

**OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS OF THE
RICE COUNTY COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
Commissioner's Room / Government Services Building
Tuesday, June 21, 2022 at 8:30 AM**

I. CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

(At the beginning of each Committee of the Whole Work Session meeting, the floor will be open to solicit public comments on items on the Agenda. Public comments will be limited to two (2) minutes for each person, subject to the discretion of the County Board Chairperson)

The following people spoke on behalf of the concern about Election drop boxes: Linda Woodrow, Kathryn Keller, Linda Moore, Rita Grood, Holly Molen, Samantha Degroot, Tom Moy and Tina Stellar. All live in Rice County.

The following spoke on behalf of the Parks Project: Ben Witt, Faribault, Marty Larsen, Northfield, and Mike Linpool of Northfield.

II. OUTSIDE AGENCY: Tim Penny

- A. Tim Penny of the Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation, also known as SMIF, presented what it is known for. SMIF works with small businesses that need resources and financial support. They work with child care shortages, and volunteer for community organizations that are experiencing burnout at increasing rates. The Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation envisions southern Minnesota as a prosperous and growing region with vibrant communities, innovative and successful economies, and engaged and valued citizens. To achieve this vision, SMIF, a regional development and philanthropic organization, fosters economic and community vitality in 20 counties of Southern Minnesota through a culture of collaboration and partnership.

III. PARKS & FACILITIES DEPARTMENT: Matthew Verdick

- A. Gabrielle Grinde and Bryan Harjes from HKGi, presented information on where they are in the process of the Parks Plan project. They are currently half of the way through the project scope. They have developed a draft vision and approach to improvements for the park system. This information has been provided to the board. This project looks into the possible changes that could take effect within the next 5 years. Gabrielle stated their main goal was to focus on the Cannon River Wilderness Area. However, they did include all the other park areas and what they would like to see happen to those as well.

IV. COMMISSIONER'S REQUEST:

- A. John Fossum brought up a memo that was created by Victoria Serreno, Assistant Rice County Attorney to the Rice County Board. This memo gives the commissioners three different options in regards to whether or not we should have a ballot Dropbox or not. Option 1 would be two separate boxes in front of the GSB. The existing box would be upgraded, as it would be possible, although difficult for someone to access the contents of the box by manipulating their arm through the deposit slot. Box 1 would be specifically for Government Department drop off's like tax payments and plans for Planning and Zoning. Box 2 would be for Absentee Ballots Only. Both would be monitored by camera. Option 2 would allow the existing drop box to be upgraded to Option one. This box would indicate drops only. Absentee ballots are NOT to be placed in the drop box. In which they will need to be brought to the Property Tax & Elections window. Video of this would be maintained for 22 months. Finally, Option 3 would remove the drop box entirely. All items will need to be mailed or brought into the Government Service Building during business hours. At this time, no decision had been made. Further information will be brought up at the next board meeting on June 28, 2022.
- B. John Fossum presented us with another memo regarding the Rice County Elections Equipment & Processes. The memo states that the Statewide Voter Registration System is the database, established by state law and administered by the Secretary of State's office, which lists Minnesota's registered voters. It is maintained through a continuous and rigorous maintenance data-matching process. The following will take place prior to voting: Inactive voters who have not updated their registration information in 4 years will be removed. Deceased voters will be removed as soon as the Minnesota Department of Health or Social Security Administration notify them. Convicted felons will be asked questions under oath before they are allowed to vote. If a convicted felon attempts to register or to vote when they are not eligible, their case is referred to the Rice County Attorney's Office. Driver & Vehicle Services provides a list of noncitizens who have temporary visas. Voters who have moved have records updated based on national change of address data provided by the USPS, Minnesota Driver & Vehicle Service

data, or information shared between state governments. Public accuracy tests of election equipment are performed. Public accuracy tests are open to the public. On Election Day: Election judges manage polling places. Every voter swears they are eligible to vote. Election judges verify that the number of ballots cast matches the number of voters, and absentee voters are prevented from voting more than once. After Election Day: Voters' records are marked to indicate that they voted; statewide voter registration system checks for anyone who voted more than once. Voters who register to vote on Election Day are entered into the statewide voter vote subject to verification procedures. Database matches are run again. By state law, Minnesota counties perform a post-election review of election results. Rice County Elections Equipment: Rice County Utilizes Democracy Live Omni Ballot assistive voting technology at all county polling places. Access to election hardware is strictly controlled 24/7/365. All voting equipment is tested and certified by pairs of staff prior to every election. Only 100% functional gear is used.

V. HIGHWAY: Dennis Luebbe

- A.** Dennis Luebbe talked about some current things taking place at the Highway shop. Currently, the maintenance crew is sweeping and cleaning. They have also been spraying for wild parsnips. He discussed the Baseline Road topic, stating that they feel it should be graded throughout the rest of the year and be paved sometime next year. County Road 9 is scheduled for overlay this week. Culvert repairs are almost complete, and should be awarded a grant next week for the interchange project. Also, it was said that the primary faze for the 6 lane round-about at county road 19 will be going into full drawing faze very soon. More information is provided at a later date.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Jeff Docken, seconded by Galen Malecha, to adjourn the meeting.

RESULT: Approved, AYES: Jeff Docken, Dave Miller, Steve Underdahl, Galen Malecha, Jim Purfeerst,
NAYS: None