

WADENA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS' MEETING

February 3, 2026

The Wadena County Board of Commissioners' Meeting was held on Tuesday, February 3rd, 2026 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 Noon and all present recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Present were: Commissioners Bryan Winkels, Ron Noon, Bill Stearns, Murlyn Kreklau and Jon Kangas; County Attorney Kyra Ladd, County Auditor/Treasurer/Interim County Administrator Heather Olson, County Engineer Anthony Maule, Planning & Zoning/Building Services Administrator Deana Malone, Human Resources & Human Services Director/Deputy County Administrator Jennifer Westrum, SGR Sr. Vice President of Recruiting Michael Czymbor via Zoom, University of Minnesota Northeast Regional Director Tony Hansen via Zoom, Wadena County Economic Alliance Executive Director Hope Williams, Greg Harris from Mathiowetz Construction, and land owner Dale Erickson.

Amend/Approve the Day's Agenda:

Motion by Commissioner Winkels to approve today's Agenda as presented, seconded by Commissioner Kreklau. Motion carried unanimously.

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

Consent Agenda:

- 01/13/2026 Minutes
- 01/20/2026 Minutes
- Auditor Warrants for Approval in the amount of \$874,588.18
- Public Health New Credit Card Request
- 2026 Allocation for Central MN Council on Aging
- Recorder's Technology Fund Purchase
- Draft Condensed Minutes of 01/15/26 Planning Commission Meeting
- Employment Update

Motion by Commissioner Kangas to approve the Consent Agenda as presented, seconded by Commissioner Winkels. Motion carried unanimously.

REGULAR AGENDA ITEMS:

Public Hearing for Commercial Housing Tax Abatement Policy and Application: The public hearing was opened at 9:18 a.m. and a request for public comment was made.

SGR - Selection of Administrator Candidates: Michael Czymbor, Sr. Vice President of the recruiting firm SGR presented 7 potential finalist candidates for the County Administrator position. Human

Resources & Human Services Director/Deputy County Administrator Jennifer Westrum assisted as the Board identified the top 4 of the 7 candidates using a scoring system based on their education and experience. The Board members agreed to proceed with these four candidates for interviews to be held on 02/17/2026 and Michael Czymbor will be present and act as the moderator.

It was the consensus of the Board to create a Negotiations Committee for conducting any necessary negotiations when the final Administrator candidate is selected. This Committee will be comprised of the Board Chair, Vice Chair and the Human Resources Director

Motion by Commissioner Kreklau to set the maximum reimburse amount of \$1,000 for the Administrator Position candidates' travel expenses to attend interviews, subject to submission of receipts and the federal mileage reimbursement rate. These reimbursements shall be paid from the Administrator Salary Fund. Motion seconded by Commissioner Stearns and carried unanimously.

A Public Hearing for Tax Abatement: The public hearing was opened at 9:35 a.m. on parcel 14-026-3050 and a request for public comment was made.

The Public Hearing for Commercial Housing Tax Abatement Policy and Application was Closed at 9:56 a.m. County Auditor/Treasurer/Interim County Administrator Heather Olson stated no questions or comments were receive in writing by the Auditor/Treasurer's office. The proposed language changes to the Policy were discussed by the Board.

Motion by Commissioner Kreklau to accept the Commercial Housing Tax Abatement Policy and Application with the change in language 'the applications must be submitted prior to construction' be included in Additional Criteria item H. Motion seconded by Commissioner Kangas and carried unanimously.

Extension Committee Appointment: University of Minnesota Northeast Regional Director Tony Hansen presented the Extension Committee's recommendation for committee appointments, requesting the reappointment of four members, noting that there is one remaining vacancy on the Committee. Those recommended reappointments are: Kyle Schulz - District 4, Karen A. Malone - District 4, Barb Johnson - District 4, and Sheldon Monson - At Large (District 1).

Motion by Commissioner Winkels to accept the reappointment of County Extension Committee Members as presented, seconded by Commissioner Kangas. Motion carried unanimously.

Resolution 2026-3 Approve CUP for Erickson on PID # 14-009-1050: Planning & Zoning/Building Services Administrator Deana Malone, Greg Harris from Mathiowetz Construction and land owner Dale Erickson were present to ask the Board for approval of Conditional Use Permit 14-009-1050. The CUP is for a sand pit on the Erickson property east of Wadena off Highway 10 to be used in conjunction with the Highway 10 and 71 construction projects. The Planning Commission recommends approval of the permit with no additional conditions.

Motion by Commissioner Winkels to approve Resolution 2026-3 and the Conditional Use Permit for Parcel 14-009-1050 as presented, seconded by Commissioner Kreklau. Motion carried unanimously.

The Public Hearing on the Proposed Property Tax Abatement 3050 was Closed at 10:07 a.m.

A Break was called from 10:08 a.m. to 10:16 a.m.

Resolution 2026-1 LELS Supervisors Collective Bargaining Agreement: Human Resources & Human Services Director/Deputy County Administrator Jennifer Westrum presented the Resolution and Agreement for Board approval, describing the financial implications involved. Negotiations have been completed and the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) has been ratified by the Law Enforcement Labor Services, Inc. (LELS), Local Supervisors, Local No. 566.

Motion by Commissioner Kangas to approve and accept Resolution 2026-1 and the LELS Supervisors CBA as presented, seconded by Commissioner Winkels. Motion carried unanimously.

LELS Licensed Deputies Memorandum of Understanding for One-Time Stipend: Human Resources & Human Services Director/Deputy County Administrator Jennifer Westrum presented this Memorandum of Understanding for the LELS Licensed Deputy group. The MOU has been negotiated by the Negotiating Committee and provides a \$1,500 stipend each to cover one year for four deputies who lagged behind in wages despite market and cost of living adjustments (COLA) for a total cost of \$6,000.

Motion by Commissioner Winkels to accept the LELS Licensed Deputies MOU as presented, seconded by Commissioner Kangas. Motion carried unanimously.

Resolution 2026-2 Conveyance of Property to City of Nimrod: County Engineer Anthony Maule explained the Resolution and process history for conveyance of Track B and Old County Road 26 to the City of Nimrod, introducing the documents produced by the City of Nimrod's attorney which had been reviewed by county staff. Once the Resolution is approved and documents recorded, the City of Nimrod will need to approve a resolution to dedicate the space as a public right-of-way and execute the easement with the landowner.

Motion by Commissioner Winkels to approve Resolution 2026-2 for the Conveyance of Property to the City of Nimrod as presented, seconded by Commissioner Kreklau. Motion carried unanimously.

Housing Tax Abatement: County Auditor/Treasurer/Interim County Administrator Heather Olson requested Board approval of the Housing Tax Abatement for parcel 14-026-3050.

Motion by Commissioner Kangas to approve the Housing Tax Abatement for parcel 14-026-3050, seconded by Commissioner Kreklau. Motion carried unanimously.

Interim County Administrator Report: County Auditor/Treasurer/Interim County Administrator Heather Olson reported on two items:

- The Administrative group, AMC and Region 5 met at Sourcewell to discuss improving communication about grant opportunities. The group plans to meet quarterly to get things moving and share information about grant opportunities.
- Ditches: Otter Tail County has formed the required Joint Ditch Authority and work on the ditch project will continue with the coordination of final hearings with Otter Tail County. Becker County has chosen not to participate.

Commissioner Reports:

Commissioner Kreklau - 01/20 Soil & Water, 02/02 MRC

Commissioner Stearns - 01/23 AMC, 02/28 PLMSWA

Commissioner Noon - 01/21 Opioid Mtg, 01/30 Central EMS, 02/02/ MRC

Commissioner Winkels - 01/22 Friendly Rider TAC

Commissioner Kangas - 01/28 ESB Radio, 01/30 Mahube OTWA

Motion to adjourn at 10:47 a.m. by Commissioner Winkels, seconded by Commissioner Stearns. Motion carried unanimously.

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

Ron Noon, County Board Chairman
Wadena County, MN