

**OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS  
PENNINGTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
JUSTICE CENTER BOARD ROOM  
AUGUST 26, 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, August 26, 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. Hearing none, there was a motion by Commissioner Peterson, seconded by Commissioner Lawrence, to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried.

Recognition of Citizens: None.

Motioned by Commissioner Sorenson, seconded by Commissioner Peterson, to approve the County Board minutes of August 12, 2025, as written. Motion carried.

Motioned by Commissioner Nelson, seconded by Commissioner Lawrence, to approve the Human Services warrants totaling \$267,699.80 and the following Commissioner warrants. Motion carried.

County Revenue	\$103,001.97
Road & Bridge	\$ 87,910.22
Solid Waste Facility	\$ 747.93
Ditch Funds	\$ 4,059.00

Julie Sjostrand – Human Services Director

Ms. Sjostrand presented the consent agenda from the August 19, 2025, Human Services Committee meeting. On a motion by Commissioner Lawrence and seconded by Commissioner Peterson, the following recommendations of the Pennington County Human Service Committee for August 19, 2025 (detailed minutes on record) are hereby adopted:

SECTION A

- I. To approve July 15, 2025, Human Service Committee Meeting minutes.
- II. To approve the agency’s personnel action as presented.
- III. A. To approve the CY 2026 Purchase of Service Agreement with the Occupational Development Center and Pennington County Human Services, as presented.  
B. To approve the Pennington County Human Services Rate Exception Letter, as presented.

C. To approve the CCAP allocation projected overspending as presented.

## SECTION B

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

Jim Karels – MCIT Risk Management Consultant

Mr. Karels distributed and reviewed the MCIT member report for Pennington County, noting that MCIT is the insurance provider for 81 of 87 MN counties. Items discussed included reinsurance, cost of buildings, cyber claims, inflation, and the effects these have on insurance rates. The county's worker's compensation rate for 2025 is better than average, with a majority of claims occurring in law enforcement and the highway department. Automobile claims account for the majority of property and liability claims. MCIT plans to bolster their website and resource center to provide more resources to counties, and loss control consultants can assist with safety concerns, work with safety committees, etc. The Board thanked Mr. Karels for his review of our annual report.

Peter Nelson – SWCD District Manager

Mr. Nelson presented the proposed 2026 budget for the SWCD totaling \$1,522,404, a decrease of \$121,009 from the 2025 budget. Revenues included a requested 4% increase to the County's appropriation. He expects overall decreases in State funding but noted that the agency will receive a \$180k soil health grant from the MN Board of Water and Soil Resources. The Board thanked him for his presentation and took the budget request under advisement.

Mike Flaagan – County Engineer

Mr. Flaagan discussed the county's radio tower and related property located in Smiley Township. With his departments upgrade to portable radios, he feels the tower is no longer needed and could be sold. Motioned by Commissioner Lawrence motioned, seconded by Commissioner Sorenson, to advertise for sale the radio tower and affiliated 3.66 acres of land located in Section 11 of Smiley Township. Following discussion, the motion was carried.

Engineer Flaagan noted that two motor grader leases will expire in 2026. He has received the following two quotes:

Ziegler/CAT: 72-months, 7,000-hour warranty, \$57,970.61

RDO/John Deere: 72-months, 7,500-hour warranty, \$62,793.30

Mr. Flaagan noted that the Ziegler quote does not include mileage for warranty work, whereas the RDO quote does include such mileage. The County's graders average 1,000 hours/year. Discussion followed with it noted that the County has used John Deere motor graders for over 20 years and the relationship has been good. Commissioner Peterson noted the approximate \$60k difference in pricing over the life of the leases. Motioned by Commissioner Peterson, seconded by Commissioner Lawrence, to approve the quote by

Ziegler/Caterpillar for the lease of two motor graders for six-years in the amount of \$57,970.61 per year per motor grader. Following discussion, the motion was carried.

Mr. Flaagan provided an update on county projects. Paving on CSAH #10 is complete, and the hot in place project with Polk County will begin next week. Road striping is the only work yet to be completed on 2025 paving projects. The County is out spraying the legal ditches right now for weeds and cattails.

Seth Vettleson – County Sheriff

Motioned by Commissioner Lawrence, seconded by Commissioner Sorenson, to approve a quote from Accurate Controls, Inc. in the amount of \$42,347.26 for the purchase, installation, licensing, and testing of five new HP security control stations, 3 HP monitors, and related software upgrades. Motion carried.

Motioned by Commissioner Peterson, seconded by Commissioner Nelson, to approve the hire of Nash Allen Robertson for the position of Full-time Deputy Sheriff, contingent on receipt of BCA fingerprint records check and final background check. Motion carried.

Motioned by Commissioner Lawrence, seconded by Commissioner Sorenson, to approve the hire of Liam Paul Martell as Part-Time Corrections Officer, contingent on receipt of BCA fingerprint records check. Motion carried.

County Auditor-Treasurer Items: None.

County Coordinator Items:

Motioned by Commissioner Nelson, seconded by Commissioner Lawrence, to approve a quote by Safety Compliance Services, LLC in the amount of \$4,000 for annual safety training for Pennington County employees, which will be held in October 2025. Motion carried.

Motioned by Commissioner Nelson, seconded by Commissioner Lawrence, to approve a quote by BKV Group in the amount of \$22,500 for work related to the LEC roofing project, to include construction documents and remittance to the MN DLI, and construction administration. Motion carried.

Mr. Erickson provided an update on 2026 health insurance, noting an expected increase of 12.5% to overall premiums. The increase is about average for similar large groups in the MN Healthcare Consortium, and largely attributable to the rising cost of claims and prescription drugs. The 2026 renewal is not final at this time and an update will be provided at the next Board meeting.

Mr. Erickson reported on behalf of the Safety Committee, noting that the group continues to meet regularly and is working on updating the employee safety manual. Safety Compliance Services has made it known they can update our safety manual and also

provide comprehensive assistance with the county's safety program, so a quote has been requested on each service and he will report back to the Board once the quotes are received.

County Attorney Items:

Assistant County Attorney-Senior Ashley Nelson was present and made a formal introduction to the Board, noting that she formerly held the position of Assistant County Attorney in Beltrami County for almost 10 years then was Assistant General Counsel for the White Earth Nation prior to joining Pennington County.

Committee Reports / Commissioner Updates:

The AMC Fall Policy Conference will take place September 10-12, 2025, in Alexandria, MN.

Motioned by Commissioner Nelson, seconded by Commissioner Lawrence, to adjourn the Board meeting to September 9, 2025, at 10:00 a.m. Motion carried.

ATTEST:

Kevin Erickson, County Coordinator  
Pennington County

Roy Sourdif, Chairman  
Board of Commissioners