated to COVID-19 response, however in April there was a change in mood and an increase in tensions. The parties differed in how the response to the COVID-19 crisis should be managed and spent time debating the governor's emergency powers and lifting the stay-at-home order. An agreement on how to approach limiting executive authority and passing omnibus bills remained elusive.

In addition, conversations around CARE's Act dollars hit stumbling blocks with disagreements with how those dollars would be distributed to counties. The Senate had one proposal and the House had another and they were not able to reach a consensus or compromise before the end of the session.

She also noted that she had heard there would be a special session and that the Governor notified the Senate majority leader that it would begin on June 12th.

She went on to say that specifically related to the AMC HHS Policy Committee priorities that those seemed to have gotten lost in the shuffle. Thus far funding has been secured and we have been sent monies. There were also over 50 waivers that were enacted to change the programmatic mandates to better serve our constituents. This included-

- Telehealth, allowing the ability to do phone or video interviews with people instead of having to meet face to face.
- Preserving the Minnesota health care coverage MA and MnCare.
- Allowing continual enrollment and suspending sanctions for cash assistance.
- Allowing child care assistance payments to providers who didn't have children attending their daycares.

The Omnibus HHS Policy Bill passed and that focused on-

- Practical changes
- Cleaning up language
- Getting rid of non-pertinent items
- Better aligning the language with what is happening in practice.

She also added that the following bills passed-

- Tobacco 21 – Requiring everyone who purchases tobacco or nicotine to be 21 years old.

- Insulin Affordability Act – Established two safety nets for insulin dependent diabetics.
 - One based on an emergency supply for 30 days.
 - The other based on ongoing supplies for individuals/State Residents who meet the financial qualifications outlined in the bill.
- Drug Pricing Transparency – Requires pharmaceutical companies to report pricing information to the state if it has been above or exceeded the level that's outlined in the bill in addition to requiring MDH to post that information on their public website.

COVID-19 Update, Erin Melz, Public Health Supervisor

Erin continued by first echoing her appreciation for all of the Aitkin County employees who have gone above and beyond for the county and their communities.

She went on by giving a brief situational update on COVID-19.

There are 21,315 positive cases of COVID-19 in the state.

There have been 881 deaths due to COVID-19, 717 of which, have been in long term care facilities.

3 Counties have yet to report their first case of COVID-19.

Aitkin County has 7 confirmed cases and 0 deaths.

On average the state is testing 7,000 people per day.

This past weekend there were 6 free testing events at various armories around the state and the goal was to test 2,000 people per day at each site.

She went on to talk about the Governor's announcement last week that on June 1st, bars and restaurants may open to customers for outdoor seating and by reservation only. Along with that hair salons, barbers, tattoo shops, nail salons, and other personal service providers may open with limited capacity and by reservation only.

Erin added that on May 20th Commissioner Jan Malcolm spoke to the peak of cases in Minnesota and that she reported that data on the COVID crisis is mixed. Some sources show that we maintained a steady pace and we are on track for the peak in the latter part of July, give or take a few weeks. That data was based on the May 13th modeling.

Last Friday the Commissioner drew attention to the volatile situation that COVID-19 can create. Friday showed a record high of new cases in one day with over 800 new cases, a 60% increase over the previous day's totals, which ended a six day streak of declining numbers. Along with that there was a record number of deaths reported that day of 33 and that the metro area ICU's are nearing 95% capacity.

Erin also noted that none of the counties long term care facilities requested to participate in the full-facility testing that was offered by the state to them at this time, however she believes that we now have a few that would be interested when the time is right for them, perhaps in the coming weeks.

Commissioner Niemi mentioned that he had heard that the State, due to the influx of new patients, was considering using nursing homes to house patients and if Erin was aware of anything like that, to which Erin replied that she had not heard of that but she knew that there were provisional plans in place for alternate care sites. Each region was to determine an alternate care site in the case that bed capacity was met and they may need to move non-critical patients off site.

Financial Assistance COVID-19 Effects, Jessi Goble, Financial Assistance Supervisor

Jessi gave an update on the COVID-19 effects on the Financial Assistance Department within HHS by reviewing a handout that was included in the Commissioners packets prior to the meeting.

Commissioner Westerlund asked if Jessi could find out whether or not they are waiving the fees that a business has to pay to participate in the SNAP program as a retailer and Jessi responded that she would find out that information for the Commissioner and get back to her.

Commissioner Wedel asked about the additional costs incurred to the county as the result of the COVID-19 crisis and the anticipated reimbursements expected to which Jessica Seibert responded that they would discuss that during their next Budget Committee meeting.

Committee Reports

CARE Board Update

Commissioner Westerlund stated they had met and that they went over some financials, updates, and that they had received a Bremer Grant to help keep them going through the crisis.

Lakes and Pines Update

Commissioner Niemi stated that they did meet via conference call. He however wanted to let Commissioner Wedel talk about his call to Lakes and Pines, Bob Benes, people who are having problems paying their rent and that he was informed that there are funds available for people having problems due to COVID-19.

Commissioner Niemi went on to add that in their meeting they had been awarded \$5,000 from the Initiative Foundation for basic needs that are usually requested from them. Calls continue to come in for help paying things such as utility bills or car insurance bills. He also added that they are seeking \$50,000 from the Major League Baseball Healthy Relations Grant to provide an onsite mental health professional at their North Branch office, twice a week, for accessibility by staff or clients.

He ended by mentioning that they had a volunteer tax service that they are able to offer to people at this time also.

Commissioner Wedel added that the Seven County Senior Federation from Mora were going to be coming to the Aitkin City Library and the Shamrock Town Hall to help people

do their taxes in the future.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:45 a.m.

Next Meeting – June 23, 2020

Break: 9:45 a.m. to 9:55 a.m.

There was no Citizens' Public Comment

Motion by Commissioner Wedel, seconded by Commissioner Westerlund and carried, all members present voting yes to approve the Consent Agenda as follows. A) Correspondence File May 12, 2020 to May 25, 2020; B) Approve May 12, 2020 County Board Minutes; C) Approve Electronic Funds Transfers \$728,737.79; D) Approve Auditor's Vouchers: General Fund \$3,181.43, Road & Bridge \$29,000.00 for a total of \$32,181.43; E) Approve Auditor's Vouchers – Sales & Diesel Tax: General Fund \$347.40, Road & Bridge \$306.76, Forest Development \$31.16, Parks \$29.91 for a total of \$715.23; F) Approve Auditor's Vouchers – Hwy Dept \$110,702.83; G) Approve Commissioner's Vouchers: General Fund \$93,068.26, Reserves Fund \$41,908.15, Road & Bridge \$36,608.19, Health & Human Services \$14,901.21, State \$5,137.50, Trust \$7,811.02, Forest Development \$6,318.46, Taxes & Penalties \$64,720.42, Long Lake Conservation Center \$1,378.80, Parks \$1,028.16 for a total of \$272,880.17; H) Approve Manual Warrants/Voids/Corrections: General Fund \$1,041.41, State \$51,446.36 for a total of \$52,487.77; I) Approve Manual Warrants/Voids/Corrections: Long Lake Conservation Center \$126.89; J) Approve Manual Warrants/Voids/Corrections – Refund Tax Payment \$209.65; K) Approve Manual Warrants/Voids/Corrections – NSF Check Property Taxes \$38.00; L) Approve Manual Warrants/Voids/Corrections – Elan: General Fund \$2,752.98, Health & Human Services \$621.03, Forest Development \$124.00, Long Lake Conservation Center \$137.78 for a total of \$3,635.79; M) Approve Manual Warrants/Voids/Corrections – Repay of Taxes – Unable to Locate Accounts \$1,821.00; N) Approve Manual Warrants/Voids/Corrections – Tax Refund – Unable to Locate Account \$247.00; O) Approve Manual Warrants/Voids/Corrections – Camping Refunds – COVID Related \$1,905.00; P) Approve Manual Warrants/Voids/Corrections – Flex Spending Claims \$1,142.02 Q) Approve "Off Sale" Liquor License – Viking at 1865 C Store; R) Approve Request to Fill Aitkin Airport Commission Committee Vacancy; S: Adopt Resolution: 2020 State of MN Boat & Water Safety Grant Agreement.

Under the consent agenda, motion for a resolution by Commissioner Wedel, seconded by Commissioner Westerlund and carried, all members present voted yes to adopt resolution – "Off Sale" Liquor License – Viking at 1865 C Store;

BE IT RESOLVED, The Aitkin County Board of Commissioners agrees to approve the following liquor license for a period from June 1, 2020 thru December 31, 2020:

"OFF" Sale:

Michael Lawrence, d/b/a **Viking at 1865 C Store** – Williams Township
This establishment has an address of 14072 Highway 65 North, McGrath, MN 56350

Break

Citizens' Public Comment

Consent Agenda

**Resolution
#20200526-057
"Off Sale" Liquor License – Viking at 1865 C Store**

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<p>Under the consent agenda, motion by Commissioner Wedel, seconded by Commissioner Westerlund and carried, all members present voted to approve – Request to Fill Aitkin Airport Commission Committee Vacancy;</p>	<p>Request to Fill Aitkin Airport Commission Committee Vacancy</p>
<p>Under the consent agenda, motion for a resolution by Commissioner Wedel, seconded by Commissioner Westerlund and carried, all members present voted yes to adopt resolution – 2020 State of MN Boat & Water Safety Grant Agreement</p>	<p>Resolution #20200526-058 2020 State of MN Boat & Water Safety Grant Agreement</p>
<p>BE IT RESOLVED, that the Aitkin County Board of Commissioners approve the Fiscal Years 2020 State of Minnesota Annual County Boat & Water Safety Grant Agreement on file in the Office of the County Auditor and authorize the Aitkin County Sheriff’s Office, County Board Chair and County Administrator to sign the agreement in the amount of \$22,127.00 for the term of January 1, 2020 through June 20, 2021;</p>	
<p>Jessica Seibert, County Administrator updated the Board on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• AMC Webinar• Building Updates• Upcoming AMC District 1 Meeting	<p>Administrator Updates</p>
<p>Motion by Commissioner Westerlund, seconded by Commissioner Niemi and carried, all members voted to approve Changes to General Operations Policy;</p>	<p>Changes to General Operations Policy</p>
<p>Motion by Commissioner Wedel, seconded by Commissioner Marcotte and carried, all members voted to approve Changes to Procurement Policy;</p>	<p>Changes to Procurement Policy</p>
<p>Motion by Commissioner Niemi, seconded by Commissioner Westerlund and carried, all members voted to adopt resolution – Open County Buildings;</p>	<p>Resolution #20200526-059 Open County Buildings</p>
<p>WHEREAS, Aitkin County is committed to providing a safe and healthy workplace for all our employees, customers and citizens; and</p>	
<p>WHEREAS, Aitkin County has established a preparedness plan to ensure the safety of our employees, customers and citizens using current CDC and MDH guidelines; and</p>	
<p>WHEREAS, The Governor of the State of Minnesota has lifted the Stay at Home Order;</p>	
<p>NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, Aitkin County will re-open our buildings to the public effective June 1, 2020.</p>	
<p>Motion by Commissioner Wedel, seconded by Commissioner Niemi and carried, all members voted to approve to Authorize Board Chair Signature on Aitkin Airport Grant;</p>	<p>Authorize Board Chair Signature on Aitkin Airport Grant</p>
<p>Motion by Commissioner Wedel, seconded by Commissioner Niemi and carried, all members voted to open the Public Hearing at 10:33 a.m., Commissioner Westerlund Abstained.</p>	<p>Public Hearing for Off Sale Liquor License</p>

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Kirk Peysar held a Public Hearing for Off Sale Liquor License. The following people stated they were not in favor of the request: Evelyn Richter, Ronald Richter, Gene Miller, Karen Miller, Bobbi Jo Bourassa, Todd Stowell, Jeffrey Ellingson, Ellie Morrow. The Board asked for clarification on who would be obtaining the Liquor License. Kirk Peysar stated that the application was received from Westerlund, Inc. dba Westerlund Cenex. Lori Westerlund stated that they applied for the license in early March before the business sold. After the business sold they chose to move forward with the application for a Liquor License under Westerlund Inc. and would be leasing a space in the building from the new owner to operate the business.

Motion by Commissioner Wedel, seconded by Commissioner Marcotte and carried, all members voted to close the Public Hearing at 11:05 a.m., Commissioner Westerlund Abstained. Commissioner Westerlund returned to the dais for the remainder of the meeting.

The Board discussed: Aitkin Airport Commissions, Arrowhead Counties Association, Lakes and Pines, Arrowhead Regional Development Council, East Central Regional Library, Mille Lacs Watershed, Arrowhead Counties Association, Mississippi Headwaters, AMC, Aquatic Invasive Species, HHS Leadership, McGregor Airport Commission;

Motion by Commissioner Wedel seconded by Commissioner Niemi and carried, all members voting yes to adjourn the meeting at 11:16 p.m. until Tuesday, June 9th, 2020 at the Aitkin County Government Center.

Board Discussion

ADJOURN

William Pratt, Board Chair
Aitkin County Board of Commissioners

Jessica Seibert
County Administrator