

**SAUK RAPIDS-RICE INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 47
SPECIAL BOARD MEETING MINUTES
Monday, December 16, 2024**

A Special Meeting of the Sauk Rapids-Rice ISD 47 Board of Education was called to order by Chair Butkowski, Monday, December 16, 2024 at 5:15 p.m. in the Boardroom of said district.

Public Comment is not taken at Special or Emergency Board Meetings.

ROLL CALL

Members present included Butkowski, Dwyer, Hauck, Holthaus, Johnson, Loidolt, and Morse. Others present were Superintendent Bergstrom.

ESTABLISHMENT OF A QUORUM

Chair Butkowski asked Clerk Loidolt to affirm there was a quorum in attendance. Clerk Loidolt affirmed there was a quorum.

APPROVAL OF MEETING AGENDA

A motion was made by Holthaus, seconded by Dwyer and unanimously carried to approve the meeting's Agenda.

ACTION

APPROVAL OF LAND EXCHANGE

A motion was made by Johnson, seconded by Morse and unanimously carried to approve the land exchange of currently owned ISD. No. 47 district property for property which is currently owned by the City of Sauk Rapids.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business appearing before the Board a motion was made by Dwyer, seconded by Loidolt and unanimously carried, adjourn the meeting at 5:31 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Lisa Loidolt, Board of Education Clerk
Sauk Rapids-Rice ISD 47
R-2-1B

STATE OF MINNESOTA

**Before the
BENTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
SITTING AS THE DRAINAGE AUTHORITY FOR
BENTON COUNTY DITCH NO. 9**

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

In the matter of:

The Repair of Benton County Ditch No. 9

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE, the Board of Commissioners of Benton County sitting as the drainage authority for Benton County Ditch No. 9, pursuant to Minn. Stat. § 103E.101, subd. 4a and Minn. Stat. § 1035E.715, 103E.728, and 103E.731 shall hold a public hearing to accept the completion of contract to repair Benton County Ditch No. 9 and the final cost of repair, and to establish the interest rate and number of annual installments for the assessment for property owners' repayment of the drainage system's repair.

The hearing shall be held at 10:00AM on Tuesday, February 4, 2025, at the Benton County Boardroom at the Benton County Government Center, at 531 Dewey Street, Foley, MN 56329. All interested parties may appear in person or may be heard by joining from your computer, tablet, or smartphone at the below link:

<https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/834170141>

You can also dial in using your phone. United States: +1(571)317-3122

Copies of the contract, the notice of completion and the final costs for the repair of Benton County Ditch No. 9 are available for inspection at Benton County Public Works office at 7752 Highway 25 NE, Foley, MN 56329.

/s/Christine Scherbing
Christine Scherbing, Auditor-Treasurer
FR-2-1B

STATE OF MINNESOTA

**Before the
BENTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
SITTING AS THE DRAINAGE AUTHORITY FOR
BENTON COUNTY DITCH NO. 14**

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

In the matter of:

The Repair of Benton County Ditch No. 14

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE, the Board of Commissioners of Benton County sitting as the drainage authority for Benton County Ditch No. 14, pursuant to Minn. Stat. § 103E.101, subd. 4a and Minn. Stat. § 1035E.715, 103E.728, and 103E.731 shall hold a public hearing to accept the completion of contract to repair Benton County Ditch No. 14 and the final cost of repair, and to establish the interest rate and number of annual installments for the assessment for property owners' repayment of the drainage system's repair.

The hearing shall be held at 10:00AM on Tuesday, February 4, 2025, at the Benton County Boardroom at the Benton County Government Center, at 531 Dewey Street, Foley, MN 56329. All interested parties may appear in person or may be heard by joining from your computer, tablet, or smartphone at the below link:

<https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/834170141>

You can also dial in using your phone. United States: +1(571)317-3122

Copies of the contract, the notice of completion and the final costs for the repair of Benton County Ditch No. 9 are available for inspection at Benton County Public Works office at 7752 Highway 25 NE, Foley, MN 56329.

/s/Christine Scherbing
Christine Scherbing, Auditor-Treasurer
FR-2-1B

**SAUK RAPIDS-RICE INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 47
REGULAR SEMI-MONTHLY BOARD MEETING
Monday, December 9, 2024**

A semi-monthly meeting of the Sauk Rapids-Rice ISD 47 Board of Education was called to order by Chair Butkowski, Monday, December 9, 2024 at 6:00 p.m. (CST).

ROLL CALL

Members present included Butkowski, Dwyer, Hauck, Holthaus, Johnson, Loidolt, and Morse. Others present were Superintendent Bergstrom, Director of Business Services Fiereck, Director of Human Resources and Administrative Services Schoenherr, Director of Teaching and Learning Boser, Rice Principal Bushman, Mississippi Heights Principal Peterson, Pleasantview Principal Froiland, Sauk Rapids-Rice High School Principal Logrono, and Sauk Rapids-Rice Middle School Principal Arndt.

ESTABLISHMENT OF A QUORUM

Chair Butkowski asked Clerk Loidolt to affirm there was a quorum in attendance. Clerk Loidolt affirmed there was a quorum.

APPROVAL OF MEETING AGENDA

A motion was made by Holthaus, seconded by Hauck and unanimously carried to approve the meeting's "Agenda".

TRUTH IN TAXATION PUBLIC HEARING

The 2024 payable 2025 proposed tax levy hearing convened. The meeting date had been noted in previous School Board meeting minutes and was also noted on individual tax statements sent by Benton County as required. Director of Business Services Fiereck prepared and presented the information for review. The following hearing components were included but were not limited to:

- A. 2024 payable 2025 proposed tax levy
- B. Current budget
- C. Budget publication
- D. Proposed percent increase/decrease and reasons for increase/decrease
- E. Opportunity for public comment

CONSENT AGENDA

A motion was made by Morse, seconded by Dwyer and unanimously carried to approve the meeting's "Consent Agenda".

DISCUSSION

COMMISSIONER'S REVIEW AND COMMENT ON PROPOSED BOND ELECTION UPDATE

The Commissioner of Education favorably reviewed and returned the district's Review and Comment document, which relates to the district's proposed bond election on February 11, 2025. Legislation, enacted in 2017, requires districts to review the Commissioner's Review and Comment, which summarizes the projects proposed to be funded, at a public meeting. The Board of Education and District Administration allowed time for community members to ask questions regarding the Commissioner's summary. In addition, the Commissioner's Review and Comment summary was published in the district's official newspaper.

ACTION

APPROVAL OF 2024 PAYABLE 2025 LEVY

A motion was made by Dwyer, seconded by Johnson and unanimously carried to adopt the 2024 Payable 2025 Levy in the amount of \$12,141,816.63.

PUBLIC INPUT

There was no public input at 7:00 p.m.

ACTION (continued)

ADOPTION OF THE RESOLUTION LIMITING AND CAPPING NON-RESIDENT ENROLLMENT

Member Hauck introduced the following Resolution and moved its adoption:

The motion for the adoption of this Resolution was duly seconded by Morse and upon a vote being taken, the following voted in favor of this Resolution:

Butkowski, Dwyer, Hauck, Holthaus, Johnson, Loidolt, Morse

And the following voted against this Resolution: None

Whereupon this Resolution was declared duly passed and adopted.

Dated: December 9, 2024

APPROVAL AND ACCEPTANCE OF FEBRUARY 11, 2025, BUILDING REFERENDUM JUDGE POOL

Member Dwyer introduced the following resolution and moved its adoption, which motion was seconded by Member Morse: Upon vote being taken thereon, the following voted in favor thereof:

Butkowski, Dwyer, Hauck, Holthaus, Johnson, Loidolt, Morse

and the following voted against the same: None

whereupon the resolution was declared duly passed and adopted.

APPROVAL OF BENTON COUNTY AGREEMENT

A motion was made by Johnson, seconded by Loidolt and unanimously carried to approve the Agreement with the Benton County Auditor-Treasurer's Office to perform specific election services for the District's Special Election on February 11, 2025.

ADOPTION OF THE DONATION RESOLUTION

A motion was made by Johnson, seconded by Butkowski and unanimously carried to adopt the Donation Resolution. The Minnesota School Board Association recommends the Donation Resolution be adopted in the Action area of the agenda.

Sauk Rapids-Rice Donation List					
Date	Donor	Purpose	Donation Amount	Donation Equipment	Building / Department
11/11/2024	SRYBA	Student Council - Not So Spooky Halloween Event	\$100.00		SRRHS
11/11/2024	Mark Hauck	Small engines class research chainsaw donation			SRRHS
11/11/2024	Walmart	Donation of school supplies			SRRHS
11/11/2024	Gary's Pizza	Yearbook Sponsorship	\$120.00		SRRHS
11/14/2024	Rice Area Sportsmen's Club	Deep Portage	\$2,000.00		PV
11/18/2024	Rice PTA	Foster Grandparent Program	\$500.00		RES
11/15/2024	East Central Energy	Donation of hygiene products for students			SRRMS
11/21/2024	Judy Clare	Donation of winter gear			SRRMS
11/25/2024	Scooters Coffee	Yearbook Sponsorship	\$300.00		SRRHS
11/13/2024	Initiative Foundation	Classroom Grants	\$9,896.74		District
11/15/2024	Blackbaud Giving Fund	Donation	\$140.00		District
Total			\$13,056.74		

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business appearing before the Board, a motion was made by Morse, seconded by Dwyer and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 7:17 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Board of Education Clerk
Sauk Rapids-Rice ISD 47
R-2-1B

**ATTENTION
BENTON COUNTY RESIDENTS**

Benton County Board of Commissioners has one opening on the Board of Adjustment. The Board of Adjustment shall consist of five members representing each of the five commissioner districts. Each member is appointed by the County Board. The members of the Board of Adjustment shall be paid a per diem, currently \$70 plus \$10 per site visit and their mileage in an amount to be determined by separate action of the County Board.

The Board will be appointing a member to represent District 4, Commissioner Jared Gapinski's District. The member

does not need to reside in District 4. If you are interested in the areas of planning and zoning and would like to serve on the Board of Adjustment, please complete the application form on the County's website www.co.benton.mn.us. It is located under Services, at the top of the page, Forms > Online Forms > Department of Development. If you would like to obtain a paper application, please contact Roxanne Achman, Land Services Director, at 320-968-5065 or pick up an application at the Planning & Zoning Office at 531 Dewey St, Foley, MN 56329. Applications will be accepted until the position is filled.

R-2-1B

NOTICE OF SPECIAL ELECTION
INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 47
(SAUK RAPIDS-RICE), MINNESOTA

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a special election has been called and will be held in and for Independent School District No. 47 (Sauk Rapids-Rice), Minnesota, on February 11, 2025, between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. to vote on the following questions:

School District Question 1
Approval of School Building Bonds
Early Childhood Center

YES Shall the board of Independent School District No. 47 (Sauk Rapids-Rice), Minnesota be authorized to issue general obligation school building bonds in an amount not to exceed \$37,190,000 for acquisition and betterment of school sites and facilities including, but not limited to, construction of an early childhood center?
 NO

BY VOTING “YES” ON THIS BALLOT QUESTION, YOU ARE VOTING FOR A PROPERTY TAX INCREASE

School District Question 2
Approval of School Building Bonds
Outdoor Activity Complex

YES Shall the board of Independent School District No. 47 (Sauk Rapids-Rice), Minnesota be authorized to issue general obligation school building bonds in an amount not to exceed \$17,710,000 for acquisition and betterment of school sites and facilities including, but not limited to, construction of an outdoor activity complex?
 NO

BY VOTING “YES” ON THIS BALLOT QUESTION, YOU ARE VOTING FOR A PROPERTY TAX INCREASE

The polling places and the precincts served by the polling places for this special election are as follows (*note: please check your polling place carefully as the polling locations have changed for some voters*):

Combined Polling Place:	Precincts Served:
The Sauk Rapids Government Center 250 Summit Avenue North Sauk Rapids, MN 56379	This combined polling place serves all territory in Independent School District No. 47 located in • City of Sauk Rapids, Precinct 2; • City of Sauk Rapids, Precinct 4; • City of Sauk Rapids, Precinct 5; and • City of Sauk Rapids, Precinct 6 In Benton County, Minnesota.
Riverside Terrace 195 River Avenue South Sauk Rapids, MN 56379	This combined polling place serves all territory in Independent School District No. 47 located in • Minden Township, Precinct 1; • Minden Township, Precinct 2; • City of Sauk Rapids, Precinct 1; • St. Cloud, Ward 2-Precinct 1; and • St. Cloud, Ward 2-Precinct 4 In Benton County, Minnesota.
Discovery Church 700 18th Street North West Sauk Rapids, MN 56379	This combined polling place serves all territory in Independent School District No. 47 located in • City of Sauk Rapids, Precinct 3; • Sauk Rapids Township; and • City of Sartell, Precinct 2 In Benton County, Minnesota.
Watab Town Hall 660 75th Street North East Rice, MN 56367	This combined polling place serves all territory in Independent School District No. 47 located in • Watab Township; and • Mayhew Lake Township In Benton County, Minnesota.
Rice City Hall 205 Main Street East Rice, MN 56367	This combined polling place serves all territory in Independent School District No. 47 located in • City of Rice; • Langola Township; and • Graham Township In Benton County, Minnesota.

All qualified electors residing in the School District may cast their ballots at the polling places listed above during the polling hours specified above.

A voter must be registered to vote to be eligible to vote in the special election. Unregistered individuals may register to vote at the polling places on election day.

Dated: November 25, 2024.

BY ORDER OF THE SCHOOL BOARD

Risa Roidelt
School Board Clerk

**BENTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
DECEMBER 17, 2024**

The Benton County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on December 17, 2024, in the Benton County Board Room in Foley, MN. Call to order by Chair Jared Gapinski was at 9:00 AM followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag. A roll call showed Commissioners Beth Schlangen, Steve Heinen, Jared Gapinski, Scott Johnson, and Ed Popp present.

Motion by Popp and seconded by Heinen to approve the Agenda as written. Motion carried unanimously.

No one was present to speak under Open Forum.

Motion by Popp and seconded by Johnson to approve Consent Agenda items 1 – 21: 1) approve the Regular Board Meeting Minutes of December 3, 2024 and authorize the Chair to sign; 2) approve the Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes of December 2, 2024 and authorize the Chair to sign; 3) approve the resolution to transfer Revenue Fund and Human Services Fund reserves to the Capital Projects Fund for future capital projects needs and authorize the Chair to sign; 4) approve the resolutions establishing loans to Ditch #3 and Ditch #6 to eliminate negative balances; 5) approve a resolution to delegate the authority to make electronic funds transfer payments and authorize the Chair to sign; 6) approve a resolution setting aside net proceeds from Tax-Forfeiture Land Sales to County Parks and authorize the Chair to sign; 7) approve a resolution establishing commitments of fund balance and authorize the Chair to sign; 8) approve a request for unpaid leave; 9) approve the Benton County Extension Office to accept by resolution a donation of \$2,000 from the Benton County National Dairy Herd Information Services and authorize the Chair to sign; 10) approve the 2025 Tobacco License Applications pending signatures from the County Sheriff and Attorney; 11) approve the Memorandum of Agreement with FEMA to continue with IPAWS and authorize the Chair to sign; 12) approve the Contract with BoldPlanning for Maintenance Agreement and authorize the Chair to sign; 13) approve the addition to the Rave contract and authorize the Chair to sign; 14) approve the contract amendment with the Central Mental Health Center for clinical supervision for an additional two months of service and authorize the Chair to sign; 15) approve the 2025 Contract for Services with Avivo for MFIP DWP Employment Services and authorize the Chair to sign; 16) approve the contract renewal for Independent Lifestyles, Inc. to provide Consumer Support Grant Program services on behalf of Benton County Human Services for the period of 1/01/2025 through 12/31/2025 and authorize the Chair to sign; 17) approve the 2025-2026 contract with the MN Department of Human Services for Community Support Program funds and authorize the Chair to sign; 18) approve the appointments to the Planning Commission and Solid Waste Advisory Committee; 19) approve the Joint Powers Agreements with Local Government Units for the enforcement and regulation of cannabis and authorize the Chair to sign; 20) approve the ARMER Equipment Grant contract and authorize the Chair to sign; 21) accept the donation of \$500 to the K-9 unit by resolution and authorize the Chair to sign. Motion carried unanimously.

Next, County Administrator Montgomery Headley requested to conduct a Public Hearing on the proposed changes to the Benton County fee schedule. The fee schedule reflects revisions as proposed by Departments. New fees are noted with underlined text. Revisions to existing fees appear as ~~strikeout text~~. The following Department Heads made the following fee schedule change requests:

Land Services Director Roxanne Achman requested approval of the following fee schedule changes for the Auditor-Treasurer's Office that pertain to cannabis:

- Cannabis and Lower Potency Hemp Edible (LPHE) Retail Registration: Cannabis with a retail registration endorsement initial fee \$0; renewal \$1,000
- Cannabis Mezzobusiness with a retail registration endorsement initial fee \$500; renewal \$1,000
- Cannabis Retailer initial fee of \$500; Renewal of \$1,000
- Medical Cannabis Combination Business with a retail location initial fee \$500; renewal \$1,000
- Lower Potency Hemp Edible Retailer initial fee \$125; renewal \$125
- Cannabis, Temporary Event \$500 license fee
- Cannabis and LPHE Civil Penalty Appeal Hearing \$500

Achman then requested the following fee schedule change for Planning and Zoning-Land Use and Recorder:

- Zoning Verification Letter \$50 per letter
- Copy of Torrens Certificate of Title \$10 \$5 per certified copy

Human Services Director Sandi Shoberg requested the Board consider the following Fee Schedule changes:

- Daycare Licensing Fee \$50 per year

Headley shared the following fee schedule change requests on behalf of County Engineer Chris Byrd:

- County Surveyor's Fee for Final Plan and RLS Review \$355 \$350 plus \$35 \$30 per lot, ~~unit or tract park or outlet~~ (minimum \$495 \$470)
- County Surveyor's Fee for Plat Review of Common Interest Communities \$355 \$350 plus \$35 \$30 per lot, ~~unit or tract, park or outlet~~ (minimum \$470 \$495)

Sheriff Troy Heck requested the Board to consider the following Fee Schedule changes:

- Safe Notice \$50
- Writ of Recovery Service (Posting of Service and Restoration of Premises) SECURING PROPERTY \$150 \$75 per hour
- Redemption of Property \$250 includes \$50 non-refundable redemption preparation fee
- Redemption of Property – Separate Junior Creditors \$250 includes \$50 non-refundable redemption preparation fee
- Permit to Carry \$80 \$70
- Permit to Carry – Renewal \$80 \$65
- Posting Notice of Sale \$255 (Notice posted at three required locations) \$50

The public hearing on the proposed fee schedule changes opened at 9:09 AM. No one was present in-person or virtual-

ly to address the County Board on the proposed fee schedule changes. The public hearing closed at 9:10 AM. There were no emails, letters or other communications to be read into the record. Departments did not receive any comments or concerns from any State agencies, cities or townships on this agenda item. No official action was required by an affected Township. Motion by Heinen and seconded by Johnson to adopt the revised Benton County fee schedule with changes effective January 1, 2025. Motion carried unanimously.

Next, Achman requested to conduct a public hearing to consider Ordinance #497 to amend Benton County Development Code Ord. 477 to add provisions for regulation of cannabis businesses within the County's zoning jurisdiction. The legalization of cannabis has created a new land use within Benton County that requires the consideration of an amendment to the County's Development Code to ensure the proper siting of such uses and the protection of surrounding properties. The ordinance was prepared in a way that addresses the type of use and the potential side effects of the use on surrounding properties. Areas of concern specifically related to cannabis businesses: water, electrical grid, odor, security, lighting, and waste. Achman provided a summary of Ordinance #497 which included definitions, zoning use districts, special provisions, setbacks, hours of operation, screening, odor, security, lighting, wastewater and solid waste and termination. The public hearing to consider Ordinance #497 opened at 9:19 AM. No one was present in-person or virtually to address the County Board on Ordinance #497. The public hearing closed at 9:20 AM. Achman reported that there were no emails, letters or other communications to be read into the record. The Department has not received any comments or concerns from any State agencies, cities or townships on this agenda item. No official action was required by an affected township. Motion by Johnson and seconded by Heinen to approve Ordinance #497 to amend Benton County Development Code to add provisions for regulation of cannabis businesses within the County's zoning jurisdiction. Motion carried unanimously.

Next, Achman requested the County Board to consider an agreement with Bogart, Pederson and Associates, Inc. for Wetland Conservation Act (WCA) Administration assistance. Bogart, Pederson, and Associates, Inc. (BPA) has been administering WCA on behalf of Benton County since August 6, 2024, due to a vacancy in the Wetland and Solid Waste Program Manager position. The contract with BPA expired on December 6, 2024. As of December 4, 2024, the Wetland and Solid Waste Program Manager position has been filled. This individual will not start until January 21, 2025, and this position would benefit greatly by having knowledgeable individuals to job shadow on wetland delineations and to seek information from relating to WCA rules, regulations, and applications. Staff have been very satisfied with the services provided by BPA and would like the County Board to consider an agreement with BPA to continue to serve as the LGU until the employee starts. After that, BPA would provide assistance as needed until the employee is properly trained and qualified to administer WCA. The contract end date is December 31, 2025, to ensure proper coverage for a full season of WCA administration. The Planning & Zoning general fund account would need to cover the cost of these services. Motion by Johnson and seconded by Popp to approve the agreement with Bogart Pederson and Associates, Inc. for WCA Administration assistance. Motion carried unanimously.

Next, Heck requested the County Board to consider approving a contract with Tyler Technologies for purchase of updated CAD/RMS system and joint powers agreement with Foley, Rice, and Sauk Rapids for cost sharing plan related to purchase of this shared system. Tyler Technologies was one of the three CAD and RMS systems the Benton law enforcement group considered for our solution. The consensus of the Benton law enforcement agencies was to select Tyler Technologies as our next software provider to create a shared law enforcement records system encompassing all law enforcement agencies in Stearns and Benton counties. Advanced conversations between Benton County, Stearns County and Tyler Technologies have yielded a plan for the Benton County system to live on Stearns County data servers and exchange information with Stearns County law enforcement agencies. This arrangement provides Benton County the ability to purchase a premier CAD&RMS system at a very reduced cost due to the infrastructure sharing with Stearns County. The Benton County one-time costs associated with this contract and cost sharing model total \$606,437.12. These costs will be paid from a combination of E911 funds, Inmate Welfare fund and Public Safety Aid funds held in the CIP. Ongoing maintenance costs for Benton County within this contract and cost sharing model total \$59,432.20 and will be paid through E911 funds, Inmate Welfare funds, and levy funds in the sheriff's office budget already dedicated to RMS system maintenance. By using Public Safety Aid, E911 funds, and Inmate Welfare funds, the funding plan requires no levy dollars be spent to acquire this system. The levy funding required for annual payments is already well within the amounts allocated in the current sheriff's budget for this purpose. The Joint Powers Agreement codifies in contract the cost sharing agreement between the Benton County Law enforcement entities for the payment of both the one-time and on-going costs of the Tyler Technologies system. Motion by Popp and seconded by Johnson to approve the contract with Tyler Technologies for purchase of updated CAD/RMS system and joint powers agreement with Foley, Rice, and Sauk Rapids for cost sharing plan related to purchase of this shared system. Motion carried unanimously.

Next, Shoberg invited Jessica Brandon, Executive Director of Central MN Mental Health Center (CMMHC), and Rob-in Matushin, Chief Operating Officer of Central MN Mental Health Center, to share information on withdrawal management and proposed 2025 contract. In the past years Stearns County completed a Host County Contract with CMMHC on behalf of Benton, Stearns Sherburne, and Wright Counties. Detox is a service counties are mandated to provide. Last year CMMHC changed from a detox center to a center providing Withdrawal Management. Withdrawal Management is

a service similar to detox but with additional services. Unlike detox, withdrawal management is eligible for funding from publicly funded medical programs. Benton County saw a reduction in costs billed to the County from \$106,859 in 2023 to \$43,817 year to date in 2024. While withdrawal management is not a service mandated to for counties to provide, it does fulfill the counties requirement to provide detoxification services. Motion by Heinen and seconded by Schlangen to approve the 2025 contract with Central Minnesota Mental Health Center for withdrawal management. Motion carried unanimously.

Next, Shoberg requested to dedicate up to \$17,120 of ARPA funds towards the administration of loans and grants from Stearns Bank and First Children's Finance. Benton County previously dedicated ARPA funds to be expended to waive some costs for childcare homes in Benton County to be spent by the end of 2024. Approximately \$17,120 have not been spent. Stearns Bank and First Children's Finance are proposing a program offering grants and loans to childcare providers in the Benton, Sherburne, and Stearns Counties to encourage development and sustain current providers. All three counties are in the development stages of a formal agreement, but funding must be dedicated before 12/31/2024 to utilize ARPA funds. The total loan/grant program would provide up to \$100,000 in grants and loans to child-care homes in the three-county area along with other financial aids. Motion by Heinen and seconded by Schlangen to dedicate up to \$17,120 ARPA funds towards administration of a child-care home loan and grant program for recruitment support of foster care providers. Motion carried unanimously.

Next, Benton County Auditor-Treasurer Christine Scherbing requested that the County Board consider establishment of Benton County Absentee and UOCAVA (Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act) for 2025. Benton County is required by MN Statute 203B.121 to establish an absentee ballot board and MN Statute 203B.23 to establish a UOCAVA ballot board. The absentee and UOCAVA ballot board would consist of a sufficient number of election judges or deputy county auditors trained in the processing and counting of absentee ballots as outlined in MN statutes 203B.121 and 203B.24. Motion by Johnson and seconded by Popp to approve a resolution establishing the Benton County Absentee and UOCAVA ballot board for 2025. Motion carried unanimously.

Next, Scherbing requested the County Board to enter into an Election Services Agreement with ISD 47 (Sauk Rapids – Rice). The School District has scheduled a School District Special Election for February 11, 2025. School boards are responsible for the conduct of all school district standalone elections. The school district clerk, or the clerks' designee, is the election administrator for the district. As requested by the School District, the County is willing to assist the School District with certain election administration duties for the School District Special Election. To School District and the County desire to enter into an agreement to provide for the administration of certain School District Special Election administration duties by the County. Motion by Gapinski and seconded by Heinen to approve the Election Services Agreement with ISD 47. Motion carried unanimously.

Next, Headley shared that Benton County received an award at the Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC) Annual Conference for outstanding performance in the Workers Compensation Division. Benton County participates in the Minnesota Counties Intergovernmental Trust (MCIT) Workers Compensation program. Each year at the AMC Annual Conference, MCIT recognizes a County for outstanding performance in workers compensation administration. For 2024, Benton County received this recognition. Present to share the award was Human Resources Assistant Shannon Johnston and Property Management Director Jeff Dingmann. This item was for informational purposes only.

Next, Benton Economic Partnership Director Amanda Othoutd requested the County Board to consider the 2025 Minnesota City Participation Program (MCP). Minnesota Housing manages the MCP, which uses the Tax-Exempt Bond Housing Pool Allocation authorized by the Office of Minnesota Management and Budget (MMB) to enable communities throughout the state to efficiently provide first-time homebuyer loans in their community without the administrative burden of running their own bond program. The first-time homebuyers access the program through their local lenders and have access to downpayment and closing cost assistance if needed. In accordance with Minnesota Statute 474A.061, cities (or counties or multi-county organizations) apply to Minnesota Housing annually for such authority. Funding allocations are allocated to participating cities on a per capita basis, with each applicant allocated a minimum of \$100,00. Allocations are based on the populations in those geographic areas. Benton County has a population of roughly 42,000. The 2024 allocation Benton County received was \$275,075 for first-time home buyer loans through this program. Benton County saw two committed loans totaling \$387,900 which met/exceeded our allocation amount making Benton County eligible to apply again in 2025. The applicants of these two loans received \$33,000 in total downpayment and closing cost loans. Motion by Heinen and seconded by Popp to approve the 2024 MCP Agreement and authorize the execution of the application. Motion carried unanimously.

Next, Headley requested the County Board to consider the final 2025 Benton County Budget and Levy. This represents the final Board action on the 2025 budget and levy. A proposed 2025 budget and levy was adopted by the County Board on September 23, 2024. A Truth in Taxation Public Meeting was conducted on December 3rd. The final 2025 budget and levy must be adopted and certified to the Auditor-Treasurer by December 27th (within five business days of December 20th). Headley noted that the state-wide average levy increase for 2025 is 6.4%. The summary of major factors includes:

Benton County minutes from page 14

- The proposed 2025 levy increases 4.98%, or \$1,183,381 from 2024, to a total property levy of \$24,931,859
 - With this proposed change for 2025, the 10-year average levy change for Benton County is a 2.7% increase
 - Due to increases in the homestead market value exclusion and other valuation reductions tied to sales data, the County's tax capacity is expected to contract by 0.7% in payable 2025, resulting in the County tax rate increasing from 44% to 46.5% (but down from a peak of 77.6% in 2014)
 - Based on a median house value of \$276,124 (up 1.18% from payable 2024's median value of \$272,910), a homeowner's County property taxes would increase \$38.61 in 2025, or \$3.22 per month
 - The proposed 2025 operating budget totals \$69,886,758, an increase of \$15,250,439, or a 27.9% increase from 2024; most of the increase is due to a substantially larger 2025 road construction program
 - The proposed levy increase is comprised of the following major elements:
 - Employee compensation and benefits \$1,079,199
 - Use full certified 2025 County Program Aid for levy reduction (583,115)
 - New positions (see detail below) 175,204
 - Expected increase in out-of-home placements (Human Services) 171,664
 - Additional contracted Probation agent/DOC cost allocation 150,457
 - Add fully ensured comprehensive dental coverage for employees 120,000
 - Increased usage of East Central Regional Juvenile Detention Center 55,000
 - Increase for contracted University of MN Extension Educator positions 43,714
 - All other operating and revenue account adjustments (net) (28,742)
- Total Levy Change for 2025 \$1,183,381

• The proposed budget includes the following "Policy Issues" from County Board action:

- Two full-time Detention Officer positions to address Minnesota Department of Corrections staffing requirements for "five-post" Jail operations; this action includes eliminating two part-time Detention Officer positions and the County Board's intention that the Sentence to Service (STS) program will be suspended, allowing the STS Crew Leader to work full-time in the Jail
- An Environmental Technician/Ditch Inspector in Highway to manage state and federal environmental permitting associated with road projects, and to assume primary responsibilities for inspections and management of the County public drainage system
- In Human Services, an Eligibility Specialist for the resumption of medical assistance eligibility redeterminations (offset by one-time state funding and based on the assumption that the position will be eliminated through attrition once state funding is exhausted); two Social Workers for MNCHOICE assessments, fully offset by state/federal funding, two Home and Community Based Waiver Services Social Workers, also fully offset by state/federal funding (all four Social Worker positions added to address growing caseloads), and a half-time Fiscal Staff position which is fully offset by state/federal funding
- Adding a fully-insured, comprehensive dental plan for employees (no cost to employees); current dental plan covers preventative services only
 - o The County's General Revenue fund balance at the end of 2023 stood at 6.1 months of expenditure coverage, versus a goal standard of 5 months expenditure coverage; the Human Services fund balance equaled 5.7 months of expenditure coverage December 2023; the proposed budget uses \$623,060 in fund balance from these funds to support the County's five-year capital improvement plan for major building maintenance and technology projects.

Headley requested that the County Board first adopt a Resolution setting the 2025 Benton County Property Tax Levy. Motion by Heinen and seconded by Popp to adopt a Resolution setting the 2025 Benton County Property Tax Levy at \$24,931,859. Motion Carried unanimously.

Next, Headley requested the County Board to adopt a Resolution setting the 2025

Benton County Budget as presented. Motion by Gapinski and seconded by Johnson to adopt a Resolution setting the 2025 Benton County budget as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Next, Headley requested the County Board to adopt the Elected Officials salaries for 2025. State Statutes require the County Board to annually set the salaries of the County's Elected Officials by Resolution. The Resolution established the 2025 salaries for the Auditor-Treasurer, County Attorney and Sheriff. The amounts set forth in the Resolution reflect County Board consensus from the December 2nd Committee of the Whole. The salaries of said elected Officials shall be as follows:

Auditor Treasurer	\$100,170
County Attorney	\$142,560
Sheriff	\$150,578

Motion by Gapinski and seconded by Schlangen to approve the Resolution setting the 2025 salaries for the Auditor-Treasurer, County Attorney and Sheriff. Motion carried unanimously.

Next, Headley requested the County set the County Commissioner Salaries for 2025. Per MN Statute §375.055, County Boards establish the annual salaries paid to County Commissioners. Such salary shall be effective January 1, 2025. The amount set forth in the Resolution reflects County Board consensus from the December 2nd Committee of the Whole:

WHEREAS, Minnesota Statute §375.055 requires that the salary of the County Commissioners be set annually by Resolution of the County Board;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Benton County Board of Commissioners that effective January 1, 2025, the salary of each member of the Benton County Board of Commissioners shall be \$33,211 and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the County Administrator is directed to publish this Resolution in the official newspaper of the County and one other newspaper in the County, pursuant to MN Statutes §375.055, Subdivision 1.

APPROVED AND ADOPTED this 17th day of December, 2024.

/ss/Jared J. Gapinski
Chair
Benton County Board of Commissioners
ATTEST:

/ss/Montgomery Headley
County Administrator
Motion by Popp and seconded by Heinen to approve the Resolution setting the 2025 County Board member salaries. Motion carried unanimously.

Next, Headley requested the County Board set the County Board Per Diem Rate for 2025. Per the consensus of the County Board at the December 2nd Committee of the Whole, the 2025 per diem rate will be maintained at \$70. The Resolution adopting the 2024 Per Diem Rate for 2025 reads as follows:

**BENTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
RESOLUTION 2024 # _____**

WHEREAS, MN Statutes §375.055 and MN Statutes §375.06 allow the County Board to establish a schedule of per diem payments for County Commissioners for each day necessarily occupied in the discharge of their duties while acting on any committee under the direction of the Board; and

WHEREAS, said statutes also permit County Board members to be reimbursed for necessary expenses, including traveling expenses, while performing the official duties of County Commissioner, as set by Resolution of the County Board; and,

WHEREAS, MN Statutes §375.055, Subdivision 5 provides that County Board members may participate in any group health insurance program instituted by the County Board for County officers and employees.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Benton County Board of Commissioners that:

1. In addition to annual salaries, County Commissioners may receive a per diem payment for attending meetings of commissions, committees and boards when such attendance is designated by the County Board. Pursuant to MN Statutes §375.055, Subdivision 5, members of the County Board shall not receive a per diem for services on the Board of Auditors, the Board of Equalization, or the Canvassing Board. As a matter of County Board policy, per diems shall not be paid for regular and special meetings of the County Board. Per diems for 2025 shall be as follows:
 - a. Site inspections as part of the duties of a specific board, committee or commission: \$10 per site, not to exceed five sites.
 - b. All other boards, committees, commissions, when the individual commissioner or the full board is designated by the County Board to serve on said body: a per diem of \$70.
2. County Commissioners may collect only one per diem each day, regardless of how few or many separate duties connected with the office are performed in such day.
3. In addition, pursuant to MN Statutes §375.055 and §375.06, each County Commissioner may be reimbursed for necessary expenses incurred in performing the duties of office. Travel in personal vehicles on official County business shall be reimbursed at the current standard mileage rate promulgated by the Internal Revenue Service or at another rate as determined by the County Board. Meals shall be reimbursed according to the dollars amounts set forth in the Benton County Personnel Policies.
4. County Commissioners shall be eligible to participate in workers compensation and optional benefits programs instituted by the County Board for county officials and employees. The employer-funded portion of health insurance premiums for County Commissioners shall be the same amounts as provided non-union employees.
5. The County Administrator is directed to publish this Resolution in the official newspaper of the County and one other newspaper in the County, pursuant to MN Statutes §375.055, Subdivision 1.

APPROVED AND ADOPTED this 17th day of December 2024

/ss/Jared J. Gapinski
Chair
Benton County Board of Commissioners
ATTEST:

/ss/Montgomery Headley
County Administrator
Motion by Johnson and seconded by Heinen to approve the Resolution setting the County Board per diem rate for 2025. Motion carried unanimously.

Next, Headley reviewed the Year-End Re-Cap of ARPA Funding Allocations and Resolution to Commit ARPA Funds to County Facility Fiber Replacement. The County Board previously reached a "consensus" to allocate \$250,000 from the County's allocation of ARPA funds to upgrade and replace the County's fiber network connecting County facilities. The Resolution formally commits those funds to this purpose and will meet the requirement to have the funds obligated by December 31, 2024. As of December 17th, the IT Department has expended \$178,678 and expects to place equipment orders to utilize the remaining balance. Also, Headley provided a year-ending recap of the County's allocations of ARPA

funds. Motion by Heinen and seconded by Johnson to approve a Resolution committing \$250,000 from the County's ARPA funds to a County facility fiber replacement project. Motion carried unanimously.

Next, County Engineer Chris Byrd requested the County Board approve an Administrative Agreement with the City of Foley. The City of Foley is moving ahead with a street and utility reconstruction project in 2025. Some of the city utilities that need to be reconstructed are under 4th Ave, which is also CR 43 and CSAH 20. It is prudent for the County to reconstruct the roadway over the utilities as part of the same project. The Administrative Agreement establishes the roles and responsibilities of the City of Foley and Benton County. Motion by Johnson and seconded by Heinen to approve the Administrative Agreement with the City of Foley. Motion carried unanimously.

Next, Byrd requested the County Board consider the IIA Technical Assistance Grant. This grant is to help pay for costs associated with applying federal transportation grants. The grant funding is state money made available in the 2023 Minnesota Legislative session. Max award amount is \$30,000 and Counties are eligible for a grant each year as long as state monies are available. Benton County was successful in receiving one of these grants in the amount of \$23,628. We will use WSB Consultants to re-work our previous RAISE Grant application for the Mayhew Lake Road project. Since the grant is funded with state money, an agreement between MN-DOT and Benton County needs to be executed. Expediency is needed so that WSB can start to work immediately on the RAISE Grant application. Motion by Gapinski and seconded by Heinen to approve the Grant Agreement with IIA for Technical Assistance. Motion carried unanimously.

Next, Byrd requested the County Board consider a Letter of Support to Sauk Rapids for Transportation Alternatives (TA) and Active Transportation (AT) grant application. The City of Sauk Rapids is planning another segment of trail along Mayhew Lake Road NE (CSAH 1) north from Osauka Road NE to the water tower road into the high school and then east along said road to Mayhew Creek Park. The City would like to apply for a TA and AT grant to help fund this project. A letter of support would be required if the trail is constructed in County ROW. Byrd has had additional discussions with the City Engineer, and the City is asking the County for "flexibility" if at some time in the future the trail needs to be relocated. County Board members had concerns about this being in the County's ROW, and Johnson motioned to table this discussion of a letter of support to Sauk Rapids for TA and AT grant applications. Seconded by Gapinski. Motion carried unanimously.

Next, Byrd requested the County Board to consider the Benton County Road ROW Plant No. 16 (CSAH 1 & 29). CSAH 1 & 29 is programmed for a roundabout in 2025. To construct the roundabout, additional ROW is needed. To clearly depict the new road ROW and provide a clear and succinct legal description for each parcel a Road ROW plat is needed. The County surveyor, Jay Whittstock has created a Road ROW Plat No. 16. Motion by Johnson and seconded by Heinen to approve the Benton County Road ROW Plat No. 16 (CSAH 1 & 29). Motion carried unanimously.

Next, Board members reported on recent meetings they attended on behalf of Benton County.

Under Additional Comments by Commissioners, Gapinski commented that we need to keep the Airport Authority on the forefront and be careful how the Airport Authority moves forward.

Johnson/Heinen to set the Committee of the Whole Meetings: Tuesday, January 7, 2025, Swearing-in ceremony, Benton County Boardroom, 8:00 AM; Monday, January 13, 2025: 1) Government Center Project Discussion with GLT Architects and Contegity; 2) Benton County Board Appointments to Boards and Commissions, Benton County Boardroom, Foley, MN 8:30 AM; Monday, January 13, 2025 County Board Goal-Setting Session at Jack & Jim's Restaurant 11025 25 Duelm Rd NE, Foley, MN 56329; 11:00 AM or upon completion of Committee of the Whole Meeting; Thursday, January 30, 2025 Minnesota Inter-County Association Annual Legislative Forum and Dinner, The Wilds Golf Club, 3151 Wilds Ridge CT NW, Prior Lake, MN 55372, 2:00 PM; Tuesday, February 4, 2025 thru Thursday, February 6, 2025 Association of Minnesota Counties 2025 County Drainage Conference, Arrowwood Conference Center, 2100 Arrowwood Ln NW, Alexandria, MN 56308, 8:00 AM; Tuesday, February 11, 2025 meet with St. Cloud Regional Airport Authority, Benton County Boardroom, Foley, 8:30 AM. Motion carried unanimously.

Next, Headley recognized and thanked Commissioner Beth Schlangen for her four years of service to the residents of Benton County as a member of the Benton County Board of Commissioners.

Chair Gapinski adjourned the Regular Board Meeting at 11:19 AM.

Jared J. Gapinski, Board Chair
Benton County Board of Commissioners

ATTEST:
Montgomery Headley
Benton County Administrator