

**OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS  
PENNINGTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
JUSTICE CENTER BOARD ROOM  
FEBRUARY 25, 2025 – 10:00 A.M.**

Pursuant to adjournment, the Pennington County Board of Commissioners met in the Pennington County Justice Center Board Room in Thief River Falls, MN, on Tuesday, February 25, 2025, at 10:00 a.m. Members present: Seth Nelson, Bruce Lawrence, Roy Sourdif, David Sorenson, and Neil Peterson. Members absent: None.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Sourdif and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

The Chairman asked if there were any amendments to the agenda. The County Coordinator noted that the County Sheriff has been removed from the agenda. Motioned by Commissioner Sorenson, seconded by Commissioner Peterson, to approve the agenda with the noted change. Motion carried.

Recognition of Citizens: None.

Motioned by Commissioner Peterson, seconded by Commissioner Nelson, to approve the County Board minutes of February 11, 2025, as written. Motion carried.

Motioned by Commissioner Lawrence, seconded by Commissioner Sorenson, to approve the Human Services warrants totaling \$252,894.73 and the following Commissioner warrants. Motion carried.

County Revenue	\$314,965.74
Road & Bridge	\$ 70,343.95
Ditch Funds	\$ 75.00

Meal reimbursements and per diems in the amount of \$32.61 were also approved.

Julie Sjostrand – Human Services Director

Ms. Sjostrand presented the consent agenda from the February 18, 2025, Human Service Committee meeting. On a motion by Commissioner Peterson and seconded by Commissioner Sorenson, the following recommendations of the Pennington County Human Service Committee for February 18, 2025 (detailed minutes on record) are hereby adopted:

**SECTION A**

- I. To approve January 21, 2025, Human Service Committee Meeting minutes.
- II. To approve the agency's personnel action as presented.
- III.
  - A. To approve and re-authorize the Pennington County Pre-Petition Screening Team and the list of screeners as presented.
  - B. To approve a letter from DHS Commissioner Jodi Harpstead commending the Agency and Staff for Perfect Performance in meeting all

DHS Human Services Financial reporting requirements for CY 2024 as presented.

C. To approve the Northwest Minnesota Multi-County Housing Redevelopment Authority acceptance of the second payment of 2024 Pennington County aid for \$39,000.00 for Housing Redevelopment Authority's Pennington County down payment assistance Program as presented.

D. To approve the Pennington County Statewide Affordable Housing Aid Policy as presented.

## SECTION B

I. To approve payment of the Agency's bills.

Commissioner Peterson noted that the MN Governor's proposed budget could result in a 6-8% levy increase to our county for Human Services alone. Ms. Sjostrand said that the proposed budget shifts costs from the state to the counties and impacts many services including waivers, the sex offender program, and the substance abuse program.

Erik Beitel – Emergency Management Director

Mr. Beitel noted that the Hazard Mitigation Plan process was completed last December and was forwarded to the State of MN and FEMA. On February 12, 2025, he received notice that the plan was approved contingent on county approval. The following resolution was introduced by Commissioner Lawrence, seconded by Commissioner Nelson, and upon vote was unanimously carried.

### **ADOPTION OF THE PENNINGTON COUNTY 2024 HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN**

**WHEREAS**, Pennington County has participated in the hazard mitigation planning process as established under the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000; and

**WHEREAS**, the Act establishes a framework for the development of a County Hazard Mitigation Plan; and

**WHEREAS**, the Act as part of the planning process requires public involvement and local coordination among neighboring local units of government and businesses; and

**WHEREAS**, the Pennington County Plan includes a risk assessment including past hazards, hazards that threaten the County, and estimate of structures at risk, a general description of land uses and development trends; and

**WHEREAS**, the Pennington County Plan includes a mitigation strategy including goals and objectives and an action plan identifying specific mitigation projects and costs; and

**WHEREAS**, the Pennington County Plan includes a maintenance or implantation process including plan updates, integration of the plan into other planning documents, and how Pennington County will maintain public participation and coordination; and

**WHEREAS**, the Plan has been shared with the Minnesota Division of Homeland and Emergency Management and the Federal Emergency Management Agency for review and comment; and

**WHEREAS**, the Pennington County 2024 Hazard Mitigation Plan will make the county and participating jurisdictions eligible to receive FEMA hazard mitigation assistance grants; and

**WHEREAS**, this is a multi-jurisdictional Plan and cities that participated in the planning process may choose to also adopt the County plan.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that Pennington County supports the hazard mitigation planning effort and wishes to adopt the Pennington County 2024 Hazard Mitigation Plan.

Commissioner Lawrence questioned Mr. Beitel on the status and progress of county cyber security, noting that the IT Committee is discussing the topic with Garden Valley Technologies. Mr. Beitel replied that a 14-county group of EMD's and state reps will be meeting this Thursday and a subgroup will be discussing employee procedures for cyber security.

Mike Flaagan – County Engineer; Alex Bladow – Assistant County Engineer

Mr. Bladow discussed a 16.5' buffer strip in Hickory Township pertaining to landowner Darwin Boutain. A fine notice was sent to Mr. Boutain as the strip did not appear to be planted. Mr. Boutain acknowledged receiving the notice but did not read it. He said he planted alfalfa in the buffer strip in June 2024 but does not have receipts for the seed purchase. Mr. Bladow noted that fines would increase from \$100 to \$500 since the deadline is more than six months past. He noted that the fines currently total \$1,200. Discussion followed with Commissioners Lawrence and Peterson stating that fines should remain and accrue until documentation is provided that the buffer strip was in fact seeded as required. Mr. Bladow will monitor the buffer strip in the spring to see what is growing.

Motioned by Commissioner Peterson, seconded by Commissioner Lawrence, to approve the hire of Lee Sherman Knutson hire as Highway Equipment Operator with an effective starting date of March 17, 2025. Motion carried.

Motioned by Commissioner Peterson, seconded by Commissioner Nelson, to authorize the Engineer to advertise for bids for the following CSAH projects scheduled for 2025. Motion carried.

CSAH #10 – Milling & Overlay  
CSAH #27 – Milling & Overlay  
CSAH #28 – Milling & Overlay  
CSAH #31 – Milling & Overlay  
CSAH #26 – Full reclamation

County Auditor-Treasurer Items: None.

County Coordinator Items:

County Coordinator Kevin Erickson presented the following updated quotes received for asbestos removal in the Old Auditorium:

Horsley Specialties	\$103,185.00
ACCT, Inc.	\$110,750.00

Commissioner Lawrence noted that Thief River Falls Area Hockey Association (TRFAHA) has been removing their items from the Auditorium. Interim County Attorney Nathan Haase said he will confirm when TRFAHA has fully removed their items and will then request that all building keys be returned to the County.

County Attorney Items:

Mr. Haase stated that the March UND recruiting visit is expected to cost approximately \$400 and funds are available in the budget. He is expecting about 25 law students to attend.

Committee Reports / Commissioner Updates:

Commissioner Peterson stated he is headed to Minneapolis/St. Paul for Northern Counties and MN Rural Counties meetings. Main discussion topics will include the new DOC rulemaking and the solid waste permitting process.

Motioned by Commissioner Nelson, seconded by Commissioner Sorenson, to adjourn the Board meeting to March 11, 2025, at 10:00 a.m. Motion carried.

ATTEST:

Kevin Erickson, Coordinator  
Pennington County

Roy Sourdif, Chairman  
Board of Commissioners