

WADENA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS' MEETING

December 23, 2025

The Wadena County Board of Commissioners' Meeting was held on Tuesday, December 23rd, 2025 in the Wadena County Courthouse Small Courtroom at 415 Jefferson St. S., Wadena, Minnesota. The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m. by Chairperson Stearns and all present recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Present were: Commissioners Murlyn Kreklau, Bryan Winkels, Ron Noon, Bill Stearns, and Jon Kangas; County Attorney Kyra Ladd, County Auditor/Treasurer/Interim County Administrator Heather Olson, County Engineer Anthony Maule, Human Services and Human Resources Director/Deputy County Administrator Jennifer Westrum, Solid Waste Supervisor Wade Miller, Solid Waste Director Chris McConn, Dennis and Beth Lindner from D&B Trucking and Logistics, Randy Becker from Becker Transport, Bill Layman from Layman Excavating, IT Coordinator Neil Hutson, Planning & Zoning/Building Services Administrator Deana Malone, Administrative Services Supervisor Amie Gendron, Deputy Tyler Wheeler, Sergeant Bryan Savaloja, Sheriff Mike Carr.

Amend/Approve the Day's Agenda:

Motion by Commissioner Winkels to approve today's Agenda after adding a discussion of the Event Center Water Lines, seconded by Commissioner Kreklau. Motion carried unanimously.

Citizen Comments: There were no citizen comments at this meeting.

Consent Agenda:

- Auditor Warrants for Approval in the amount of \$488,181.96
- Snowmobile Safety Grant
- Resolution 2025-63 EMPG Grant
- Recorder Fees for Judicial Security Legislation and Adopting Procedures
- Public Health Mass Dispensing Local Agreement with Local Schools
- IV-D Interagency Cooperative Agreement and Arrangement
- Public Health Clinic Rental Site
- OHV Safety Grant
- Highway Dept Renewal of Building Cleaning Services Contract
- Interest Rate on Delinquent Taxes
- Cancellation of Outstanding Checks
- Friendly Rider Donations
- Vintage Golf Operations, LLC Liquor License
- Knob Hill Sportsmen's Club Liquor License
- Month End Cash and Investments Balance November 2025
- Revenues and Expenditures Budget Report November YTD 2025

- Employment Update

Motion by Commissioner Noon to approve the Consent Agenda after pulling the Cancellation of Outstanding Checks item for further discussion, seconded by Commissioner Winkels. Motion carried unanimously.

Cancelling Outstanding Checks: Commissioner Kangas expressed his concern regarding entity contact attempts for one of the two outstanding checks presented for cancellation. County Auditor/Treasurer/Interim County Administrator Heather Olson provided clarification and procedural information.

Motion by Commissioner Kangas to approve cancelling the outstanding checks as presented, seconded by Commissioner Noon. Motion carried unanimously.

REGULAR AGENDA ITEMS:

Human Services Statistical Reports: Support Services Supervisor Amie Gendron presented the reports as of November 2025, noting changes in caseloads and program participation. The Board considered moving the Human Services report to the consent agenda in the future, but the majority of the Commissioners did not wish to do so.

Licensed Solid Waste Haulers: Solid Waste Supervisor Wade Miller and Solid Waste Director Chris McConn presented the application for a Solid Waste and Recycling Hauler License for Hough Inc. The need for more equitable service coverage across the county was discussed. Solid Waste Director Chris McConn stated that he would follow-up with the Solid Waste Committee.

Motion by Commissioner Noon to approve the Solid Waste and Recycling Hauler License for Hough Inc., seconded by Commissioner Stearns. Motion carried unanimously.

Transport Contract for Solid Waste and Recycling: Solid Waste Supervisor Wade Miller and Solid Waste Director Chris McConn addressed the Board regarding the re-bidding of the hauling contract for transporting MSW (household garbage) from the Wadena County Transfer Station to the Gwinner, ND Landfill and also the single sort recycling from the Wadena County Transfer Station to Shakopee, MN. Three bids were received on this project and were discussed at length. The Solid Waste Committee is recommending awarding the contract to Layman Excavating at \$77,662.50.

Representatives from the three bidders were in attendance. Dennis and Beth Lindner from D&B Trucking, Randy Becker from Becker Transport, and Bill Layman from Layman Excavating expressed their comments and concerns including the \$30,000 gap between the bids and the lack of specific maintenance responsibilities in the bid documents. Solid Waste Director McConn acknowledged these concerns but noted they must follow the RFP process even though it does not include the trailer maintenance costs, and if that detail is to be added to the bid process it must be done at a committee

level prior to opening the bids. The contracts come up for bids infrequently, every 3 - 5 years, and may be extended yearly according to the Solid Waste State Statutes

Motion by Commissioner Kangas to award the 3-year Transport Contract for Solid Waste and Recycling, effective March 1, 2026, to Layman Excavating and to terminate the existing contract with Becker Transport effective February 28, 2026. Motion seconded by Commissioner Stearns. A roll call vote was taken: Kreklau - nay, Noon - aye, Stearns - aye, Winkels - aye, Kangas - aye. Motion carried 4 to 1.

Amendment to Crow Wing River Watershed Implementation Agreement: County Attorney Kyra Ladd and Planning & Zoning/Building Services Administrator Deana Malone gave a brief background of this agreement's history which included the addition of the White Earth Nation, presented to the Board on November 18, 2025. County Attorney Ladd stated that she had not been notified of the change to the agreement and expressed concern that tribal involvement and sovereignty language issues were added to the agreement without her review.

The agreement includes funding provisions to the county for low-income septic replacement; however there are two signature pages, one for the county and one for the Soil and Water Board. The County's signature is not required for Soil and Water to access those funds.

Motion by Commissioner Noon to rescind the November 18, 2025 approval of the Amendment to the Crow Wing River Watershed Implementation Agreement, seconded by Commissioner Winkels. Motion carried unanimously.

A break was taken from 10:17 a.m. to 10:23 a.m.

Resolution 2025-61 in Support of 2030 Federal Transportation Project Application: County Engineer Anthony Maule addressed the Board requesting support of this resolution. The Wadena County Highway Department is applying for Federal Funding for a Roadway Resurfacing Project through the Federal Surface Transportation Block Grant Program. Funding provided would be 80% of eligible costs. The remaining 20% would come from CSAH regular funds. The project involves 6 miles on CSAH 23 from CSAH 12 to CSAH 15 which was last surfaced/graded in 2009.

Motion by Commissioner Winkels to approve Resolution 2025-61 in support of an Application for Federal Funding for a Roadway Resurfacing Project through the Federal Surface Transportation Block Grant Program, seconded by Commissioner Kreklau. Motion carried unanimously.

Resolution 2025-64 Request for State Funding for 40 Bed Non-Secure Juvenile Facility in Clay County: Commissioner Noon introduced the resolution supporting Clay County's request for state funding to build a 40-bed non-secure juvenile mental health facility. Currently there are only 4 of these facilities in the state.

Motion by Commissioner Noon to approve Resolution 2025-64 Supporting State Funding for a 40 Bed Non-Secure Juvenile Facility in Clay County, seconded by Commissioner Kangas. Motion carried unanimously.

Recognition: Sergeant Bryan Savaloja was recognized by Sheriff Mike Carr and the Board of Commissioners for receiving the prestigious **FBI-LEEDA Trilogy Award**, for completing the three-part series of intense trainings that foster strong leadership within law enforcement. The Board congratulated and commended Sergeant Savaloja on his accomplishment.

Mass Notification System: Sergeant Bryan Savaloja and Deputy Tyler Wheeler presented the bids for a new mass notification vendor. In November, 2025, the Sheriff's Office was notified of a data breach involving their mass notification vendor OnSolve (CodeRED). This, along with decreased alert capabilities, poor communication and loss of public trust, resulted in the termination of their contract effective December 31, 2025. The funding for this service will come from the E911 Funds already accounted for in the 2026 budget.

Motion by Commissioner Noon to approve the 5-year mass notification contract with Rave Alert by Motorola for \$20,000 (\$4,000/year), seconded by Commissioner Winkels. Motion carried unanimously.

Microsoft Software Renewal: IT Coordinator Neil Hutson introduced Microsoft 365 to the Board. The current Microsoft Office licensing and associated other contracts are due for renewal/replacement in 2026. Moving to a unified Microsoft 365 model consolidates multiple vendor contracts into one and provides modern tools for all staff at a lower total cost of ownership. Funds will be reallocated from existing expiring software contracts to cover this renewal. Projected net savings are approximately \$12,000/year.

Motion by Commissioner Winkels to move to the Microsoft 365 model and authorize the purchase of licensing at Government Pricing rates via Marco Technologies, seconded by Commissioner Stearns. Motion carried unanimously.

Ag Society Lease: Commissioner Winkels presented the one-year version of the lease for approval and went through the updates and changes to the lease. Discussion included event security, liability insurance, funding allocations, and maintenance items. The board reviewed the language about assessments in the lease agreement, ultimately deciding to leave the current language unchanged for now while acknowledging that future discussions would be needed about water and sewer costs.

Motion to approved the 1-year Ag Society Lease as presented by Commissioner Winkels, seconded by Commissioner Kreklau. Motion carried unanimously.

Event Center Water Access: Commissioner Noon began the discussion providing a brief overview of the status of water line installation to the event center, stating the water line was completed up to the building but needs to be connected inside the building. A permit has been acquired and a plumber was

found, but the plumber is no longer responding. Now the line needs to be excavated and de-watered again. Work has stopped and FOWCY is requesting direction to get thing moving again.

This subject will be re-visited at the January 6th, 2026 Board meeting after the Interim County Administrator and County Engineer have had time to review previously recorded discussions with FOWCY representative Dan Sartell and hopefully have him attend the meeting to participate in the discussion.

Motion by Commissioner Noon, seconded by Commissioner Winkels to go into closed session of the Wadena County Board of Commissioners per MN Statute § 13D.05 Subd. 3(d) for a safety and security access discussion at 11:30 a.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Open session of the Wadena County Board of Commissioners was resumed at 11:44 a.m.

Safety and Security Access Control Bids: IT Coordinator Neil Hutson and Sergeant Bryan Savaloja presented the 2 bids received for upgrading and updating the access control system for the exterior doors of the courthouse along with the public to private doors at the Human Services building. This is a one-time charge.

It was noted that if all doors were to be upgraded at this time it would be around \$300,000. The request at this time is to only upgrade the most essential exterior doors of the courthouse and the public to private doors at Human Services for \$62,001.47.

Motion by Commissioner Noon to approved the \$62,001.47 Marco proposal for courthouse and human services door control system upgrades, to be paid from South Country Funds. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Winkels and carried unanimously.

Interim County Administrator Report: County Auditor/Treasurer/Interim County Administrator Heather Olson gave her report.

- The employee pot luck was a big success
- The county was awarded \$10,000 in grant dollars through the elections program for courthouse entrance ramp improvements

Commissioner Reports:

Commissioner Kreklau - 12/19 KRLS

Commissioner Noon - 12/17 PH CHAMP, 12/18 S&S, 12/19 City of Wadena, 12/22 Mediations

Commissioner Stearns - 12/17 PLSWMA, 12/18 S&S

Commissioner Winkels - 12/17 Staples Rotary, 12/18 P&Z, 12/21 Ag Society

Commissioner Kangas - 12/17 ESB Radio Board, 12/22 Mediations

Motion to adjourn by Commissioner Winkels at 12:05 p.m., seconded by Commissioner Kreklau.
Motion carried unanimously.

Heather Olson, County Auditor/ Treasurer
Interim County Administrator/Clerk of the Board
Wadena County, MN

William Stearns, County Board Chairman
Wadena County, MN