

MOWER COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
WORK SESSION

October 4, 2022

The Mower County Board of Commissioners in and for the County of Mower, Minnesota, met in a Work Session on October 4, 2022 at 1:44 p.m. at the Government Center, 201 1st Street NE, in Austin, Minnesota.

Members present, viz: Chair Jeff Baldus, , John Mueller, Jerry Reinartz and Polly Glynn. Member excused: Vice-Chair Mike Ankeny Also in attendance were Assistant Public Works Director Valerie Sheedy, County Administrator Trish Harren, Executive Assistant Denise Barthels (remote); Marcus Thompson (remote); Eric Johnson (remote)

The Chair called the meeting to order.

Assistant Public Works Director Valerie Sheedy and Solid Waste Officer Marcus Thompson presented information pertaining to possible changes to the solid waste fee point system for the Board's discussion. The goal is to provide community service that makes recycling an easy choice for the residents of Mower County by providing convenient, accessible disposal for recyclable, reusable or hazardous materials that will in turn reduce the community's waste stream in an effort to protect the environment for generations to come. An increase to the "point" value on the solid waste property tax assessment would provide additional revenue to build reserve funds to make future needed capital improvements to the facility and program as well as buffer against rising costs and an unstable resale market. The Board reviewed the budget noting the income received from assessments, solid waste fees, the sale of materials and grants. Curbside-home (residential) recycling generates the most revenue (2021 - \$541,164). The cost to the homeowner is currently \$52 annually (at \$6.50 per point.) The proposed changes are as follows: 1) to raise the point value from \$6.50 to \$8.00 or \$9.00; 2) increase the bare land point from .5 to 1; and 3) to eliminate points to non-profits (which includes the YMCA, Hormel Historic Home, Austin Utilities, the Rink, etc.). The annual cost to the curbside-home (residential) would increase to \$64 (\$8 per point) or \$72 (\$9.00 per point) annually. It was noted that statewide, the average annual cost for this service ranges from \$55 to \$99 per household.

The Mower County Tax Abatement Program for new construction is set to sunset December 31, 2022. County Administrator Trish Harren provided the Board with an update on the program since its establishment in the fall of 2016 to address the housing shortage through a tax abatement incentive and to grow the tax base. Since that time 230 new units of housing have been added at an estimated value of \$61 million. The Board discussed the continuation of the program with possible modifications and clarifications. Possible modifications could eliminate the parameter that construction cannot have commenced prior to application approval, add an appeal process, clarify eligibility of certain types of homes, and require that the housing project meets proper building/zoning codes without violations prior to approval. It was discussed that relocating a livable home to another parcel in Mower does would not qualify but a home from outside the county would qualify as it was adding a housing unit. It was also discussed that only the living quarters of a shouse would be eligible

for the abatement and that it needed to be inhabited. A policy amendment will be presented to the Board for review and approval at a future meeting to be effective January 1, 2023.

The work session concluded at 3:07 p.m.

THE MOWER COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

BY: _____
Chairperson

Attest:

By: _____
Clerk/Administrator

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