

**OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS  
PENNINGTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
JUSTICE CENTER BOARD ROOM  
DECEMBER 15, 2025 – 5:00 P.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 Monday, December 15, 2025, at 5:00 p.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 Nelson, seconded by Commissioner Sorenson, to approve the agenda as written. Motion carried.

Recognition of Citizens: None.

Motioned by Commissioner Sorenson, seconded by Commissioner Peterson, to approve the County Board minutes of November 25, 2025, as written. Motion carried.

Motioned by Commissioner Peterson, seconded by Commissioner Lawrence, to approve the Auditor and Manual warrants for November 2025 totaling \$7,666,791.64 and the following Commissioner warrants. Motion carried.

County Revenue	\$123,913.09
Road & Bridge	\$165,084.29
Solid Waste Facility	\$ 14,392.87
Ditch Funds	\$ 71,441.85

Per diems and meal reimbursements in the amount of \$2,362.33 were also approved.

Kermit Genereux – Thief River Falls Pickleball Association

Mr. Genereux presented on behalf of the TRF Pickleball Association's expansion committee and noted Mr. Bill Fogarty (present) is the club's president. Mr. Genereux discussed the physical and mental health benefits of pickleball and noted its popularity with area senior citizens. He stated that the players support the community and local stores before and after play so there is local benefit to sponsorship. Currently there are 3 pickleball courts on the north side of Franklin Middle School which are fully utilized with people often waiting to play. The local club would like to add two more pickleball courts at an estimated cost of \$93,000-\$100,000 and hope to complete the project by fall of 2026. They are seeking county support in the amount of \$10,000-\$15,000. Mr. Genereux thanked the County Board for their time and consideration.

Colleen Hoffman, Crystelle Philipp, Marit Martell - Hoffman, Philipp & Martell, PLLC

Ms. Philipp distributed printed copies of the county's 2024 financial audit. Ms. Philipp noted that few adjustments were needed during the audit and throughout the year and commended county staff for their work. The 'Management's Discussion and Analysis' section of the audit lists the key aspects for the Board to review. Other sections discussed include the balance sheet, fund balances, and the county's debt, which includes bonds payable and leases. Due to higher than recommended fund balances, it was suggested that the county commit a portion of unassigned funds, such as for future projects. Engineer Mike Flaagan was present and questioned the county's leasing habits as compared to other counties they audit. Ms. Philipp stated that Pennington County leases more heavy equipment, whereas other counties typically lease items like automobiles. Further discussion included federal and state funds & programs that are administered or initiated at the county level, of which no issues were found. The Board thanked the firm for presenting their report on the 2024 financial audit.

Mike Flaagan – County Engineer

Engineer Flaagan provided an update to the Board. His department is working through the lease agreement for the new truck, noting the paperwork is more complicated than usual. He is also working on right-of-way agreements related to the upcoming CSAH #11 and township road project, and noted that the project's engineering work is about 90% complete. time.

Seth Vettleson – County Sheriff

Sheriff Vettleson presented an amended Joint Powers Agreement for the Pine to Prairie Drug (and Violent Crime) Task Force, which consists of membership by four cities, eight counties, and U.S. Customs and Border Protection / Homeland Security Investigations. He noted that Pennington County and the City of Thief River Falls are now half-members. Motioned by Commissioner Lawrence, seconded by Commissioner Peterson, to approve the amended JPA agreement for the Pine to Prairie Drug Task Force as presented and authorize Board signatures. Motion carried. The Sheriff noted that Alex Henningsen is the assigned officer for the County and Ben Tureson is the assigned officer for the City of Thief River Falls.

Sheriff Vettleson noted that ABM Technology provides IT services to the Sheriff's Office but recently lost their state accreditation for the next 12 months. Morris Electronics Inc. has provided a quote of \$42,220 for IT services in 2026, to include 12 on-site visits and 52 weeks of remote support. After-hours remote support will cost \$1,331.20 and an hourly rate of \$125.00. The Sheriff noted that the overall pricing is very comparable to that of ABM Technology. Motioned by Commissioner Lawrence, seconded by Commissioner Neson, to approve a Network Support Contract between the Pennington County Sheriff's Office and Morris Electronics Inc. for the period of January 1, 2026, to December 31, 2026, with pricing as described above. Motion carried.

County Auditor-Treasurer Items:

Motioned by Commissioner Peterson, seconded by Commissioner Sorenson, to approve issuance of the following licenses for 2026. Motion carried.

Farmers Union Oil	Cigarette & Tobacco
Northdale Oil Inc.	Cigarette & Tobacco
Kruse In	Cigarette & Tobacco

Motioned by Commissioner Peterson, seconded by Commissioner Lawrence, to approve the following licenses for 2026. Motion carried.

TRF Golf Club	On-Sale Liquor & Sunday Sales
Legacy Catering LLC	On-Sale Liquor & Sunday Sales
Carpenter's Corner	On-Sale Liquor Sales
Falls Stay & Play	3.2 On-Sale Liquor
Kruse In	3.2 Off-Sale Liquor
Northdale Oil, Inc.	3.2 Off-Sale Liquor

County Coordinator Items:

Mr. Erickson discussed MN Statute 480.50 regarding the masking of Judicial and elected official personal information in real property records. The Statute authorizes the County Recorder to charge a service fee up to \$75.00 for filings related to judicial security. Motioned by Commissioner Nelson, seconded by Commissioner Sorenson, to set a Recorder Office service fee of \$75.00 for filings related to Judicial Security per MN Statute 480.50, effective January 1, 2026. Motion carried.

Mr. Erickson discussed proposed changes to the Pennington County Personnel Policy resulting from the new MN Paid Family & Medical Leave law. After reviewing a new section on MN Paid Leave, he recommended a change to the 12-month measuring period for FMLA to a look-back basis to match that of MN Paid Leave, and changes to the Pregnancy and Parental Leave policy whereas such leave will run concurrently with MN Paid Leave and FMLA when applicable. He noted that the proposed changes have been reviewed by and are recommended for approval by the Personnel Committee. Motioned by Commissioner Lawrence, seconded by Commissioner Peterson, to approve the proposed changes to the Pennington County Personnel Policy as presented effective January 1, 2026. Motion carried. Mr. Erickson stated the changes will be distributed to employees and a revised Personnel Policy will be posted to the County website before January 1, 2026.

Mr. Erickson discussed two quotes received from Safety Compliance Services LLC. The first quote for \$3,250 would provide for preparation/update of the County Safety Programs and Safety Manual, to include travel, mileage, and meeting with the committee and staff as needed. The second quote of \$33,200 was a two-year proposal including annual employee safety training, preparation/update of County Safety Programs and Manual, annual safety inspection of all county workplaces, consultation on OSHA-related issues, and assistance in event of an OSHA inspection. Following discussion, there was a

motion by Commissioner Nelson, seconded by Commissioner Sorenson, to approve the quote of \$3,250 by Safety Compliance Services LLC for preparation/update of County safety programs and manual as described above. Motion carried.

County Attorney Items: None.

Committee Reports / Commissioner Updates:

Commissioner Peterson noted the recent AMC Annual Conference in Bloomington, MN was very good and the workshops presented useful information for both the Commissioners and staff that attended.

At 5:55 the Chairman recessed the Board meeting to the Truth in Taxation Budget Hearing.

At 6:00 the Chairman called the 2026 Truth-in-Taxation Budget Hearing to order. Interim County Attorney Nathan Haase opened the hearing by discussing the purpose of the Hearing and noted that it is not to discuss property valuation.

Present at the Hearing: Commissioners Sourdif, Lawrence, Nelson, Sorenson, and Peterson, Carl Bruzek – County Assessor, Jennifer Herzberg – County Auditor/Treasurer, Nathan Haase – Interim County Attorney, Kevin Erickson – County Coordinator, Lucas Fornshell – Accounting/Payroll Manager, April Scheinoha – TRF Times, Randy Malo – constituent.

Ms. Herzberg was called upon to review the summary budget and levy comparison provided. She noted that the budget has not changed since the levy was approved in September. She reviewed budgeted revenues and expenses for 2026, citing any significant changes by department and noted a slight decrease to County Program Aid for 2026. She noted an approximate \$255k decrease in jail revenue due to loss of Marshall County inmates. The proposed levy increase is 3.80% for 2026 and the total budget is \$13,428,681.

Hearing no comments or questions on the budget or levy, the Chairman closed the Budget Hearing at 6:10 p.m. and called the Board meeting back to order.

The following resolution was motioned by Commissioner Peterson, seconded by Commissioner Sorenson, and upon vote was unanimously carried.

## **RESOLUTION**

**WHEREAS**, the Pennington County Board of Commissioners has reviewed the department budgets for 2026 at several County Board meetings and at this time finds no further changes.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the following budgets for 2026 are approved.

<b>FUND</b>	<b>REVENUE</b>	<b>EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>+/- RESERVE</b>
General Revenue	\$ 12,490,820	\$ 13,266,006	\$ -775,186
Road & Bridge	\$ 9,010,417	\$ 9,010,417	\$ 0
Welfare	\$ 5,908,451	\$ 6,134,154	\$ -225,703
Debt Service	\$ 1,141,262	\$ 1,073,206	\$ 68,056
Solid Waste Facility	\$ 101,000	\$ 125,600	\$ -24,600
Ditch Maintenance	\$ 225,000	\$ 225,000	\$ 0
Tax Forfeiture	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000	\$ 0

The following resolution was motioned by Commissioner Peterson, seconded by Commissioner Sorenson, and upon vote was unanimously carried.

### RESOLUTION

**WHEREAS**, the Pennington County Board of Commissioners has reviewed the proposed levy for 2026 and the proposed Real Estate Tax Statements have been sent as required.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the final property tax levies for 2026 are approved as follows:

<b>FUND</b>	<b>LEVY BEFORE CPA*</b>	<b>CPA</b>	<b>LEVY AFTER CPA</b>
General Revenue	\$8,870,384	\$689,719	\$ 8,180,665
Road & Bridge	\$2,018,390	\$156,378	\$ 1,862,012
Welfare	\$2,438,260	\$189,518	\$ 2,248,742
Bonded Debt Fund	\$1,137,262	\$ 0	\$ 1,137,262
Total Levy			\$13,428,681

\*CPA = County Program Aid

Motioned by Commissioner Nelson, seconded by Commissioner Sorenson, to adjourn the Board meeting to December 30, 2025, at 10:00 a.m. Motion carried.

ATTEST:

Kevin Erickson, County Coordinator  
Pennington County

Roy Sourdif, Chairman  
Board of Commissioners