

## PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Date: January 6, 2026

9:00 a.m.

Place: Commissioners Room, Courthouse, Caledonia, MN

Members Present: Cindy Wright, Eric Johnson, Kurt Zehnder, Robert Schuldt, and Greg Myhre

Others Present: Interim Auditor/Treasurer Polly Heberlein, Fillmore County Journal Reporter Charlene Selbee, The Caledonia Argus Associate Editor Katia Gorsuch, Interim Administrator Carol Lapham, Coordinator Brent Parker, EDA Director & Coordinator Support Allison Wagner, Engineer Brian Pogodzinski, Financial Assistance Supervisor Karen Kohlmeyer, Fiscal Supervisor Heidi Harms, Accountant Sheila Schroeder, Social Worker Kelly Rohland, IT Director Andrew Milde, Interim County Attorney Suzanne Bublitz, Clayton Johnson, Roger Pearson, Dan Vesterse, Steve Bauer, Todd Rohweder, Bob Borowiak, Michael Sieve, Larry Gaustad, Bonnie Laumb, and Karen Colsch

Presiding: Coordinator Parker, Chairperson pro tem

Call to order.

Pledge of Allegiance.

Parker requested nominations for 2026 Board of Commissioner Chairperson. Commissioner Zehnder nominated Commissioner Myhre for 2026 Board Chairperson. Commissioner Johnson nominated Commissioner Wright for chairperson. Commissioner Johnson also nominated Commissioner Schuldt for chairperson. Commissioner Zehnder motioned, Commissioner Schuldt seconded motion carried three to two to make Commissioner Myhre 2026 Board of Commissioner Chairperson. The Commissioners voted by roll. Commissioners Wright and Johnson voted no. Commissioners Zehnder, Schuldt, and Myhre voted yes. Commissioner Schuldt nominated Commissioner Wright as 2026 Board of Commissioner Vice Chairperson. There were no other nominations for vice chairperson. Motion was made by Commissioner Schuldt, seconded by Commissioner Zehnder, motion carried unanimously to make Commissioner Wright 2026 Board of Commissioner Vice Chairperson. The Commissioners voted by roll. All Commissioners voted yes.

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

Motion was made by Commissioner Wright, seconded by Commissioner Zehnder, motion carried unanimously to approve the meeting minutes from December 30, 2025.

Public Comment:

Clayton Johnson was against allowing rifles to be used in Houston County for deer hunting. He referenced a study and shared what he had found with the Commissioners. He said members of the public had thought a public hearing was going to be held in August 2025 on the matter.

Steve Bauer shared with the board a petition with 250 names on it. He said those who had signed the petition were against using rifles in Houston County for deer hunting because of safety concerns.

Dan Vesterse from Spring Grove said he was 55 years old and had owned land in Black Hammer Township for 40 years. He said he came from a big hunting family. He recalled a story from 1989 where he had been stopped by the local game warden at the time and he had asked why rifles were not allowed for deer hunting in Houston County. He said the warden had said it was a safety issue due to the terrain. Vesterse said he was in the US Army. He said the amount of ricocheting from rifle bullets was unbelievable. He was against using rifles in Houston County for deer hunting.

Bob Borowiak questioned why rifles were needed for hunting in Houston County's hill country. He said he had been hunting and climbing the County's hills for 65+ years. He said if people could not hunt a deer with shotguns today, they did not need to be in the woods.

Michael Sieve from Yucatan Township said he killed his first deer in 1969. He said he was very interested in deer management. He asked: "When are we going to give these deer a chance?" He said guns were "good these days". He said "enough is enough" for the deer.

Mike Moen said he had hunted for over 60 years. He asked about the new rifle season.

## APPOINTMENTS

Houston County recognized staff for years of service to the County. Awardees are listed below.

## Employee Recognition Awards

### 30 Year Award

Sheila M Schroeder 5/17/1995

### 25 Year Award

Suzanne M Bublitz 5/31/2000

Ann E Diersen 1/31/2000

Holly J Gleason 10/25/2000

Shawn L Peter 7/17/2000

Luke T Sass 2/29/2000

### 20 Year Award

Duane D Brownlee Jr 10/17/2005

Andrew J Milde 11/30/2005

### 15 Year Award

Kelly J Petersen 6/28/2010

### 10 Year Award

Joann B Curley 5/4/2015

Michael R Meiners 3/16/2015

Leah N Milde 1/12/2015

Danny M O'Heron 12/14/2015

Kelly J Rohland 5/11/2015

Haleigh L Sierzant 5/15/2015

A public hearing was scheduled for 9:05 a.m. to implement new real property protection fees, pursuant to Minn. Statute 480.50 Subd. 6. The hearing was inadvertently missed on the agenda, and no public hearing was held.

Interim Auditor/Treasurer, Heberlein, opened the sealed bid for the official County newspaper 2026. The County had received one bid on time from *Caledonia Argus*. A second bid had been received, but it was received after the deadline. Heberlein opened the bid from the *Caledonia Argus* and read the rate amounts line by line to Commissioners. The bid amounts are below.

### Caledonia Argus

**OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER FOR 2026** Official proceedings of the County Board and all notices required to be published in the county's official paper. Charge per inch (based on a 7 point type, Arial font, with 8 point leading) \$ 3.00

**MISCELLANEOUS NOTICES** that are not required to be published in the Official Paper (per column inch). Legal Rate \$ 3.00 Display Rate \$ 3.00

**FIRST PRINTING OF 2025 FINANCIAL STATEMENT** Charge per inch (based on a 7 point type, Arial font, with 8 point leading) \$ 3.00

**PUBLICATION OF SAMPLE BALLOT INFORMATION** Charge per inch (based on a 7 point type, Arial font, with 8 point leading) \$ 3.00

**PUBLICATION OF TAX FORFEITURE INFORMATION** Charge per inch (based on a 7 point type, Arial font, with 8 point leading) \$ 3.00

**PUBLICATION OF DELINQUENT TAX LIST:** Charge per inch (based on a 7 point type, Arial font with 8 point leading) \$ 3.00

## CONSENT AGENDA

Commissioner Johnson moved, Commissioner Zehnder seconded, motion unanimously carried to approve the consent agenda. The Commissioners gave a round of applause for Kelly Petersen thanking her for her years of service to the County. Approved items are below.

- 1) Consider adopting Resolution No. 26-01 and designating 2026 Official Newspaper. Resolution is below.

### RESOLUTION NO. 26-01

#### 2026 OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER

January 6, 2026

WHEREAS, Minn. Statute § 375.12 Subd. 1, requires a county to solicitations of bids annually at the first regular meeting for an official paper;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Houston County Board of Commissioners, that the following publications have been designated as the Official Newspaper for publication of minutes, public notices, and other routine county business, with the accepted rates for publication expenses:

#### Caledonia Argus

**OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER FOR 2026** Official proceedings of the County Board and all notices required to be published in the county's official paper. Charge per inch (based on a 7 point type, Arial font, with 8 point leading) \$ 3.00

**MISCELLANEOUS NOTICES** that are not required to be published in the Official Paper (per column inch). Legal Rate \$ 3.00 Display Rate \$ 3.00

**FIRST PRINTING OF 2025 FINANCIAL STATEMENT** Charge per inch (based on a 7 point type, Arial font, with 8 point leading) \$ 3.00

**PUBLICATION OF SAMPLE BALLOT INFORMATION** Charge per inch (based on a 7 point type, Arial font, with 8 point leading) \$ 3.00

**PUBLICATION OF TAX FORFEITURE INFORMATION** Charge per inch (based on a 7 point type, Arial font, with 8 point leading) \$ 3.00

**PUBLICATION OF DELINQUENT TAX LIST:** Charge per inch (based on a 7 point type, Arial font with 8 point leading) \$ 3.00

- 2) Consider adopting Resolution No. 26-02 Account Powers Granted for Merchants Bank N.A. Resolution is below.

RESOLUTION NO. 26-02

**ACCOUNT POWERS GRANTED  
MERCHANTS BANK N.A.**

January 6, 2026

BE IT RESOLVED, the Houston County Board of Commissioners authorizes County Auditor/Treasurer Polly Heberlein the authority to open any deposit or share accounts in the name of Houston County and further authorizes Auditor/Treasurer Heberlein, Finance Director Carol Lapham and Board Chairman to endorse checks and orders for the payment of money or otherwise withdraw or transfer funds on deposit with this Financial institution.

- 3) Consider adopting Resolution No. 26-03 Account Powers Granted for ESB Banking. Resolution is below.

RESOLUTION NO. 26-03

**ACCOUNT POWERS GRANTED  
ESB BANKING**

January 6, 2026

BE IT RESOLVED, the Houston County Board of Commissioners authorizes County Auditor/Treasurer Polly Heberlein the authority to open any deposit or share accounts in the name of Houston County and further authorizes Auditor/Treasurer Heberlein and Finance Director Carol Lapham, and Board Chairman to endorse checks and orders for the payment of money or otherwise withdraw or transfer funds on deposit with the requirement of two signatures with this Financial institution.

- 4) Accept the resignation/retirement of Kelly Petersen, Appraiser, effective February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2026, with thanks for her 15 years of service to the residents of Houston County.

ACTION ITEMS

File No. 1 – Commissioner Johnson moved, Commissioner Zehnder seconded, motion carried unanimously to authorize for additional fees in association with MN Statute 480.50 Personal Information in Real Property Records. (This item would need to be revisited on a future agenda as the public hearing on the matter was inadvertently missed on the agenda, and no public hearing was held.)

File No. 2 – Commissioner Zehnder moved, Commissioner Wright seconded, motion unanimously carried to approve Resolution No. 26-04 Authorization to Use Alternative Method to Disseminate Bids and Requests. Resolution is below.

#### RESOLUTION NO. 26-04

### **AUTHORIZATION TO USE ALTERNATE METHOD TO DISSEMINATE BIDS AND REQUESTS**

January 6, 2026

WHEREAS, Minn. Statute § 331A.03 Subd. 3(b), allows a county to use its website or recognized industry trade journals as an alternative to disseminate solicitations of bids, requests for information and requests for proposals;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Houston County Board of Commissioners, that the County of Houston will continue to use the Houston County website, [www.co.houston.mn.us](http://www.co.houston.mn.us) as an alternative means to disseminate solicitations of bids, requests for information, and requests for proposals for transportation related construction and maintenance projects.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that any dissemination by alternative means must be in substantially the same format and for the same period of time as a publication would otherwise be required under Minn. Statute § 331A.03 Subd. 3.

File No. 3 – Commissioner Zehnder moved, Commissioner Wright seconded, motion unanimously carried to approve and sign 2026 to 2028 law enforcement contract with the City of Spring Grove. The Commissioners voted by roll. All Commissioners voted yes. Commissioner Johnson asked the Sheriff to provide quarterly reports to the Commissioners on the Sheriff's office as a whole including budget information, overtime, and number of those in jail.

File No. 4 – Commissioner Wright moved, Commissioner Zehnder seconded, motion carried to approve Resolution No. 26-05 Designating the County Coordinator as Clerk of the Houston County Board of Commissioners. Resolution is below.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 26-05**

### **A RESOLUTION DESIGNATING THE COUNTY COORDINATOR AS CLERK OF THE COUNTY BOARD**

**PURSUANT TO MINNESOTA STATUTES § 375.49**

**WHEREAS**, the County Board of Commissioners is authorized under Minnesota Statutes § 375A.06 to establish the position of County Coordinator and to assign to that position such administrative and executive duties as the Board deems appropriate; and

**WHEREAS**, Minnesota Statutes § 375.49, subdivision 2, expressly permits the County Board to delegate duties traditionally performed by other county offices, including administrative and clerical functions, to the County Coordinator; and

**WHEREAS**, the County Board finds that assigning the duties of Clerk of the County Board to the County Coordinator promotes efficiency, consistency, accountability, and effective administration of county operations; and

**WHEREAS**, the County Board desires to clearly designate the County Coordinator as Clerk of the Board to ensure proper preparation of board agendas, minutes, resolutions, official records, and related statutory duties;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Houston County Board of Commissioners hereby designates the County Coordinator to serve as Clerk of the County Board, effective January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2026; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that as Clerk of the County Board, the County Coordinator is authorized and directed to perform all duties customarily and statutorily associated with the office of Clerk of the Board, including but not limited to:

- Preparing and maintaining official board records, minutes, and resolutions;
- Attesting to board actions and maintaining the official seal, where applicable;
- Ensuring compliance with applicable state statutes, administrative rules, and record-retention requirements; and
- Performing such additional clerical and administrative duties as may be assigned by the County Board; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that this designation shall remain in effect until modified or rescinded by subsequent action of the County Board.

Adopted by the Houston County Board of Commissioners on this 6th day of January **2026**.

File No. 5 – Commissioner Zehnder moved, Commissioner Johnson seconded, motion unanimously carried to approve Resolution No. 26-06 designating 2026 Annual Appropriations included as part of the 2026 Operating Budget. The Commissioners voted by roll. All Commissioners voted yes. Resolution is below.

**RESOLUTION NO. 26-06**  
**2026 ANNUAL APPROPRIATIONS**

January 6, 2026

WHEREAS, The Houston County Board of Commissioners approved the 2026 Annual Budget on December 30th, 2025;

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Houston County Board of Commissioners, that the following appropriations will be made in 2026 as appropriate from the County Revenue Fund:

<b>ORGANIZATION</b>	<b>2026 BUDGET</b>
SE Minnesota Initiative Fund	\$3,938
SEMAAA	\$2,000
SELCO	\$203,283
Emergency Medical Service	\$10,000
SEMCAC - Senior & Caregiver Advocacy	\$3,500
SEMCAC - Senior Nutrition	\$2,500
SEMCAC - Transportation Program (Donation Rides)	\$1,500
SEMCAC – Rolling Hills Transit	\$5,000
Houston County Food Shelves	\$7,500
Historical Society	\$37,500
Historical Society - Matching Funds (Maximum)	\$5,000
Southern MN Tourism/Historic Bluff Country	\$942
Agricultural Society	\$20,000
Agricultural Society - Prior Year Financials Additional	\$4,000
RRSWCD	\$129,000
Bluff Country Minnesota Multi-County Housing and Redevelopment Authority	\$3,000
SE MN EMS	\$5,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b><u>\$443,663</u></b>

File No. 6 – Commissioner Zehnder moved, Commissioner Wright seconded, motion unanimously carried to review and approve payments. Payments are below.

**2026/01/06 COMMISSIONER WARRANTS:**

<u>VENDOR NAME</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
AMC/MACA	16,200.00
ARTHUR J GALLAGHER RISK MANAGEMENT	6,398.00
	<u>22,598.00</u>
1 VENDOR PAID LESS THAN \$2000.00	125.00
	<u>22,723.00</u>
PUBLIC HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES	18,733.39
	<u>41,456.39</u>

File No. 7 – The Commissioners discussed the committees they would like to serve on in 2026. Commissioner Zehnder moved, Commissioner Wright seconded, motion unanimously carried to approve 2026 Board of Commissioners Committee appointments.

#### DISCUSSION ITEMS

Coordinator Parker updated the board about an upcoming AMC technical training day. He said he would look into having a public hearing regarding the use of rifles for deer hunting.

The Commissioners discussed recent and upcoming meetings including a Southern Medical JPC meeting.

Commissioner Johnson said he wanted to clarify that a public hearing regarding using rifles in Houston County for deer hunting had not been held in 2025 because the board had learned rifles would not be able to be used until the 2026 hunting season. It had been the general consensus of the board to wait on making a decision on the matter in 2025 as changes would not go into effect until 2026.

Commissioners Johnson and Wright shared that they had attended former Houston County Commissioner Teresa Walter’s funeral. She had served as a public servant through the County and as a township officer.

Closing Public Comment:

None.

There being no further business, a motion was made by Commissioner Zehnder, seconded by Commissioner Johnson, motion unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 10:23 a.m. The next meeting would be a workgroup session on January 13, 2026.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

HOUSTON COUNTY, MINNESOTA

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Greg Myhre, Chairperson

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_  
Brent Parker, Coordinator

## PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Date: January 13, 2026

9:00 a.m.

Place: Commissioners Room, Courthouse, Caledonia, MN

Members Present:

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

Others Present:

Interim Auditor/Treasurer Polly Heberlein, The Caledonia Argus Associate Editor Katia Gorsuch, Interim Administrator Carol Lapham, Coordinator Brent Parker, EDA Director & Coordinator Support Allison Wagner, Public Health Supervisor Jordan Knoke, Public Health Educator Bri Ceaser, and Steve Curns

### Board Workgroup Session

The Commissioners discussed with Coordinator Parker the possibility of holding public hearings to hear from the public their thoughts on using rifles for deer hunting in Houston County. It was the general consensus of the board that public hearings should be held on the matter, so the County could decide if they wanted to opt out of allowing rifles to be used for deer hunting in Houston County. The tentative plan was to hold public hearings on the matter on February 3<sup>rd</sup> and March 3<sup>rd</sup> at 6:00 p.m. in the basement of the County Justice Center. Commissioner Wright asked that some information be shared with the public on the matter prior to the hearings. Commissioner Johnson suggested having a game warden attend a regular Commissioner meeting to discuss the matter. Commissioner Myhre asked if the matter could be put on an upcoming ballot in March, but it could not be, and the March election was only for the townships. Commissioner Zehnder had invited Steve Curns to the meeting who shared some information he had gathered from the MN DNR website and MN DNR resources the Commissioners could reference on hunting.

Public Health Supervisor Knoke shared with the board that Public Health Educator Ceaser had worked hard on a MDH grant through the Office of Rural Health that had been recently awarded in the amount of \$13,873.00 for the County's dental project. No match would be required by the County.

Commissioners discussed recent committee meetings they had attended including a SE MN Emergency Medical Community, Hiawatha Valley Mental Health, SCHSAC, and Jail Review/Safety Review meeting.

Commissioner Myhre suggested all the Commissioners attend the Planning Commission meeting on January 22<sup>nd</sup> at 5 p.m.

Commissioner Myhre said he wanted the board to discuss the County’s quarter, quarter rule at an upcoming workgroup session. It was the general consensus of the board that significant research and time would need to be spent on the matter if it were to be changed in the future.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

HOUSTON COUNTY, MINNESOTA

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Greg Myhre, Chairperson

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_  
Brent Parker, Coordinator

## PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Date: January 20, 2026

9:00 a.m.

Place: Commissioners Room, Courthouse, Caledonia, MN

Members Present: Cindy Wright, Eric Johnson, Robert Schuldt, and Greg Myhre

Others Present: Interim Auditor/Treasurer Polly Heberlein, Fillmore County Journal Reporter Charlene Selbee, The Caledonia Argus Associate Editor Katia Gorsuch, Finance Director Carol Lapham, Coordinator Brent Parker, EDA Director & Coordinator Support Allison Wagner, Financial Assistance Supervisor Karen Kohlmeyer, Fiscal Supervisor Heidi Harms, Social Services Supervisor Bethany Moen, and Interim Recorder Michelle Werner

Presiding: Chairperson Myhre

Call to order.

Pledge of Allegiance.

Prior to approving the agenda Commissioner Myhre asked that Action Items 1, 2, and 5 be pulled from the agenda as Commissioner Zehnder would not be able to attend the board meeting. Myhre asked that the full board be present to vote on those items. Motion was made by Commissioner Wright, seconded by Commissioner Johnson, motion unanimously carried to approve the agenda with the changes.

Motion was made by Commissioner Johnson, seconded by Commissioner Schuldt, motion carried unanimously to approve the meeting minutes from January 6, 2025.

Motion was made by Commissioner Wright, seconded by Commissioner Johnson, motion carried unanimously to approve the meeting minutes from January 13, 2026.

Public Comment:

None.

### APPOINTMENTS

Motion was made by Commissioner Schuldt, seconded by Commissioner Wright, motion carried unanimously to open a public hearing pursuant to Minnesota Statutes § 375A.1205, Subdivision 1. The purpose of the hearing was to consider making the positions of Auditor / Treasurer and Recorder positions appointed. No public comments were made on the matter.

Motion was made by Commissioner Johnson, seconded by Commissioner Wright, motion carried unanimously to close the public hearing and go back into regular session.

Motion was made by Commissioner Johnson, seconded by Commissioner Schuldt, motion carried unanimously to open a public hearing to implement new real property protection fees, pursuant to Minn. Statute 480.50 Subd. 6. Interim Recorder Werner said by statute these fees were allowed to be charged. No public comments were made on the matter.

Motion was made by Commissioner Johnson, seconded by Commissioner Schuldt, motion carried unanimously to close the public hearing and go back into regular session.

## CONSENT AGENDA

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

- 1) Hire Theresa Foellmi as a 1 FTE Eligibility Worker (B24 – Step 2) with a start date of January 26, 2026.
- 2) Approve Purchase of Service Agreement with ABC Woodland to provide supported employment services.

## ACTION ITEMS

File No. 1 – This item was removed from the agenda.

File No. 2 – This item was removed from the agenda.

File No. 3 – Commissioner Johnson moved, Commissioner Wright seconded, motion unanimously carried to approve the authorization for additional fees in association with MN Statute 480.50 Personal Information in Real Property Records as requested by the Recorder's office: a \$75 fee for each property notice, a \$75 fee for each consent and a \$75 fee for each request as allowable per statute.

File No. 4 – Commissioner Wright moved, Commissioner Johnson seconded, motion carried to approve Hiawatha Valley Mental Health Center (HVMHC) 2026 POS contract and rates for adult and children's services. Commissioner Wright said the services were crucial to the County.

File No. 5 – This item was removed from the agenda.

File No. 6 – Commissioner Wright moved, Commissioner Myhre seconded, motion unanimously carried to approving a competitive search for a 1 FTE Public Health Family Health Nurse (B24).

File No. 7 – Commissioner Johnson moved, Commissioner Schuldt seconded, motion unanimously carried to accept a \$200 donation from Auxiliary Post 6801 to the Veteran Service Office to use for any veteran’s needs. Commissioner Schuldt thanked the Auxiliary Post for their regular and generous donations. The board agreed.

File No. 6 – Commissioner Johnson moved, Commissioner Wright seconded, motion unanimously carried to review and approve payments. Payments are below.

**REVIEW LICENSE CENTER PAYMENTS**

**2025/12/31 AUDITOR WARRANTS**

<u>VENDOR NAME</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
CONSOLIDATED ENERGY COMPANY	5,634.32
FRONTIER PRECISION INC	2,479.00
GOVERNMENT MANAGEMENT GROUP	4,250.00
INSIGHT PUBLIC SECTOR	4,247.53
INTELLICENTS	6,000.00
LA FLEUR LAW OFFICE LLC	2,647.50
LIBERTY TIRE RECYCLING LLC	3,585.35
METAL CULVERTS INC	43,927.60
MNCCC	17,655.00
NEWMAN SIGNS INC	12,049.10
TREASURER CITY OF LA CRESCENT	6,292.92
US BANK VOYAGER FLEET SYS	2,258.75
VASKE COMPUTER INC	8,450.00
VISA	12,100.58
WIEBKE TIRE CO	3,260.00
WRIGHT/CINDY	2,118.20
	<u>136,955.85</u>
51 VENDORS PAID LESS THAN \$2000.00	<u>18,310.62</u>
	<u>155,266.47</u>

**REVIEW LICENSE CENTER PAYMENTS**

**2026/01/12 AUDITOR WARRANTS:**

<u>VENDOR NAME</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
COMPUTER FORENSIC SERVICES LLC	48,301.41
FELDMEIER/MATTHEW	85,204.00
HOUSTON COUNTY TREASURER	84,273.80
LETG LLC	45,271.15
MACTEK SYSTEMS INC	4,837.00
MASWCD	7,654.59
MN COUNTIES INTERGOVERNMENTAL TRUST	7,477.00
MN COUNTY ATTORNEY ASSN	4,550.00
MN STATE TREASURER	4,189.00
VAN DIEST SUPPLY COMPANY	39,322.70
WINONA COUNTY PLANNING & ZONING	4,188.86
	<u>335,269.51</u>
21 VENDORS PAID LESS THAN \$2000.00	<u>12,831.88</u>
	<u>348,101.39</u>

**2026/01/20 COMMISSIONER WARRANTS:**

<b>VENDOR NAME</b>	<b>AMOUNT</b>
ABILITY BUILDING COMMUNITY	2,279.42
ACEN TEK	4,463.29
ADMZ PROPERTIES	3,650.00
ADVANCED CORRECTIONAL HEALTHCARE	8,112.33
BOLTON & MENK INC	2,250.00
CALEDONIA SNO GOPHERS CLUB	20,421.72
CALEDONIA/CITY OF	12,348.44
EHLERS	1,212,625.00
ENTERPRISE FM	11,199.61
GREAT LAKES SALT COMPANY	84,921.50
HOKAH CO-OP OIL ASSN	4,530.00
HOUSTON COUNTY TREASURER	37,726.39
HOUSTON-MONEY CREEK SNOWRIDERS	9,563.40
LA CRESCENT TRAIL	7,448.76
MAYO CLINIC	15,834.69
MN COUNTIES INTERGOVERNMENTAL TR	408,865.00
MN SHERIFF'S ASSN	7,096.89
MN STATE AUDITOR	10,981.95
MN TRANSPORTATION ALLIANCE	2,813.00
RICHARD'S SANITATION LLC	16,833.35
SCHNEIDER CORPORATION/THE	69,164.40
SELCO	50,820.75
SEMV CET	8,858.37
THORSON GRAPHICS LLC	2,354.56
VIKING RIDGE RIDERS	7,900.20
WEX BANK	5,790.39
	<hr/>
	2,028,853.41
32 VENDORS PAID LESS THAN \$2000.00	14,345.60
	<hr/>
	2,043,199.01
PUBLIC HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES	218,169.88
	<hr/>
	2,261,368.89

**DISCUSSION ITEMS**

Coordinator Parker shared with the board details on the upcoming 2026 AMC Legislative Conference.

The Commissioners discussed recent meetings including a Hiawatha Valley Mental Health, and Land Use Committee meeting with the City of Caledonia to work on communication.

Upcoming meetings and public hearings included a Joint Board of Health, and Planning Commission meetings, and public hearings regarding the use of rifles in Houston County for deer hunting that would be happening in February and March. In addition, the board would need to have another public hearing regarding the possibility of making the positions of Auditor / Treasurer and Recorder appointed prior to voting on the matter.

Closing Public Comment:

None.

There being no further business, a motion was made by Commissioner Johnson, seconded by Commissioner Wright, motion unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 9:28 a.m. The next meeting would be a regular meeting on January 27, 2025.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

HOUSTON COUNTY, MINNESOTA

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Greg Myhre, Chairperson

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_  
Brent Parker, Coordinator

## PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Date: January 27, 2026

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, Fillmore County Journal Reporter Charlene Selbee, The Caledonia Argus Associate Editor Katia Gorsuch, Finance Director Carol Lapham, Coordinator Brent Parker, EDA Director & Coordinator Support Allison Wagner, Public Health Supervisor Jordan Knoke, Interim Attorney Suzanne Bublitz, Holly Dvorak, Kathy Solum, Dayva Goetzinger, Tammy Diersen, Kristina Hauser, Deb Wray, Charlie Wray, and Sheila Schroeder

Presiding: Chairperson Myhre

Call to order.

Pledge of Allegiance.

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

Motion was made by Commissioner Wright, seconded by Commissioner Johnson, motion carried unanimously to approve the meeting minutes from January 20, 2026.

Public Comment:

Dayva Goetzinger from Jefferson Ridge said she was a concerned citizen of Houston County. She was concerned about the proposed MariBell Transmission project and said she wanted to hold Dairyland Power and MISO accountable. She said other Counties such as Crawford County had passed resolutions demanding answers. She said an official independent monitor had found that MISO is assuming a view of the future that is extremely unlikely, and would lead to uneconomic investment. She said it was unfair of them to take the land. Goetzinger said the project would decrease their land value. She said she had health concerns and three little kids. She asked Houston County to please help.

Sheila Schroeder from Wilmington Township said she was there representing concerned landowners being impacted by the MariBell Transmission line. She said it was unfair because they had years to plan the project and the landowners only had two months. She said the Schroeder's had four lines that would be affected by the project. She said it would change the County's character and the landscape. She was concerned about the amount of voltage that would be

overhead. She said the landowners believed the existing land would be worthless. She said Dairyland and MISO should prove the need with documentation.

Holly Dvorak from Winnebago Township said she did not own land that would be directly impacted by the line, but lived about a football field away. She said we lived in the driftless area. She said she believed in the County's one per quarter, quarter rule. She said the County had made it through and escaped the glaciers and survived all this time, and that we should not succumb to those wanting to destroy our beauty.

Kristina Hauser asked if it was possible for Houston County to do a moratorium as an option in relation to the transmission project. She said the County did moratoriums for other things.

Tammy Diersen from Houston County said the MariBell Transmission project went across all the best farm land. She said she was concerned about health effects. One of her concerns was noise. She said other countries had studied the matter and found negative effects. Diersen said heavy equipment would wreak havoc on township roads. She said it would impact funds needed for road maintenance. She said she was concerned about wildlife in the area, and the impact the project would have on tourism for Houston County. She asked where the need was for the line. She said the companies had more power than they knew what to do with.

Kathy Solum from Mound Prairie Township said she was in favor of rifle hunting. She confirmed that the first public hearing on the matter would be on Wednesday, February 4<sup>th</sup>, 2026 at 6:00 p.m. in the basement of the Houston County Justice Center.

#### APPOINTMENTS

None.

#### CONSENT AGENDA

Commissioner Zehnder moved, Commissioner Johnson seconded, motion unanimously carried to approve the consent agenda. The Commissioners gave a round of applause for Danny O' Heron thanking him for his years of service to Houston County. Approved items are below.

- 1) Approve authorization for establishment of the 2026 Houston County Absentee Ballot Board and approval of Resolution No. 26-06. Resolution is below.

**RESOLUTION NO. 26-06  
AUTHORIZATION FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF THE  
2026 HOUSTON COUNTY ABSENTEE BALLOT BOARD  
JANUARY 27, 2026**

WHEREAS, Houston County is required by Minnesota Statutes 203B.121, Subd. 1 to establish an Absentee Ballot Board, and

WHEREAS, this board will bring uniformity in the processing of accepting or rejecting returned absentee ballots in Houston County; and

WHEREAS, the Absentee Ballot Board would consist of a sufficient number of election judges as provided in sections 204B.19 to 204B.22 and may include deputy county auditor-treasurers trained in the processing and counting of absentee ballots;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Houston County Board of Commissioners hereby authorizes Houston County Auditor-Treasurer to establish a County Absentee Ballot Board that would consist of a sufficient number of election judges as provided in sections 204B.19 to 204B.22 and may include deputy auditor-treasurers to perform the task.

- 2) Accept the resignation/retirement of Danny O’Heron, Recycling Center Lead, effective April 9th, 2026, with thanks for his 10 years of service to the residents of Houston County.

**ACTION ITEMS**

File No. 1 – Commissioner Johnson moved, Commissioner Zehnder seconded, motion unanimously carried to approve a 2026 property tax abatement of \$5,450 for Larry Ledbhr.

File No. 2 – Commissioner Zehnder moved, Commissioner Wright seconded, motion unanimously carried to approve the 2026 unpaid green acre payback amounts to be added as a special assessment tax (parcel-specific) and adopt Resolution No. 26-07. Resolution is below.

**Resolution No. 26-07  
HOUSTON COUNTY ASSESSOR  
RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE ASSESSMENT OF PROPERTIES  
FOR UNPAID SPECIAL CHARGES**

WHEREAS the following properties (“Properties”) in Houston County have unpaid special charges in the amounts below:

**Unpaid Special Charges**

<b>Owner</b>	<b>Parcel #</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Reason</b>
Clint Meyer	11.0218.000	\$2,219.92	Green Acres Payback
Clint Meyer	11.0223.000	\$2,662.42	Green Acres Payback
Nicholas Booker & Dean & Angela Happel	12.0035.000	\$22.20	Green Acres Payback
Nicholas Booker & Dean & Angela Happel	12.0038.000	\$180.32	Green Acres Payback
Nicholas Booker & Dean & Angela Happel	12.0043.000	\$18.45	Green Acres Payback
Ralph & Kathleen Hammel and Robert	13.0314.000	\$492.54	Green Acres Payback

R & Kandice Hammel			
Ralph & Kathleen Hammel and Robert R & Kandice Hammel	13.0326.001	\$17.64	Green Acres Payback
Robert & Kandice Hammel and Ralph & Kathleen Hammel	13.0320.000	\$122.87	Green Acres Payback
Robert & Kandice Hammel and Ralph & Kathleen Hammel	13.0321.000	\$640.34	Green Acres Payback
Robert & Kandice Hammel and Ralph & Kathleen Hammel	13.0325.000	\$200.48	Green Acres Payback
Robert & Kandice Hammel and Ralph & Kathleen Hammel	15.0329.000	\$172.59	Green Acres Payback
Darci Gerard	15.0319.000	\$152.98	Green Acres Payback

**WHEREAS**, the owners of these Properties have been notified of the delinquencies and the County’s intent to collect these charges through assessment; and

**WHEREAS**, the delinquent bills remain unpaid, and the owners have not worked out other payment arrangements; and

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that pursuant to Minnesota Statutes Sections 273.111 subdivisions 9-16, the Houston County Board of Commissioners hereby approves assessing the Properties for delinquent charges in the amounts set forth above; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Houston County Board of Commissioners hereby approves and directs the Houston County Assessor to certify the above-mentioned charges to the Houston County Auditor for collection with property taxes payable in 2026.

File No. 3 – Commissioner Zehnder moved, Commissioner Wright seconded, motion unanimously carried to approve a competitive search for a 1 FTE Appraiser. (Note: Depending upon qualifications/MN DOR certifications the successful candidate could be hired as an Appraiser Trainee B22, Certified MN Appraiser B23, Certified MN Appraiser-Income B24).

File No. 4 – Commissioner Zehnder moved, Commissioner Johnson seconded, motion unanimously carried to approve a competitive search for a 1 FTE Recycling Center Lead (B23).

File No. 5 – Commissioner Zehnder moved, Commissioner Wright seconded, motion unanimously carried to review and approve payments. Payments are below.

**REQUEST APPROVAL FOR PAYMENTS**

**2026/01/27 COMMISSIONER WARRANTS:**

<b>VENDOR NAME</b>	<b>AMOUNT</b>
ADVANCED CORRECTIONAL HEALTHCAR	7,726.02
BOARD OF WATER & SOIL RESOURCES	17,873.30
CALEDONIA OIL CO INC	3,340.00
GREAT LAKES SALT COMPANY	13,177.06
INTERSTATE BILLING SERVICES	8,813.59
MINNESOTA ENERGY RESOURCES	10,958.26
MNCCC	45,314.82
	<u>107,203.05</u>
36 VENDORS PAID LESS THAN \$2000.00	21,340.59
	<u>128,543.64</u>
PUBLIC HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES	28,770.09
	<u>157,313.73</u>

**REVIEW LICENSE CENTER PAYMENTS**

**2026/01/16 AUDITOR WARRANTS:**

<b>VENDOR NAME</b>	<b>AMOUNT</b>
DELTA DENTAL	7,687.38
IUOE LOCAL 49 FRINGE BENEFIT FUNDS	26,605.00
MEDICA	254,631.40
MN LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY	2,681.41
	<u>291,605.19</u>
5 VENDORS PAID LESS THAN \$2000.00	3,814.79
	<u>295,419.98</u>

**REVIEW LICENSE CENTER PAYMENTS**

**2026/01/20 AUDITOR WARRANTS:**

<b>VENDOR NAME</b>	<b>AMOUNT</b>
MN LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY	2,677.32
	<u>2,677.32</u>

**REVIEW LICENSE CENTER PAYMENTS**

**2026/01/21 AUDITOR WARRANTS:**

<b>VENDOR NAME</b>	<b>AMOUNT</b>
WELLS FARGO BANK	1,212,625.00
	<u>1,212,625.00</u>

## DISCUSSION ITEMS

Coordinator Parker shared with the board notes from a Department Head meeting. Parker said he would work with Attorney Bublitz to see if a moratorium in relation to the MariBell Transmission project was a possible option for the County.

Two upcoming public hearings on the use of rifles for deer hunting in Houston County would take place in the basement of the Houston County Criminal Justice Center, Caledonia, MN. These would be Special County Board Meetings with the only business being the public hearings. They would take place on February 4, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. and March 3, 2026 at 6:00 p.m.

One upcoming public hearing, pursuant to Minnesota Statutes § 375A.1205, Subdivision 1 to consider making the positions of Auditor / Treasurer and Recorder positions appointed would take place in the Historic Courthouse County Board Room 222, Caledonia MN on February 3, 2026 at 9:05 a.m.

The Commissioners discussed recent and upcoming meetings including a Planning Commission, Department Head, Joint Board of Health, Finance, and SELCO meeting.

Closing Public Comment:

None.

There being no further business, a motion was made by Commissioner Zehnder, seconded by Commissioner Johnson, motion unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 9:50 a.m. The next meeting would be a regular meeting on February 3, 2025.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

HOUSTON COUNTY, MINNESOTA

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Greg Myhre, Chairperson

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_  
Brent Parker, Coordinator

## PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Date: February 3, 2026

9:00 a.m.

Place: Commissioners Room, Courthouse, Caledonia, MN

Members Present: Cindy Wright, Eric Johnson, Kurt Zehnder, Robert Schuldt and Greg Myhre

Others Present: Interim Auditor/Treasurer Polly Heberlein, Fillmore County Journal Reporter Charlene Selbee, The Caledonia Argus Associate Editor Katia Gorsuch, Finance Director Carol Lapham, Coordinator Brent Parker, EDA Director & Coordinator Support Allison Wagner, Interim Attorney Suzanne Bublitz, Environmental Services Director Amelia Meiners, OneEnergy Renewables Associate Director Development Beth Esser, OneEnergy Renewables Associate Development Braeden DuMond, Dayva Goetzinger, Tammy Diersen, Kristina Hauser, Sheila Schroeder, Franklin Hahn, Larry Gaustad, Kelly Meyer, Tim Meyer, Sandie Lord, Lavern Weichert, George Johnston, Clint Von Arx, Tom Hammell, Rick Frank, Rebeckah Marschall, Dennis Myhre, Donise Becker, Bev Bauer, Larry Bauer, Kevin Schuldt, Bruce Bulman, Mark Klinski, Sheri Allen, Andy Allen, City of Caledonia Administrator Jake Dickson, Yvonne Krogstad, and Dan Schansberg

Presiding: Chairperson Myhre

Call to order.

Pledge of Allegiance.

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

Motion was made by Commissioner Johnson, seconded by Commissioner Zehnder, motion carried to approve the meeting minutes from January 27, 2026. All Commissioners voted yes, except for Commissioner Schuldt who abstained due to being absent from the meeting.

Motion was made by Commissioner Johnson, seconded by Commissioner Zehnder, motion unanimously carried to make a correction to a misspelled word in the January 20, 2026 meeting minutes on page 15.

Public Comment:

Dayva Goetzinger from Houston County thanked the Commissioners for their service to the County. She said she had heard about another development that may impact the character of

Houston County and was there as a concerned citizen. She said in addition to the discussion surrounding the MariBell transmission line project, there was a proposal for a 25 acre solar farm on prime agricultural land. She said the proposal raised several concerns including health implications for neighboring properties, unsustainable use of agricultural land for commercial purposes, potential decrease in property values in the surrounding area, and disregard for the guidelines outlined in the Houston County Comprehensive Land Use Plan. She said the Comp plan was created by the people for the people. She referred to the plan stating that on page 2 it said “Houston County’s Comprehensive Plan will serve as an expression of the County’s future vision and a strategic map to reach that vision. The plan will be an important tool for the County to articulate desired land use patterns to ensure a safe, pleasant, and thriving environment... it will also provide the overall foundation for all land use regulation in Houston County”. She quoted the plan saying additionally on page 4 the plan stated, “Protecting the natural environment was a top priority, while future infrastructure improvements were ranked lower in priority”. She said on page 6 the plan recognized that “Houston County understands the cultural and economic significance of agriculture to the community. Local decisions should support maintaining and sustaining the vitality of family farms and locally owned agricultural operations, while promoting practices that balance soil and water conservation with economic sustainability”. She said these were just a few key points in the Comp Plan and they highlighted the guiding principals that should be used in the situation. Goetzinger shared a story from a friend who was traveling west for a sporting event and remarked on the numerous fields of solar panels and expressed her disappointment noting how unappealing they were and how fortunate she feels to live in Houston County. Goetzinger urged the Commissioners to vote for what was best for the people.

Clint Von Arx from Caledonia thanked the Commissioners for their service. He said he had no issues with regenerative energy. He said what he did have an issue with was the development of large commercial solar “on our wide open spaces and productive ag lands”. He said he had heard arguments “it’s my land I can do what I want with it” and “we are going to pasture sheep on it thus keeping the land in ag” but Von Arx said what it boiled down to was a structure that would span 25 acres. He said he grew up in Houston County and loved the County and its beauty, which was why he chose to support the Comprehensive Land Use Plan and maintain the County’s wide open spaces and productive ag lands. Von Arx said allowing the commercial solar project, or the MariBell, and similar commercial scale projects would directly affect the moral compass of the County’s land use plan. He said he along with other concerned citizens had went out over the weekend to get a petition signed asking the board to up hold the Comprehensive Land Use Plan. As of that morning they had 692 signatures and counting between the online and paper petitions. He said “we the people want our wide open spaces”. He said additionally there was not enough research on the long-term effects of the projects on soil health, water quality, and overall quality of life of wildlife and/or people who resided near the projects. He said “as recommended by your own planning commission, I strongly urge the board to uphold the values of our comp plan that we the people of the County took part in setting the standard for”. He said he appreciated the board’s time and efforts on the matter.

Mark Klinski from Union Township said he did not understand why zoning had not submitted a rewritten proposal after the Commissions voted down the first proposal. He said it had been two months. He said the Planning Commission did not want to add interpretation to the Comprehensive Land Use Plan to include commercial solar. He said the comp plan currently did not address commercial solar. He said in his opinion that part should be addressed before the conditional use permit was discussed unless each conditional use permit was considered on a case by case basis.

George Johnston from the La Crescent area said he had called MiEnergy and they had told him they were maybe in favor of the solar project, but only if the people of the township and Houston County were for it and if it followed all the zoning, planning, and Comprehensive Land Use Plan. Johnston said if you have a rule it should be followed. He said allowing the solar project to go through would go against the Comprehensive Land Use Plan that everyone needed to follow. He said we needed rules and regulations.

Dan Schansberg said he suspected Houston County wasn't using more power currently than in 1980. He said the only time the power was out at his farm was due to a storm of some kind. He said he had asked someone from MiEnergy once if the cost of electricity would continue to rise no matter how energy efficient they got and Schansberg said the MiEnergy representative had said yes and that the rise in cost was mostly due to the cost of employees and equipment like new trucks. He said more commercial solar was coming to Fillmore County. He said Fillmore County would soon have around 1500 acres of solar. Schansberg said the City of Caledonia was about 1800 acres so Fillmore County's solar would nearly cover the entire City of Caledonia for comparison. Schansberg said the City of Harmony was considering a data center being built. He said in his opinion Houston County should just sit back and see "how messed up Fillmore County gets". He said he thought the data center in Harmony would use all Fillmore County's solar so there would not be a benefit to the people of Fillmore County.

Kelly Meyer from Houston County thanked the Commissioners for their service to Houston County. She said she was there to respectfully express her concerns in regards to the commercial solar project being proposed. Meyer said the proposal was inconsistent with Houston County's Comprehensive Plan. She said the plan was created to protect the County's agricultural land, wide open spaces, and rural character, "assets that define us today as a County". She said allowing the project would conflict with those protections and set a precedent for similar large-scale commercial developments in areas intended to remain agricultural and wide open. It would take prime farmland out of production and permanently alter the surrounding landscape. Meyer said there were real concerns for neighboring property owners. "I believe this type of development affects property values, land use compatibility, and the quiet rural environment that all of our families have invested in and depend on" she said. Additionally, she said there were unanswered questions about long term health and environmental impacts of the systems. She said these were important decisions that would affect "our land for generations". She said Houston County's natural beauty, productive farmland, and rural identity were among the County's greatest assets. She said this was why people chose to live in the County, work in the County, and visit the County. She said once the landscape was altered, it could not easily be restored.

Finally, she said while not directly related to the agenda item on the agenda for the day she believed it was important to view the current proposal in the broader context of the ongoing infrastructure pressures in Houston County including the MariBell transmission line. She said taken together the projects raised serious concerns about cumulative impacts on “our land, our landscape, and our rural way of life”. Meyer respectfully urged the Board to consider the long-term consequences of the proposal that had already been denied by the Zoning department and Planning Commission and to uphold the values and protections outlined in the Comprehensive Land Use Plan. She thanked the board for their time and consideration.

Rebeckah Marschall said she was speaking on behalf of the Houston County Farm Bureau. She said the Houston County Farm Bureau would like to address the policies regarding solar facilities on high quality production farmland in Houston County. On September 26, 2023 at their annual meeting the Houston County Farm Bureau unanimously passed the following policy: “We oppose wind and solar facilities being put on production farmland that has a CER a Crop Equivalent Rating of 70 or higher.” She said the members believed that agricultural land and soil “are irreplaceable resources that we should protect for future generations”. She said while they supported property rights and diversified energy they encouraged the Board to consider the long term impact of agricultural land when reviewing future land use ordinances or conditional use permits. She also spoke about the 2026 Minnesota State Farm Bureau official policies on solar energy as a resource to provide further information on how the issues were viewed across the State. Marschall said the Houston County Farm Bureau opposed article 1 and article 2 of the official policies including opposing solar areas being called farms. She thanked the board on behalf of the board and members for taking their views into account.

Sheila Schroeder from Wilmington Township said she was back again because she felt that her issue with the MariBell transmission line also had a correlation with the solar panel discussion. She said she was all about preserving ag land, all tillable ag land. She said it was the way they made their living, and she wanted to see that land protected. Schroeder said from 2001 to 2016 in Minnesota 180,000 acres of land were lost, and from 2017 to 2022 Minnesota lost another 74,000 acres, and it was predicted Minnesota was on track to lose another 300,000 acres of Minnesota farm land. She said she had issues with that and asked where food would come from in the future. She said she was afraid of the land loss to solar farms and that the County would just get more and more and more loss to solar farms if they were allowed. She said her farm had been approached to build a solar farm, as had other farmers and it was a personal decision not to do so to preserve the land. Schroeder said she did not want to see Houston County developed like other Counties to the North. She said the whole country was losing prime ag land at an alarming rate. She said she wanted to protect what Houston County had. She said “The people have told you this that the beauty and the landscape is their primary focus for living here...if those are the priorities of our County I think that that’s the way we need to vote”. She said a fear about the MariBell transmission line was that they would be taking a large crane on the 250 foot proposed easement and go from pole to pole, to pole. She said she was afraid the soil would be so compacted it would not be able to be used again. She said they planned to ask them to take the topsoil off if the project went that far so it could be preserved, but she was not sure if that would help. She said they were going to try to oppose the transmission line, but that they needed help.

Tom Hammell from Jefferson Township said he was there to express his concern about the proposed 765 kV MariBell transmission project. He said both the needs and benefits had been poorly explained by the power company. Hammell said according to a statement on the project's own website "Together, this team is committed to working closely with communities and citizens to maintain transparent communication and thoughtful planning throughout every stage of this project." Hammell said the real process had been anything but that. He said the company had been less than forthright with landowners about the process and the right-of-way accusation. He said the needs have been poorly explained. He said they have been told the growth is good and the risks are not that bad, but Hammell said they needed to know more than that. He asked how the County's infrastructure will be affected and the real risks and benefits. He said "we are asked to accept a project that will move power over our heads with no real benefit to those of us in the County". He asked that the County put a moratorium in place on further development on untested technology until the risks and benefits could be figured out". He said at the very least he wanted to know more concrete detail about both the risks and benefits both to County government and its individual residents.

Dennis Myhre from Eitzen said he did not agree with wind and solar. He said they say solar is clean and green energy, but a lot of mining goes into making up solar panels. He asked if they would be recyclable when they were done being used or if they would go into a land fill. He did not believe that solar actually needed to be close to substations as lines could be buried. He said there were only two people that came out good with solar panels and that was the people that own the panels and the people that own the land the panels sit on. He suggested looking at something more reliable like nuclear energy. He said solar energy was unreliable. He said we need something that is going to allow energy 24/7. He asked who would like to look at solar panels. He said houses would decrease in value in the country if solar panels were allowed. He said he wanted to keep the County's wide open spaces and that it was pretty in the countryside.

## APPOINTMENTS

At 9:05 a.m. Commissioner Johnson moved, Commissioner Zehnder seconded, motion unanimously carried open a public hearing, pursuant to Minnesota Statutes § 375A.1205, Subdivision 1 for the purpose of considering making the positions of Auditor / Treasurer and Recorder positions appointed.

Coordinator Parker said the Commissioners had the authority to make the positions appointed and traditionally the positions had been difficult and the skills required to perform the job had continued to advance. Being able to appoint people in positions based on their experience, skills, and abilities rather than being elected was something the County was considering. As background information he shared that of Minnesota's 87 counties 60 had an appointed recorder and 56 had an appointed auditor and treasurer. This was a common trend in Minnesota due to the complexity of the positions.

Commissioner Johnson said multiple public hearings had been held to get feedback from the public on the matter as they knew the matter was important. Commissioner Wright said they also received individual feedback on the matter in addition to the public hearings.

Bruce Bulman from Caledonia said his aunt would have never gotten the position if she had needed to prove she was eligible to do it and yet she ended up being one of the best in the State. He said one of the supreme court justices had spoke at her funeral. He said he thought it was a tragedy if people were appointed and local people didn't have the opportunity for the job. He said people could learn on the job. He said his aunt was a good example of this.

Bev Bauer said she was the Houston County Recorder for 20 years. She had been elected. She said she knew sometimes people said running for office was a popularity contest, but she did not think that was the correct wording. Bauer said running for election was a lot of work and those running for the offices ran for the whole County. She said people lost rights all the time. She said there was not a school to go to, to know how to do the Recorder's office. She said people learned to do the job through experience. Bauer had worked in the office prior to being elected. She said she liked that the elected officials answered to the taxpayer. She spoke in favor of keeping the potions elected.

Yvonne Krogstad from Spring Grove said candidates who applied for the position would state their experience in their ads. She said that didn't mean someone was good at that job, but she said that was also true of an appointed person. She said elected officials were directly responsible to the voters. She said elected officials also applied more checks and balances as they were more independent of the County board. She asked if the appointed system was working well for other counites. She asked if the County needed to follow suit even if it was working well for other counties.

Commissioner Wright moved, Commissioner Johnson seconded, motion unanimously carried to come out of closed session and return to the regular session.

## CONSENT AGENDA

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

- 1) Change the employment status of Jessica Kraus, Assistant County Attorney, from probationary to regular, effective Feb 13th, 2026.

## ACTION ITEMS

File No. 1 – Prior to any motions being made Environmental Services Director Amelia Meiners said the proposed commercial solar project was being proposed ¼ mile West of the Caledonia substation. She said there were three parties involved in the application and that these included: the landowners Andy and Sheri Allen, the solar company OneEnergy Develoment LLC,

and MiEnergy who was the distribution provider. Meiners said she wanted to clarify that the commercial solar project being considered was independent of the MariBell transmission line. Meiners said her office had brought forward a recommendation of denial based on incompatibility with the Comprehensive Land Use Plan and that the Planning Commission had recommended the County board deny the request and had also cited concerns including water quality, pollution, and impacts on neighboring property owners. Meiners said land use decisions were based on two guiding documents: the County’s Comprehensive Land Use Plan and Zoning Ordinance. Commissioner Johnson moved, Commissioner Wright seconded, motion unanimously carried to deny a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) for OneEnergy Development LLC on behalf of AC4 Farms LLC to construct a 5MW ground mounted solar distribution commercial solar project in an Agricultural Protection District in Caledonia Township. (The Planning Commission recommended the Board of Commissioners deny the CUP request.) The Commissioners voted by roll and all Commissioners vote to deny the request. Commissioner Myhre said he only voted to deny the request because the County needed to redo the Comp Plan and amend it.

File No. 5 – Commissioner Zehnder moved, Commissioner Schuldt seconded, motion unanimously carried to review and approve payments. Payments are below.

**REQUEST APPROVAL FOR PAYMENTS**

**2026/02/03 COMMISSIONER WARRANTS:**

<b>VENDOR NAME</b>	<b>AMOUNT</b>
US BANK VOYAGER FLEET SYS	2,157.45
TOIT TRAINING LLC	2,250.00
VERIZON WIRELESS	2,708.47
LIBERTY TIRE RECYCLING LLC	3,197.75
TOWMASTER LLC	102,000.00
OLYMPIC BUILDERS GENERAL CONTRACTORS	319,696.85
	<u>432,010.52</u>
16 VENDORS PAID LESS THAN \$2000.00	6,204.91
	<u>438,215.43</u>
PUBLIC HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES	23,452.72
	<u>461,668.15</u>

**REVIEW LICENSE CENTER PAYMENTS**

**2026/01/23 AUDITOR WARRANT:**

<b>VENDOR NAME</b>	<b>AMOUNT</b>
TREASURER CITY OF LA CRESCENT	19,113.07
	<u>19,113.07</u>

**2026/01/22 AUDITOR WARRANTS:**

<u>VENDOR NAME</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
HOUSTON COUNTY TREASURER	2,848.23
ISD 300 TREASURER	64,541.31
TREASURER CITY OF BROWNSVILLE	2,278.28
TREASURER CITY OF CALEDONIA	17,982.41
TREASURER CITY OF HOKAH	6,844.61
TREASURER CITY OF HOUSTON	2,554.29
TREASURER CITY OF LA CRESCENT	51,343.26
TREASURER CITY OF SPRING GROVE	17,552.72
TREASURER SCHOOL DISTRICT 238	2,642.23
TREASURER SCHOOL DISTRICT 239	3,562.86
TREASURER SCHOOL DISTRICT 294	34,649.09
TREASURER SCHOOL DISTRICT 297	30,297.95
TREASURER SCHOOL DISTRICT 299	42,867.05
TREASURER TWP OF BLACKHAMMER	5,935.73
TREASURER TWP OF BROWNSVILLE	3,512.48
TREASURER TWP OF CALEDONIA	3,804.46
TREASURER TWP OF CROOKED CREEK	2,803.04
TREASURER TWP OF HOUSTON	5,633.36
TREASURER TWP OF LA CRESCENT	5,994.01
TREASURER TWP OF MAYVILLE	3,274.27
TREASURER TWP OF MONEY CREEK	12,549.07
TREASURER TWP OF MOUND PRAIRIE	11,139.70
TREASURER TWP OF SHELDON	3,375.24
TREASURER TWP OF SPRING GROVE	7,699.08
TREASURER TWP OF UNION	4,591.04
TREASURER TWP OF WILMINGTON	3,226.39
	<u>353,502.16</u>
7 VENDORS PAID LESS THAN \$2000.00	5,846.98
	<u><u>359,349.14</u></u>

**DISCUSSION ITEMS**

Coordinator Parker reminded the Commissioners of two upcoming public hearings on the use of rifles for deer hunting in Houston County would take place in the basement of the Houston County Justice Center, Caledonia, MN. These would be Special County Board Meetings with the only business being the public hearings. They would take place on February 4, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. and March 3, 2026 at 6:00 p.m.

The Annual Bluff Country Collaborative (BCC) Career Fair/Hiring Event would take place at the La Crescent Area Event Center on March 11<sup>th</sup>, 2026 from 9 a.m. to Noon. The event would be free for Houston County businesses and job seekers in the area to attend. Businesses were asked to sign up by February 11<sup>th</sup>, 2026.

Commissioner Myhre said the Board needed to do something about the MariBell transmission line. He said the board was not allowing solar panels so why would the board allow the transmission line. He said the line would take up more ag land than solar panels. He said the Board needed to try to stop the line.

The Commissioners discussed recent and upcoming meetings including an Economic Development Authority (EDA), E911, Hiawatha Valley Mental Health Bringing Light Into Darkness Program, SELCO, and upcoming Department Head meeting.

The Commissioners said they had received numerous calls and emails from residents and that they appreciated the feedback.

Closing Public Comment:

Sheri Allen, landowner, said she had a few comments. First of all, she said she wanted to thank everyone for their respectful comments on both sides both from the Commissioners and those in the board room. She said when they had started out the process people were not always very respectful. She said their project did not have anything to do with MariBell. She said her and Andy didn't even support the MariBell project themselves. She said her understanding was that the reason the ordinance was voted down was because the wording was set to only affect people with prime land. Allen said in her opinion if the County was going to make a Comp Plan or an ordinance she thought it should affect people across the board "and you shouldn't attack people with prime ag land". She said it should be consistent for all landowners. She said there was still work that needed to be done. She suggested looking at personal solar and commercial solar.

Andy Allen said he was a proud resident of Caledonia and Houston County. He said he thought for everyone it was a little bit of relief. He said Sheri and him loved the community and loved getting to live in Houston County and to farm. He said there had been a lot of hard work on all parts. He said he wanted to commend the people that opposed the solar project as they had put a lot of time into it. He said he wanted to give them credit where credit was due. He said he could also see that coming for the MariBell project which him and Sheri also opposed. He said "everyone here has had a hard job". He said he wanted to thank everyone including the people in the audience and the board. He said they thought what they were doing was going to help the community, and they still did. He said they didn't realize the project was going to upset people and said they had meant no harm, no foul by any of it. He said they appreciated the support, the comments, and the conversation. He said after the process he felt he had been educated significantly. He said Sheri had also put a lot of work into it.

Franklin Hahn said the comments made that the Planning Commission was opposed to the applicants were not true. He said when they as a board made decisions, they went by three things including The Comprehensive Land Use Plan, Shoreland, and Zoning Ordinance. He said when an application came in no matter what it was they went by those three things, and if a flag came up it was hard for the board to approve one project if it didn't qualify based on those three things. He said it was important for the board to be consistent. He thanked the County board for taking time and studying the matter. He said as far as changing the Zoning Ordinance or Comp Plan they could not be changing it every month with each application that came in. They had to stick with what they had.

Yvonne Krogstad asked about the Comp Plan and asked if something was not addressed in the plan if it was not allowed.

Mark Klinski clarified he misspoke earlier in the meeting and was referring to an amendment to the Zoning Ordinance and not the Comprehensive Land Use Plan.

There being no further business, a motion was made by Commissioner Zehnder, seconded by Commissioner Johnson, motion unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 10:29 a.m. The next meeting would be a special meeting on February 4, 2026 at 6:00 p.m.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

HOUSTON COUNTY, MINNESOTA

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Greg Myhre, Chairperson

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_  
Brent Parker, Coordinator

# PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS SPECIAL MEETING

Date: February 4, 2026

6:00 p.m.

Place: Commissioners Room, Courthouse, Caledonia, MN

Members Present: Cindy Wright, Eric Johnson, Kurt Zehnder, Robert Schuldt (attended virtually), and Greg Myhre

Others Present: Interim Auditor/Treasurer Polly Heberlein, The Caledonia Argus Reporter Kim Nielson, Coordinator Brent Parker, EDA Director & Coordinator Support Allison Wagner, Interim Attorney Suzanne Bublitz, County Appraiser Joe Olson, Assistant County Attorney Daniel Coogan, Bev Bauer, Larry Bauer, Jana Beckman, John Beckman, Gary Becker, Luke Onstad, Rebecca Paulson, Dan Solum, Rissy Solum, Jon Kulas, Terry Schuldt, Ryan Schuldt, Kevin Bulman, Dean Ellingson, Phil Costigan, Matt Schmitz, Dave Wray, Steve Hartwick, David Bjerke, Jane Bjerke, Danny Rud, Shane Eastman, Todd Rohweder, John Earl Meyer, Gary Van Domelen, Chis Bierke, Christian Bjerke, Clayton Johnson, Dan Vesterse, Mike Moen, Bruce Kuehmichel, Larry Gaustad, Gary Gimble, Bruce Hoitink, Curt Henderson, Marisa Pearson, Roger Pearson, Robert Petersen, Stephen Reiman, Bob Burns, Matt Storlie, Bob Borowman, Carol Sweeney Monarch, Jerry Stempinski, Geoff Halverson, Bob Lemke, Kathy Solum, Connie Harnack, Tom Harnack, Steve Lunes, John Hauser, Bruce Lee, Deb Wray, Charlie Wray, Mark Weichert, Bonnie Laumb, Mark Betz, Mary Betz, Kevin Schulddt, Merle Becker, Donise Becker, Loren Lapham, Wesley Lapham, Chance Nelson, Kay Cross, Bob Borowiak, and Alan Klug

Presiding: Chairperson Myhre

Call to order Special Meeting.

Pledge of Allegiance.

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

## APPOINTMENTS

Motion was made by Commissioner Johnson, seconded by Commissioner Zehnder, motion unanimously carried to open a public hearing on the use of rifles for deer hunting in Houston County. Minnesota Statutes § 97B.031, Subd. 7 had authorized a county board located

in the former shotgun zone to adopt an ordinance after notice and public hearing to limit the type of firearms that may be used to hunt deer within the county if they chose to do so.

Clayton Johnson from Black Hammer Township asked: “Why are we even considering rifles”. He said he questioned this. He said he had spoke to the author of the bill. He said he would appreciate the Commissioners maintaining a shotgun only zone. He said it was a safety issue.

Charlie Wray from Houston County spoke against the use of rifles in Houston County. He said a lot of people got excited when they saw a deer. He said rifles posed dangers to other hunters, people working in the fields, and others.

Bob Burns from Caledonia said he was not in favor of using rifles because he said they could increase dangers. He said the deer kill was plenty good using shotguns. Burns said he realized hunters used rifles for hunting other animals but that there were less people doing those kinds of hunting.

Steve Bauer from Caledonia said his main issue with rifles was safety. He said he was concerned about homes and small acreages. He spoke against the use of rifles in Houston County for deer hunting.

Dan Vesterse from Spring Grove said he was 55 years old and had owned land in Black Hammer Township for 40 years. He came from a hunting family. He recalled a story from 1989 where he had been stopped by the local game warden at the time and he had asked why rifles were not allowed for deer hunting in Houston County. He said the warden had said it was a safety issue due to the terrain. Vesterse said he was in the US Army. He said had concerns about the amount of ricocheting from rifle bullets. He was against using rifles in Houston County for deer hunting.

Kay Cross from Spring Grove said she was not a hunter. She had concerns for safety and fair chase. She said sportsmanship was a commitment to fair play. Kross told stories of children who had been mistaken for animals and were accidently shot. She said accidents happened under normal situations and added that distance and speed would “absolutely increase possibility for error”. She asked the Commissioners to please not allow rifles.

Mike Sieve from Yucatan Township said he had been hunting since 1990. He said more things kept being added to pressure the deer. He said he was concerned about sportsmanship. He asked: “When are we going to do something for the deer?”

Marisa Pearson from Caledonia said she did not support the use of rifles for deer hunting in Houston County. She said she had safety concerns. She said extending ranges decreased safety. She said archery hunters were already successful in harvesting deer. Pearson said shooting farther and faster was not safe. She was concerned about young hunters and said she wanted everyone to enjoy hunting as safely as possible. She said she was not comfortable

sending kids to the woods with rifle hunting. She said people might not participate in deer hunting due to safety concerns if rifles were allowed to be used.

Bob Borowiak from Houston said his concern was safety. He said if and when there was a negative event involving a high power rifle “who are they going to look at when that happens”. He said “You folks had the option to opt out”.

Steve Kurns from Caledonia Township said he came from a county in Wisconsin. He said when that county allowed rifles to be used for deer hunting there were no additional accidents after allowing rifles. He said a Pennsylvania study that had been referenced was anecdotal. He said shotgun rounds were more likely to skip. Kurns said it was about personal responsibility and that was preached in hunter safety. He urged the Commissioners to allow hunting with rifles in Houston County. He said to look at the data.

Carol Sweeny Monarch said she was opposed to using rifles in Houston County. She said her family hunted and her biggest concern was hunter safety. She said she would not allow rifle hunting on her farm. She said people might not get to hunt because of the risk factor.

Dean Ellingson from Spring Grove said he looked forward to hunting with a rifle. He said most hunters hunted from a tree stand. He said he was looking forward to a more accurate shot. He said rifles were more efficient. Ellingson said there were too many deer. He said people could still use shotguns if they chose to do so.

John Meyer from Gopher State Sportsman Club said his club was 200 members strong. The club endorsed the use of rifles for the 2026 hunting season.

Gary Van Domelen said he was a retired business attorney. He said he had property by Hokah. He said the original 1942 law was for deer herd management not public safety. He said the concern was that there would not be any deer left as at the time there were less deer than there are currently. He said the original law was never put into place for safety to begin with. He said Wisconsin statistics showed shotguns in more accidents in relation to their use. He said 70 to 80% of land in Houston County was owned by private people who could make a decision about rifle use on their private land. He said deer caused car accidents and CWD was an issue. He said he was in favor of using rifles for deer hunting.

Robert Petersen from Spring Grove said he had been using a rifle for 20 years. He said he did not see a problem with using a rifle.

Bruce Lee from Crystal Valley in Houston County said he would not mind people hunting on his farm with a rifle. He said there were too many deer. Later he said La Crosse County had a lot more people than Houston County.

Steve Hartwick from Money Creek Township said he had a small farm bordered on two sides by State land. He said people were more likely to hunt with a scope when using a rifle and

had a more limited view. He said every hunter was supposed to act responsibly but if everyone did we would not have game wardens. He had concerns for eagles. He was against using rifles.

Tom Harnack from Sheldon Township said rifles increased range. He warned about homes, buildings, and livestock. He asked the Commissioners to not allow rifles.

Roger Pearson from Caledonia said his grandfather was shot with a rifle during deer hunting. He said he thought people would hunt less if rifles were allowed. He said he really didn't want to see rifles be allowed to be used due to safety concerns.

Luke Onstad from Houston County said he had 40 acres. He said with a shotgun his range from where he would be shooting would not leave his property. He said with a rifle his range could affect 58 parcels besides his own. He said there were not very many deer up north where rifles were allowed. He said he was concerned about safety.

Joe Hartley from Caledonia said he was in favor of rifle hunting. He said people needed to "get over the fear factor".

Allen Klug said he was in favor of rifles. He said Iowa didn't have any problems, and Houston County wouldn't either.

Jeff Halverson from Black Hammer Township said he saw ample opportunity for people to hunt deer. He said he was strongly opposed to rifle hunting. He said Houston County had steep bluffs and deep valleys.

Mark Munson from Wilmington Township said he taught hunter safety. He said Minnesota was the only State in the Midwest that didn't allow some form of rifle hunting. He said 12 and 13 year hunters needed to be accompanied by an adult. At 14 youth could hunt alone but that was up to the parent.

John Hauser from Caledonia Township said if it wasn't broke don't fix it.

Kevin Bulman from Caledonia said he was a firearm safety instructor. He said four main rules for hunting included knowing your target and beyond. He said it was the responsibility of the hunter. He said it was more of a training issue than the weapon being used. He said it was up to parents and guardians to further train as to ethical and safety standards for hunting. He said while rifles were not needed he encouraged people to see rifles as an opportunity for the future. He said there were more options for lead free ammunition with rifles. He said suppressors could also be used to protect hearing.

Terry Schuldt from Caledonia said there used to be a three day hunting season and a lot more people got killed from that. He said he had concerns about people not from the area coming to hunt. He said there were too many trophy hunters that didn't shoot does, and people who would not let anyone else hunt. He said there should be more farmers in Houston County.

Christopher Bjerke, Houston County resident, said he wouldn't want to increase the danger factor, but did think shotguns were more crude. He said he was not going to say which way to vote. He said he did think there would be more people hunting with rifles.

Bruce Hoitink from Caledonia said rifles were more accurate than shotguns. He was in favor of rifles.

Christian Bjerke a student from Spring Grove said he was looking forward to using rifles as were his fellow students. He said using rifles would help hunters be more accurate and take down more deer. He said young hunters were looking forward to using rifles.

Motion was made by Commissioner Zehnder, seconded by Commissioner Johnson, motion unanimously carried to end the public hearing and return to the meeting.

Closing Public Comment:

None.

Commissioner Johnson said some had mentioned adding restrictions when it came to types of rifles, he said he wanted to make it clear that the DNR would not enforce those additional restrictions and it would be up to the County Sheriff's Office. He said the DNR would enforce the rule if the County decided to opt out and only allow shotguns, but they would not enforce any modifications to the rule. Commissioner Johnson said he did not like that the State had put the board in the position to have to decide between the two options.

Commissioner Wright said the County could review the matter every year.

Another public hearing on the use of rifles for deer hunting in Houston County would take place on March 3<sup>rd</sup>, at 6:00 p.m. in the basement of the County Justice Center.

There being no further business, a motion was made by Commissioner Johnson, seconded by Commissioner Zehnder, motion unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 7:15 p.m. The next meeting would be a workgroup session on February 10, 2026.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

HOUSTON COUNTY, MINNESOTA

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Greg Myhre, Chairperson

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_  
Brent Parker, Coordinator

## PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Date: February 10, 2026

9:00 a.m.

Place: Commissioners Room, Courthouse, Caledonia, MN

Members Present:

Cindy Wright, Kurt Zehnder, Robert Schuldt, and Greg Myhre

Others Present:

Interim Auditor/Treasurer Polly Heberlein, The Caledonia Argus Associate Editor Katia Gorsuch, Finance Director Carol Lapham, Coordinator Brent Parker, EDA Director & Coordinator Support Allison Wagner, Social Services Supervisor Bethany Moen, Fiscal Supervisor Heidi Harms, Public Health Supervisor Jordan Knoke, Engineer Brian Pogodzinski, Environmental Services Director Amelia Meiners, and Interim Attorney Suzanne Bublitz

### Board Workgroup Session

The Commissioners discussed with Engineer Pogodzinski the City of La Crescent's , City of La Crescent draft Active Transportation Action Plan. Pogodzinski said a main priority of the City of La Crescent was to slow traffic down to increase safety for bikes and pedestrians. Pogodzinski said statute dictated that the speed limit on County roads in urbanized areas be 30 miles per hour. The County could not enforce a lower speed limit on County roads. Cities could lower speed limits on their City streets with ordinances, but these would not apply to County streets. County roads were mentioned within the plan. Pogodzinski said sometimes it seemed that solutions were coming ahead of a plan being formed. Commissioner Wright said she had participated in planning meetings and wanted to see the City of La Crescent get additional input from residents. She said she appreciated being involved from the County perspective. Commissioner Schuldt brought up some concerns in relation to the plan noting the County roads in the plan were truck routes and changing or narrowing those roads in the future would impact businesses and traffic. The board discussed that residents and businesses traveled on County roads through the City and it was not only residents of the City traveling on the roads. It was the general consensus of the board that the City of La Crescent should focus on City roads. The County wanted to continue to participate in planning meetings especially when it came to County roads. The County did not have an interest in narrowing County roads. The County wanted to focus on identifying problems, and not finding solutions before identifying problems. Lastly, the County wanted to be involved in the process. Pogodzinski would communicate this to the City.

Environmental Services Director Meiners discussed with the board a need for a new hook truck in the future to replace the current one. The current County hook truck was a 2007 and had lots of miles. It was also a stick truck and in hiring new staff the County was starting to see less

people who knew how to operate a stick shift. Meiners recommended getting an automatic truck. It was possible the current truck could be traded in.

Parker discussed the organizational structure of the County with the board, and possible future changes.

Parker said a MariBell resolution was being worked on and would hopefully be on the agenda the following week. Parker had sent some further information regarding the project to the Commissioners. A Certificate of Need application for the line had been submitted to the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission. The public could send comments to the Public Utilities Commission. The County's future resolution on the matter could also be submitted by the County.

Parker shared with the board a list of 54 zoning related ordinances that at some point would need to be looked at and reviewed. The ordinance list had been put together by the zoning office. Parker said reviewing the ordinances would be a time consuming process.

The workgroup session ended at 11:10 a.m.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

HOUSTON COUNTY, MINNESOTA

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Greg Myhre, Chairperson

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_  
Brent Parker, Coordinator

## PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Date: February 17, 2026

9:00 a.m.

Place: Commissioners Room, Courthouse, Caledonia, MN

Members Present: Cindy Wright, Eric Johnson, Robert Schuldt, and Greg Myhre

Others Present: Interim Auditor/Treasurer Polly Heberlein, Fillmore County Journal Reporter Charlene Selbee, The Caledonia Argus Associate Editor Katia Gorsuch, Finance Director Carol Lapham, Coordinator Brent Parker, EDA Director & Coordinator Support Allison Wagner, Financial Assistance Supervisor Karen Kohlmeyer, Fiscal Supervisor Heidi Harms, Social Services Supervisor Bethany Moen, Engineer Brian Pogodzinski, Highway Maintenance Foreman Jordan Goeden, Larry Gaustad, Sheila Schroeder, Charlie Wray, Deb Wray, Dairyland Power Cooperative System Planning & Operations Director Steve Porter, Dairyland Power Cooperative Substation Engineer Clay Dewitt, Dairyland Power Stakeholder Communications, Engagement & Key Projects Manager Eric Jacobson, Dairyland Power Sr. Project Manager; Transmission Projects Dylan Alitz and Dairyland Power Staff Attorney Rob Maly

Presiding: Chairperson Myhre

Call to order.

Pledge of Allegiance.

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

Motion was made by Commissioner Johnson, seconded by Commissioner Schuldt, motion carried unanimously to approve the meeting minutes from February 3, 2026.

Motion was made by Commissioner Zehnder, seconded by Commissioner Wright, motion carried unanimously to approve the meeting minutes from the special meeting on February 4, 2026.

Motion was made by Commissioner Wright, seconded by Commissioner Schuldt, motion carried to approve the meeting minutes from the workgroup session on February 10, 2026. All Commissioners voted yes, except for Commissioner Johnson who abstained due to being absent from the meeting.

Public Comment:

Sheila Schroeder from Wilmington Township thanked the board for listening to her and the group with concerns about the MariBell Transmission Line. She said the proposed resolution opposing the project in Houston County had all the parts the group had wanted. She highly encouraged the board to vote for the resolution opposing the project.

**APPOINTMENTS**

None.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

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

- 1) Hire Christine Novak as a 1 FTE Accounting Clerk (B22 – Step 4) with a start date of February 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2026.
- 2) Hire Lynn Buhl as a 1 FTE Child Support Officer (B24 – Step 4) with a start date of March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2026.
- 3) Transfer Dianna Kerns from Social Worker to a 1 FTE Child Protection Social Worker (Lateral Transfer / C41 – Step 4) effective immediately.
- 4) Approve a competitive search for a 1 FTE Social Worker (C41).
- 5) Award the renting of the two areas of land at the airport to the highest bidders and approve land agreements. (Separate agreements for the 5.59 acres and the 17.63 acres.) Abstracts are below.

HOUSTON COUNTY, MINNESOTA  
 Airport Crop Land Abstract  
 Runway Acres Bid  
 February 4, 2026 at 1:00 p.m.

				Burg's LLC Jamison and Jeni Burg		Johnathon Glasspoole	
Line	Item	Qty	Unit	Unit Price	Total Price	Unit Price	Total Price
1	Airport Crop Land Rental - Runway	17.63	Acres	\$151.00	\$2,662.13	\$125.00	\$2,203.75
<b>HIGH BID</b>		<b>17.63</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>\$151.00</b>	<b>\$2,662.13</b>		

HOUSTON COUNTY, MINNESOTA  
 Airport Crop Land Abstract  
 Hangar Acres Bid  
 February 4, 2026 at 1:00 p.m.

				Jeremy Burt		Nick Hoscheit		Johnathon Glasspoole	
Line	Item	Qty	Unit	Unit Price	Total Price	Unit Price	Total Price	Unit Price	Total Price
1	Airport Crop Land Rental - Hangar	5.59	Acres	\$230.00	\$1,285.70	\$208.00	\$1,162.72	\$125.00	\$698.75
<b>HIGH BID</b>		<b>5.59</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>\$230.00</b>	<b>\$1,285.70</b>				

## ACTION ITEMS

File No. 1 – Prior to any motions being made the Commissioners discussed the proposed Resolution No. 26-08 A Resolution of the Houston County Board of Commissioners Opposing the Proposed 765 kV “Gopher to Badger Link” Transmission Project Within Houston County, Minnesota. Commissioner Wright suggested adding some further language into the resolution being considered to make it more specific. Commissioner Zehnder moved, Commissioner Johnson seconded, motion unanimously carried to adopt Resolution No. 26-08 A Resolution of the Houston County Board of Commissioners Opposing the Proposed 765 kV “Gopher to Badger Link” Transmission Project Within Houston County, Minnesota with the suggested edits. The Commissioners voted by roll. All Commissioners voted yes. The final resolution is below.

### RESOLUTION NO. 26-08

#### **A RESOLUTION OF THE HOUSTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OPPOSING THE PROPOSED 765 kV “GOPHER TO BADGER LINK” TRANSMISSION PROJECT WITHIN HOUSTON COUNTY, MINNESOTA**

WHEREAS, Northern States Power Company, doing business as Xcel Energy, and Dairyland Power Cooperative (collectively, “Applicants”) have filed a Joint Application with the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (“MPUC”) for a Certificate of Need (MPUC Docket No. ET3, E002/CN-25-121) for the Gopher to Badger Link Project, which includes approximately 105 miles of 765 kV/161 kV double-circuit transmission line extending to the Minnesota/Wisconsin border and a new three-circuit 161 kV switching station proposed within Houston County; and

WHEREAS, According to the Application, Segment 2 structures would typically range from approximately 150 to 199 feet in height, spaced approximately 1,200 to 1,500 feet apart, and require up to an approximately 250-foot-wide right-of-way; and

WHEREAS, The Application estimates total project costs between approximately \$979 million and \$1.273 billion (2024 dollars), and states the facilities would be placed in service by the end of 2034; and

WHEREAS, The Application states that the Project was approved by MISO as part of its Long-Range Transmission Planning (LRTP) Tranche 2.1 portfolio and is designed to address regional reliability, economic, and generation transition objectives; and

WHEREAS, Minnesota Statutes § 216B.243 and Minnesota Rules Chapter 7849 require that a Certificate of Need may only be granted if, by a preponderance of the evidence, the proposed facility will provide benefits to society in a manner compatible with protecting the

natural and socioeconomic environments, including human health, and that the project will comply with relevant local policies and regulations; and

WHEREAS, Houston County has adopted its Comprehensive Land Use Plan by ordinance, which recognizes:

1. The cultural and economic importance of agriculture,
2. The preservation of scenic bluffs, valleys, and natural landscapes,
3. The protection of environmentally sensitive areas,
4. The priority of natural resource protection over large-scale infrastructure expansion; and

WHEREAS, Houston County lies within Minnesota's Blufflands and Driftless Area, characterized by steep slopes, karst topography, trout streams, agricultural production lands, tourism-based economies, and significant scenic resources; and

WHEREAS, The proposed Project would introduce the largest alternating current transmission voltage currently operating in the United States (765 kV) into Houston County, including a double-circuit configuration with a 161 kV line beneath the 765 kV circuit; and

WHEREAS, The Application acknowledges potential impacts including electric and magnetic fields (EMF), noise, corona discharge, agricultural disruption, and environmental impacts, but long-term localized effects on Houston County's agricultural economy, property values, and tourism-dependent landscape remain disputed and unresolved; and

WHEREAS, Houston County residents, landowners, and agricultural producers have expressed significant concerns including but not limited to:

1. Potential human health impacts.
2. EMF exposure.
3. Audible noise and corona effects.
4. Stray voltage.
5. Agricultural land fragmentation and loss of productivity.
6. Potential loss of homes and farms.
7. Property value depreciation.
8. Visual and aesthetic impacts to the Blufflands landscape.
9. Wildlife and livestock impacts.
10. Tourism impacts.
11. Eminent domain concerns.
12. Road damage and construction impacts.
13. Adequacy of public engagement and transparency.
14. Whether the Project delivers demonstrable, direct benefit to Houston County residents.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:

### *Section 1. Opposition*

The Houston County Board of Commissioners formally opposes the proposed routing of the 765 kV Gopher to Badger Link transmission facilities within Houston County unless and until it is conclusively demonstrated through the MPUC process that:

1. The Project is the least-impactful alternative, and is explicitly proven to provide Houston County residents with direct benefits.
2. No reasonable lower-voltage or non-wires alternatives exist.
3. The Project fully complies with Houston County's Comprehensive Land Use Plan.
4. Local environmental, agricultural, and socioeconomic impacts are minimized to the maximum extent practicable.

### *Section 2. Environmental and Local Review*

Houston County formally requests:

1. A full Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and mitigation plan with local review that includes Houston County-specific agricultural, karst, groundwater, wildlife, scenic, tourism, and property value analyses.
2. Detailed modeling of EMF, audible noise, and corona discharge at residential setbacks.
3. Independent Agricultural Impact Assessment specific to Blufflands soils and topography.
4. Full disclosure of anticipated right-of-way acquisition impacts within the County.
5. Early sharing of the Route Permit Application prior to formal filing.

### *Section 3. Information Requested from Applicants*

Houston County requests that the Applicants provide, in written and publicly accessible form on or before April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2026:

1. A breakdown of cost allocation by state and rate class.
2. Documentation of Minnesota residential rate impacts resulting from this project projected over 1, 10, and 20 years.
3. A list of specific quantified economic benefits projected for Houston County.
4. Detailed alternative route analysis considered for Houston County.
5. Documentation of distributed energy resource assumptions used in load forecasts (Years 1, 10, and 20).
6. A list of prior combined 765 kV / 161 kV double-circuit installations constructed by the Applicants.
7. Detailed site criteria and footprint for the proposed Houston County switching station.
8. Road use agreements, construction practices, and infrastructure protection commitments to minimize risk and damages.
9. A clear explanation of eminent domain authority and compensation standards.

*Section 4. Preservation of Local Authority*

Houston County asserts its right to:

1. Participate as a party in MPUC proceedings,
2. Submit formal comments and expert testimony,
3. Protect its Comprehensive Land Use Plan,
4. Advocate for agricultural land preservation,
5. Protect the Blufflands landscape and tourism economy,
6. Protect residents' property rights.

*Section 5. Transmission of Resolution*

The County Coordinator is directed to transmit this Resolution to:

1. Minnesota Public Utilities Commission
2. Minnesota Department of Commerce
3. Xcel Energy
4. Dairyland Power Cooperative
5. MISO
6. The Governor of Minnesota

File No. 2 – Prior to any motions being made the Commissioners discussed with Coordinator Parker the possibility of adopting Resolution No. 26-09 A Resolution Separating Public Health and Human Services Into Two Distinct County Departments. Coordinator Parker said in looking at other counties who had combined Public Health and Human Services he was seeing a trend of the two departments being separated once again. The State would need to be notified of the separation. Commissioner Wright said the two departments would still work together like they currently did. She said all departments should be linked to one another. Commissioner Zehnder said he wanted to make sure the departments were comfortable with the plan to separate. Commissioner Zehnder moved, Commissioner Wright seconded, motion unanimously carried to adopt Resolution No. 26-09 A Resolution Separating Public Health and Human Services Into Two Distinct County Departments. The Commissioners vote by roll. All Commissioners voted yes. Resolution is below.

**RESOLUTION NO. 26-09**

**A RESOLUTION SEPARATING PUBLIC HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES INTO TWO DISTINCT COUNTY DEPARTMENTS**

WHEREAS, the County Board is responsible for establishing the administrative structure of county government to promote effective governance, accountability, and service delivery; and

WHEREAS, the County currently operates Public Health and Human Services as a combined department; and

WHEREAS, the County Board has determined that separating Public Health and Human Services into two distinct departments will improve organizational clarity, operational efficiency, and administrative oversight; and

WHEREAS, the County Board further desires to clarify the organizational placement of the Finance Division to ensure clear lines of authority and fiscal accountability,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED

*Separation of Departments*

Effective February 17<sup>th</sup>, 2026, the existing Public Health and Human Services Department shall start to be officially separated into two distinct county departments:

- Public Health Department
- Human Services Department

*Departmental Authority*

Each department shall operate independently under its respective statutory authority, leadership, and administrative structure, subject to County Board approval.

*Fiscal Services Placement*

The Fiscal Services shall be positioned within the county's organizational structure with administrative oversight.

*Administrative Implementation*

County administration is authorized and directed to take all necessary actions to implement this organizational change, including updates to organizational charts, job descriptions, internal policies, and administrative systems.

File No. 3 – Commissioner Johnson moved, Commissioner Zehnder seconded, motion unanimously carried to approve contract with Ability Building Community (ABC).

File No. 4 – Commissioner Zehnder moved, Commissioner Johnson seconded, motion carried to approve purchase of Recycling Truck, 2026 Western Star 47X Palfinger HT 500 hook truck. This would also include an additional five year warranty.

File No. 5 – Commissioner Johnson moved, Commissioner Schuldt seconded, motion unanimously carried to approve cooperative agreement detailing agency responsibilities with the City of Houston regarding project SAP 028-013-013 located within the City of Houston.

File No. 6 – Commissioners discussed individual purchases recommended below. These items had been budgeted.

- a. Commissioner Zehnder moved, Commissioner Wright seconded, motion unanimously carried to approve Plow Truck Chassis: Dave Syverson Truck Center for the 2027 Western Star.
- b. Commissioner Johnson moved, Commissioner Schuldt seconded, motion unanimously carried to approve Plow Truck Chassis: Towmaster for Swenson Body.
- c. The purchase of a Skid Steer was tabled.
- d. Commissioner Zehnder moved, Commissioner Wright seconded, motion unanimously carried to approve purchasing Mulching Head: Diamond Mowers for the 72" Drum Mulcher with Drum Brake
- e. Commissioner Johnson moved, Commissioner Zehnder seconded, motion unanimously carried to approve purchasing Mowers: Hammell Equipment for 2 - Vermeer 5050 Mowers.

Approved bids are below:

Houston County Highway Department  
2026 Equipment

Agenda Item	Dave Syverson Truck Centers 2027 Western Star 47X Tandem Chassis Sourcewell Bid	Nuss Truck & Equipment 2027 Mack Granite 64FR MN Coop Purchase bid
<b>Plow Truck Chassis</b>	<b>163,556.00</b>	<b>165,799.92</b>

Agenda Item	Towmaster Swenson Body MN Coop Purchase Bid
<b>Plow Truck Box</b>	<b>217,462.00</b>

Agenda Item	Contains a Drum Brake	
	Diamond Mowers 72" Drum Mulcher MN State Contract 269767	RDO Equipment Fecon 72"
<b>Mulching Head</b>		
	<b>\$ 49,950.00</b>	<b>\$ 50,983.66</b>

Agenda Item	Hammell Equipment Vermeer 5050
<b>Mowers x 2 - \$13,450.00 each</b>	<b>\$ 26,900.00</b>

File No. 7 – Commissioner Zehnder moved, Commissioner Johnson seconded, motion unanimously carried to review and approve payments. Payments are below.

**REVIEW LICENSE CENTER PAYMENTS**

**2026/02/05 AUDITOR WARRANTS:**

VENDOR NAME	AMOUNT
DELTA DENTAL	7,994.98
IUOE LOCAL 49 FRINGE BENEFIT FUNDS	28,475.00
MEDICA	256,381.82
MN LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY	2,663.76
	295,515.56
7 VENDORS PAID LESS THAN \$2000.00	3,252.71
	<u>298,768.27</u>

**REQUEST APPROVAL FOR PAYMENTS**

**2026/02/17 COMMISSIONER WARRANTS:**

VENDOR NAME	AMOUNT
ACENTEK	4,303.94
ADVANCED CORRECTIONAL HEALTHCAR	8,112.33
ANCOM COMMUNICATIONS	9,678.60
BENJEGERDES MACHINE INC	6,341.63
CALEDONIA OIL CO INC	4,720.00
CALEDONIA/CITY OF	13,401.85
COMPUTER FORENSIC SERVICES LLC	48,301.41
CONSOLIDATED ENERGY COMPANY	4,934.08
EHLERS	3,150.00
GREAT LAKES SALT COMPANY	26,497.37
GROUND BREAKING CONNECTIONS LLC	7,083.33
HOKAH CO-OP OIL ASSN	4,427.89
HOUSTON COUNTY TREASURER	23,470.03
INTERSTATE BILLING SERVICES	4,635.89
LIBERTY TIRE RECYCLING LLC	4,010.00
MASTER'S TOUCH INC/THE	8,000.00
MINNESOTA ENERGY RESOURCES	13,380.58
MN STATE TREASURER	3,303.00
NATIONAL TANK OUTLET	12,146.00
RICHARD'S SANITATION LLC	15,834.76
STONEBROOKE ENGINEERING INC	3,880.94
TOWMASTER LLC	3,072.42
VANGUARD APPRAISALS INC	14,175.00
VISA	7,002.73
WEX BANK	4,182.35
WINONA CONTROLS INC	5,330.50
WS TRUCKING & CONSTRUCTION LLC	3,382.50
	266,759.13
56 VENDORS PAID LESS THAN \$2000.00	25,640.49
	292,399.62
PUBLIC HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES	259,595.21
	<u>551,994.83</u>

## DISCUSSION ITEMS

Coordinator Parker said the 2026 Legislative Session for the State of Minnesota started that day. He would follow what was happening. He said Engineer Pogodzinski, Environmental Services Director Meiners, Highway Maintenance Foreman Goeden, and staff had done a good job of getting ready for a MS4 audit. He said IT Director Milde did a fantastic job for the County especially when preparing for potential IT threats. Assessor Onstad had sent a letter on behalf of the County to representatives asking them to consider simplifying the property tax system.

The Commissioners discussed recent and upcoming meetings including an ECB, WinLac, Public Health, and School Mapping meeting.

Commissioner Johnson asked if the Commissioners wanted to consider passing other County resolutions for example a resolution suggesting the DNR bring back earn a buck, or a resolution encouraging the Sate to simplify the property tax system.

### Closing Public Comment:

Steve Porter, Dairyland Power Cooperative, System Planning & Operations Director said he was there to speak to the board's resolution related to the Gopher to Badger Link transmission project. He said Dairyland was headquartered in La Crosse, WI and was an applicant to the State of Minnesota for the Gopher to Badger Link project with co-applicant, Xcel Energy. He said he had read the resolution and understood the questions and concerns from the County board. Porter said "Dairyland is a not-for-profit Generation and Transmission electric cooperative and through our 24 member electric distribution cooperatives, Dairyland serves many rural electric consumers in portions of four states, including southeast MN. Dairyland carefully considers cost impact and transmission needs for all proposed transmission projects. Dairyland's Vision is to provide safe, reliable and cost-effective energy to our member distribution cooperatives, which includes MiEnergy here in Houston County." He spoke about the process. He said "Throughout Minnesota's state permitting process, Dairyland's goal is to have an open dialogue with impacted landowners and communities. I want to assure the Houston County Board that many of the questions and concerns raised in the resolution will be addressed through the MN Public Utilities Commission's Certificate of Need and Route Permit process. Opportunities for public dialogue with the Dairyland and Xcel Energy have started with open houses in January and additional open houses planned for April. Additionally, with the Certificate of Need application being filed with MN Public Utilities Commission, comments will be able to be submitted to that docket as the PUC considers the application submitted by Dairyland Power and Xcel Energy."

There being no further business, a motion was made by Commissioner Zehnder, seconded by Commissioner Johnson, motion unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 10:30 a.m. The next meeting would be a regular meeting on February 24, 2026.

## BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

HOUSTON COUNTY, MINNESOTA

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Greg Myhre, Chairperson

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_  
Brent Parker, Coordinator

## PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Date: February 24, 2026

9:00 a.m.

Place: Commissioners Room, Courthouse, Caledonia, MN

Members Present: Eric Johnson, Kurt Zehnder, Robert Schuldt, and Greg Myhre

Others Present: Interim Auditor/Treasurer Polly Heberlein, Fillmore County Journal Reporter Charlene Selbee, The Caledonia Argus Associate Editor Katia Gorsuch, Finance Director Carol Lapham, Coordinator Brent Parker, EDA Director & Coordinator Support Allison Wagner, Financial Assistance Fiscal Supervisor Heidi Harms, Public Health Supervisor Jordan Knoke, Engineer Brian Pogodzinski, Highway Maintenance Foreman Jordan Goeden, Larry Gaustad, John Beckman, and Mark Klinski

Presiding: Chairperson Myhre

Call to order.

Pledge of Allegiance.

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

Motion was made by Commissioner Johnson, seconded by Commissioner Schuldt, motion carried unanimously to approve the meeting minutes from February 17, 2026.

Public Comment:

John Beckman from Houston Township said he was there on behalf of the Houston County Township Association. He said the townships saw there would be talk about the quarter, quarter rule at the meeting. He said the townships meant no disrespect, but they felt that the 1 per quarter, quarter rule was good. He said the benefits to the rule outweighed the negatives. He urged the board to keep things the status quo.

### APPOINTMENTS

Interim Auditor/Treasurer, Polly Heberlein, reviewed the County's Cash and Investments through December 31, 2025. Heberlein said the County had 54 investment accounts with a total balance of \$10,637,207.86.

### CONSENT AGENDA

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

- 1) Change the employment status of Nicole Karl, Eligibility Worker, from probationary to regular, effective March 2nd, 2026.

**ACTION ITEMS**

File No. 1 – Commissioner Zehnder moved, Commissioner Schuldt seconded, motion unanimously carried to approve the 2026 Community Clinic Grant Agreement with Minnesota Department of Health in the amount of \$13,873 and authorize Public Health Supervisor/CHS Administrator to sign the grant agreement.

File No. 2 – Commissioner Schuldt moved, Commissioner Zehnder seconded, motion unanimously carried to accept the Garden-in-a-Box Program from the Minnesota State Horticultural Society and authorize Public Health Supervisor to accept the application.

File No. 3 – Commissioner Zehnder moved, Commissioner Myhre seconded, motion unanimously carried to approve purchase of Skid Steer from RDO Equipment for the John Deere 324 G. Bid is below.

**Houston County Highway Department  
2026 Equipment**

Agenda Item	RDO Equipment Co John Deere 324G	Midwest Machinery John Deere 324G
<b>Skid Steer</b>	89,196.00	64,000.00
<b>Sourcewell Contract Discount</b>	(26,758.80)	
<b>RDO Discount</b>	(3,000.00)	
<b>Skid Steer Purchase Price</b>	<b>59,437.20</b>	<b>64,000.00</b>

File No. 4 – Commissioner Johnson moved, Commissioner Zehnder seconded, motion unanimously carried to review and approve payments. Payments are below.

**REVIEW LICENSE CENTER PAYMENTS**

**2026/02/13 AUDITOR WARRANTS:**

<b>VENDOR NAME</b>	<b>AMOUNT</b>
HOUSTON COUNTY TREASURER	98,343.43
OLMSTED SWCD	5,686.88
SE SWCD TECHNICAL SUPPORT JPB	21,689.15
WABASHA COUNTY SWCD	25,211.95
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	150,931.41
10 VENDORS PAID LESS THAN \$2000.00	4,500.58
	<hr/>
	155,431.99
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**REQUEST APPROVAL FOR PAYMENTS**

**2026/02/24 COMMISSIONER WARRANTS:**

<b>VENDOR NAME</b>	<b>AMOUNT</b>
ABILITY BUILDING COMMUNITY	2,213.71
ELECTION SYSTEMS & SOFTWARE INC	3,165.00
ENTERPRISE FM	11,306.11
EPA AUDIO VISUAL INC	4,416.27
INSIGHT PUBLIC SECTOR	2,782.30
MORRIS ELECTRONICS INC	3,624.95
NUSS TRUCK & EQUIPMENT	2,764.78
TREASURER TWP OF BLACKHAMMER	23,194.40
TREASURER TWP OF BROWNSVILLE	21,330.44
TREASURER TWP OF CALEDONIA	30,450.65
TREASURER TWP OF CROOKED CREEK	17,278.32
TREASURER TWP OF HOKAH	16,055.89
TREASURER TWP OF HOUSTON	18,882.92
TREASURER TWP OF JEFFERSON	6,736.03
TREASURER TWP OF LA CRESCENT	36,508.12
TREASURER TWP OF MAYVILLE	20,174.24
TREASURER TWP OF MONEY CREEK	28,559.54
TREASURER TWP OF MOUND PRAIRIE	27,706.03
TREASURER TWP OF SHELDON	14,185.79
TREASURER TWP OF SPRING GROVE	23,240.56
TREASURER TWP OF UNION	16,112.67
TREASURER TWP OF WILMINGTON	26,921.35
TREASURER TWP OF WINNEBAGO	17,043.40
TREASURER TWP OF YUCATAN	22,045.65
	<hr/>
	396,699.12
16 VENDORS PAID LESS THAN \$2000.00	7,825.46
	<hr/>
	404,524.58
PUBLIC HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES	86,778.45
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	491,303.03
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## DISCUSSION ITEMS

The Commissioners discussed the quarter/quarter rule in Houston County as requested for discussion by Commissioner Myhre. Commissioner Myhre said he wanted more people to be able to live next to their parents, and wanted to make it easier for people to come back to Houston County to live. He said he wanted to change the rule to two per quarter, quarter. Commissioner Myhre said he didn't know how people could afford 40 acres. Commissioner Johnson explained that people did not need to own 40 acres to build in Houston County, rather it simply needed to be an open quarter, quarter to build a house with a conditional use permit. Commissioner Schuldt said he didn't want to see farmland lost in Houston County but asked if there was a way to preserve prime ag land, and also allow more housing in Houston County. Commissioner Schuldt said he wanted to look at all options. He gave an example of someone who had wanted to build where a former homestead had been. Commissioner Zehnder said he had had a lot of time to think about the matter and he did not think it was the right time to look at another large topic. He said the County was already considering a solar ordinance, a possible shotgun ordinance, and other things that needed to be handled first. Commissioner Johnson was not in favor of changing the rule and suggested waiting until the full board could discuss the matter and decide if it should be looked into further as Commissioner Wright was absent. He said it did not make sense to study the matter and use staff time if the rule didn't end up being changed. Commissioner Johnson quoted the Comprehensive Land Use Plan saying: "The County has enacted zoning ordinances that permit for agricultural use by right and has historically limited development of single family residences to densities of one dwelling unit per one 40 acre quarter, quarter section in past iterations of agricultural zoning districts. The County has also strived to continue to preserve commercial agriculture as a viable, permanent land use and as a significant economic activity in the County". Commissioner Johnson said for farmers in the County like himself the ag land in the County was their office. Commissioner Myhre asked if they had to wait three or four years to look into the matter. Commissioner Myhre said Houston County's Comprehensive Land Use Plan was the "worst" he had ever seen. Commissioner Johnson reminded Commissioner Myhre that Commissioner Myhre had voted yes to adopt the plan. No official decisions were made on the matter. It would be discussed again when the full board was present.

Coordinator Parker said Houston County's Resolution they had passed, Resolution No. 26-08 A Resolution of the Houston County Board of Commissioners Opposing the Proposed 765 kV "Gopher to Badger Link" Transmission Project Within Houston County, Minnesota had been submitted to the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) the week prior. The comment was still not showing in the State's system, and the County had heard from others that some comments from last week were also not showing. Wagner had contacted the State PUC that morning. The PUC was looking into the matter.

The Commissioners discussed recent and upcoming meetings including a Department Head Meeting and Root River Watershed One meeting.

Commissioners Myhre and Schuldt said they had not been given enough notice to attend the township meeting the day prior.

Closing Public Comment:

Mark Klinski from Union Township said he was part of the Houston County Township Association. He said he thought the County was capable of discussing more than one rule at a time including the quarter, quarter rule. He said the Townships would be having their annual meeting in early April and they would make sure to invite the Commissioners in advance.

There being no further business, a motion was made by Commissioner Zehnder, seconded by Commissioner Johnson, motion unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 10:30 a.m. The next meeting would be a regular meeting on February 24, 2026.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

HOUSTON COUNTY, MINNESOTA

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Greg Myhre, Chairperson

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_  
Brent Parker, Coordinator

## PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Date: March 3, 2026

9:00 a.m.

Place: Commissioners Room, Courthouse, Caledonia, MN

Members Present: Cindy Wright, Eric Johnson, Kurt Zehnder, Robert Schuldt, and Greg Myhre

Others Present: Interim Auditor/Treasurer Polly Heberlein, Fillmore County Journal Reporter Charlene Selbee, The Caledonia Argus Associate Editor Katia Gorsuch, Finance Director Carol Lapham, Coordinator Brent Parker, EDA Director & Coordinator Support Allison Wagner, Public Health Supervisor Jordan Knoke, Public Health Educator Bri Ceaser, Engineer Brian Pogodzinski, Social Services Supervisor Bethany Moen, Corey Baker, Steve Hartwick, Tammy Diersen, Dayva Goetzinger, Pam Snodgrass, John Haines, Joyce Roffler, Deb Hoskins, Liza Eng, Burce Eng, Donna Buckbee, Scott Halteli, Cindy Hatleli, Vicki Olson, Anne Yakle, Kristina Hauser, Duane Teschleer, John Pugleasa, and Sheila Schroeder

Presiding: Chairperson Myhre

Call to order.

Pledge of Allegiance.

Prior to any motions being made Wagner clarified the grant accepted the previous week had been from the Minnesota State Horticultural Society. Wagner said the mix up on the agenda had been her mistake. She also clarified that in the February 17, 2026 minutes the truck chassis was awarded to Towmaster for the Swenson Body. Motion was made by Commissioner Zehnder, seconded by Commissioner Schuldt, motion unanimously carried to approve the agenda.

Motion was made by Commissioner Johnson, seconded by Commissioner Schuldt, motion carried to approve the meeting minutes from February 24, 2026. All Commissioners voted yes, except for Commissioner Wright who abstained due to being absent from the meeting.

Public Comment:

Cynthia Crestwell-Hatleli said she owned property next to a proposed mine. She said mine density standards had changed in March of 2025. She said neighbors of the proposed mine should have been notified. She read to the board a timeline of events. She requested that amendments that were made in March of 2025 be reverted back to what they had been in 2014. She also spoke on behalf of her husband, Scott Halteli, who was concerned that with more mines there would be less building sites available. He did not think there was a shortage of sand. He too, wanted the rule reverted back to the way it was.

Corey Baker from Yucatan Township said he was bordered on one side by a mine. He said he was concerned about being bordered on another side by another mine. He said it would mean a lot to him to have protections put in place. Baker said he would like the Commissioners to look at and accept the petition. He said his children wanted to live near him in the future.

John Haines from Houston said he was worried the County was getting ready to make a decision that could not easily be reversed. He said if a quarry went in it would be hard for it to go out. He asked what the dust abatement plan would be. He asked about protecting water and said farmers needed water. He asked if anyone had talked to businesses. Haines said protecting investments the County had already made was a serious responsibility.

Joyce Roffler from Yucatan Township said she was one of the petition signers. She said people had been unaware of the changes that had taken place. She said the Argus was the Official County Newspaper, but that her paper was delivered late and the County did not have many newsstands. She was concerned about sand mines causing heavy traffic.

Ann Yakle said she had been a resident of Houston County since 1988. She said she would not want to have the Commissioners' jobs. She said she thought they would be seeing a lot of pressure regarding land use. She asked that the board try to balance economics with preserving the area. She said she specifically chose to move to Southeast Minnesota. She said compromises often had to happen. Yakle said she thought requiring ½ mile between mines was a good compromise. She said she knew some mines may be needed.

Donna Buckbee said she grew up in the twin cities. It was 50 years prior when she had laid her eyes on the beauty of Houston County. She said she fell in love with the County. She said Houston County was the most beautiful place on earth. Buckbee said she was not saying that mines were not needed, but she said "don't do it in the most beautiful" place.

Duane Teschleer from Fillmore County said to protect tourism in the area he was strongly opposed to mines. He said he came to the area from lower Alabama and returned from the gulf to be in a place that was pristine. He said frac sand mining was destructive and silica going into the air was bad. He said he loved living in the area.

Steve Hartwick from Money Creek Township said 250 people had signed the petition and their opinions mattered. He said he knew publishing things in the Caledonia Argus met the County's requirement, but he asked why something that affects the entire County would get such little publicity.

## APPOINTMENTS

None.

## CONSENT AGENDA

None.

## ACTION ITEMS

File No. 1 – Commissioner Wright moved, Commissioner Zehnder seconded, motion unanimously carried to accept donation of \$100.00 from Winona Community Foundation on behalf of the Fastenal Blue Team Giving fund for foster care children in Houston County.

File No. 2 – Commissioner Zehnder moved, Commissioner Wright seconded, motion unanimously carried to approve Purchase Contract for Mosquito Abatement Services with Driftless Region Vector Control LLC.

File No. 3 – The Commissioners discussed approving the Airport Lease Agreement with the City of Caledonia, MN to lease a vehicle from the County to provide a courtesy car for the Houston County Airport with Engineer Pogodzinski. The County's insurance would not cover a courtesy car, however the City's insurance would cover the car as most small airports were owned by municipalities. Commissioner Wright moved, Commissioner Zehnder seconded, motion to approve the agreement. Commissioner Johnson asked if those using the car would be able to travel throughout Houston County or what the rules/conditions would be with the use of the car. Pogodzinski said it would be the City of Caledonia to set the rules as they would be carrying the insurance. After further discussion Commissioner Wright amended her motion to instead table the matter until more information about the rules could be determined. Commissioner Zehnder seconded and the Commissioners unanimously voted to table the matter. Commissioner Wright said she did want to see the agreement move forward after more information on the rules could be provided as having a courtesy car would be good for the area.

File No. 4 – Commissioners discussed with Engineer Pogodzinski the possibility of allowing the highway department to hire of one summer help employee. Pogodzinski said they would most likely hire an interested student. Commissioner Johnson asked if the temporary position would be advertised. Engineer Pogodzinski said in the past when working with students in the summer he did not think the positions had been advertised. Commissioner Johnson said the County should advertise the positions. Commissioner Zehnder moved, Commissioner Wright seconded, motion carried 4 to 1 to approve the hire of one summer help employee in the Highway department. Commissioners Wright, Zehnder, Schuldt and Myhre voted yes. Commissioner Johnson voted no.

File No. 4 – Commissioner Zehnder moved, Commissioner Wright seconded, motion unanimously carried to review and approve payments. Payments are below.

REQUEST APPROVAL FOR PAYMENT	
2026/03/03 COMMISSIONER WARRANTS:	
<b>VENDOR NAME</b>	<b>AMOUNT</b>
CALEDONIA OIL CO INC	5,647.00
DAHL AUTOMOTIVE	5,561.12
DAVE SYVERSON TRUCK CENTER	252,368.07
DLT SOLUTIONS LLC	5,383.04
MN STATE AUDITOR	10,844.50
VERIZON WIRELESS	2,947.35
WIEBKE TIRE CO	3,258.96
	286,010.04
20 VENDORS PAID LESS THAN \$2000.00	9,207.07
	295,217.11
PUBLIC HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES	25,611.66
	320,828.77

## DISCUSSION ITEMS

Coordinator Parker said the final public hearing regarding the use of rifles in Houston County for deer hunting would take place that evening. Coordinator Parker said the County was having some tech issues with the cameras in the Board of Commissioner room, so when watching the recording the speakers would be seen from a side angle. The County was working to have the cameras fixed.

The Commissioners discussed recent and upcoming meetings including a Planning Commission, Safety, Feedlot, and Personnel meeting.

The Commissioners congratulated Coordinator Parker on his one-year anniversary with Houston County.

Commissioner Wright said she had questions regarding the sand mine ordinance. She said there should be clarification on what it was and what it wasn't. She said she would like to see the County look into four areas that were highlighted in the petition signed by 245 residents including:

1. A comprehensive review of current ordinances to restore and strengthen all mine density limits.
2. Clearly defined restrictions on the number and proximity of sand mines allowed in any area.
3. Stronger health and safety protections for residents and the environment.
4. Public hearings for community input before any new conditional use permits for mines are approved.

### Closing Public Comment:

Joyce Roffler said more mines would impact property values. She said she would like to see public hearings take place on the matter.

Duane Teschleer said he was concerned citizens living in the area would be breathing in mining.

Cindy Crestwell discussed the timeline again. She said there was available sand that could be used. She said citizens' health and safety should come before a single family's profit. She asked the board to look into reverting the rule.

Donna Buckbee from Yucatan Township said she was one of the people who had collected signatures for the current petition and had also done so for past petitions. She said this time around she saw a difference in people's attitude. In regard to rifles she said it was her understanding a bullet from a rifle could travel three miles. She asked why the County would want people firing rifles that traveled so far.

John Haines said originally the shotgun/rifle rule had made sense. He asked if it was that big of a deal between a rifle and a shotgun now.

Steve Hartwick from Money Creek Township asked about upcoming meetings. He said he had read in a 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary edition of the Fillmore County Journal where news staff had been highlighted that every one of them had said the environment was why they decided to live in the area.

There being no further business, a motion was made by Commissioner Zehnder, seconded by Commissioner Wright, motion unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 10:15 a.m. The next meeting would be a workgroup session on March 10, 2026.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

HOUSTON COUNTY, MINNESOTA

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Greg Myhre, Chairperson

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_  
Brent Parker, Coordinator

## PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS SPECIAL MEETING

Date: March 3, 2026

6:00 p.m.

Place: Basement of County Justice Center, Caledonia, MN

Members Present: Cindy Wright, Eric Johnson, Kurt Zehnder, Robert Schuldt, and Greg Myhre

Others Present: Interim Auditor/Treasurer Polly Heberlein, The Caledonia Argus Reporter Katia Gorsuch, Coordinator Brent Parker, EDA Director & Coordinator Support Allison Wagner, Interim Attorney Suzanne Bublitz, Sheriff Brian Swedberg, Roger Pearson, Tracy Pearson, Clayton Johnson, Dan Vesterse, Tony Schroeder, Joe Hastlez, Gary Gimble, Gary Oldenburg, Glenn Tullius, Donald Ott, Dave Weber, Rick Frank, Steve Reiman, Ramen Frankin, Jason VanGundy, Jeremy Van Gundy, Bob Borowiak, Curt Henderson, Marc Nelson, Dewayne Schroeder, Geoff Halverson, Kaleb Peterson, John Meyer, Jon Koche, Ryan Rohrer, Matt Johnson, Nathan Hahn, Larry Gaustad, Dan Solum, Marissa Solum, Nathan Lee, Damien Lampert, Dustin Miller, Jordan Jaster, Kathy Solum, Steve Bauer, Rande Gustafson, Mary Lou Gerand, Nick Schneider, Ricky Flatin, Russel Gerard, Jeff Frank, Kaleb Skauge, Chad Wiebke, John Hauser, Bruce Kuehmichel, Steve Massman, Bruce Vongroven, Jason Abnet, Bonnie Laumb, Jeanett Buttell, Mike Buttell, David Abts, Dylan Lee, Carter Chigilo, Owen Gee, John Tschumper, Edward Voight, Mike Solum, Shane Eastman, Sam Fattig, Amy Fattig, Scott DeWitt, Deanna DeWitt, Jeff Abrams, Kay M Capps Cross, Michael Sieve, Chris Bjerke, Nick Bjerke, Bruce Lee, Mark Bird, Jason Wiebke, Mark Weichert, Susan Schneider, Bo Hamlin, and Nathanael Culver

Presiding: Chairperson Myhre

Call to order Special Meeting.

Pledge of Allegiance.

Motion was made by Commissioner Johnson, seconded by Commissioner Schuldt, motion unanimously carried to approve the agenda.

### APPOINTMENTS

A public hearing on the use of rifles for deer hunting in Houston County was started. Minnesota Statutes § 97B.031, Subd. 7 had authorized a county board located in the former

shotgun zone to adopt an ordinance after notice and public hearing to limit the type of firearms that may be used to hunt deer within the county if they chose to do so.

Dave Weber from Money Creek said he was strongly in favor of allowing rifles for deer hunting. He said safety came down to the shooter not the firearm.

Russel Gerard from Wilmington Township said he was looking forward to hunting with a rifle. He said he could think of plenty of reasons people should be able to use rifles. He said they were nice to shoot, and nice for kids to shoot. Rifles were already legal in Minnesota, and his daughter used a rifle. He said he was 63 and looking forward to spending the rest of his years hunting with a rifle. Gerard said most of the comments made about safety at the previous meeting were from the “big buck crowd”. He said he filled his freezer with food. He did not think safety was an actual issue.

Donald Ott from the Mound Prairie area said he thought rifles were safer to use. He said Wisconsin numbers supported this. He also said using rifles would lower the cost of hunting. He said rifles were more accurate and had a more effective kill.

Nathanael Culver from Hokah Township said rifles should be allowed. He said he hunted in Fillmore and Houston County. He argued that shotguns were more dangerous than rifles. He said rifles were less likely to get caught up in brush.

Roger Pearson from Caledonia said he was not in favor of using rifles for deer hunting. He said he had drivers training, but even though he had the training he didn’t always follow the rules. He was against rifle use.

Glenn Tullius from La Crescent and Money Creek said he grew up near Fountain City. He said statistics were excellent for Minnesota safety. He was in favor of using rifles. He said he was sorry the Commissioners had to make the decision.

Dustin Miller was in favor of using rifles for deer hunting. He said he hunted all year long and used bow, shotgun, and rifle.

Dylan Lee from Houston said he thought it was safer to use a rifle. He said a vast number of people shot rifles at coyotes four months out of the year. He said as long as people were safe the equipment they used shouldn’t matter.

Jeff Frank said he had lived in Minnesota for nine years. He also hunted near Fort McCoy and in Wisconsin. He said he lived in La Crosse as a youth and at the time it was a shotgun only territory. He said since the rule changed in Wisconsin there had not been any issues that he was aware of. He said his daughter was 14 years old and he wanted her to be able to use a rifle that was easiest to be able to hold. He was in favor of rifles.

David Abts said he was in the Gopher State Sportsman Club, a youth coach, and firearm safety instructor. He said rifles would benefit youth and those who were not able bodied. He said using rifles would help smaller stature shooters. He said rifles could be lighter than shotguns. He said carrying a lighter gun allowed for a safer hunt as the shooter would be less fatigued.

Jeanett Buttell said she was a lifelong resident of Houston County. She was against the use of rifles. She said it scared her to think of sitting in a tree stand with her grandchildren with rifles. She said the area she hunted was a very hilly property and she had safety concerns.

Kaleb Peterson from Hokah said he was a police rifleman and also in the national guard. He said he was in favor of legalizing rifles. He said he didn't believe it was other people's business to tell people what they could hunt with. He said there were laws in place for individuals. He said shotguns were more expensive.

Jeremy Van Gundy from Houston said the DNR first introduced the rule as a deer management tool. He said decisions should be made based on facts not feelings.

Clayton Johnson from Black Hammer Township said he had created a video that had been shared with the Commissioners. He was against the use of rifles for deer hunting as he was concerned about safety. He said he was concerned about people hunting from the road.

Daryl Melbostad from Spring Grove said hunting with a rifle was more ethical. He said landowners should have the option to say what people could and could not hunt with. He said he didn't believe the State of Minnesota gave the Commissioners an easy job.

Bob Borowiak from Houston said the County had received over 300 signatures from people saying they wanted the County to opt out of the new rule. He asked how many signatures had been received from the other side. He said he thought someone who signed their name to something was more powerful than a verbal statement.

Rande Gustafson from Winnebago Valley said he was not a deer hunter as he didn't like the cold or the meat. He said he was not sure if he was for or against the use of rifles. He said his land bordered State land. He said he had heard that tourism might increase. He said if that happened concerns would also need to be addressed. He had had issues with trespassers and had been told by the DNR that they could not respond for a week due to lack of workers. He was concerned about trespassing and vandalism.

Jordan Jaster from Spring Grove said people should give the new rule a chance. He said if there were a bunch of problems the Commissioners could change it back to the way it was. He quoted his mom saying "you never know if you like it or not if you don't give it a chance".

Mike Sieve from Yucatan Township said "we live in a society that wants instant gratification". He asked when hunting would get back to the sportsmanship that he appreciated.

Tony Schroeder said there were currently a lot of deer. He said maybe Houston County should just try using rifles.

Mark Weichert from Caledonia said it was inappropriate to use rifles in Houston County. He said he thought there would be more out of state hunters if it were to be allowed.

Kathy Solum from Houston said she supported the use of rifles. She said she grew up in La Crosse in a hunting family. She said she had started bow hunting. She said they owned farmland and their crops had been decimated by deer. She said she had lost a cousin in an accident due to deer. She was not afraid of rifle hunting. Solum said deer hunters were respectable. She said northern Minnesota and Wisconsin currently used rifles. She said the use of rifles would allow youth, smaller, and older adults to be able to hunt. She said the County had CWD. She said banning rifles would lead to confusion for the hunter. Solum said she was for the use of rifles and she was sorry the Commissioners had been put in the position of making the decision.

Mark Nelson from Houston said he had a law enforcement and EMS background. He said he didn't have an issue with rifles. He did not have safety concerns after working in law enforcement for 20 years in Wisconsin.

Dan Vesterse from Spring Grove said he was a big buck hunter. He said rifles traveled farther and faster. He said a video had been prepared with tracer rounds. Vesterse said if people wanted to hunt using a rifle they could go where they were allowed. He was against rifles and said people could not find a big buck anymore. He said it was a classic example of if it is not broke don't fix it.

Geoff Halverson, Houston resident, said he was opposed to rifle hunting. He had concerns for safety and other hunters.

Bo Hamlin said he grew up in La Crescent. He was a veteran with the United States Marine Corps. He said Buffalo County Wisconsin produced the largest bucks in the United States and rifle hunting was allowed there. He said 18% of the population participated in firearm deer hunting. He said there were concerns about deposits of lead. He said non-toxic percentiles could only be found with rifles. He said rifles allowed for more ethical hunting. He said rifles had lower cost ammunition. He said allowing rifles let hunters have the ability to have options.

Deanna DeWitt said most accidents happened from tree stands. She said for the farmers she hoped people could use rifles and the State of Minnesota had passed it.

Curt Henderson from La Crescent was a firearm instructor. He asked the board to keep it the same. He said a lot of people in the room had good points. He said he took kids hunting because their parents didn't want anything to do with it. He said there were a lot of fools out there.

Mike Solum from Wilmington Township said he was opposed to the use of rifles. He said he agreed with what others had said.

Kay Cross from Spring Grove said she was not a hunter. She was opposed to allowing rifles for deer hunting. She said she remembered a child who was shot in his backyard who someone thought was a deer. She said she had empathy for the people who accidentally shot someone and for the people who got shot. Cross said she lived near the edge of town. She said she was giving an emotional plea and urged the Commissioners to not allow the use of rifles.

Dan Solum from La Crescent Township said he was for the use of rifles. He said you could misuse anything and get hurt.

Mike Buttell from Houston County said he was an “old school” hunter who still knocked on people’s doors to hunt. He had taught his kids to do the same. He said he was for shotgun only.

Larry Gaustad from Yucatan Township said he had lived there for 74 years, and shot a lot of deer. He said he didn’t have a preference one way or another when it came to the use of rifles or shotguns. He said he had called St. Paul and asked why the pressure had been put on the Houston County Commissioners. He said he also called a DNR official to see if they would come to the meeting. He said there were lots of deer. He said in three days 81 deer had been shot with 100 permits on his hunting land. He said he had shot deer with everything. He said people should thank the farmers for raising big bucks.

Nick Schneider from Mound Prairie Township said most everything he had wanted to say had already been said. He said the DNR had chose to make the change. He did not think they would have left the decision up to the Commissioners if it was a safety issue. He said people did not want more laws. He said the data showed rifles were safer. He asked that the board give people the chance to make the decision on their own.

Steve Bauer from Caledonia said it was a safety issue. He said anyone who shot a rifle knew it went farther. He asked the Commissioners to remember the names of those who signed the petition when they voted.

Scott DeWitt from Caledonia Township said he was for the use of rifles. He said there were certain situations where he wanted to use a rifle. He said he did custom combining and saw a lot of deer damage to crops. He said often when combining outer rows of corn no yellow came through. He said he hunted for the meat and not the horns. He said he wanted the opportunity to use a weapon of his choice where it was safe.

Bruce Vongroven said he was a lifelong Houston County participant. He said he hoped there was not division among the hunters because of this. He said he hunted with a rifle out west. He said most people that hunted were ethical. He said rifle people would start taking shots from farther, and farther away. He said he had concerns about safety. He was not for using rifles for

deer hunting in Houston County. He said farmers were growing the deer. He thanked the board and told them good luck with their decision.

Tracy Pearson from Caledonia was against the use of rifles and had been raised by hunters.

Ed Voight from Caledonia Township was a beef farmer. He said it was important to protect livestock.

Susan Schneider from Caledonia was against the use of rifles. She said the topography in Houston County was different. She said the distance rifles could travel could be a dangerous situation. She said a lot of people who came to Houston County to hunt were not familiar with the area.

Rich Zibrowski from Houston said he was for the use of rifles. He had hunted since he was a kid. He said he drove truck, and he felt safer in the woods than he did on the road driving. He said if people didn't want to use a rifle then they shouldn't use one.

Bonnie Laumb from Caledonia was against the use of rifles.

Shane Eastman, Houston County resident, said he was for freedom of choice. He said, "Give us a choice, that is all I want".

Bruce Lee said he was for allowing rifles.

Jackson Perry said "give us a choice". He said he was for suppressors.

Sam Fattig from Hokah said he lost a deer a few years prior and it may have been due to slightly less accuracy. He said he would be out hunting coyotes with a rifle. He said where he hunted there were massive backdrops so ricocheting was not an issue.

After hearing no more public comments, the public hearing ended.

There being no further business, a motion was made by Commissioner Johnson, seconded by Commissioner Zehnder, motion unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 7:21 p.m. The next meeting would be a workgroup session on March 10, 2026.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

HOUSTON COUNTY, MINNESOTA

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Greg Myhre, Chairperson

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_

Brent Parker, Coordinator

## PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Date: March 10, 2026

9:00 a.m.

Place: Commissioners Room, Courthouse, Caledonia, MN

Members Present:

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

Others Present:

Interim Auditor/Treasurer Polly Heberlein, The Caledonia Argus Associate Editor Katia Gorsuch, Finance Director Carol Lapham, Coordinator Brent Parker, EDA Director & Coordinator Support Allison Wagner, Public Health Supervisor Jordan Knoke, Public Health Educator Bri Ceaser, Engineer Brian Pogodzinski, Environmental Services Director Amelia Meiners, Interim Attorney Suzanne Bublitz, Kathy Solum, Cindy Crestwell-Hateli, Scott Hateli, Steve Hartwick, and Ben Katz

### Board Workgroup Session

The Commissioners discussed possible future action regarding a rifle ordinance in Houston County. Coordinator Parker said the Commissioners had received feedback both for and against using rifles for deer hunting in Houston County. Commissioner Schuldt said Winona and Fillmore Counties were not doing an ordinance and that rifles would be allowed in those surrounding counties. Commissioner Johnsons said the legislature had passed the use of rifles with the DNR's approval. He said the original rule had been enacted because the deer population at the time had been scarce and they wanted to build the deer population. Commissioner Johnson said this was no longer the case. Commissioner Johnson said he didn't want to take away people's right of choice when it came to what gun they could use especially if the surrounding counties were allowing rifles. He said hunting zones crossed county lines. He said there was also some confusion on if the DNR would enforce a local ordinance. Commissioner Wright said from a public health perspective it could be looked at in both directions. She did not think Houston County should make their decision based primarily on what the surrounding counties were doing. Commissioner Zehnder said he still wanted to talk to more of his constituents before making a decision. Commissioner Myhre said he thought the board should vote on the matter at an upcoming meeting. No official decisions were made.

The Commissioners discussed recent sand mine density concerns from residents with Environmental Services Director Meiners. Text amendments had been made to the Zoning Ordinance for mineral extraction in March of 2025. Environmental Services Director Meiners said when the application to amend the ordinance had come in her office had been required to review it in a certain time period. They had an obligation to process it. The amendments that had been made included adding definitions of construction minerals and industrial minerals. Mine density

standards language was also modified. The ½ mile setback was still in place for industrial use. The text amendment took away the density requirement for construction minerals. Commissioner Johnson said the previous rule, before it was amended in March of 2025, did not define end use. After Houston County had made their rule other counties had started to define industrial vs. construction therefore the County amended their rule. Commissioner Johnson said dairy farmers used construction sand for bedding and construction sand was used for mound systems. He said river sand could not be used for these things. There were no frac sand mines in Houston County. Commissioner Wright asked about health and safety for people and the environment. Environmental Services Director Meiners said Houston County was not the only agency that monitored for health and safety. MSHA or Mine Safety Health Administration looked at operations of quarries. The DNR required permits within certain distances from trout streams. The matter would be discussed further at an upcoming Planning Commission meeting.

The Commissioners discussed a recent Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) audit with Coordinator Parker, Engineer Pogodzinski, and Environmental Services Director Meiners. Houston County was required to have a MS4 permit because of the County's right of way near La Crescent, and La Crescent's proximity to a major metro area, La Crosse. MS4 did not apply to most communities, and it was mostly required of metro areas. The County had not been audited for 17 years. Pogodzinski said everything was being done correctly in the field. However, after the audit the County found out there would need to be some changes to make sure the County was in compliance. The County would need to pass a new ordinance regarding the MS4 in order to resolve concerns. Staff would work on the ordinance and bring it back to the board for review at a later time.

Engineer Pogodzinski discussed with the board a policy regarding trees in city boulevards. He had been working with the Attorney's office on the policy for some time, and it would come back to the board for final approval.

The Commissioners reviewed with Coordinator Parker a resolution Fillmore County had passed regarding the Department of Natural Resources proposing to expand the designated trout streams additional miles upland from existing buffers. In Fillmore County employees, landowners, and commissioners had questions about the proposed expansion and had not heard back from the department. Fillmore County was opposed to the proposed expansion beyond the existing trout streams already designated unless they could be an active part of the process according to a recent ordinance they had passed. Houston County Commissioners said they too were starting to get calls from Houston County residents with similar concerns to Fillmore County. Commissioner Wright said she would like to have more information on the matter. The Commissioners asked how many miles would be affected in Houston County. County staff would look into the matter and report back to the board.

The Commissioners discussed the County's quarter, quarter rule. The townships had been asked to discuss thoughts on the rule at their upcoming annual meetings. Results of those discussions would be discussed at the Township Association spring meeting in April. The

Commissioners discussed that the Zoning office was busy, and did not have time to study the matter currently.

Environmental Services Director Meiners said the Residential Clean Sweep Event would take place on Saturday, April 25, 2026 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. in Houston. She asked if Commissioners wished to volunteer at the event again as they had done the year prior.

The workgroup session ended at 10:26 a.m.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

HOUSTON COUNTY, MINNESOTA

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Greg Myhre, Chairperson

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_  
Brent Parker, Coordinator

## PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Date: March 17, 2026

9:00 a.m.

Place: Commissioners Room, Courthouse, Caledonia, MN

Members Present: Cindy Wright, Eric Johnson, Kurt Zehnder, Robert Schuldt, and Greg Myhre

Others Present: Interim Auditor/Treasurer Polly Heberlein, Fillmore County Journal Reporter Charlene Selbee, The Caledonia Argus Associate Editor Katia Gorsuch, Finance Director Carol Lapham, EDA Director & Coordinator Support Allison Wagner, Engineer Brian Pogodzinski, and Environmental Services Director Amelia Meiners

Presiding: Chairperson Myhre

Call to order.

Pledge of Allegiance.

Commissioner Johnson said the programming update from UMN Extension had needed to be rescheduled. Motion was made by Commissioner Zehnder, seconded by Commissioner Johnson, motion unanimously carried to approve the agenda with the update.

Motion was made by Commissioner Zehnder, seconded by Commissioner Johnson, motion unanimously carried to approve the regular meeting minutes from March 3, 2026.

Motion was made by Commissioner Johnson, seconded by Commissioner Schuldt, motion unanimously carried to approve the special meeting minutes from March 3, 2026.

Commissioner Johnson said discussion regarding the County's quarter, quarter rule needed to be added to the workgroup session minutes as it has been accidentally missed. Commissioner Wright added that the Commissioners had discussed that the Environmental Services Office was busy and did not have time to study the matter currently. Motion was made by Commissioner Johnson, seconded by Commissioner Wright, motion unanimously carried to approve the workgroup session minutes with the changes.

Public Comment:

None.

### APPOINTMENTS

None.

## CONSENT AGENDA

Motion was made by Commissioner Zehnder, seconded by Commissioner Johnson, motion unanimously carried to approve the consent agenda. Approved items are below.

- 1) Hire Karen Fryseth as a 1 FTE Child Support Officer (B24 – Step 2) with a start date of March 30th, 2026.
- 2) Transfer Andrea Lien from Adult Protection Social Worker to a 1 FTE HCBS Social Worker (Lateral Transfer / C41 – Step 3) effective immediately.
- 3) Approve a competitive search for another 1 FTE Adult Protection Social Worker (C41).

## ACTION ITEMS

File No. 1 – Commissioner Zehnder moved, Commissioner Johnson seconded, motion unanimously carried to appoint Lane Zaffke to a 1<sup>st</sup> term on the Houston County Extension Committee. His term dates would be from the appointment date through 12/31/2028.

File No. 2 – Commissioner Zehnder moved, Commissioner Schuldt seconded, motion unanimously carried to approve a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) for Michel and Susan Bashaw for a single-family dwelling on less than 40 acres in the Agriculture Protection District in La Crescent Township.

File No. 3 – Commissioner Zehnder moved, Commissioner Wright seconded, motion unanimously carried to approve a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) for the Barta Family Trust for a cabin in the Agriculture Protection District in Houston Township.

File No. 4 – Commissioner Zehnder moved, Commissioner Johnson seconded, motion unanimously carried to award project SAP 028-607-008 / SAP 028-618-009 for the paving on CSAH 7 and CSAH 18 to Dunn Blacktop in the amount of \$4,849,295.18. One bid was received. Bid is below.

SAP 028-607-008 and SAP 028-618-009	
Dunn Blacktop Company	\$4,849,295.18

File No. 5 – Commissioner Zehnder moved, Commissioner Johnson seconded, motion unanimously carried to accept the low bid from Bruening Rock Products in the amount of \$381,242.12 for CP 2026-01 Shouldering. Abstract is below.

CP 2026-01 Shouldering	
Bruening Rock Products	\$381,242.12
Dunn Blacktop Company	\$441,515.23

File No. 6 – Commissioner Johnson moved, Commissioner Schuldt seconded, motion unanimously carried to accept all quotes for CP 2026-02 for aggregate stockpiles. Quotes are below.

C.P. 2026-02 (STOCKPILE QUOTES)							
Quantities	U of M	Milestone Materials State Bid Prices Through 1/30/2027	Milestone Materials Through 5/16/2026 to 5/15/2027 USE STATE UNTIL 1/30/27	Botcher Construction Co., Inc Through 5/16/2026 to 5/15/2027	Bruening Rock Products, Inc Through 5/16/2026 to 5/15/2027	Ron Weymiller Construction Through 5/16/2026 to 5/15/2027	Van Gundy Excavating Through 5/16/2026 to 5/15/2027
Stockpile Aggregate Class 5	Ton	9.20	9.60	9.50	9.35	9.75	9.50
Stockpile Aggregate Class 5Q	Ton		9.60		9.35		9.50
Stockpile Aggregate Class 5 Modified	Ton		9.60		9.35		9.50
Stockpile - Gabion Stone	Ton		23.50	20.00	14.25		22.50
Rip Rap, Class I	Ton		23.50	15.00	14.25		22.50
Rip Rap, Class II	Ton		21.00	15.00	14.25	15.50	20.00
Rip Rap, Class III	Ton	18.00	18.75	15.00	14.25	15.50	18.00
Rip Rap, Class IV	Ton	18.00	18.75	15.00	14.25		18.00
Rip Rap, Class V	Ton	18.00	18.75	15.00	14.25		18.00
Quarry-Run Riprap	Ton		7.50	8.50	8.50	8.10	9.00

File No. 7 – Commissioner Johnson moved, Commissioner Zehnder seconded, motion unanimously carried to accept all quotes for CP 2026-03 for equipment rental. Quotes are below.

C.P. 2026-03 Equipment Rental																
Cost Code	Equipment	Specification	Capacity/ Size	HP	Notes	Unit	Labor code	Harvestor Landscaping & Tree	Harvestor Paving and Tree	Harvestor Rock Products	Griffin Construction Co., Inc	Landscape Interiors, LLC	Myler Construction LLC	Schwabert Landscaping	Van Gulpe Excavating, LLP	WY Tree-Log & Coor, LLC
8191	Labo															
8350	Chain Saw	Bar Length	25 In			hour		75.00	120.00	80.00	100.00	70.00	85.00	80.00	90.00	90.00
8251	Dozer, Crawler			to 65		hour		101	120.00	105.00	110.00	90.00		95.00		90.00
8252	Dozer, Crawler			to 105		hour		364		145.00			175.00			
	Dozer, Crawler			to 160		hour		364		181.00					160.00	185.00
	Dozer, Crawler			to 200		hour		364		227.00			205.00		195.00	195.00
8281	Excavator, Hydraulic	Bucket Capacity	1.0 CY	to 90	Crawler, Truck & Wheel Includes bucket	hour		364	290.00	270.00			255.00		225.00	
8282	Excavator, Hydraulic	Bucket Capacity	1.5 CY	to 160	Crawler, Truck & Wheel Includes bucket	hour		313	163.00				170.00		150.00	150.00
8283	Excavator, Hydraulic	Bucket Capacity	1.5 CY	to 160	Crawler, Truck & Wheel Includes bucket	hour		313	183.00				175.00		175.00	190.00
8284	Excavator, Hydraulic	Bucket Capacity	2.5 CY	to 265	Crawler, Truck & Wheel Includes bucket	hour		313	272.00	280.00			255.00		240.00	
8333	Excavator, Hydraulic	Bucket Capacity	4.5 CY	to 420	Crawler, Truck & Wheel Includes bucket	hour		305	243.00	320.00			325.00		300.00	
8340	Graders	Moldboard Size	14 Ft	to 235	Includes Pigid and Articulate equipment	hour		306	215.00	180.00			185.00		175.00	
8541	Loader, Skid-Steer	Operating Capacity	1000 Lbs	to 35		hour		344	120.00	141.00			155.00	150.00		
8542	Loader, Skid-Steer	Operating Capacity	2000 Lbs	to 65		hour		344	120.00	141.00	160.00		165.00	150.00	125.00	110.00
8543	Loader, Skid-Steer	Operating Capacity	3000 Lbs	to 85		hour		344	120.00	153.00	170.00		175.00	150.00		110.00
8392	Loader, Skid-Steer	Operating Capacity	4000 Lbs	to 94		hour		344		150.00	173.00		150.00	185.00	175.00	150.00
8393	Loader, Wheel	Bucket Capacity	2 CY	to 105		hour		344		182.00			175.00			
8394	Loader, Wheel	Bucket Capacity	3 CY	to 152		hour		344		202.00			185.00			
8395	Loader, Wheel	Bucket Capacity	4 CY	to 200		hour		344		242.00	205.00		205.00		180.00	
8571	Loader, Wheel	Bucket Capacity	5 CY	to 250		hour		315		290.00			225.00		200.00	
8572	Loader-Backhoe, Wheel	Capacity	1 CY	to 70	Loader and Backhoe Buckets included	hour		313		182.00			175.00			
	Loader-Backhoe, Wheel	Loader Bucket Capacity	1.5 CY	to 95	Loader and Backhoe Buckets included	hour		313		193.00			185.00			
8721	Truck, Dump	Truck Capacity	4 CY			hour			50.00			90.00	105.00	100.00		
8722	Truck, Dump	Truck Capacity	10 CY	to 235		hour		413		126.00			135.00			110.00
8723	Truck, Dump	Truck Capacity	12 CY	to 255		hour		407		126.00	130.00		145.00		125.00	110.00
8780	Truck, Dump	Truck Capacity	18 CY	to 330		hour		604		168.00			165.00		145.00	
8781	Truck, Water	Tank Capacity	2500 Gal	to 175	Include pump and rear spray system	hour		613		134.00	140.00					
2123.61	Truck, Water	Tank Capacity	4000 Gal	to 250	Include pump and rear spray system	hour		607		173.00					150.00	
	Tandem Truck w/ Pup Trailer	Truck Capacity Pup Capacity	10 CY 10 CY			hour		602		162.00						
	Grapple Truck	Tandem Grapple				hour						180.00				
	Grapple Haul Truck		50 yard box			hour										
	Grapple Haul Truck		60 yard box			hour				250.00						
	Bucket and Truck		60 ft			hour				250.00			140.00			
	Bucket and Truck		30 ft			hour							125.00			
	Bucket and Truck		65 ft			hour										
	Semi Tractor w/ belly dump					hour		602		151.00	140.00					
2123.521	Semi Tractor w/ end dump					hour				151.00	140.00					
	Semi Tractor w/ side dump					hour				139.00	140.00					
2123.61	Lowboy					hour		603		336.00	250.00				250.00	
	Shouldering Machine					hour		383		207.00						

C.P. 2026-03 Equipment Rental																
Cost Code	Equipment	Specification	Capacity/ Size	HP	Notes	Unit	Labor code	Harvestor Landscaping & Tree	Harvestor Paving and Tree	Harvestor Rock Products	Griffin Construction Co., Inc	Landscape Interiors, LLC	Myler Construction LLC	Schwabert Landscaping	Van Gulpe Excavating, LLP	WY Tree-Log & Coor, LLC
	Power Broom					hour				139.00			175.00			150.00
	Pneumatic - Tired Roller					hour				181.00						
	Hydroseeder		Mixed tank			hour	203			125.00			900.00	650.00	650.00	
	Hydroseeder		Mixed tank			Tank	203						900.00	900.00	1,200.00	
	Turf Tractor & Tiller					hour	203	100.00		145.00			145.00	150.00		
	Small Square Bale Muncher					hour	203						275.00	350.00	300.00	
	Large Square Bale Muncher					hour	203						325.00	350.00	350.00	
	Skid Loader Attachments	Harley Rake Land Leveler			w/Skidsteer	hour	344				190.00		200.00	175.00		150.00
	Silt Fence Machine					hour				106.00			200.00	180.00	165.00	
	Silt Fence Machine					lin ft	366			1.58				7.00	6.00	
	Haul Truck					hour	204			221.00	260.00 315.00				200.00	
	Sheeps Foot					hour	396			139.00	210.00				140.00	
	Skidder					hour	385					155.00	200.00		150.00	
	65 Ton Crane					hour	304			358.00						
	Excavator with Hydraulic Hammer					hour	304			277.00			350.00		300.00	250.00
	OUTSIDE OF PROPOSAL															
	Feller Buncher					hour										375.00
	Stamp Grader				14ch Diameter	hour							7.00			
	Chipper					hour							90.00			
	Mini Excavator				16 18" - 20" bucket	hour				100.00						
	Mini Excavator				16 Auger	hour				100.00						
	Post Pounder (Gas) Tool Only					hour				10.00						

File No. 8 – Commissioner Zehnder moved, Commissioner Wright seconded, motion unanimously carried to accept the low quote from Fahrner Asphalt Sealers LLC, in the amount of \$131,600.00 for CP 2026-04 Crack Filling. Abstract is below.

CP 2026-04 Crackfilling	
Fahrner Asphalt Sealers, LLC	\$ 131,600.00
American Pavement Solutions	\$ 133,000.00

File No. 9 – Commissioner Zehnder moved, Commissioner Schuldt seconded, motion unanimously carried accept the low bid from Scott Construction Inc. in the amount of \$503,789.01 for CP 2026-06 Bituminous Seal Coat. Abstract is below.

CP 2026-06 Bituminous Seal Coat	
Scott Construction, Inc	\$503,789.01
Allied Blacktop Company	\$570,294.54
Asphalt Surface Technologies Corp.	\$580,587.40
Fahrner Asphalt Sealers, LLC	\$581,028.31

File No. 10 – Commissioner Zehnder moved, Commissioner Wright seconded, motion unanimously carried to approve the purchase of a sign cutter from Traff Tech in the amount of \$8,475.00.

File No. 10 – Commissioner Wright moved, Commissioner Johnson seconded, motion unanimously carried to approve Resolution No. 26-10 setting minimum salary for any officials elected in 2026. Resolution is below.

#### RESOLUTION NO. 26-10

#### MINIMUM SALARY FOR OFFICIALS ELECTED IN 2026

WHEREAS, The Houston County Board of Commissioners must set a minimum salary for any newly elected officials.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Houston County Board of Commissioners, the following minimum salaries exist for any officials elected in 2026:

<u>POSITION</u>	<u>SALARY</u>
County Attorney	\$5000
County Recorder	\$5000
County Auditor/Treasurer	\$5000
County Sheriff	\$5000
County Commissioner	\$5000

File No. 10 – Commissioner Zehnder moved, Commissioner Johnson seconded, motion unanimously carried to approve Resolution No. 26-11 opposing the proposed expansion beyond

the existing trout streams already designated, unless Houston County can be an active part of the process, be shown proper documentation for the necessity of expansion and how this could lead to additional stream miles capable of sustaining a trout population. Resolution is below.

RESOLUTION NO. 26 – 11

HOUSTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

WHEREAS; In 2018, the Buffer Law was enacted through Minnesota Board of Water & Soil Resources. Due to this law the Department of Natural Resources, property owners, and County Officials followed buffer maps to protect existing streams and rivers within Houston County that were designated for fishing and recreation;

WHEREAS; the Department of Natural Resources is now proposing to expand the designated trout streams, which is approximately 37.4 additional miles upland from existing buffers;

WHEREAS Houston County Officials and Houston County landowners have received notices, which include maps, that show the proposed expansion area; the maps are hard to interpret and appear to be areas without flowing water capable of trout habitat, therefore being expanded beyond what is practical for the stated purpose, and is asking counties to enforce additional miles without input or guidance;

Now THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the Houston County Board of Commissioners are opposed to the proposed expansion beyond the existing trout streams already designated, unless Houston County can be an active part of the process, be shown proper documentation for the necessity of expansion and how this could lead to additional stream miles capable of sustaining a trout population.

File No. 13 – Commissioner Zehnder moved, Commissioner Wright seconded, motion unanimously carried to review and approve payments. Payments are below.

**REVIEW LICENSE CENTER PAYMENTS**

**2026/03/17 AUDITOR WARRANTS:**

<u>VENDOR NAME</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
DAVE SYVERSON TRUCK CENTER	252,368.07
DELTA DENTAL	7,816.80
IUOE LOCAL 49 FRINGE BENEFIT FUNDS	28,475.00
MEDICA	255,236.84

MN LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY	2,675.15
	<u>546,571.86</u>
5 VENDORS PAID LESS THAN \$2000.00	2,037.49
	<u><u>548,609.35</u></u>

**REQUEST APPROVAL FOR PAYMENT**

**2026/03/17 COMMISSIONER WARRANTS:**

<b>VENDOR NAME</b>	<b>AMOUNT</b>
ACEN TEK	4,719.70
ADVANCED CORRECTIONAL HEALTHCAR	8,112.33
BOLTON & MENK INC	4,500.00
CALEDONIA/CITY OF	14,960.92
COMPUTER FORENSIC SERVICES LLC	48,301.41
ENTERPRISE FM	6,423.14
GROUNDBREAKING CONNECTIONS LLC	7,083.33
HOUSTON COUNTY TREASURER	20,292.13
HOUSTON COUNTY TREASURER	36,936.81
INSIGHT PUBLIC SECTOR	14,464.64
LA CROSSE GLASS & OVERHEAD DOOR	7,696.00
MIENERGY COOPERATIVE	2,382.64
MINNESOTA ENERGY RESOURCES	11,377.16
MN STATE TREASURER	3,506.50
NUSS TRUCK & EQUIPMENT	2,764.78
OFFICE OF MNIT SERVICES	3,624.14
QUADIENT FINANCE USA, INC	10,000.00
RICHARD'S SANITATION LLC	15,666.46
SHI INTERNATIONAL CORP	48,263.42
VERIZON	2,678.52
VISA	6,252.49
WELLS FARGO BANK	202,863.75
	<u>482,870.27</u>
66 VENDORS PAID LESS THAN \$2000.00	30,804.55
	<u><u>513,674.82</u></u>

PUBLIC HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

176,857.91

690,532.73

## DISCUSSION ITEMS

The Commissioners discussed recent and upcoming events and meetings including a Solid Waste, Bluff Country Collaborative Career Fair and Hiring Event, Workforce Development Inc., Jail/Sheriff's Office, Planning Commission, and Township Annual Meetings.

Commissioner Zehnder said the jail had been busy recently with 17 adult inmates in one day. The jail was averaging 5.9 adults per day, and had also had juveniles regularly. The jail had recently received a grant that would provide new equipment to help monitor inmates. He said staff were doing a great job at the jail.

Closing Public Comment:

None.

There being no further business, a motion was made by Commissioner Zehnder, seconded by Commissioner Johnson, motion unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 9:50 a.m. The next meeting would be a regular meeting on March 24, 2026.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

HOUSTON COUNTY, MINNESOTA

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Greg Myhre, Chairperson

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_  
Brent Parker, Coordinator

## PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Date: March 24, 2026

9:00 a.m.

Place: Commissioners Room, Courthouse, Caledonia, MN

Members Present: Cindy Wright, Eric Johnson, Kurt Zehnder, Robert Schuldt, and Greg Myhre

Others Present: Interim Auditor/Treasurer Polly Heberlein, Fillmore County Journal Reporter Charlene Selbee, The Caledonia Argus Associate Editor Katia Gorsuch, Coordinator Brent Parker, Finance Director Carol Lapham, EDA Director & Coordinator Support Allison Wagner, Engineer Brian Pogodzinski, Interim Recorder Michelle Werner, Attorney Suzanne Bublitz, Fiscal Supervisor Heidi Harms, Public Health Supervisor Jordan Knoke, Bob Burns, Mark Klinski, and Yvonne Krogstad

Presiding: Chairperson Myhre

Call to order.

Pledge of Allegiance.

Commissioner Johnson said additional donations had come in for the Extension Tesmer Farm Safety Day that should be added to Action Item No. 7. Motion was made by Commissioner Zehnder, seconded by Commissioner Johnson, motion unanimously carried to approve the agenda with the update.

Motion was made by Commissioner Johnson, seconded by Commissioner Schuldt, motion unanimously carried to approve the regular meeting minutes from March 17, 2026.

Public Comment:

Yvonne Krogstad spoke to the board about a courtesy care for the airport. She said she believed people flying into the airport should have friends, or business partners pick them up. She said a courtesy car was an expense the taxpayers should not have to pay for.

### APPOINTMENTS

At 9:05 a.m. a motion was made by Commissioner Johnson, seconded by Commissioner Wright, motion unanimously carried to open a public hearing regarding a proposal to change the offices of Recorder and Auditor/Treasurer from elected positions to appointed positions pursuant to Minnesota Statutes.

Coordinator Parker said a hearing needed to take place the day of the decision.

Yvonne Krogstad said making the position appointed would be taking away another right of the citizens of the County. She urged the board to leave the positions elected.

Bob Burns from Caledonia said when a person was elected you didn't know what you were going to get. He said the County could get a better quality employee by hiring someone. Burns said he thought it was okay to switch from elected to appointed. He said that way you know what you are getting.

Motion was made by Commissioner Johnson, seconded by Commissioner Schuldt, motion unanimously carried to come out of the public hearing and return to the regular session.

## CONSENT AGENDA

Motion was made by Commissioner Zehnder, seconded by Commissioner Wright, motion unanimously carried to approve the consent agenda. Approved items are below.

- 1) Hire April Ledebuhr-Kerrigan as a 1 FTE Public Health Nurse (C42 – Step 3), with a start date of April 8, 2026.
- 2) Hire Thomas Pecinovsky as a 1 FTE Recycling Lead Worker (B23 – Step 3), with a start date of April 6, 2026.
- 3) Change the employment status of Daniel Coogan, Assistant County Attorney, from probationary to regular effective April 1, 2026.
- 4) Allow Public Health Supervisor to approve the MOU with Great Rivers United Way.

## ACTION ITEMS

File No. 1 – The Commissioners discussed the possibility of approving Resolution No. 26-12 making the position of Auditor/Treasurer Appointed pursuant to Minnesota Statute § 375A.1205. Coordinator Parker said the vote would need to have a supermajority in order to pass. If it passed people would have an opportunity to petition against the change. Commissioner Wright said she had heard a lot from both sides. She said the County's HR department now had a process that was diligent in making sure people were performing their jobs. She said sometimes people ran for office and they were not qualified. Wright said she had researched for months what other counties were doing. Commissioner Schuldt said he believed that the people who had ran for the position in Houston County had been qualified. He said: "If it's not broke I don't think we should fix it". Commissioner Johnson said the decision was a tough one. He said in the beginning he had fought against the idea. He did have concerns about the position becoming a part of the union. Johnson said the rules for the department had gotten very complicated, and the State always had new rules that came down and needed to be followed. Commissioner Zehnder said it was an extremely tough decision, and that he needed to follow what the voters in his district wanted. Commissioner Myhre said he didn't mind changing the position from elected to appointed. He said he liked the idea that anyone from the County would be able to apply for the job if it was appointed. He said we are not shutting anybody off that way. Commissioner Wright moved, Commissioner Myhre seconded, to adopt Resolution No. 26-12 making the position of

Auditor/Treasurer appointed pursuant to Minnesota Statute § 375A.1205. The motion failed due to lack of a super majority. The Commissioners voted by roll. Commissioners Wright, Johnson, and Myhre voted yes. Commissioners Zehnder and Schuldt voted no. The position would stay an elected position.

File No. 2 – Commissioner Wright said she felt the same way about the recorder position as she did the auditor/treasurer position however she thought the County should remain consistent between the departments. Therefore, Commissioner Wright moved, Commissioner Zehnder seconded, motion unanimously carried to keep the County Recorder position elected and not change it to appointed. The Commissioners voted by roll. All Commissioners voted to keep the position elected.

File No. 3 – Interim Recorder Werner said the Recorder’s office had been receiving an increased number of phone calls concerning fraud in property transactions. Constituents were asking for a way to monitor their property. The County’s software vender did have a program that allowed alerts to be sent via email or text when a document had been recorded in an individual or business name. Other counties had the service and offered it free to constituents. Members of the public would need to sign up to receive an email or text. It was an after the fact notification, however if quick action was taken the hope was fraudulent activity could be caught and fixed. The Recorder’s office had money in their technology fund that could be used to pay for the service. Commissioner Zehnder moved, Commissioner Johnson seconded, motion unanimously carried to approve purchasing the Land Notification Program. The total initial cost would be \$11,000. The annual fee moving forward would be \$1,500.

File No. 4 – Commissioner Zehnder moved, Commissioner Schuldt seconded, motion unanimously carried to approve the low quotes from Ness Pumping and Porta Potty Rentals for both Wildcat Park and Bob Botcher Park. Quotes are below.

HOUSTON COUNTY, MINNESOTA  
BATHROOM QUOTE  
MARCH 13, 2026 2:00 P.M.

Wildcat Park Bathrooms			Ness Pumping & Porta Potty Rentals		Kimo's Pumping Service	
			Unit Price	Total \$	Unit Price	Total \$
	6 month rental of 4 bathrooms with service					
	3 Regular bathrooms	3	90.00	\$1,620.00		\$0.00
	1 Handicap bathroom	1	175.00	\$1,050.00		\$0.00
	<b>Total for Bathrooms</b>		<b>445.00</b>	<b>\$2,670.00</b>	<b>458.20</b>	<b>\$2,749.20</b>
	Sales Tax			\$183.56		\$189.00
	<b>6 months</b>			<b>\$2,853.56</b>		<b>\$2,938.20</b>

Bob Botcher Park Bathroom			Ness Pumping & Porta Potty Rentals		Kimo's Pumping Service	
			Unit Price	Total \$	Unit Price	Total \$
	6 month rental of 1 bathrooms with service	1	85.00	\$510.00	125.00	\$750.00
	<b>Total for Bathrooms</b>					
	<b>6 months</b>			<b>\$510.00</b>		<b>\$750.00</b>

File No. 5 – Commissioner Zehnder moved, Commissioner Johnson seconded, motion unanimously carried to approve a work order under MN Dot’s Master Partnership Contract to provide pavement markings for Houston County.

File No. 6 – Commissioner Johnson moved, Commissioner Schuldt seconded, motion unanimously carried to approve treated salt quantities for the State Cooperative Purchase contract.

File No. 7 – Commissioner Johnson moved, Commissioner Wright seconded, motion unanimously carried to accept donations to the Extension Tesmer Farm Safety Day in the amount of \$1,225.00 and additional donations of \$2,870.00. The Commissioners thanked those who donated for their generous donations.

File No. 8 – Commissioner Zehnder moved, Commissioner Wright seconded, motion unanimously carried to review and approve payments. Payments are below.

REQUEST APPROVAL FOR PAYMENT

2026/03/24 COMMISSIONER WARRANTS:

VENDOR NAME	AMOUNT
ABILITY BUILDING COMMUNITY	2,118.66
CALEDONIA OIL CO INC	3,502.00
CALEDONIA SNO GOPHERS CLUB	11,345.40

CONSOLIDATED ENERGY COMPANY	7,182.00
ENTERPRISE FM	4,776.47
HOUSTON-MONEY CREEK SNOWRIDERS	5,313.00
IMPERIAL DADE	2,380.88
INSIGHTSOFTWARE LLC	13,282.70
KWIK TRIP	4,154.63
LA CRESCENT TRAIL	4,138.20
LIBERTY TIRE RECYCLING LLC	3,913.10
RDO EQUIPMENT CO INC	12,392.59
SOUTH CENTRAL COLLEGE	3,944.22
TSG SERVER & STORAGE INC	29,950.00
VIKING RIDGE RIDERS	4,389.00
	112,782.85
22 VENDORS PAID LESS THAN \$2000.00	7,560.25
	120,343.10
PUBLIC HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES	
	120,343.10

REVIEW LICENSE CENTER PAYMENTS

2026/03/13 AUDITOR WARRANTS:

VENDOR NAME	AMOUNT
AVENU INSIGHTS & ANALYTICS LLC	7,862.35
GOODHUE COUNTY SWCD	2,500.00
HAMMELL EQUIPMENT INC	26,900.00
TRANSCO INDUSTRIES INC	10,341.00
	47,603.35
16 VENDORS PAID LESS THAN \$2000.00	5,957.56
	53,560.91

DISCUSSION ITEMS

The Commissioners discussed recent and upcoming events and meetings including a Department Head, Solid Waste, AMC Legislative Update, Department of Public Health Sustainability Planning, and SELCO meeting.

Closing Public Comment:

None.

There being no further business, a motion was made by Commissioner Zehnder, seconded by Commissioner Johnson, motion unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 9:55 a.m. The next meeting would be a regular meeting on April 7, 2026.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

HOUSTON COUNTY, MINNESOTA

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Greg Myhre, Chairperson

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_  
Brent Parker, Coordinator

## PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Date: April 7, 2026

9:00 a.m.

Place: Commissioners Room, Courthouse, Caledonia, MN

Members Present: Cindy Wright, Eric Johnson, Kurt Zehnder, Robert Schuldt, and Greg Myhre

Others Present: Interim Auditor/Treasurer Polly Heberlein, Fillmore County Journal Reporter Charlene Selbee, The Caledonia Argus Associate Editor Katia Gorsuch, Finance Director Carol Lapham, Coordinator Brent Parker, EDA Director & Coordinator Support Allison Wagner, Public Health Supervisor Jordan Knoke, Public Health Educator Bri Ceaser, Engineer Brian Pogodzinski, Environmental Services Director Amelia Meiners, Larry Gaustad, Clayton Johnson, Dan Vesterse, Mike Moen, Teresa O'Donnell Ebner, Dean Mierau, Linda Griggs, Mary Denzer, Donna Buckbee, Steve Hartwick, Heidi Harms, John Haines, Cory Baker, Jackie Baker, Rebecca Christenson, Joan Redig, Scott Halteli, Cindy Crestwell-Hatleli, Bonnie Laumb, Ray Ronnenberg, Deb Hoskins, Michael Sieve, and Joyce Roffler

Presiding: Chairperson Myhre

Call to order.

Pledge of Allegiance.

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

Motion was made by Commissioner Zehnder, seconded by Commissioner Schuldt, motion unanimously carried to approve the meeting minutes from March 24, 2026.

Public Comment:

Cynthia Crestwell-Hatleli from Yucatan Township said there could be a balance between ag and what was necessary to preserve karst terrain. She said years of damage due to agricultural practices could be changed, but it was hard to put the environment back in its former state. She said the half mile density standard should be a minimum distance between mines. She said if the goal was to make sand more readily available throughout the County it would make more sense to spread out the mines. She said while she could see the benefits for cattle, she thought over time sand spread out over soil would cause a soil degradation issues.

Cynthia Crestwell-Hatleli read a public comment on behalf of her husband, Scott Halteli. He asked "Do we really need more sand mines to meet the needs of Houston County?" In his

opinion he thought sand from the river could be used for septic systems and dairy farms. One mine had trees growing out of it. He thought the County should exhaust the mines that were currently permitted before more were permitted. Hatleli said Winona had less sand mines than Houston County and asked if Houston County needed more sand. He thought the 267 people who signed the petition deserved another public hearing on the matter.

John Hayes from Houston said the whole sand mine ordinance had been a big time thing years ago. He said the half mile rule had been a compromise that had been come up with at the time. He said the purpose of a sand mine density ordinance was to spread out the mines. He thought mines should be properly reclaimed. He said he hoped the original compromise would be upheld today.

Mary Denstad from Yucatan Township questioned if laws were followed during the process. She said a couple of years had been spent trying to uphold the rule.

Rebecca Christenson from Yucatan Township said it was to the County's benefit to space out quarries. She said the County had at least 40 dairy farms and that they were continuing to decline. She said she lived directly below where a mine was proposed to be located. She said there was obvious sand migration from that area. Christenson asked the Commissioners to please bring back the half mile setback.

Donna Buckbee said she did not believe in the distinction between industrial and construction sand. She said the criteria did not change how sand worked in the environment. She asked the board to restore the half mile rule.

Joan Redig from Money Creek Township said she grew up on a farm in Winona County. She said she was concerned about the findings, and felt they were only an opinion. She said it was not economical to transport materials and said she was concerned about clustering. Redig said controlling the density of mines protected the beauty of the surrounding area.

Teresa O'Donnell said she lived in La Crescent and had grown up in Rushford. She said she was at the meeting to voice her concern about increasing mining in Houston County. She referenced the Comprehensive Land Use Plan and said as a City Council member of La Crescent she understood the effort that goes into comprehensive plans. She said planning involved establishing needs and also following the values of the people. O'Donnell referenced a few pages at the beginning of the County's Comprehensive Land Use Plan. She said beginning on Page 4 of the plan discussed balancing the needs of the community and environment. She also quoted, quotes from the public engagement section of the plan stating "Houston County is one of the most beautiful places on earth in my opinion..." "The peace and quiet, the beautiful bluffs..." She said she thought there was a way to make that happen.

Joyce Roffler from Yucatan Township said she thought a monopoly of mines already existed. She said there should be preservation of ag, bluffs, and environmentally friendly

landscapes. She said the terms density and setbacks were different. She said there were different risks with different sands.

Mike Sieve from Yucatan Township said he had moved to the area and believed it was the prettiest part of the State. He said he left where he had lived because he didn't like the use of the land. He said 50 years later a lot was being done to stop mistakes made 50 years ago. He asked the Commissioners to think about the future.

Linda Griggs from Yucatan Township asked the Commissioners to restore the half mile rule. She reviewed the timeline and said she did not like the process.

Jackie Baker said she was one of the applicants on the agenda that day. She said she was respectfully asking that the Commissioners restore the half mile density standards on behalf of her and her husband. She said a lot of time had went into the original rule. She said her family depended on the half mile density standards. Baker said removing the rule impacted her family. She said if a property owner had wanted a mine and had applied for a variance property owners in the area would have been notified. She said lack of public comment at the time when the rule was changed was due to lack of awareness. She said restoring the rule did not ban sand mining.

Dean Mierau said he owned a business in Fillmore County and that people came to the area because they loved it. He said as a business owner he was asking that the board take that into consideration. He said he had many first time customers in previous years who enjoyed the area.

Steve Hartwick said he was a 50 year resident of Money Creek Township. He said he was concerned about noise at mining operations. He said factors were compiled when two mines were close together. He said he knew that legally the County had only needed to give notice in the Argus but he thought when amending County Code the County should reach out to as many people as possible.

Clayton Johnson said he appreciated the time and consideration the County had given to shotgun vs. rifle. He said he found it interesting that the people he had heard speak at meetings who wanted to use a rifle wanted it for personal reasons in Johnson's opinion. He said those opposed to rifles were concerned about safety.

Dan Vesterse from Spring Grove said he attended the first public hearing on rifle vs. shotgun. He said at that meeting more people were in favor of shotgun only. He said many had also signed a petition for shotgun only. He thanked the Commissioners.

Mike Moen from Spring Grove asked that the Commissioners change the rule back to shotgun only in Houston County. He said his biggest issue was safety. Moen said property owners he had talked to had wanted it to be left as shotgun only. He said he did not think more deer would be killed if rifles were allowed.

## APPOINTMENTS

None.

## CONSENT AGENDA

Commissioner Zehnder moved, Commissioner Schuldt seconded, motion unanimously carried to approve the consent agenda. The Commissioners thanked Carrie O’heron and Liza Jandt for their 82 years of combined service to Houston County. Approved items are below.

- 1) Accept retirement from Carrie O’heron effective May 29th, 2026, with 46 years of service.
- 2) Accept retirement from Liza Jandt Effective June 4<sup>th</sup>, 2026, with 36 years of service.
- 3) Change the employment status of McKinley Sisson, Jailer/Dispatcher from probationary to regular, effective April 21, 2026.
- 4) Review and approve payments. Payments are below.

## REQUEST APPROVAL FOR PAYMENTS

### 2026/04/07 COMMISSIONER WARRANTS:

<b>VENDOR NAME</b>	<b>AMOUNT</b>
CALEDONIA OIL CO INC	4,636.70
CDW GOVERNMENT	4,923.78
CENTEC CAST METAL PRODUCTS	3,568.14
COMPUTER FORENSIC SERVICES LLC	48,301.41
DELTA DENTAL	7,939.64
GREAT LAKES SALT COMPANY	37,144.84
GROUNDBREAKING CONNECTIONS LLC	7,083.33
INSIGHT PUBLIC SECTOR	7,716.50
INTERSTATE BILLING SERVICES	19,202.37
IUOE LOCAL 49 FRINGE BENEFIT FUNDS	28,475.00
LIBERTY TIRE RECYCLING LLC	3,716.45
MASTER'S TOUCH INC/THE	6,739.29
MEDICA	258,219.76
MN DEPT OF CORRECTIONS	56,439.72
MN LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY	2,679.11
OLYMPIC BUILDERS GENERAL CONTRAC	132,525.00
ONSOLVE INTERMEDIATE HOLDING COM	8,690.05
TRAFFTECH INC	8,421.64
VANGUARD APPRAISALS INC	3,040.00

VERIZON WIRELESS	2,678.52
ZIEGLER INC	7,553.37
	<hr/>
	659,694.62
42 VENDORS PAID LESS THAN \$2000.00	23,744.44
	<hr/>
	683,439.06
PUBLIC HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES	17,843.77
	<hr/>
	701,282.83
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## ACTION ITEMS

File No. 1 – The Commissioners discussed options and possible action to either move forward with a shotgun only ordinance or allow rifles in Houston County. Coordinator Parker said the conversation would guide him in the direction the Commissioners wanted to go. Commissioner Wright said for several months she had talked to people about shotgun only vs. rifle. She said she had talked to about 125 additional people not including those who attended the public hearings. She said about 75% of people she spoke to were opposed to rifles. Wright said she did not believe Houston County needed to do what other counties in the area were doing. She said she was in favor of creating an ordinance and was opposed to rifles. Commissioner Zehnder said a majority of people in his district wanted the rule to stay shotgun only. Commissioner Wright moved, Commissioner Zehnder seconded, motion carried three to two to create a shotgun only ordinance. Rifles would not be allowed to be used in Houston County under the ordinance. The Commissioners voted by roll. Commissioners Wright, Zehnder, and Myhre voted yes to move forward with creating a shotgun only ordinance. Commissioners Johnson and Schuldt voted no.

File No. 2 – Commissioner Zehnder moved, Commissioner Johnson seconded, motion unanimously carried to approve a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) for Scott Standish for a single-family non-farm dwelling on less than 40 acres in the Agriculture Protection District in Mayville Township.

File No. 3 – Commissioner Johnson moved, Commissioner Wright seconded, motion unanimously carried to approve a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) for Gabriel Howe for a single-family non-family farm dwelling on less than 40 acres in the Agriculture Protection District in Yucatan Township.

File No. 4 – Commissioner Zehnder moved, Commissioner Schuldt seconded, motion unanimously carried to approve a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) for Thomas and Colleen Niebeling for substantial land alteration and excavation in floodplain.

File No. 5 – The Commissioners discussed approving or denying a Text Amendment to the Zoning Ordinance on mine density standards for Burns & Hansen, P.A. on behalf of Cory and Jackie Baker, Scott Hatleli and Cindy Cresswell-Hatleli, and Rosemary Iversen. The Planning Commission had not recommended approval for the request. Environmental Services Director Meiners said going back to 2025 the County had received a proposal from G-Cubed for a text

amendment. The applicant needed to provide compatibility with the Comprehensive Land Use Plan. The notice was published in the Caledonia Argus. Coordinator Parker said the Townships in the County were emailed. He said Environmental Services Director Meiners had emails that were sent to Townships. Commissioner Wright said the County had received a petition. Commissioner Wright said she wanted the concerns in the petition to be reviewed and looked into in the same way the County looked into other petitions. Commissioner Wright said the year prior when she had voted on the matter there were things she did not know. She said the County’s inventory and enforcement of mines were things she wanted to know more about. Wright said she wanted more awareness to make people feel safe. Commissioner Wright said she was not saying it was not appropriate to approve the request, but she did not feel now was the time to do it. Commissioner Wright said she wanted more information. Commissioner Johnson said the half mile rule still applied to industrial. He said construction mines were a lesser mining operation. He said construction was less intense with not as much going out. He said Houston County’s current rule was the same rule Fillmore and Winona County had. Commissioner Johnson said at the time when the current text amendment was changed, he thought it was the reasonable thing to do, as he knew a lot of dairy farmers and people putting in sewers that struggled to find sand. Commissioner Johnson said a lot of concerns would be addressed in a CUP application process. Commissioner Zehnder said he had concerns because since his time as Commissioner he had looked at the Comp Plan as the “holy grail”. He said he wanted to keep the beauty of Houston County. Commissioner Schuldt said he kept hearing that people were not knowing about things. Commissioner Wright moved, Commissioner Schuldt seconded, motion carried four to one to table the matter until further research could be done. The Commissioners voted by roll. Commissioners Wright, Zehnder, Schuldt, and Myhre voted yes. Commissioner Johnson voted no. The matter was tabled.

File No. 6 – Commissioner Zehnder moved, Commissioner Johnson seconded, motion unanimously carried to award the 2026 Chloride bid to Bluff Country Brine. Bluff Country Brine’s bid was for \$1.538 for chloride delivered and \$1.68 for chloride delivered and applied. Abstract is below.

ABSTRACT OF BIDS						
HOUSTON COUNTY, MINNESOTA						
CALCIUM CHLORIDE QUOTE						
March 18, 2026 1:00 p.m.						
Item #	Item	Contractor	Bluff Country Brine Unit Price	Knife River Unit Price	Envirotech Services Inc Unit Price	Northern Salt Inc Unit Price
1	Delivered by tanker truck to Caledonia	Gallons	1.538	1.600	1.730	1.716
2	Delivered & Applied to various county roads	Gallons	1.680	1.760	1.930	1.820
	Minimum Transport load	Gallons	4,100.00	4,000.00	4,000.00	4,200.00
		Cashier's Check		Bond	Bond	Bond
	Total Gallons Est		54,000.00			
	Estimate Cost		83,052.00	40% County	60% Township/City	
	Budget 2026		100,000.00			
	Under Budget		(16,948.00)			

File No. 7 – Commissioner Johnson moved, Commissioner Zehnder seconded, motion unanimously carried to approve a quote for the replacement of overhead garage doors at the Spring Grove shop. The remaining doors would be replaced at a later time. Quotes are below.

Houston County Highway Department			
2026 Garage Doors			
Garage Door Location	Tri-State Doors	La Crosse Overhead Door	Overhead Door
Spring Grove Shop	31,950.00	35,158.00	38,789.00
		(25,918+9,240)	
Hokah Shop	7,778.00	7,739.00	8,562.00
Houston Shop	17,555.00	17,231.00	21,405.00
		(8,602+8,629)	
Discount for doing all doors	(2,500.00)	(4,900.00)	
<b>Total Cost</b>	<b>54,783.00</b>	<b>55,228.00</b>	<b>68,756.00</b>

File No. 8 – Commissioner Wright moved, Commissioner Zehnder seconded, motion unanimously carried to approve a quote from Addco Acquisition, LLC through their distributor Surefitter for message boards. Their quote was on the State Bid for \$25,122.

File No. 9 – Commissioner Zehnder moved, Commissioner Wright seconded, motion unanimously carried to approve changing the title and pay band of Jordan Knoke from Public Health Supervisor to Public Health Director (D-61 step 4) effective March 9<sup>th</sup>, 2026. This change was due to restructuring and not an open position.

File No. 10 – Commissioner Zehnder moved, Commissioner Wright seconded, motion unanimously carried to change the County’s current tax software to CPT (Counties Providing Technology).

File No. 11 – Commissioner Wright moved, Commissioner Zehnder seconded, motion unanimously carried to enter a three-year contract with Darktrace cyber security platform to further protect the County’s network and data.

#### DISCUSSION ITEMS

The Commissioners discussed recent and upcoming meetings including Township Annual Meetings, PUC Hearing, Public Health, Airport, ECB, EDA, Planning Commission, Houston County Collaborative, SELCO, and Township Association meeting.

#### Closing Public Comment:

Linda Griggs thanked the board for listening to all the people that showed up at the meeting. She said the question had been brought up as to why the rule had been changed in the first place. She said the 2015 rule had come about after hours of collaboration. Griggs said it had been a true compromise. She said Houston County did not need to mimic what Winona County and Fillmore County were doing. Griggs said she didn’t think too many people were complaining before the rule was changed. She thanked the board for keeping shotgun only in Houston County.

Donna Buckbee thanked the board. She said the family was a sweet family with nice children.

Mary Denzer thanked the board for their patience and for listening to concerns. She said she had been a potter for 52 years and lived near a proposed sand mine. She said there was a river nearby. She said construction sand and industrial sand were the same thing.

Steve Hartwick from Money Creek Township thanked the board for tabling the matter at the meeting. He said he wanted to know if Townships were notified of the change.

Joyce Roffler from Yucatan Township thanked the board for their work. She thanked the board for resolutions passed in recent months. She said she didn’t think the County had the staff to monitor all conditions and regulations. She thanked the Commissioners for listening.

There being no further business, a motion was made by Commissioner Zehnder, seconded by Commissioner Wright, motion unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 11:13 a.m. The next meeting would be a workgroup session on April 14, 2026.

#### BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

HOUSTON COUNTY, MINNESOTA

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Greg Myhre, Chairperson

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_

Brent Parker, Coordinator

## PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Date: April 14, 2026

9:00 a.m.

Place: Commissioners Room, Courthouse, Caledonia, MN

Members Present:

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

Others Present:

Interim Auditor/Treasurer Polly Heberlein, The Caledonia Argus Associate Editor Katia Gorsuch, Finance Director Carol Lapham, Coordinator Brent Parker, EDA Director & Coordinator Support Allison Wagner, Public Health Supervisor Jordan Knoke, Environmental Services Director Amelia Meiners, Interim Attorney Suzanne Bublitz, Sheriff Brian Swedberg, Cindy Hateli, Scott Hateli, Steve Hartwick, Cory Baker, and Donna Buckbee

### Board Workgroup Session

Coordinator Parker told the board he had attended the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) meeting on Thursday April 9, 2026 regarding the Gopher to Badger Link 765 kV transmission line project. The County had been invited to participate in the process after passing a resolution opposing the project. Parker had attended in person and Commissioners Wright and Myhre had attended virtually. Parker said while the County had questions regarding the completeness of the application at the PUC meeting the County learned that the applicants had met the bare minimum requirements required by the PUC. Parker said the form had been filled out. The application would next be transferred to the Minnesota Department of Commerce and comments could be directed there. At the PUC meeting a stay had been put on the certificate of need meaning that the route and certificate of need would be reviewed jointly in October 2026. Commissioner Wright said she thought it was good for the PUC to see the County represented at the meeting. She said she had also attended a separate meeting with the No765MN group. She said the lawyer representing that group had a lot of experience, and that there were similar groups for example in Wisconsin. Dairyland Power had responded to the County's resolution, but mostly the response directed the County back to pages in the original application, and the County still had questions in some of those areas.

Coordinator Parker said at one point many counties had transferred their Department of Corrections jobs to the State. He said Houston County had had these jobs as County jobs at one time, but currently they were State employees. Parker said he had been researching the matter for a while as many counties were now reverting back to the county model. He would be researching cost effectiveness, and different models that were involved.

Commissioner Wright said she had attended the City of La Crescent City Council meeting the night prior. She said the City would be losing their paper that they used as their official

newspaper. They were looking into other options including the Caledonia Argus and a Minnesota Newspaper Association paper.

Commissioner Wright said she thought the County should look into an ordinance regarding data centers, commercial solar, battery storage, and other related items. She said many topics that had come before the board recently had a common theme.

The County had been given an extension and would have 104 days to pass an ordinance in order to be in compliance after a recent Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) audit.

Sheriff Swedberg said he was concerned with the upcoming County ordinance regarding having Houston County be shotgun only and not allowing rifles. He said he had concerns about enforcement and said neighboring Counties around Houston County would not be enforcing the rule. The same bullets could be used in some rifles and legal hunting guns. The Sheriff said there was confusion on if the DNR would enforce the rule and what should happen when it came to forfeiting deer and firearms if people violated the ordinance. Attorney Bublitz said a discussion would need to be had with the DNR and she recommended a joint enforcement approach.

The workgroup session ended at 9:57 a.m.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

HOUSTON COUNTY, MINNESOTA

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Greg Myhre, Chairperson

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_  
Brent Parker, Coordinator