

PROCEEDINGS OF THE STEELE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

REGULAR SESSION

December 16, 2025

STATE OF MINNESOTA }
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COUNTY OF STEELE }

The Steele County Board of Commissioners held a Work Session at 4:00 p.m. on December 16, 2025 with Commissioner's Brady, Glynn, Prokopec, Abbe and Krueger present. Also present were Human Resources Director Gina McGuire, PT&E Director Jennifer Mueller, County Assessor Brian Anderson, County Attorney Robert Jarrett, Public Health Director Amber Aaseth, County Administrator Renae Fry and Executive Assistant Rebecca Kubicek.

Public Health Specialist Ethan Rindfleisch presented the proposals for use of the Opioid Response Initiative Reward fund. Steele County will receive approximately \$1.5 million over 18 years as part of multi-state settlement agreements with pharmaceutical entities and currently has approximately \$517,318 in funds available. To ensure effective utilization of these funds, Steele County launched a Request for Proposals (RFP) process to identify qualified organizations. This year the committee is recommending approving funding to Spero for prevention up to \$14,500 and for treatment up to \$34,000. Also recommending approving funding to the United Way of Steele County for prevention up to \$45,500. Total recommendation in funding in an amount of up to \$94,000. The Commissioners agreed to bring item forward to the Board meeting.

Public Health spoke regarding the Local Homeless Prevention Aid (LHPA) which was created to help local governments ensure no child is homeless. Steele County received \$127,697 of aid in 2024, which is required to be spent by December 31, 2025. On June 24, 2025, the Board allocated \$128,000 of this aid to the Lighthouse of Southern Minnesota (\$38,000), Semcac (\$44,000), and Steele County Transitional Housing (\$46,000). The results of each organization were provided at the meeting.

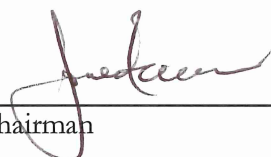
In 2026 several union groups will convert from sick time to PTO. To align the personal policy with the union contracts: modify the accrual rate table by removing the 0-3 years category and reduce the PTO accrual maximum from 800 hours to 600 hours. Lastly the board was asked to approve funding to reduce the PTO hours accrued in excess of 600 hours with a one-time cashout for those same employees to bring their maximum down to 500 hours. The cashout would be payable in 2025. The Commissioners agreed to bring item forward to the Board meeting.

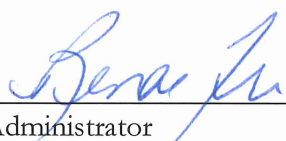
Mark Blando, Tony Martens, and Bethany Anderson spoke regarding the Owatonna Library. The relationship between the Owatonna Library and the Blooming Prairie Library is unique in that the BP library is not a fully incorporated branch of the Owatonna library, but rather a stand-alone with some sharing of resources. The funds contributed by the County to the Owatonna Library are split 90/10 with Blooming Prairie. Blooming Prairie Library also receives some funds from Dodge County. The Owatonna Library and

Blooming Prairie staff have been getting together to develop a new contract between the two entities to start in 2027.

Rena presented the board with the proposed 2026 budget levy. After another round of reviews and updates, the final proposal puts the year over year levy increase at 4.6%. The Board had no further questions, thanked staff for their efforts to reduce spending and indicated they were ready to act on the 2026 levy and budget as part of their regular meeting.

Meeting was adjourned at 4:45 p.m.


Chairman

ATTEST: 
Administrator