

**ADJOURNED MEETING OF THE COUNTY BOARD**  
**May 7th, 2024**

The Board of Commissioners of Freeborn County met in the Freeborn County Boardroom at 8:30 a.m. on Tuesday, May 7th, 2024. Members present: Commissioners Forman, Edwin, Shoff and Eckstrom. Commissioner Kaasa was absent.

The meeting was opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Commissioner Forman offered the following motion;

**MOVED**, approving the agenda as presented with the addition of two items under C. Report of County Administrator; to consider a resolution accepting the resignation of Rebecca Zuniga, Eligibility Worker; and to consider a resolution to fill the vacant Eligibility Worker position

Motion seconded by Commissioner Eckstrom.

After discussion, a vote was taken and the Chair declared the motion approved.

Commissioner Eckstrom offered the following resolution;

**RESOLUTION No. 24-138**  
**Approval of the Freeborn County Board of Commissioners Consent Agenda as provided**  
**in the Freeborn County Board Rule of Procedure 9(A)**

**WHEREAS**, the Freeborn County Board is the governing body of Freeborn County, and;

**WHEREAS**, the Freeborn County Board has implemented a Consent agenda to perform the duties of the board in a more effective and efficient manner, and

**WHEREAS**, the following items have been placed for approval of the Freeborn County Board of Commissioners on the current Board meeting Consent Agenda as provided by the Board rules of procedure, being routine and of a regular action;

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, to place the following are hereby approved for appropriate action:

- 1) Approval of the April 16th, 2024 minutes;
- 2) Approval of Regular Full-Time Status employees
- 3) Approval of Drainage Repairs

Resolution seconded by Commissioner Shoff.

After discussion a vote was taken and the Chair declared the resolution adopted.

The Commissioners provided Board Committee updates.

The Freeborn County Commissioner and Diamond Jo Casino Scholarship recipients for 2024 were presented as follows. Albert Lea: Alyssa Colby & Olivia Wegner; Glenville-Emmons: Avery Hornberger; Alden-Conger: Madison Matson and Lake Mills: Taylor Vanek.

Chairman Edwin asked if there was any public comment and there was none.

Commissioner Shoff offered the following resolution;

**RESOLUTION 24-139**  
**APPROVAL OF THE REVISED FREEBORN COUNTY ABATEMENT POLICY**

**RESOLVED**, that the Freeborn County Board of Commissioners adopt the following Freeborn County Abatement Policy;

Freeborn County Abatement Policy

Adopted December 16, 2008/Effective January 1, 2009/Revised June 15, 2021/Revised December 20, 2022/Revised May 7, 2024

### **Delegation of Authority**

**Pursuant to Minnesota Statute 375.192, the County Board of Commissioners delegates the authority, power, and responsibilities for approving the abatements described in this policy under \$10,000.00 in tax to the County Assessor and County Auditor jointly. The delegation of authority will provide for the efficient, responsive, and timely processing of taxpayer and public requests. Abatements of \$10,000.00 or more, will be brought before the County Board of Commissioners for majority vote. Approved Abatements of \$10,000.00 or more require the county to give notice to the school board and municipality. (this section the board will give notice within 20 days, per Statute)**

### **Policy**

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all taxpayers and properties in Freeborn County are treated fairly and equitable, and have equal access and consideration under the statutory procedures.

The Board of Commissioners authorizes the County Assessor and County Auditor to jointly administer abatements, reductions of market value, classification changes, or taxes.

It is important to note that abatement is not part of the appeals process for market valuation challenges, but shall be an administrative process by which corrections can be made to property and tax.

For Homestead Abatements, the required December 31<sup>st</sup> date of ownership AND occupancy will be strictly adhered to. Abatements will not be approved for taxpayers who fail to return a requested homestead application and any other requested documents (example: Schedule F and/or FSA 156EZ) by the due date of December 31<sup>st</sup>.

Abatements will be considered for late payments or no payments in instances of payment lost in the mail if positive proof of payment can be provided (such as certified check or other means of payment by the taxpayer). Penalties shall not be abated because of failure to receive tax statements or if any parcel was omitted when making payment.

The County Auditor shall make available to the Board of Commissioners the abatement requests and action taken periodically as needed or requested.

All applications for abatements will be accepted and considered.

Abatements will not be used as a means to reduce conflict and/or controversy.

Copies of all abatements shall be retained in the Office of the County Auditor and will be available for inspection upon request in accordance with the Freeborn County record retention policy.

### **Restrictions**

Abatements shall be considered as they relate to taxes payable in the current year and the two prior years. The prior two years shall be considered only in case of a clerical error or a documented hardship as defined in this policy. Penalty, interest, and costs shall continue to be in force, due and payable to the date the abatement application is delivered to the County Assessor or County Auditor; penalty and interest will be recalculated on the adjusted tax amount for approved applications.

While any abatement application is pending approval or processing, it is required that any tax installments, penalties, or interest which become due must be paid in full regardless of the outcome of the abatement process.

Abatements for the current tax year shall be considered, but not processed, when prior year taxes remain unpaid—unless the abatement is based on hardship as defined in this policy.

No abatement will be considered for a petition that has been filed with tax court and the outcome is still pending.

Abatement for Special Assessments shall be approved by the governing body levying the assessment.

Economic Development Abatements shall not be included in this policy. The provisions for this type of abatement are contained in Minnesota Statutes Chapter 469.

Local Option Disaster Abatements shall not be included in this policy. The provisions for this type of abatements are contained in Minnesota Statutes Chapter 273.

**Procedure**

The County Assessor and County Auditor shall use the most recent Application for Property Tax Abatement developed by the Minnesota Department of Revenue and maintain all other necessary forms.

Abatements must be approved by both the County Assessor and County Auditor.

Any abatement shall be disbursed by Freeborn County within thirty days of approval.

**Definitions**

**Abatement:** Action to reduce or abate the market value, taxes, or to change the property classification, following a written request by the taxpayer of record, the property owner, or owner’s agent.

**Hardship:** A tragedy or casualty suffered by taxpayer, beyond the control of the taxpayer, such as a death, extreme or extended illness, mental incapacity, accident, fire, natural disaster, military service, or other extreme issue documented by the County Assessor or County Auditor/Treasurer that results in that results in erroneous valuation or classification or late payment of tax, and which may prevent the property owner from filing a timely appeal of the valuation or classification of the property. To prove hardship documentation must be provided. Hardship shall not include financial hardship.

**Types of Abatements**

Market Value Reduction changes

Classification changes

Special Assessments

Local Option Disaster Abatement (not included in this policy) – Freeborn County shall follow the Minnesota Department of Revenue policy/program set forth in MN Statute 273.1231 and 273.1235

Economic Development (not included in this policy)

Resolution seconded by Commissioner Forman.

After discussion a vote was taken and the Chair declared the resolution adopted.

Commissioner Eckstrom offered the following resolution;

**RESOLUTION 24-140  
AWARD OF SAP 024-598-019  
CONSTRUCT BRIDGE 24555**

**WHEREAS**, the Freeborn County Highway Department has the responsibility of maintaining the county highway system; and

**WHEREAS**, the Freeborn County Highway Department has prepared plans and specifications for construction of bridge 24555 on CR 60 3 miles west of Emmons, MN in Freeborn County.

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, to accept the low bid from ICON Constructors, LLC of Mabel, MN for \$1,034,088.00 for project SAP 024-598-019.

Resolution seconded by Commissioner Shoff.

After discussion, a vote was taken and the Chair declared the resolution approved.

Commissioner Forman offered the following resolution:

**RESOLUTION 24-141  
LOCAL BRIDGE REPLACEMENT PROGRAM GRANT AGREEMENT  
GRANT TERMS AND CONDITIONS  
SAP 024-598-019**

**WHEREAS**, the Freeborn County Highway Department has the responsibility of maintaining the county highway system; and

**WHEREAS**, local units of government across Minnesota rely on State grant funding for the replacement of deficient bridges and Freeborn County actively pursues these opportunities; and

**WHEREAS**, Freeborn County has applied to the Commissioner of Transportation for a grant from the Minnesota State Transportation Fund related to the replacement of Bridge No. 92991 with Bridge No. 24555; and

**WHEREAS**, the amount of the grant has been determined to be \$816,695.00 by reason of lowest responsible bid.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that Freeborn County hereby agrees to the terms and conditions of the grant consistent with Minnesota Statutes Section 174.50, and will pay any additional amount by which the cost exceeds the estimate, and will return to the Minnesota State Transportation Fund any amount appropriated for the project but is not required, and

**IT IS FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the County Engineer is authorized to execute the grant agreement and any amendments thereto with the Commissioner of Transportation concerning the above referenced grant.

Resolution was seconded by Commissioner Shoff.

After discussion, a vote was taken and the Chair declared the resolution approved.

Commissioner Forman offered the following resolution:

**RESOLUTION 24-142**

**APPROVAL OF COST PARTICIPATION WITH THE CITY OF ALBERT LEA FOR THE  
SIBLEY STREET AND MARSHAL STREET RECONSTRUCTION PROJECT  
CITY PROJECT 2403, CP 024-GBB-022**

**WHEREAS**, the Freeborn County Highway Department has the responsibility of maintaining the county highway system; and

**WHEREAS**, Sibley Street and Marshal Street in the City of Albert Lea east of Bridge Avenue form the connecting route for CSAH 22 to US Highway 65 and therefore are County roads, and

**WHEREAS**, the roadway on this portion of CSAH 22 is in need of reconstruction due to poor pavement condition; and

**WHEREAS**, utilities owned by the City of Albert Lea are also in need of replacement and a joint project has been developed that will require cooperation between the City of Albert Lea as the lead agency and Freeborn County as the Road Authority; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Albert Lea has received bids for the project and has awarded the construction contract to BCM Construction, Inc. of Faribault, Minnesota in the amount of \$1,088,632.00; and

**WHEREAS**, the attached City/County cost splits will determine the amount of participation in the project and shows Freeborn County's estimated responsibilities for road construction items for the County portions of the roadway totaling \$395,498.16 (construction + engineering).

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Freeborn County Board of Commissioners approve participation in City Project 2403 as a project partner; and

**IT IS FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the County Engineer shall make appropriate payments to the City of Albert Lea as reimbursement for all road construction costs completed on the County portions of each roadway in the project.

Resolution was seconded by Commissioner Eckstrom.

After discussion, a vote was taken and the Chair declared the resolution approved.

Commissioner Forman offered the following resolution:

**RESOLUTION 24-143**

**APPROVING REPLACEMENT OF SIGN MAINTENANCE TRUCK**

**WHEREAS**, the Freeborn County Highway Department has the responsibility of maintaining the county highway system; and

**WHEREAS**, the highway department uses and maintains a fleet of maintenance equipment used to complete critical work on County highways; and

**WHEREAS**, the existing sign truck is a specialized unit that is purpose built for conducting maintenance on the vast inventory of signage deployed on our highway system and it is due for replacement; and

**WHEREAS**, a replacement unit has been designed and priced to fulfil the requirements set by the County Engineer for this unit using a combination of State Bid pricing for the chassis and a custom quote for the body including a crane, ramp, sign and post storage, tools, safety and work lighting, other appurtenant items;

**WHEREAS**, the delivery time for the desired unit is 16-18 months so the unit must be ordered now to ensure delivery in 2025.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that Freeborn County board of Commissioners approves the purchase of a new sign truck chassis and custom body in the approximate amount of \$340,691; and

**IT IS FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the retired unit shall be auctioned as surplus equipment using an approved electronic auction platform after the new unit has been delivered.

Resolution was seconded by Commissioner Shoff.  
After discussion, a vote was taken and the Chair declared the resolution approved.

Commissioner Forman offered the following resolution:

#### **RESOLUTION 24-144**

##### **PERMISSION TO FILL THE FREEBORN COUNTY OFFICE SUPPORT SPECIALIST, SR. POSITION**

**WHEREAS**, the Freeborn County employees have the responsibility for providing quality service with integrity and accountability to the citizens of Freeborn County;

**WHEREAS**, the Freeborn County Board is the appointing authority for all county employees, and;

**WHEREAS**, Jody Larson, Freeborn County Office Support Specialist, Sr. has accepted another position as the Detention Center Program Coordinator so this leaves a vacant Office Support Specialist, Sr. position;

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the board approves the filling of the vacant Office Support Specialist, Sr. position.

Resolution was seconded by Commissioner Eckstrom.  
After discussion, a vote was taken and the Chair declared the resolution approved.

Commissioner Shoff offered the following resolution:

#### **RESOLUTION 24-145**

##### **PERMISSION TO FILL THE FREEBORN COUNTY OFFICE SUPPORT SPECIALIST – MENTAL HEALTH POSITION**

**WHEREAS**, the Freeborn County employees have the responsibility for providing quality service with integrity and accountability to the citizens of Freeborn County;

**WHEREAS**, the Freeborn County Board is the appointing authority for all county employees, and;

**WHEREAS**, Stacie Laite, Freeborn County Office Support Specialist – Mental Health has accepted another position within DHS as a Child Support Enforcement Aide starting May 6<sup>th</sup>, 2024 so this leaves a vacant Office Support Specialist – Mental Health position. Her last day as Office Support Specialist – Mental Health will be May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2024;

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the board approves the filling of the vacant Freeborn County Office Support Specialist – Mental Health position.

Resolution was seconded by Commissioner Eckstrom.  
After discussion, a vote was taken and the Chair declared the resolution approved.

Commissioner Forman offered the following resolution:

**RESOLUTION 24-146  
ACCEPTING THE RESIGNATION OF ANGIE BALSLEY**

**WHEREAS**, the Freeborn County Administration has the responsibility for providing a quality service with integrity and accountability to the citizens of Freeborn County;

**WHEREAS**, the Freeborn County Board is the appointing authority for all county employees;

**WHEREAS**; Angie Balsley has been employed as the Benefits Specialist since March 16<sup>th</sup>, 2000 and is resigning her position effective July 8<sup>th</sup>, 2024,

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, to accept the resignation of Angie Balsley as a Freeborn County Benefits Specialist effective on or about July 8<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

Resolution was seconded by Commissioner Shoff.  
After discussion, a vote was taken and the Chair declared the resolution approved.

Commissioner Forman offered the following resolution:

**RESOLUTION 24-147  
APPOINTMENT OF HEATHER BAGLEY AS FREEBORN COUNTY RECORDER**

**WHEREAS**, the Freeborn County Board is the appointing authority for Freeborn County and for all Freeborn County employees; and

**WHEREAS**, the Freeborn County Board of Commissioners has, by resolution, made the office of the Freeborn County Recorder an appointed position by the process provided by law; and

**WHEREAS**, the former County Recorder, Kelly Hendrickson, was appointed as County Auditor-Treasurer, thereby leaving a vacancy of the County Recorder position; and

**WHEREAS**, Heather Bagley has been identified as the top candidate for the position;

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Freeborn County Board of Commissioners does hereby appoint Heather Bagley as the Freeborn County Recorder.

Resolution was seconded by Commissioner Shoff.  
After discussion, a vote was taken and the Chair declared the resolution approved.

Commissioner Shoff offered the following resolution:

**RESOLUTION 24-148  
PERMISSION TO FILL THE FREEBORN COUNTY DEPUTY RECORDER POSITION**

**WHEREAS**, the Freeborn County employees have the responsibility for providing quality service with integrity and accountability to the citizens of Freeborn County;

**WHEREAS**, the Freeborn County Board is the appointing authority for all county employees, and;

**WHEREAS**, Heather Bagley, Freeborn County Deputy Recorder has accepted another position as the County Recorder so this leaves a vacant Deputy Recorder position;

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the board approves the filling of the vacant Deputy Recorder position.

Resolution was seconded by Commissioner Eckstrom.  
After discussion, a vote was taken and the Chair declared the resolution approved.

Commissioner Forman offered the following resolution:

**RESOLUTION 24-149**

**ACCEPTING THE RESIGNATION OF REBECCA ZUNIGA**

**WHEREAS**, the Freeborn County Department of Human Services has the responsibility for providing a quality service with integrity and accountability to the citizens of Freeborn County;

**WHEREAS**, the Freeborn County Board is the appointing authority for all county employees;

**WHEREAS**; Rebecca Zuniga has been employed as an Eligibility Worker since September 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2013 and is resigning her position effective May 17<sup>th</sup>, 2024,

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, to accept the resignation of Rebecca Zuniga as an Eligibility Worker effective on or about May 17<sup>th</sup>, 2024

Resolution was seconded by Commissioner Eckstrom.  
After discussion, a vote was taken and the Chair declared the resolution approved.

Commissioner Forman offered the following resolution:

**RESOLUTION 24-150**

**PERMISSION TO FILL THE FREEBORN COUNTY ELIGIBILITY WORKER POSITION**

**WHEREAS**, the Freeborn County employees have the responsibility for providing quality service with integrity and accountability to the citizens of Freeborn County;

**WHEREAS**, the Freeborn County Board is the appointing authority for all county employees, and;

**WHEREAS**, Rebecca Zuniga, Freeborn County Eligibility Worker Specialist has resigned her position effective May 17<sup>th</sup>, 2024;

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the board approves the filling of the vacant Freeborn County Eligibility Worker position

Resolution was seconded by Commissioner Shoff  
After discussion, a vote was taken and the Chair declared the resolution approved.

Commissioner Forman offered the following resolution:

**RESOLVED AS**, to reschedule the June 11<sup>th</sup>, 2024 Workshop to Monday, June 10<sup>th</sup>, 2024

Resolution was seconded by Commissioner Eckstrom.  
After discussion, a vote was taken and the Chair declared the resolution approved.

Commissioner Eckstrom offered the following motion:

**MOVED**, to reschedule the July 9<sup>th</sup>, 2024 Workshop

Resolution was seconded by Commissioner Shoff.  
After discussion, a vote was taken and the Chair declared the resolution approved.

Commissioner Shoff offered the following resolution:

**RESOLUTION No. 24-XXX**  
**Approval of Claims**

**RESOLVED**, that the following claims be allowed and paid on or before May 10th, 2024.

<u>FUND</u>	<u>NAME</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
01	General Fund	\$ 977,891.63
03	County Road & Bridge	\$ 236,234.19
05	Human Services	\$ 364,391.63
06	Public Health	\$ 146,256.50
40	County Ditch	\$ 42,633.23
70	Trust & Agency	\$ 150,677.59
73	Payroll Clearing Fund	\$ 15,867.89
74	<u>Turtle Creek Watershed</u>	<u>\$ 5,665.33</u>
	<b>FUND TOTALS</b>	<b>\$ 1,939,617.99</b>

Number of Claims not exceeding \$300 – 71  
Dollar amount of claims not exceeding \$300 – \$ 7,704.53  
Resolution seconded by Commissioner Forman.  
After discussion, a vote was taken and the Chair declared the resolution adopted.

Chair, Commissioner Edwin adjourned the meeting at 9:06 a.m. until 8:30 a.m. on Tuesday, May 21<sup>st</sup>, 2024.

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Brad Edwin  
Chair

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_  
Erin Hornberger  
County Clerk