



Anoka County Joint Law Enforcement Council

Government Center
2100 Third Avenue, STE 720 • Anoka, MN 55303

March 31, 2023

Executive Committee

John Swenson, *Chair*
Lino Lakes Public Safety Director
Brad Johnson, *Vice Chair*
Anoka County Attorney
Brad Wise, *Secretary/Treasurer*
Anoka County Sheriff
Jeff Katers,
Ramsey Police Chief
Brian Podany,
Blaine Police Chief

Members

Josh Antoine,
Spring Lake Park Police Chief
Patrick Antonen,
Circle Pines City Administrator
Lenny Austin,
Columbia Heights Police Chief
Julie Braastad,
Anoka County Commissioner
Sheri Bukkila,
Andover Mayor
Tony Cavegn,
Lino Lakes Council Member
Steve Feldman,
St. Francis Mayor
Brian Kirkham,
Ham Lake Mayor
Jerry Koch,
Coon Rapids Mayor
Amáda Márquez Simula,
Columbia Heights Mayor
James Mork,
Centennial Lakes Police Chief
Robert Nelson,
Spring Lake Park Mayor
Michael Olson,
Ramsey Council Member
Dave Ostwald,
Fridley Council Member at Large
Eric Peterson,
Anoka Police Chief
Tim Sanders,
Blaine Mayor
Scott Schulte,
Anoka County Commissioner
Todd Schwieger,
St. Francis Police Chief
John Stahnke,
Coon Rapids Police Chief
Brian Weierke,
Fridley Director of Public Safety
Brian Wesp,
Anoka Council Member

Fire Representative

Charlie Thompson,
Columbia Heights Fire Chief

Senator Rest and Committee Members

RE: S.F. 2030, Extension of Anoka County Public Safety Levy In Minn. Stat. § 383E.21

I am the current Chair of the Anoka County Joint Law Enforcement Council (JLEC). In that capacity, I write to request that Senate Taxes Committee support SF 2030, which simply continues the authority granted under Minn. Stat. § 383E.21. JLEC has proposed the extension of this legislation to provide for a continuation of a funding mechanism in Anoka County for vital public safety projects.

The JLEC is a joint-powers entity established in 1970 to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of law enforcement in Anoka County. The JLEC includes among its membership every municipal chief of police in the county, one elected representative for each municipality with a police department, as well as six (6) county representatives, including two county commissioners, the County Attorney, the Sheriff, and two elected municipal representatives from the cities that contract with the Sheriff for law enforcement services. JLEC has been responsible for substantial public safety improvements in Anoka County, including, but not limited to, the following efforts.

1. Anoka County Auto Theft Task Force – this Task Force has existed for approximately 20 years as a cooperative effort to combat auto theft in Anoka County with all JLEC agencies participating in the task force. The Task Force is funded through a state grant from the Minnesota Department of Commerce and has resulted in shared investigative resources to combat auto theft in Anoka County in an efficient and effective manner.
2. A Public Safety Data System (PSDS) – this \$8 million investment in a county-wide software and hardware system which links law enforcement, jail and fire record management systems, with our computer-aided dispatching system. The incorporation of these systems has streamlined information sharing about public safety disciplines creating fiscal efficiencies as well as creating more effective systems to safeguard Anoka County communities.
3. Traffic Safety – member agencies have a long-standing commitment to each other's communities to enhance safety on our Anoka County

roadways through countywide participation in traffic safety grant funded initiatives, such as the “Towards Zero Death” on our roadways initiative.

4. Emerging Trends and Issues – we collectively work together to assist Anoka County communities to address any emerging issue or safety threats a community may face, and the evolution of criminal law and criminal justice policies.

JLEC members are driven to serve our communities in a collaborative, efficient and effective manner and we have a proven record of our accomplishments over the last fifty-three (53) years of doing just that.

As a joint-powers entity, the JLEC does not have independent levy or bonding authority. A decade ago, the JLEC and Anoka County sought the special legislation that now exists in Minn. Stat. § 383E.21 to undertake specific public safety projects. That levy was used to fund the creation, development, and operation of the PSDS. Unfortunately, the authority provided under Minn. Stat. § 383E.21 will sunset December 31, 2023.

The extension of Minn. Stat. § 383E.21 is an important tool in the JLEC’s ability to continue operating in an efficient and effective manner and will ensure that the JLEC has the ability to address the public safety needs for all of Anoka County.

The cities of Andover, Anoka, Blaine, Centerville, Circle Pines, Columbia Heights, Coon Rapids, Fridley, Lexington, Lino Lakes, Ramsey, Spring Lake Park, and St. Francis have passed resolutions of support for this important legislation. This legislation is also supported by Anoka County Attorney Brad Johnson and Anoka County Sheriff Brad Wise.

I, along with all municipal chiefs of police, Anoka County Attorney and Sheriff, now respectfully ask you to support the continuation of Minn. Stat. § 383E.21 Countywide Public Safety Improvements and Equipment; Bonding and Tax Levies by signing onto SF 2030. That would authorize Anoka County to levy or bond for capital improvement projects recommended by the JLEC. Remember, there are numerous checks and balances in the procedures and processes that the county and the JLEC will follow. First, the JLEC (which includes elected members) will require a supermajority before recommending a project to the Anoka County Board as viable for the public safety levy or bonding. Second, the Anoka County Board will independently determine whether to levy or bond in any given year for a recommended project.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light yellow background. The signature reads "John E. Swenson" in a cursive script.

John E. Swenson
JLEC Chair
Lino Lakes Public Safety Director