Minutes of the Region 26 Council Board Meeting

October 27, 2026

Present:
Blaine County: Matt Eggert
City of Ord: Brandon Stoural
Garfield County: Diana Hurlburt
Greeley County: Jordan Foltz
Loup County: Dave Larson
Sherman County: Tom Bandur
Thomas County: Joseph Smith
Law Enforcement: Joel Bergman
Valley County: Theresa Petska
Wheeler County: Doug Pokorny
Tri-County Municipalities: Jay Meyer, Chairman
Catie Larsen, Executive Director

Absent:
Range Municipalities: Paige Ryschon

Staff Present: Virginia Michalski, Office Manager

Chairman Jay Meyer called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm as a legal meeting of the Region 26 Council. Notice of the meeting and agenda were sent to all clerks of each member county/municipality for posting and given in advance to all members of the Board. A quorum was present. The Open Meetings Act was available for public inspection.

Action Items Requiring Vote

Approval of Agenda

Motion and second were made to approve the agenda. Motion by Joseph Smith, seconded by Dave Larson, to approve the October 27, 2026 agenda as presented. Motion carried by roll call vote. Ayes (10), Nays (0), Abstain (0).

Approval of September 29, 2026 Minutes

The Board reviewed the minutes of the September 29, 2026, meeting no corrections were requested. Motion by Doug Pokorny, seconded by Theresa Petska, to approve the September 29, 2026 meeting minutes. Motion carried by roll call vote. Ayes (9), Nays (0), Abstain (1).

August 2026 Financial Statement

The August 2026 Financial Statement, which had been previously tabled, was brought back for discussion after additional information was received and further explanation was given. A motion was made and a roll call vote was conducted regarding the revised statement. Motion by Dave Larson, seconded by Joseph Smith, to approve the August 2026 financial statement. Motion carried by roll call vote. Ayes (10), Nays (0), Abstain (1).

September 2026 Financial Statement

The September 2026 Financial Statement was presented. Motion by Joseph Smith, seconded by Dave Larson to approve the September financial statement. The financial statement was approved by roll call vote. Ayes (10), Nays (0), Abstain (1).

October Claims

The Board reviewed and discussed October 2026 claims, including vehicle rebuilding expenses, Geocomm contract costs, and the federal mileage reimbursement rate, which was discussed at $0.76 per mile with the possibility of a year-end rate review. Following discussion a motion by Doug Pokorny, seconded by Dave Larson to approve the October Claims. The October claims were approved by roll call vote. Ayes (10), Nays (0), Abstain (1).

Budget

The Board conducted a detailed review of the proposed budget and discussed several line-item adjustments. Administrative hours for Virginia were increased from 36 to 40 hours per week, resulting in corresponding payroll tax adjustments. Increases were also made to dispatch retirement, board mileage, building maintenance, and 911 telephone expenses. To offset these increases, reductions were approved in several areas, including staff appreciation, hosting and training expenses, information technology and connectivity maintenance, and lodging costs. Newspaper subscriptions and administrative mileage were removed from the budget. The NIRMA insurance allocation was set at $52,000, with available dispatch wage funds helping to offset the increase. After accounting for anticipated grant funding, including the Deb Fischer and Wildfire Management grants, the budget was balanced at a total of $1,239,505.

Following discussion and review of the adjustments, a revised motion was made to approve the budget with county assessments remaining unchanged from the previous year. The Board also discussed the proper structure and management of sinking funds and reserve accounts to ensure compliance with accounting and legal requirements. Specific discussion included establishing separate funds for

equipment replacement and a vehicle replacement fund funded at approximately $4,000 annually. Board members discussed maintaining the current reserve fund balance of $90,000 while working toward a long-term reserve target of approximately $160,000.

The Board reviewed current audit reporting practices and discussed how account balances are presently combined into a single cash figure within the audit books. To gain further clarification regarding account structure and reporting requirements, the Board agreed to invite Chuck to attend a future meeting and provide additional guidance.

The Board discussed dispatch operations, staffing levels, and wage considerations for the upcoming budget year. A phased, stair-step wage increase was proposed through January to allow for evaluation of budget performance before implementing full increases, pending consultation with the auditor. Discussion also noted that the dispatch wage budget currently includes funding to absorb overtime expenses generated by staffing shortages and shift coverage needs.

Additional discussion focused on operational improvements and staffing support. A meeting was scheduled with Broken Bow to explore mutual aid and backup dispatch coverage during periods of illness, leave, or staffing shortages.

Motion by Joel Bergman, seconded by Branden Stoural, to approve the revised budget. Motion carried by roll call vote. Ayes (10), Nays (0), Abstain (1).

Towers and Equipment

Jay Meyer informed us work at the North Loup Scotia tower has been completed and is operating as expected. The Board also reviewed the status of the Loup City tower generator fuel supply and noted that the fuel tank is currently at approximately 30 percent capacity. Discussion focused on increasing the fuel level to at least 50 percent prior to the winter season to ensure adequate backup power availability during severe weather or extended outages. Tom Bandur said Sherman County would cover the cost to fill the propane tank.

Jay Meyer said the strobe light at the Greeley tower has been flashing improperly. He had a video of it that he will share with Catie to have Corey with Platte Valley take a look at it and get it fixed.

Garage Update

The Board discussed the garage and building project in conjunction with the recent budget adjustments and agreed to postpone moving forward with the garage construction project at this time. While the project remains a future consideration, members determined that delaying the project was the most appropriate course of action given current budget priorities. Catie had reached out an got some estimates for a new concrete building pad, which included an approximate cost of $5,000 for a 4-inch pad and $6,000 for a 6-inch reinforced pad with rebar. Additional clarification may still be needed regarding whether footings are included in the quoted costs.

The Board also agreed to continue renting the vehicle garage at a cost of $100 per month to provide protection and secure storage for the pickup truck. As an interim measure, Dave Larson and his crew will smooth and level the ground in the garage area to eliminate holes and address any potential safety concerns. This work will improve site conditions until a decision is made to proceed with the larger garage project in the future.

Criminal Justice Report

Joel Bergman reported they had an meeting coming up November 6th.

Communications Center Report

Caden Johnson was not able to attend the meeting but asked Catie to report that Ian and Catie attended the APCO/NENA conference and were able to meet a lot of vendors and discuss some possible upcoming changes with equipment for Region 26.

Director's Report

Catie provided an update on activities and projects affecting the Region 26 and the region. Within the North Central PET Region, we continue to await activation of the new Grants Management System (GMS). Training activities have continued, including participation in the Capstone exercise program. Progress is also being made on the Flock Safety camera project, with plans underway to install an additional eleven cameras utilizing grant funding.

Catie attended several meetings during the reporting period, including the East Central 911 Meeting, the North Central PET Region Meeting, and a staff meeting. During the East Central 911 Meeting, a demonstration was presented on a potential replacement for the CallWorks system, allowing attendees to review features and capabilities of a possible future solution. Preparations are also underway for upcoming municipality elections, and letters will be distributed to member entities regarding voting procedures in October.

Additional updates included participation in several professional development and networking events. Virginia and Catie attended the NIRMA Conference, while Ian and Catie attended the APCO/NENA Conference. Catie also participated in the Legislative Conference.

Work has continued on improving regional communications and coordination through implementation of the Signal messaging application with the Sandhills and Lou-Platte Task Force teams. In conjunction with these efforts, the Lou-Platte Task Force agreement was updated to reflect the addition of Broken Bow as a participating member.

Catie also reported on several administrative and operational projects. We are in the process of updating the administrative copier, which is expected to reduce overall operating costs. As part of the transition, removal of a dedicated fax line is being considered since we really do not use it and we can always use the dispatch copier to fax if needed. An audit from the Unemployment office has been completed. Catie further reported that the budget for the Deb Fischer Department of Justice Radio Console project has been announced and approved. Banking information has been submitted, and we are hopeful that work on the new radio console project will begin in the near future.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be November 24, 2026 at 6:30 p.m.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:09 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Catie Larsen, Executive Director

Approved by the Region 26 council:

Chairman:_____Date:_____