

**MOWER COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
WORK SESSION**

July 7, 2020

The Mower County Board of Commissioners in and for the County of Mower, Minnesota, met in a Work Session on July 7, 2020 at 1:52 p.m. at the Government Center, 201 1<sup>st</sup> Street NE, in Austin, Minnesota.

All members present, viz:     Jeff Baldus, Chair  
  Polly Glynn  
  Tim Gabrielson  
  Jerry Reinartz  
  Mike Ankeny  
  Trish Harren, County Administrator

Also present: Jeff Kasak, IT Manager; Donna Welsh, Finance Manager

The Chair called the meeting to order.

The status of the Return to Work Plan was reviewed and discussed. The Commissioners expressed a desire that the Government Center be opened all day instead of only 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. Health & Human Services still has about 63 persons working from home and the intent is to bring the employee's back slowly to not overwhelm the IT staff which also has persons still working from home. The IT Manager indicated to the Board that his department could manage the return of employees to the office over the course of about a week. Staff was directed effective July 13, 2020 that the Government Center be open to the public its regular hours 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. As long as the needs of the public are being met at the office, Health & Human Service employees will be scheduled to return to the office over the next few weeks.

The Board discussed the request from Premier Hotel Properties for property tax relief in the form of a payment plan. The Finance Director indicated that the county accepts payments with confessions of judgment which isn't a factor in this case. Taxpayers can pay payments but penalty and interest applies to outstanding balances. Penalties accrue after the due date on any outstanding balance and interest accrues on any outstanding balance as of January 1 the following year. The County Administrator indicated that a small business relief program is being established with the CARES Act Covid Relief Funding and this business may be eligible for a grant through that program. However, CARES Act funding may not be used to assist with property tax payments. This item will be added to the July 14, 2020 agenda for action regarding the request.

The Board discussed possible uses of CARES Act funding received in the amount of \$4.9 million. Any expenditure of the funds need to meet the outlined criteria and there will be an extensive audit of the grant funds received. Eligible expenses need to be purchased and/or invoiced prior to December 1. The eligible expenses must be reasonable / necessary in reference to the health emergency (pandemic). Some examples of eligible expenses

include (but not limited to) are salaries of public health, emergency management and the Sheriff's department during the pandemic; electronic equipment for persons to work from home in accordance with the Governor's order; software updates; cleaning supplies; and a minimum of 10% on business subsidy. It is the County's decision to set criteria regarding the business subsidy. The Finance Committee will review and make a recommendation to the Board concerning the criteria for business subsidy and eligible purchases to be made with the CARES Act funding.

Under other items, there was a discussion concerning the fair. The Mower County Fair is still planned to go on as scheduled. However, the Fair Board is scheduled to have another meeting this evening at which the decision could be made yet to cancel the fair. It was noted that MCIT will not insure the County in the event there is a use on the property that is in violation of the Governor's executive order regarding maximum capacity at events. The Fair Board carries its own liability insurance, but the County owns the property and MCIT insures all the buildings. Currently the maximum capacity is set at 250 persons. It is the Fair Board's decision.

The work session concluded at 3:21 p.m.

**THE MOWER COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

**BY:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Chairperson**

**Attest:**

**By:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Clerk/Administrator**

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