

PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Date: August 19, 2025

9:00 a.m.

Place: Commissioners Room, Courthouse, Caledonia, MN

Members Present:

Cindy Wright, Eric Johnson, Kurt Zehnder, and Greg Myhre

Others Present:

Interim Auditor/Treasurer Polly Heberlein, Interim Administrator Carol Lapham, Board Clerk/EDA Director/CEDA Allison Wagner, Public Health and Human Services Director John Pugleasa, Human Resource Officer Brent Parker, Sheriff Brian Swedberg, Engineer Brian Pogodzinski, Environmental Services Director Amelia Meiners, Mike Moen, Shane Eastman, Denny Reed, Franklin Hahn, Larry Gaustad, Jayme Longmire, Carol Sweeney Marnach, Dustin Miller, Mike Buxengard, Mark Monson, Peter Gengler, Jerry Knutson, Community Development Larry Kirch, Explore La Crosse Jeremiah Burish, Clayton Johnson, Scott Betz, Joe Wiebke, Larry Bauer, Howard Lampert, Jake Hauser, Wayne Feldmeier, Glenn Lamb, and Bonnie Laumb

Presiding: Chairperson Johnson

Call to order.

Pledge of Allegiance.

Motion was made by Commissioner Wright, seconded by Commissioner Zehnder, motion unanimously carried to approve the agenda.

Motion was made by Commissioner Zehnder, seconded by Commissioner Wright, motion carried to approve the meeting minutes from August 5, 2025. All Commissioners voted yes, except for Commissioner Johnson who abstained due to being absent from the meeting.

Motion was made by Commissioner Myhre, seconded by Commissioner Zehnder, motion unanimously carried to approve the workgroup session minutes from August 12, 2025.

Public Comment:

Shane Eastman from the La Crescent area said he was in favor of using rifles to kill deer while deer hunting. He said “we have deer population issues”. He said firearm safety instructors did a wonderful job. He encouraged the board to fact find and talk to people. He said he believed people should have a choice to use a rifle.

Mark Monson from Spring Grove, Wilmington Township said he too was in favor of using rifles for deer hunting. He said he was a past certified firearm safety instructor. He said in his opinion shotguns were much more dangerous than rifles.

Clayton Johnson from Black Hammer Township said he appreciated everyone's position on the rifle discussion. He said people needed to shoot more deer, but asked what people should do with them after. He said a program like hunters feeding the hungry should be looked into. He said rifles shot farther than shotguns. He said he realized the new rifle rule would not take effect until 2026, but said in the past the hunting season had been extended.

Dustin Miller, Houston County resident, said rifles were already used for hunting. He said coyote hunting at night had no restrictions. He was in favor of using rifles for deer hunting.

Jake Hauser, Houston County resident, said he had lived in Houston County for 60 years. He said he had used a shotgun for hunting the whole time he had lived in Houston County. He said he saw no reason to use a rifle whatsoever.

Wayne Feldmeier said he had had a rifle bullet go through his house. He said rifles were too dangerous.

Carol Sweeney Marnach from Brownsville Township said her family hunted. She was opposed to using rifles due to safety factors. She said there were lots of farmers in the field during hunting season.

Tony Bauer said the land he hunted on was 640 acres and included 10 or 11 building sites. He said he felt safer hunting with shotguns than rifles. He said he didn't think farmers would want rifle hunting.

Jerry Knutson said he was a camper at Wildcat Campground and had been for a long time. He said there was a lottery coming up. He said he had been through four lotteries. He said he had been through lotteries where the campground was not full. He suggested the Commissions look at another way of doing things so campers did not need to move.

Commissioner Johnson said he understood there had been some confusion around people thinking there would be a public hearing regarding rifles at the board meeting that day. He said no public hearing had been scheduled on the matter. He said the Commissioners had decided to hold off on making a decision on rifles because the County had learned that the rifle rule would not come into effect for the 2025 hunting season. The County had time to decide what to do on the matter.

APPOINTMENTS

La Crescent Community Development Director Larry Kirch and Jeremiah Burish with Explore La Crosse spoke to the board about the upcoming 2025 Gravel National Championships that would take place in Houston County on gravel roads on September 20, 2025. The bike race was a partnership between Gravel National Championship, the City of La Crescent, and Explore La Crosse. Kirch and Burish addressed concerns with the County board and County staff. Burish said if expenses were submitted ahead of time and agreed upon for things like additional patrol and EMS services those expenses would be reimbursed to the County or local agencies. Kirch acknowledged that the Townships where the race would be taking place should have been notified sooner. Burish said those in the race needed to abide by traffic rules and the bicycles could only take up one side of the road allowing other traffic to also use the road. Oncoming traffic would not have their side of the road blocked due to the race. Burish said the race would have economic benefits to the areas by bringing in riders and their spectators.

CONSENT AGENDA

Commissioner Wright moved, Commissioner Zehnder seconded, motion unanimously carried to approve the consent agenda. Approved items are below.

- 1) Review 2024 Annual Disclosure Report for City of Spring Grove Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Districts for the year ended December 31, 2024.
- 2) Appoint Nicole Karl as a Public Health and Human Services Eligibility Worker (B24 – Step 1) effective September 2, 2025.
- 3) Approve guardianship contract with Virgie Rud.

ACTION ITEMS

File No. 1 – Commissioner Myhre moved, Commissioner Zehnder seconded, motion unanimously carried to approve the proposed T-Hanger rental rates along with next year’s existing rental rates. Rates are below.

Houston County Airport Proposed Rental Rates Board Meeting August 19, 2025				
		Current	Proposed	
			Per Month	Per Year
T-Hangers	(8 Units)	NA	\$ 150.00	\$ 1,800.00
Box Hangers (To be built)	(4 Units)	NA	\$ 41.67	\$ 500.00
Effective starting July 2026				
Existing Box Hangers (Rows 2 and 3)	(8 Units)	250.00	\$ 32.08	\$ 385.00
Existing Benzling Hanger	(1 Unit)	975.91	\$ 96.25	\$ 1,155.00

Commissioner Myhre moved, Commissioner Zehnder seconded, motion unanimously carried to approve a \$75.00 fee for the storage unit at the airport. It was the general consensus of the board to give priority of hangers to the current first row and have the others be first come, first served after the airport project. Those who needed to move hangers would have 30 days to do so.

File No. 2 – Commissioner Zehnder moved, Commissioner Wright seconded, motion unanimously carried to affirm grant and have interim administrator resign the resolution with the corrected project number. (BA 8-19-25 Fed AIG Grant was approved on August 5, 2025. However, the project number should have been # 3-27-0016-014-2025.) Corrected resolution is below.

RESOLUTION NO. 25-20
AUTHORIZATION TO EXECUTE
FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATIVE AIRPORT IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM
GRANT (AIP)
CONSTRUCT 8-UNIT T-HANGAR PROJECT
Grant Number 3-27-0016-014-2025

BE IT RESOLVED by the Houston County Board of Commissioners for the County of Houston as follows:

1. That the FAA Grant No. 3-27-0016-014-2025, “Construct / Expand Hangar” at the Houston County Airport is accepted.
2. That the Houston County Board Chairman, Eric Johnson, is authorized to execute the Contract and any amendments on behalf of the County of Houston.

File No. 3 – Commissioner Wright moved, Commissioner Zehnder seconded, motion unanimously carried to approve BA 8-19-25 Crack Fill Grant and Resolution No. 25-26. Resolution is below.

RESOLUTION NO. 25-26
AUTHORIZATION TO EXECUTE
FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATIVE AIRPORT IMPROVEMENT
PROGRAM GRANT (AIP)

RESEAL/RESURFACE RUNWAY
Grant Number 3-27-0016-016-2025

BE IT RESOLVED by the Houston County Board of Commissioners for the County of Houston as follows:

1. That the FAA Grant No. 3-27-0016-016-2025,

“Construct / Expand Hangar” at the Houston County Airport is accepted.

2. That the Houston County Board Chairman, Eric Johnson, is authorized to execute the Contract and any amendments on behalf of the County of Houston.

File No. 4 – Prior to any motions being made Commissioners discussed with Environmental Services Director Amelia Meiners, the applicants, and Planning Commission members an interim use permit (IUP) request to operate a cannabis microbusiness in the Agriculture Protection District in Houston Township. At the Planning Commission meeting the IUP had failed due to a split, tie vote as one member was absent, creating an even number of members. Planning Commission members who had voted no said they had done so due to the location and concerns of the property flooding. Meiners said she had checked with the DNR on the flooding concerns. Commissioner Wright moved, Commissioner Johnson seconded, motion carried three to one to approve an Interim Use Permit to operate a cannabis microbusiness in the Agriculture Protection District in Houston Township for Seth Brown and Dorian Keenan with conditions. Added to the motion was that Soil and Water also be asked if they wanted to give their input on the flooding concerns. The Commissioners voted by roll. Commissioners Wright, Johnson, and Zehnder voted yes. Commissioner Myhre voted no. Commissioner Wright said she voted yes because this was a crop and the industry was already highly regulated. The item failed at the Planning Commission meeting not due to a majority, but rather a split vote. Commissioner Johnson said he voted yes because it was allowed under the cannabis ordinance. He said the floodplain concerns would be addressed in the building permit phase of the project, and it was possible the building permit wouldn’t get approved if concerns could not be resolved at that time. Commissioner Zehnder he was voting yes, however the business itself conflicted with a career he was involved in, so the decision was very hard for him. He said he respected the Planning Commission, and he had voted yes in agreement with what the other Commissioners had said. Commissioner Myhre said he voted no due to the property being in a flood zone.

File No. 5 – Commissioner Zehnder moved, Commissioner Wright seconded, motion unanimously carried to approve a request from Sno Pac foods for a \$125,000 EDA Loan to build a cold storage facility in Caledonia. The rate would be 3.5% for ten years. Wagner said the request had been unanimously recommended for approval by the EDA. The project would create jobs and also help fill a need for cold storage space in the area. In addition to the project benefiting Sno Pac, Sno Pac was willing to lease cold storage space to other small local businesses in Houston County.

File No. 6 – Commissioner Zehnder moved, Commissioner Myhre seconded, motion unanimously carried to accept Brownsville Auxiliary Post 6801 donation in the amount of \$200.00 to the Veteran Services Office to use for any veteran’s needs.

File No. 7 – Commissioner Zehnder moved, Commissioner Myhre seconded, motion unanimously carried to accept SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT AND RELEASE OF ALL

CLAIMS between The County of Houston and Sheriff Brian Swedberg. The Commissioners voted by roll. All Commissioners voted yes.

File No. 8 – Commissioner Myhre moved, Commissioner Wright seconded, motion unanimously carried to adopt Resolution No. 25-24, setting Sheriff Brian Swedberg’s 2025 pay to \$141,473.00. The Commissioners voted by roll. All Commissioners voted yes. Resolution is below.

RESOLUTION # 25-24

IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED, that the Houston County Board of Commissioners approves the annual salary as indicated below for the County Sheriff effective January 1, 2025:

Brian Swedberg County Sheriff	\$141,473.00
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Adopted in Caledonia, Minnesota on this 19th day of August 2025.

File No. 9 – Commissioner Zehnder moved, Commissioner Myhre seconded, motion unanimously carried to create an Organizational Structure Review Committee and appoint Chairman Johnson/Commissioner Cindy Wright/Interim Administrator Lapham to the committee.

File No. 10 – Commissioner Zehnder moved, Commissioner Wright seconded, motion unanimously carried to approve a fee increase for Sheriff’s Deputy time from \$85 to \$120 effective 8/20/2025. This increase was requested to offset the additional cost of deputy time based on the 2025-2027 LELS #237 contract settlement.

File No. 11 – Commissioner Wright moved, Commissioner Zehnder seconded, motion unanimously carried to review and approve payments. Payments are below.

REVIEW LICENSE CENTER PAYMENT

2025/08/05 AUDITOR WARRANT:

<u>VENDOR NAME</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
1 VENDOR PAID LESS THAN \$2000.00	<u>475.00</u>
	<u>475.00</u>

REVIEW LICENSE CENTER PAYMENT

2025/08/06 AUDITOR WARRANT:

VENDOR NAME	AMOUNT
BREYER/SUSAN	4,680.00
	<u>4,680.00</u>

2025/08/08 AUDITOR WARRANTS:

VENDOR NAME	AMOUNT
NUSS TRUCK & EQUIPMENT	158,170.38
	<u>158,170.38</u>
4 VENDORS PAID LESS THAN \$2000.00	594.16
	<u>158,764.54</u>

REVIEW LICENSE CENTER PAYMENTS

2025/08/14 AUDITOR WARRANTS:

VENDOR NAME	AMOUNT
ISD 300 TREASURER	6,426.16
TREASURER SCHOOL DISTRICT 239	6,890.15
TREASURER SCHOOL DISTRICT 294	2,294.86
TREASURER TWP OF CALEDONIA	2,181.74
TREASURER TWP OF CROOKED CREEK	9,092.97
TREASURER TWP OF HOKAH	3,125.94
TREASURER TWP OF JEFFERSON	6,555.01
TREASURER TWP OF MONEY CREEK	4,896.42
TREASURER TWP OF MOUND PRAIRIE	6,094.83
TREASURER TWP OF SHELDON	2,770.49
TREASURER TWP OF WINNEBAGO	3,418.02
TREASURER TWP OF YUCATAN	12,496.03
	<u>66,242.62</u>
8 VENDORS PAID LESS THEN \$2000.00	4,372.58
	<u>70,615.20</u>

VENDOR NAME	AMOUNT
ACEN TEK	4,604.44
ADVANCED CORRECTIONAL HEALTHCARE	7,726.02
BOLTON & MENK INC	3,000.00
BRUENING ROCK PRODUCTS INC	2,886.91
CALEDONIA/CITY OF	19,590.53
CEDA	7,285.33
FAHRNER ASPHALT SEALERS LLC	108,585.43
FEDERAL FLAGS LLC	2,184.00
GOVERNMENTJOBS.COM INC	8,773.95
HOUSTON COUNTY TREASURER	21,310.63
ICON CONSTRUCTORS LLC	105,450.00
MEYERS LAWN SERVICE	2,440.00
MILESTONE MATERIALS	8,758.16
MINNESOTA ENERGY RESOURCES	2,843.30
MN STATE AUDITOR	9,375.60
MN STATE TREASURER	4,603.00
MORRIS ELECTRONICS INC	10,383.25
OLYMPIC BUILDERS GENERAL CONTRAC	181,903.15
PAMELA ANN LARSON VAGTS	6,330.00
RICHARD'S SANITATION LLC	23,711.47
WEX BANK	7,911.74
	<hr/>
	549,656.91
68 VENDORS PAID LESS THAN \$2000.00	32,425.90
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	582,082.81
PUBLIC HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES	366,435.04
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	948,517.85

DISCUSSION ITEMS

The Commissioners discussed recent and upcoming meetings including a WINLAC meeting and Root River Watershed meeting.

Closing Public Comment:

Wayne Feldmeier suggested to the board to not let people put “junk” or anything flammable in airport hangers. He said he was not confident in DNR recommendations.

There being no further business, a motion was made by Commissioner Wright, seconded by Commissioner Zehnder, motion unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 11:59 a.m. The next meeting would be a regular meeting on August 26, 2025.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

HOUSTON COUNTY, MINNESOTA

By: _____
Eric Johnson, Chairperson

Attest: _____
Carol Lapham, Interim Administrator

**HOUSTON COUNTY
AGENDA REQUEST FORM
August 26, 2025**

**Date Submitted: 08/21/2025
By: Brent Parker, Human Resources Officer**

ACTION

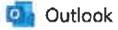
APPOINTMENT REQUEST

- **Labor Negotiations – Closed session pursuant to Minn. Stat. §13D.03, Subd. 1, (b) to discuss labor negotiations, including negotiation strategies or developments or discussion and review of labor negotiation proposals, conducted pursuant to sections [179A.01](#) to [179A.25](#).**

HR CONSENT AGENDA REQUEST

- **Change the employment status of Melissa Burrow, Deputy Auditor/Treasurer, from probationary to regular, effective September 5, 2025.**

<u>Reviewed by:</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> HR Director	<input type="checkbox"/> Sheriff
	<input type="checkbox"/> Finance Director	<input type="checkbox"/> Engineer
	<input type="checkbox"/> IS Director	<input type="checkbox"/> PHHS
	<input type="checkbox"/> County Attorney	<input type="checkbox"/> (indicate
	<input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Svcs	<input type="checkbox"/> other dept) _____
	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<u>Recommendation:</u>		
<u>Decision:</u>		



Auditor Warrants 2025/08/15

From Lynn Colsch <LColsch@HoCoMN.gov>
Date Thu 8/21/2025 4:56 PM
To HoCo BOC <BOC@HoCoMN.gov>

**REVIEW LICENSE CENTER
PAYMENTS**

**2025/08/15 AUDITOR
WARRANTS:**

VENDOR NAME	AMOUNT
EMMONS & OLIVIER	
RESOURCES INC	4,422.50
HAMMELL EQUIPMENT INC	4,063.52
HOUSTON COUNTY TREASURER	75,450.23
OLMSTED SWCD	13,543.44
VISA	8,493.07
WABASHA COUNTY SWCD	2,490.62
WINONA COUNTY SWCD	54,299.46
	<u>162,762.84</u>
6 VENDORS PAID LESS THAN \$2000.00	4,242.15
	<u>167,004.99</u>

Lynn Colsch
Finance Clerk
Houston County
304 South Marshall Street
Caledonia MN 55921
507-725-5825
LColsch@HoCoMN.gov



Commissioner Warrants 2025/08/26

From Lynn Colsch <LColsch@HoCoMN.gov>
Date Thu 8/21/2025 4:56 PM
To HoCo BOC <BOC@HoCoMN.gov>
Cc Carol Lapham <CLapham@HoCoMN.gov>

**REQUEST APPROVAL FOR
PAYMENT**

**2025/08/26 COMMISSIONER'S
WARRANTS:**

NAME	AMOUNT
ABILITY BUILDING COMMUNITY	2,316.57
CALEDONIA OIL CO INC	5,838.00
COMPUTER FORENSIC SERVICES LLC	48,301.41
ENTERPRISE FM	11,753.65
GALLAGHER BENEFIT SERVICES INC	6,000.00
HOUSTON COUNTY TREASURER	21,876.27
INSIGHT PUBLIC SECTOR	2,234.73
MIENERGY COOPERATIVE	6,446.72
OFFICE OF MNIT SERVICES	2,154.47
	106,921.82
24 VENDORS PAID LESS THAN \$2000.00	7,435.67
	<u>114,357.49</u>

Lynn Colsch
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Houston County
304 South Marshall Street
Caledonia MN 55921
507-725-5825
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