

**OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS
OF THE COUNTY BOARD
LAKE COUNTY, MINNESOTA**

Tuesday, April 7, 2020. Lake County Board of Commissioners' meeting was held in the Lake County Service Center, Split Rock River Room, 616 Third Ave, Two Harbors, Minnesota. Board Members Present: District 1 Commissioner Peter "Pete" R. Walsh, District 2 Commissioner Derrick "Rick" L. Goutermont, District 3 Commissioner Richard "Rick" C. Hogenson. District 4 Commissioner Jeremy M. Hurd, and District 5 Commissioner Rich Sve. Board Members Absent: None. Unless otherwise stated, all actions have been approved by unanimous yeas vote.

Also present: Lake County Administrator Matthew Huddleston and Laurel D. Buchanan, Clerk of the Board. In attendance by conference call: Lake County Emergency Management Director BJ Kohlstedt and Lake County Health & Human Services (LCHHS) Director Lisa Hanson. The meeting was made available to the public to join remotely by telephone by dialing 1-888-742-5095 and entering Participant Code: 7635925916. In-person attendance is not allowed at this time. Lake County buildings are closed to the public due to the Novel Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

Board Chairperson Rich Sve called the meeting to order at 2:00 PM and announced that Public Comments will not be heard during the board meeting during this time of closure. Written comments are welcome and may be submitted in writing by email to clerk.board@co.lake.mn.us or by United States Postal Service (USPS) mail addressed to Lake County Service Center, Attn: County Administrator Matthew Huddleston, 616 Third Avenue, Two Harbors, MN 55616. Board Chairperson Rich Sve reviewed that all Lake County Board of Commissioners meetings are action meetings, as needed, for response to COVID-19. We have two board action items for this meeting.

LCHHS Director Lisa Hanson updated the Board of Commissioners regarding current statistics of COVID-19 in Minnesota. Ms. Hanson advised that we have identified buildings that could be used as isolation and quarantine sites; agreements are being drafted. There is a shortage of personal protective equipment (PPE) for front-line health care workers and emergency responders nationwide. To date, Lake County has no confirmed COVID-19 cases, but is prepared for the virus to arrive locally. According to the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH), it is not 'if' COVID-19 will arrive in Lake County, but 'when' the virus presents locally.

Lake County Emergency Management Director BJ Kohlstedt updated the Board of Commissioners regarding virtual meetings of the Lake County Emergency Operations Center (EOC) team and how we are keeping the community informed. We have a Public Information Officer (PIO) working to craft these messages. The EOC is working diligently to plan for next phases and manage the current COVID-19 response. Officials and health partners including LCHHS, Lake View Memorial Hospital and Clinic, and Lake County Emergency Management are meeting regularly to assess needs and update plans.

Ms. Kohlstedt advised that Guidelines for COVID-19 can be found on our new online hub. The hub contains important public information for residents to access regular updates and service availability. This can be accessed on the County's website at www.co.lake.mn.us > Emergency Management or at <https://lake-county-coronavirus-response-lakecountymn.hub.arcgis.com/>. Residents are also asked to follow the Lake County Facebook page @LakeCountyMN for regular updates. Ms. Kohlstedt informed the Board about "Hospitality for Hope", an initiative with the hotel industry and local, state and federal governments to help communities across the country during this health crisis. The idea is to connect hotel properties with the health community, to find housing and support as the COVID-19 public health

crisis grows. The “Hospitality for Hope” collaboration may help first responders, fire, rescue, law enforcement, and others needing to shelter-in-place.

Ms. Kohlstedt advised that she has heard concerns about unnecessary travel in Lake County. Commissioners discussed public safety concerns and concerns about depleting our limited resources. We have limited hospital beds and limited capacity in our hospital. There were questions about enforcement of travel restrictions. We ask people to follow what the Governor has recommended. We encourage no travel unless necessary. Ms. Kohlstedt advised that traveling for pleasure is permitted. It is allowed by the order declared by the Minnesota Governor which allows “outdoor activities” including “walking, hiking, running, biking, driving for pleasure, hunting and fishing.” Commissioners discussed that getting outdoors is important for mental health. Lake County Commissioners discussed that we encourage people to participate in these activities in their own communities, rather than traveling to other communities for recreation. There were questions about anglers traveling to the North Shore for fishing. Fishing location advisories would need to come from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR). County officials may address the issue of non-residents traveling to our county. Commissioners discussed the need for people to use common-sense sanitation measures and the need for social distancing in grocery stores and gas stations.

Administrator Huddleston reviewed that the Stay at Home order may be extended beyond what is currently in place. We are working on long-term staffing plan. The majority of our staff continue to work, off-site if possible, but there are a few employees that are at home, that do not have the ability to work remotely. Administrator Huddleston discussed recruitment, technology for conducting interviews with candidates, and our message to candidates regarding the timing of when they could start.

Administrator Huddleston provided an update on bid results for Prospectors Loop and the recommendations from project manager Short Elliott Hendrickson, Inc. Administrator Huddleston advised that we are currently looking into an online bidding process that we would use for Highway Department projects and other county department projects. Information Technology (I.T.) Director Boris Naschansky, County Attorney Russ Conrow, Highway Engineer Krysten Foster, and County Administrator Matthew Huddleston are reviewing online software such as Bid Express.

The National Association of Counties (NACo) and the Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC) are providing daily news, updates and information about resources concerning the COVID-19 pandemic. Commissioners discussed the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and inquiries about whether we may delay when property taxes are due or what can be done to abate penalties and interest on late payments. AMC provided general guidelines and recommendations. County Auditor Linda Libal joined the conference call at 3:27 PM. Administrator Huddleston advised that we have an abatement coming up on April 14, 2020, from the County Assessor’s Office. Lake County handles abatement applications on a case-by-case basis; abatements are made for clerical errors or for outstanding circumstances. Commissioner Pete Walsh left the meeting at 3:36 PM and returned at 3:38 PM. There was a discussion on tax relief versus tax abatement. The income tax extension is July 15. There was a discussion on when the second half payments are due for property taxes. Commissioners discussed what the effect would be on the county budget, revenue streams and service levels if there were a delay in the collection of taxes. There was a question about how other taxing jurisdictions would be impacted. County Administrator will request feedback from townships, cities and the school district. After we consult with other taxing jurisdictions, we will review options.

Administrator Huddleston provided an update on the Thye-Blatnik calls that Northeastern Minnesota Tri-Counties (Lake, St. Louis and Cook) had on April 6, 2020, with Chief Vicki Christiansen, United States Forest Service (USFS) Chief and with Stephen Censky, Deputy Secretary of U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and Congressman Pete Stauber staff, regarding the appraised value of lands in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW). Our focus is on the Highest and Best Use (HBU) standards and the importance of county involvement in the new appraisal. We requested the Forest Service to incorporate all relevant data, including recreation and mineral values, in the new appraisal. We are encouraged by these conversations and are optimistic that we will be able to continue this dialogue and continue to work toward a favorable outcome for all involved in the new appraisal.

MOTION WALSH, SECOND GOUTERMONT: 01 – Approve and authorize the Lake County Board Chair to sign the Purchase of Service Agreement between Lake County and Sara Preston, RN, PHN, for public health nurse services for the period of April 1, 2020 through December 31, 2020. Absent: None

MOTION HOGENSON, SECOND HURD: 02 – Approve and authorize the Lake County Board Chair to sign the Purchase of Service Agreement between Lake County and Louise Anderson, BAN, MSN, RN, PHN, for the period of April 1, 2020 through December 31, 2020. Absent: None

Board Chairperson Rich Sve inquired whether there is any other business to come before the Board; hearing none, the meeting was adjourned at 4:30 PM.

The Lake County Board of Commissioners will convene for the following meetings to be held at the Lake County Service Center, Split Rock River Room, 616 Third Avenue, Two Harbors, Minnesota.

- Regular meeting at 2:00 PM on Tuesday, April 14, 2020.
- Committee of the Whole (COW) at 2:00 PM on Tuesday, April 21, 2020.
- Regular meeting at 2:00 PM on Tuesday, April 28, 2020.
- Agenda meeting at 2:00 PM on Tuesday, May 5, 2020.

ATTEST:

Laurel D. Buchanan
Clerk of the Board

Rich Sve, Board Chairperson
Lake County Board of Commissioners