

WADENA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS' MEETING

February 10, 2026

The Wadena County Board of Commissioners' Meeting was held on Tuesday, February 10th, 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, Planning & Zoning/Building Services Administrator Deana Malone, Human Resources & Human Services Director/Deputy County Administrator Jennifer Westrum, BHU Supervisor Amelia Hutson, and Public Health Director Sarah Ness.

Amend/Approve the Day's Agenda:

Motion by Commissioner Winkels to approve today's Agenda after adding a Labor Attorney discussion, 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 \$108,220.39
- Human Services Warrants for Approval in the amount of \$17,743.21
- Mid Minnesota Federal Credit Union Donation
- Employment Update

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

REGULAR AGENDA ITEMS:

Resolution 2026-4 Narcan for Law Enforcement: Public Health Director Sarah Ness presented this Opioid Settlement Fund resolution for Board approval, stating that law enforcement is no longer able to receive Narcan through Central MN EMS and current stock is at or near expiration. Narcan is a brand name of Naloxone. This project supports a bulk order of Naloxone and will provide and meet the needs of law enforcement (WCSO, WPD, SPD, MPD) to carry two doses of Naloxone at all times.

Motion by Commissioner Winkels to approve the Opioid Settlement Request for Proposal Application submitted by the Wadena County Sheriff's Department on behalf of the county police departments for \$1,584 to purchase Narcan for law enforcement. Motion seconded by Commissioner Kreklau and carried unanimously.

Resolution 2026-5 Wadena Schools / Interquest Canines: Public Health Director Sarah Ness introduced this resolution for Board approval which would support the Wadena-Deer Creek School request for \$1,360 for the use of Interquest Detection Canines for 4 random drug searches during the 2026 school year.

Motion by Commissioner Kreklau to approve the Opioid Settlement Request for Proposal Application submitted by Public Health and Superintendent Lee Westrum on behalf of the Wadena-Deer Creek Schools for \$1,360 to utilize Interquest Canine units, seconded by Commissioner Stearns. Motion carried unanimously.

Hope Center Proposal: Human Resources & Human Services Director/Deputy County Administrator Jennifer Westrum and BHU Supervisor Amelia Hutson introduced the Hope Center Proposal in which Human Services would oversee daily operations rather than closing the Center or seeking a new operating entity. If approved, Human Services would hire a part-time employee to staff the facility Monday, Wednesday and Friday for 15-19 hours per week under the supervision of BHU Supervisor Amelia Hutson. Funding would continue through 2026 with existing funds with potential for additional staffing in 2027 pending AMHI decisions.

Motion by Commissioner Stearns to approve the creation and grading of a position description for a part-time Hope Center employee and Human Services providing the day-to-day oversight and management of the Center, seconded by Commissioner Winkels. A roll call vote was taken: Kreklau - nay, Stearns - aye, Noon - aye, Winkels - aye, Kangas - nay. Motion carried 3 - 2.

Compensatory Payouts and Balances Information: Human Resources & Human Services Director/Deputy County Administrator Jennifer Westrum brought before the Board the annual Compensatory Balances Report which is comprised of two parts: 1) the 2025 year-end payouts for non-exempt employees; and 2) the 2026 beginning balance report for all employees. Deputy Administrator Westrum explained that the yearly cap for compensatory time is 80 hours for all employees other than the 49ers (Highway staff) who have a Memorandum of Understanding in place for a maximum of 120 hours. Only non-exempt employees qualify for a payout of compensatory time unless the full Board approves a payout for exempt employees. The Board discussed the differences between non-exempt and exempt employees and the details of compensatory time.

Public Hearing for Tax Abatement: A public hearing was opened at 9:32 a.m. on parcel 17-620-0190 and a request for public comment was made.

Resolution 2026-6: Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) with LELS Jailer/Dispatcher Non-Licensed Essential Unit: Human Resources & Human Services Director/Deputy County Administrator Jennifer Westrum presented the CBA for review, stating that negotiations have been completed and ratified by the Union. Deputy County Administrator Westrum then discussed the estimated costs for shift differentials, field training, uniforms and benefits.

Motion by Commissioner Kangas to approve Resolution 2026-6 LELS Non-Licensed Jailer/Dispatcher Collective Bargaining Agreement as presented. Motion seconded by Commissioner Winkels and carried unanimously.

LELS Jailer-Dispatcher Non-Licensed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for 12 Hour Shift: Human Resources & Human Services Director/Deputy County Administrator Jennifer Westrum presented the MOU necessary for Dispatchers to continue to work 12-hour shifts which is the result of issues identified by HR and addressed independently of labor negotiations. The MOU was drawn up by Labor Attorney Dyan Ebert after consultations with HR and the union business agent.

Motion by Commissioner Winkels to adopt the Memorandum of Agreement as presented, seconded by Commissioner Noon. Motion carried unanimously.

Elections Window: County Auditor/Treasurer/Interim County Administrator Heather Olson requested that although it was previously approved, no action be taken on the election window remodel until after mid-term elections. The Board agreed to take no action at this time.

Labor Attorney Discussion: County Attorney Kyra Ladd informed the Board that she was recently notified by Labor Attorney Dyan Ebert that she and fellow partner Cally Kjellberg-Nelson will be leaving Quinlivan & Hughes, P.A. on March 2, 2026 to start their own firm. They would like to continue handling Wadena County's files and are asking the Board to confirm whether the County agrees to transfer the files to them or retain new counsel to represent the County. Quinlivan and Hughes will not necessarily have labor council on staff going forward. The Personnel Committee recommends that the Board continue with Dyan Ebert as the Labor Counsel. Fees will remain the same (MCIT rates). If the Board decides to stay with Attorney Ebert, she will send a Retainer Agreement and Letter of Engagement that will outline the fee schedule. It was noted that at any time the Board may issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) to get other quotes for this service

Motion by Commissioner Stearns that Wadena County's files be transferred to Dyan Ebert and Cally Kjellberg-Nelson at Resolute Law, LLC for continued handling and to give authorization to County Attorney Kyra Ladd to sign and authorize the forgoing action. Motion seconded by Commissioner Winkels and carried unanimously.

Zoning-Parks-GIS -Maintenance Department Update: Planning & Zoning/Building Services Administrator Deana Malone reported on several departmental services, including the number of various building and septic permits issued, passport applications, GIS and Park fees collected. She also listed the extensive overview of work done in 2025 and the Maintenance Department's activities and ongoing projects. Goals for 2026 include enabling online permit applications for the public, Flood Plain Ordinance adoption, Old Wadena Park improvements and migrating to Arc Pro for GIS services.

The Public Hearing for Housing Tax Abatement was Closed at 10:24 a.m. County Auditor/Treasurer/Interim County Administrator Heather Olson stated that this applicant had a modular home moved onto the property within the last 6 months and she has no objection to granting the abatement on

the County side, but that the requested abatement of the City of Menahga Assessments are not under the Auditor/Treasurer's authority.

Motion by Commissioner Kangas to accept the Housing Tax Abatement for parcel 17-620-0190, seconded by Commissioner Stearns. Motion carried unanimously.

Interim County Administrator Report: County Auditor/Treasurer/Interim County Administrator Heather Olson reported that she is continuing to work with other County Administrators on grant possibilities and that quarterly meetings are planned in this area.

Commissioner Reports:

Commissioner Winkels - 02/05 Joint Board & Planning Commission Meeting, 02/10 Personnel Committee

Commissioner Kangas - 02/05 Joint Board & Planning Commission Meeting, 02/09 Solid Waste

Commissioner Kreklau - 02/05 Joint Board & Planning Commission Meeting, 02/09 Extension Committee

Commissioner Stearns - 02/05 Joint Board & Planning Commission Meeting, 02/09 TWCC

Commissioner Noon - 02/05 Joint Board & Planning Commission Meeting, 02/09 Extension

Motion to adjourn at 10:38 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