

REGULAR MEETING OF THE KOOCHICHING COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
Held on Friday, May 13, 2022 9:30 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Commissioners Sjoblom, Adee, and Skoe

MEMBERS PRESENT VIA TELEPHONE: Commissioner Pavleck

MEMBERS ABSENT: Commissioner Murray (Medical)

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: Dave Reimer, Tom West, Matthew Gouin, Mark Lessard, Heidi Ohlquist, and KCCTV reporter Darcy Sullivan

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE VIA TELECONFERENCE: Jeff Naglosky and Kathy LaFrance

2022/05-09 Motion by Sjoblom, seconded by Adee to approve the agenda with additions and deletions. Voting yes by roll call: Sjoblom, Adee, Pavleck, Skoe. Motion carried.

2022/05-10 Motion by Adee, seconded by Skoe to Declare a Local State of Emergency due to storm damage and flooding that began April 22, 2022. Voting yes by roll call: Sjoblom, Adee, Pavleck, Skoe. Motion carried.

2022/05-11 Motion by Sjoblom, seconded by Skoe to promote Betsy Zaren to Administration Director effective May 13, 2022. Discussion by Commissioner Adee that he is concerned there may be issues raised in the community because we didn't open it up for others to apply and when Teresa Briggs was promoted, he thought it was opened for others to apply. Chair Pavleck said that was 30 years ago and he can't remember but believed it was an appointment from Auditor's office. Commissioner Skoe said we may have to do that and thought we should make it an interim position. Zaren asked if we could have our County Attorney weigh in on the legalities of this since he is present at the meeting via teleconference. Naglosky thought it was too important of a position to leave vacant and felt it would be right to make an interim appointment of Betsy as she's been in the office a long time and she's been doing the work of Administration Director this last while. For a position this high in the County, Naglosky thinks it is important to post it and make it available to anyone else in the County to apply if you're going to look at an internal post or, if you're going to do a full-on search it may well be that Betsy still gets it because she has been in the office and she's the most qualified but because we're spending public money on a fairly high ranking position Naglosky wants to ensure there is plenty of daylight on this. Commissioner Adee then reiterated that he is concerned about what perception we are giving the public if we do an internal hire without posting regardless of the position. Commissioner Skoe asked if we should adjust the existing motion or void that one and start over. Commissioner Sjoblom does not want to rescind motion and felt the Board should move forward and vote on the motion. Adee thinks the vote will fail. Sjoblom then made a motion to rescind original motion and have Betsy Zaren continue as interim administration director while a search is conducted. It was decided the vote would be tabled until the May 24<sup>th</sup> Board meeting.

000 Notice of hire of Sandra Thompson as Assessor Clerk with hire date of May 9, 2022.

2022/05-12 Motion by Sjoblom, seconded by Skoe to approve modifications to the Temporary Hire Policy and increase non-skilled worker wages to \$14.00 - \$15.50 per hour and \$16.00 per hour for skilled worker as approved by Board Motion 2022/04-28. Further to include a third exception allowing emergency temporary hires when the Koochiching County Board of Commissioners declare an emergency as supported by Minnesota Statute 179A.03 Subd. 14 (a)(4) and modify the approver from the Administration Director to Human Resources. Voting yes by roll call: Sjoblom, Adee, Pavleck, Skoe. Motion carried.

000 Notice of Emergency Temporary hire of Bruce Grotberg as Deputy Operations Chief in response to emergency flooding operation.

000 Notice of Emergency Temporary hires of Richard Rud and Richard Mastin as Field Mitigation Coordinators in response to emergency flooding operation.

000 Sheriff Hedlund expressed his appreciation on getting the emergency temporary hires set up as they are very important positions in the sandbagging operation. Additionally, the Sheriff and the DNR are working on establishing a No Wake Zone. Darren Kittleson is working with the Minneapolis DNR to ensure we have the correct paperwork to declare a No Wake Zone. We currently have 180,000 sandbags and we are actively looking for more. With the rain we just got, we will run the sandbagging operation through the weekend, and it is going to strain Highway staff and other employees and volunteers, but we can't take our foot off the gas. Please recruit volunteers as we need them at the bagging sites and placing sandbags at residences. We're not at FEMA declaration yet, I think we'll get there but there is not guarantee. At the meeting this morning, some equipment was identified that would speed up filling the sandbags and the Sheriff wants to know what the threshold would be to purchase equipment that may or may not be covered by FEMA. We have two sandbaggers on hand but not sure if Lake of the Woods will need theirs back or not. This is a good one as it has two augers and can handle wet sand. A second question was posed during the meeting this morning, employees are wondering if they will be allowed to sandbag during their regular workday like they did during the 2014 flood if it didn't interfere with their regular workload. Zaren noted if we do this again this year, please communicate with Administration so we can set them up in the timecard system. Len Peterson discussed the Bobcat Sandbagger and how efficient it is, but we would need a certain type of bag.

000 Kathy LaFrance, Public Health and Human Services Director reported they pretty much have their schedule filled for people to work in the Registration Tent. All volunteers must register before volunteering and sign in and out daily to track number of volunteers for FEMA reimbursement. There are questions from employees if they can volunteer for sandbagging during their regular work hours. It was decided they could if it doesn't interfere with their regular work. The Director and Supervisors are in a good position to decide if they can let staff go and volunteer at the sandbagging operation and continue to get their work done. Chair Pavleck agreed we should do what ever we can to assist.

2022/05-13 Motion by Sjoblom, seconded by Skoe authorizing the Sheriff to spend up to \$50,000 to purchase sandbagging equipment and sandbags as needed. Voting yes by roll call: Sjoblom, Adee, Pavleck, Skoe. Motion carried.

2022/05-14 Motion by Adee, seconded by Sjoblom to adopt resolution declaring a Local State of Emergency due to storm damage and flooding that began April 22, 2022.

**WHEREAS**, Koochiching County, MN has suffered from storm damage and flooding that began occurring on Friday, April 22, 2022;

**WHEREAS**, extensive damage was caused to public property, primarily roadways, ditches, and culverts throughout the County, and endangerment of safety and transportation routes;

**WHEREAS**, water flow from April 22<sup>nd</sup> storm has contributed excess amount of water flow into the Rainy Lake basin, resulting in high water levels on Rainy Lake and Rainy River which post an imminent threat to local infrastructure including public and private property in these areas;

**WHEREAS**, the Koochiching County Sheriff's Office AND Emergency Management is conducting an Initial Damage and Impact Assessment Report for submission to Minnesota Homeland Security and Emergency Management (HSEM) to determine eligibility for state public disaster assistance in accordance with Minn. Stat. 12B.30;

**WHEREAS**, the Koochiching County Sheriff's Office AND Emergency Management request that the Koochiching County Board Chair declares Koochiching County in a State of Local Emergency due to the recent storms resulting in flood damage across the County;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Chair of the Koochiching County Board of Commissioners hereby declare a STATE OF LOCAL EMERGENCY in Koochiching County, Minnesota, due to the recent storms resulting in flood damage which began on April 22, 2022, resulting in damage to public property and infrastructure, and request state public disaster assistance in accordance with Minn. Stat. 12B.30 for any eligible storm recovery activities. Voting yes by roll call: Sjoblom, Adee, Pavleck, Skoe. Motion carried.

000 Commissioner Pavleck suggested the Board meet every Tuesday while the State of Emergency is in effect.

000 The Board Chair called for public comment and Brian McBride encouraged the Board to empower the Sheriff to make decisions without having to run back to the Board.

2022/05-15 Motion by Adee, seconded by Skoe to adjourn the meeting at 10:35 a.m. Voting yes by roll call: Sjoblom, Adee, Pavleck, Skoe. Motion carried.