

**OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS
PENNINGTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
JUSTICE CENTER BOARD ROOM
SEPTEMBER 9, 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, September 9, 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 Jamie Bakken of the Historical Society has been added to the agenda at 10:40 a.m. Motioned by Commissioner Peterson, seconded by Commissioner Sorenson, to approve the agenda with the change presented. Motion carried.

Recognition of Citizens: None.

Motioned by Commissioner Nelson, seconded by Commissioner Lawrence, to approve the County Board minutes of August 26, 2025, as written. Motion carried.

Motioned by Commissioner Peterson, seconded by Commissioner Lawrence, to approve the Auditor-Manual warrants for August 2025 totaling \$1,781,908.31 and the following Commissioner warrants. Motion carried.

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| County Revenue | \$36,622.93 |
| Road & Bridge | \$64,120.05 |
| Solid Waste Facility | \$ 5,500.00 |
| Ditch Funds | \$ 300.00 |

Meals and per diems in the amount of \$2,903.75 were also approved.

Charity Brault – NW MN Multi-County Housing & Redevelopment Authority

Ms. Brault presented their 2024 annual report and discussed their levy. The HRA is authorized by Statute to levy 25% of .0185% of taxable market value with funds used for match programs, grants, down payment assistance, and rehab activities in the local area. Recent projects include the Oak Lodge Apartments (24 units) and Sherwood Park (20 units). The down payment assistance program is a revolving fund that provides up to \$7,500 at 4% interest. She also discussed the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program and the Bring It Home state program. The Board thanked her for the report.

Mike Flaagan – County Engineer

Engineer Flaagan discussed the redetermination of benefits for County Ditch #46 and County Ditch #70 and Board actions required.

Motioned by Commissioner Peterson, seconded by Commissioner Nelson, to approve the Auditor's Order regarding redetermination of benefits for Pennington County Ditch 46. Motion carried.

Motioned by Commissioner Peterson, seconded by Commissioner Lawrence, to approve the Findings and Order Initiating the Redetermination of Benefits regarding Pennington County Ditch 46. Motion carried.

Motioned by Commissioner Peterson, seconded by Commissioner Sorenson, to approve the Auditor's Order regarding redetermination of benefits for Pennington County Ditch 70. Motion carried.

Motioned by Commissioner Peterson, seconded by Commissioner Lawrence, to approve the Findings and Order Initiating the Redetermination of Benefits regarding Pennington County Ditch 70. Motion carried.

Engineer Flaagan noted that during redetermination of benefits for CD #70, it was found that 0.7% of the benefited area was located in Marshall County. The law allows for such a small area to be removed from the benefited area upon County Board approval.

Motioned by Commissioner Peterson, seconded by Commissioner Sorenson, to approve removal of the 0.7% of benefited area of Pennington County Ditch 70 determined to be located within Marshall County, MN. Motion carried.

Engineer Flaagan discussed the following two quotes received for a new dump trailer; budgeted for 2026 but could be purchased with the 2025 budget:

ABU Trailers Inc. = \$17,350.58 (no trade-in); \$13,350.58 w/\$4k trade-in)

Grand Trailer Sales (EGF) = \$25,129.85 (no trade-in offer)

Motioned by Commissioner Peterson, seconded by Commissioner Nelson, to approve the quote by ABU Trailers Inc. in the amount of \$13,350.58 (inc. \$4,000 trade-in) for a new dump trailer, to be paid for in 2025. Motion carried.

The County Board scheduled a road tour of 2025 projects for September 22, 2025, at 8:00 a.m. The tour will leave from the Highway Department.

Commissioner Peterson commented that the Board members are getting good feedback on County mowing work. Mr. Flaagan said his department will keep mowing as long as the weather allows. 2025 road striping work is complete and noted that CSAH #3 received special striping from the county line to the roundabout on Highway #75 as part of a speed study.

Seth Vettleson – County Sheriff, Erik Beitel – Emergency Management Director

Sheriff Vettleson discussed a proposed transition from the Code Red emergency notification system to a system called Everbridge. Mr. Beitel stated that a majority of area counties have already made the transition to Everbridge. One major advantage is the

ability to notify every phone within a designated emergency area. In a recent demonstration Everbridge was able to connect with over 8,000 phone numbers in the area within 5 minutes. Contact ability includes transient people, residents, etc., and the system is easier, faster, and allows up to 5 superusers. Everbridge provided a quote of \$8,650.23 for a one-year contract, as compared to Code Red at \$6,713.37. Motioned by Commissioner Peterson, seconded by Commissioner Sorenson, to approve the quote by Everbridge in the amount of \$8,650.23 for a one-year contract for emergency notification services, which will replace the current Code Red services. Motion carried. Mr. Beitel said the transition to Everbridge will begin in November with some system overlap occurring through 12/31/25.

Jamie Bakken – Pennington County Historical Society

Ms. Bakken thanked the Board for their annual appropriation to the Historical Society. She discussed upcoming projects at Pioneer Village, including a new roof for the Street Wizard's car building. Two cabin roofs were replaced in 2024. She discussed the camps held onsite this year and noted an upcoming wedding in November. Ms. Bakken discussed area county appropriations and requested an increase from Pennington County. She noted some investors are looking to build a \$400k addition off the main Engelstad building which would be climate controlled and used to house artifacts. The Board thanked her for the update.

County Auditor-Treasurer Items:

The following resolution was introduced by Commissioner Lawrence, seconded by Commissioner Sorenson, and upon vote was unanimously carried.

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING EXECUTION OF AGREEMENT

BE IT RESOLVED, that Pennington County enter into a grant agreement with the Minnesota Department of Public Safety, for traffic safety projects during the period from October 1, 2025, through September 30, 2026.

The County Auditor-Treasurer is hereby authorized to execute such agreements and amendments as are necessary to implement the project on behalf of the County of Pennington and to be the fiscal agent and administer the grant.

Ms. Herzberg discussed the 2026 budget, stating that most of the proposed levy increase is due to salaries and benefits; citing an increase of 9.9% to health insurance premiums. She noted that the County's IT position and budget has been moved to its own department for 2026. At this time, she estimates a levy increase of 4.5% - 5.0% for 2026 but noted that it may decrease by the time the Board sets the levy. Commissioner Peterson thanked the Auditor-Treasurer and all County departments for their work on the budget and keeping the levy as low as possible.

County Coordinator Items:

Motioned by Commissioner Lawrence, seconded by Commissioner Nelson, to approve renewal of the Operating and Facility Space Agreement between Pennington County and Waste Masters, LLC, for use of the transfer station for recyclables and for use of the County's scale, for the period of September 1, 2025, to August 31, 2028. The County shall pay Waste Masters \$5,720.00/month in Year 1, \$5,892.00/month in Year 2, and \$6,069.00/month in Year 3. Discussion was held with Mr. Haase noting that such payments were rounded up to the nearest dollar. Commissioner Nelson, a member of the Solid Waste Committee, noted a longer contract with Waste Masters LLC would be beneficial to the County. Following discussion, the motion carried.

Motioned by Commissioner Sorenson, seconded by Commissioner Nelson, to approve a quote by Hudson Electric LLC in the amount of \$625.00 to remove 11 old lights and install 6 new lights in the County Recorder's office as part of a ceiling project. Motion carried with Commissioner Lawrence abstaining.

Motioned by Commissioner Peterson, seconded by Commissioner Sorenson, to approve a quote by Lawrence Builders in the amount of \$3,955.00 to install a new suspended ceiling in the County Recorder's Office. Motion carried with Commissioner Lawrence abstaining.

Coordinator Erickson discussed the County's 457b deferred compensation plan through Nationwide. The Secure 2.0 Act of 2023 dictates that as of January 1, 2026, Roth deferrals must be utilized for any high earner (\$145k+), age 50+ catchup contributions. Currently, the County's plan doesn't offer Roth deferrals. Motioned by Commissioner Sorenson, seconded by Commissioner Lawrence, to approve amending the County's Plan documents with Nationwide to allow 1) Roth contributions for employees, 2) to offer Roth rollovers, and 3) to allow Roth In-Plan conversions (one-time conversion of pre-tax dollars to Roth dollars), all effective January 1, 2026. Motion carried.

The County Coordinator discussed two quotes received from Safety Compliance Services – one for updating the County's Safety Programs, and one for a two-year complete safety services package. He will bring the quotes to the Safety Committee and report back to the Board with any recommendations.

Mr. Erickson presented a letter from the Board of Peace Officer Standards and Training stating that a review of mandated employee training and department policies was conducted on August 7, 2025, and the Pennington County's Sheriff Office passed the review.

County Attorney Items:

Mr. Haase noted that one office leased by the DOC-Probation has poor Wi-Fi reception, so a booster or relay system has been ordered through ABM.

Mr. Haase discussed remote access for his office.

Committee Reports / Commissioner Updates:

Commissioner Peterson noted that Northern Counties met last week and in discussion about 2026 levies he noted that Pennington County appears to be on the low end for the area. He noted that a few new counties are interested in joining Northern Counties.

It was noted that the AMC Fall Policy Conference starts tomorrow, September 10, 2025.

Motioned by Commissioner Nelson, seconded by Commissioner Sorenson, to adjourn the Board meeting to September 23, 2025, at 10:00 a.m. Motion carried.

ATTEST:

Kevin Erickson, County Coordinator
Pennington County

Roy Sourdif, Chairman
Board of Commissioners