

**OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS  
PENNINGTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
JUSTICE CENTER BOARD ROOM  
DECEMBER 30, 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, December 30, 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 Nelson, seconded by Commissioner Lawrence, to approve the agenda as written. Motion carried.

Recognition of Citizens: None.

Motioned by Commissioner Peterson, seconded by Commissioner Sorenson, to approve the County Board minutes of December 15, 2025, and the minutes from the Kratka and Cloverleaf Township Public Hearings held on November 17, 2025, as presented. Motion carried.

Motioned by Commissioner Peterson, seconded by Commissioner Nelson, to approve the Human Services warrants totaling \$218,698.21 and the following Commissioner warrants, to include payments to Karpel Solutions in the amount of \$6,625.00 for PBK Annual Maintenance and to Jill Kolstoe in the amount of \$140.00 for notary license and recording fee reimbursement. Motion carried.

County Revenue	\$125,599.34
Road & Bridge	\$355,882.55
Solid Waste Facility	\$ 1,252.73
Ditch Funds	\$ 1,553.50

Per diems and meal reimbursements in the amount of \$2,050.00 were also approved.

Julie Sjostrand – Human Services Director

Ms. Sjostrand presented the consent agenda of the December 16, 2025, Human Service Committee meeting. On a motion by Commissioner Nelson and seconded by Commissioner Peterson, the following recommendations of the Pennington County Human Service Committee for December 16, 2025 (detailed minutes on record) are hereby adopted:

SECTION A

- I. To approve November 18, 2025, Human Service Committee Meeting minutes.
- II. To approve the agency's personnel action as presented.

- III.
  - A. To approve the CY 2026-2027 Child Support Cooperative Agreement between the State of Minnesota, Pennington County Attorney's Office, Pennington County Sheriff's Office, and Pennington County Human Services as presented.
  - B. To approve CY 2026 Guardian and Conservator Purchase of Service Agreement between Lutheran Social Services of Minnesota and Pennington County Human Services as presented.
  - C. To approve CY 2026 Rural Transportation Collaborative Access Transportation Services Contract with Tri-Valley Opportunity Council, Inc. as presented.
  - D. To approve the CY 2025 NW8 LAC (Local Advisory Council) Report to the County Board of Commissioners as presented.

## SECTION B

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

### Miranda Solem – DWI Treatment Court

Ms. Solem distributed handouts on the Pennington-Marshall County DWI Court program and stated it aims to reduce recidivism, enhance public safety, and offer a structured path to recovery. Participants must live in the county, participate for 14+ months, cooperate with random testing, field and office visits, and attend DWI Court hearings. 8 people are currently enrolled in Pennington County. A county contribution of \$2,500 was requested to assist with program incentives, drug test costs, etc. Motioned by Commissioner Peterson, seconded by Commissioner Sorenson, to approve a \$2,500 funding request to the Pennington-Marshall Counties DWI Court program to be paid in 2025. Following discussion and questions regarding the Drug Court program, the motion was carried.

### Seth Vettleson – County Sheriff

Sheriff Vettleson requested an increase to the per diem rate for housing out-of-county inmates (non-contracted counties) in 2026. Motioned by Commissioner Peterson, seconded by Commissioner Lawrence, to increase the per diem rate for out-of-county inmates (non-contracted) from \$80.00 to \$85.00 per day effective January 1, 2026. Motion carried. Mr. Vettleson noted that the high-risk offender per diem will remain at \$150.00 per day.

The Sheriff discussed a recent accident where a Pennington County Deputy was rear-ended by another vehicle in a snowstorm; he is awaiting the loss determination by MCIT. Discussion was held on a new squad vehicle available in Warroad MN. Commissioner Lawrence asked that the Sheriff check on pricing of that squad and the issue will be addressed at the next Board meeting.

County Auditor-Treasurer Items:

Motioned by Commissioner Lawrence, seconded by Commissioner Sorenson, to transfer \$101,736.36 from various ditch maintenance funds to the Road & Bridge Fund for work done by the Highway Department in 2025. Motion carried.

Motioned by Commissioner Peterson, seconded by Commissioner Nelson, to authorize the County Auditor-Treasurer to make temporary transfers as outlined by the Auditor-Treasurer, to bring ditch balances to a positive balance at the end of 2025. Motion carried.

Motioned by Commissioner Peterson, seconded by Commissioner Lawrence, to authorize a temporary transfer not to exceed \$200,000 from the General Fund to the Road & Bridge Fund to bring the Road and Bridge fund to a positive balance at the end of 2025. Motion carried.

Motioned by Commissioner Lawrence, seconded by Commissioner Sorenson, to approve committing \$23,000 from the Road and Bridge Fund - Department 320 Furniture and Equipment account, for an ongoing server project that will continue into 2026. Motion carried.

Motioned by Peterson, seconded by Lawrence, to approve the Commitment of up to \$850,000 from the General Fund for ongoing and future capital improvement projects, to include completion of the LEC roof that has been delayed, replacement of county servers, and upgrades to the Government Center fire alarm system. Motion carried.

Motioned by Commissioner Peterson, seconded by Commissioner Nelson, to schedule an Economic Development Tax Abatement Hearing for January 27<sup>th</sup>, 2026, at 10:30 a.m. in the Justice Center Board Room regarding the following properties. Motion carried.

<u>Parcel Number:</u>	<u>Property owner:</u>
25.097.014.10	Kia B. Vichaikul
25.111.003.10	Abbey Halvorson

Kayla Jore – Pennington & Red Lake County Public Health & Home Care Director

Ms. Jore presented and reviewed a handout on Foundational Public Health Responsibilities, which include communicable disease control, chronic disease/injury prevention, environmental public health, maternal, child, and family health, and access to and linkage with clinical care. Opioid funding and substance use prevention were discussed, with it noted that the Sanford contract with local schools continues and is showing success with about 40 kids participating. Community Strong has been in existence for about 5 years and they plan to evaluate the program in 2026. The Be the Voice event continues to be a main focus. Influenza cases in the county are rising, especially Influenza A, and the county's vaccination rate is very low at approximately 22%. The Board thanked her for the update and report.

County Coordinator Items:

Motioned by Commissioner Lawrence, seconded by Commissioner Sorenson, to approve a new, non-union position of Lead Maintenance Worker at wage grade 14 and authorize advertising of the full-time position. Motion carried.

Motioned by Commissioner Nelson, seconded by Commissioner Sorenson, to approve a request by Building & Grounds Supervisor Morgan Bernier for up to 10 hours of overtime for Lead Custodian Tony Marsh for January 3-4, 2026, in the event of inclement weather and snow removal. Motion carried.

Motioned by Commissioner Lawrence, seconded by Commissioner Sorenson, to approve the reappointments of Caron Alten and Lorna Peterson to the Pennington & Red Lake County Public Health & Home Care Board for two-year terms effective January 1, 2026. Motion carried.

Motioned by Commissioner Sorenson, seconded by Commissioner Lawrence, to approve the appointment of Caitlin Knodel to the NW Regional Library Board as Pennington County Representative for a three-year term effective January 1, 2026. Motion carried.

Motioned by Commissioner Lawrence, seconded by Commissioner Nelson, to approve revisions to Article 7.4 and 7.5 of the Pennington County Personnel Policy regarding rest and meal breaks, whereas employees are entitled to a 15-minute break for each 4-hour period of continuous work and a 30-minute meal break for a 6+ hour period of continuous work, and whereas employees may be required to sign a waiver for any such break(s) they voluntarily choose to waive, effective January 1, 2026. Motion carried.

Motioned by Commissioner Lawrence, seconded by Commissioner Peterson, to approve a 4% cost of living adjustment for County Sheriff and set such salary at \$133,538.08 effective January 1, 2026. Motion carried.

Mr. Erickson informed the Board that no bids were received for the county land, tower, and building for sale in Smiley Township; bids were to be opened at 9:00 a.m. today. Discussion followed with Interim CA Nathan Haase stating the county's options, which include continuing to seek bids and listing the property with a realtor. The Board requested that the County Assessor re-evaluate the property values and deferred the issue to a future Board meeting.

Mr. Erickson presented the following quotes received for replacement of a water heater at the LEC/Justice Center, with each vendor providing multiple heater options. It is noted that neither vendor included state permitting fees in their quotes, which may be an additional cost.

Lee Plumbing

1) Bock OptiTherm 500N-A, 5-year warranty, installation	\$32,500
2) AO Smith Cyclone, 3-year warranty, installation	\$30,600
3) IBC indirect tank heater, piping, pump, installation	\$24,500

Bernier Plumbing

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| 1) Bock OptiTherm 500N-A, 5-year warranty, installation | \$26,900 |
| 2) Ruud Tritron ASM, 3-year warranty, installation      | \$24,600 |
| 3) AO Smith Flex, 3-year warranty, installation         | \$25,200 |

Motioned by Commissioner Lawrence, seconded by Commissioner Sorenson, to approve the replacement of a water heater at the LEC/Justice Center at a total cost up to \$30,000 and to authorize the Building Committee to make final approval of vendor and quote. Discussion followed with the Board requesting that Bernier Plumbing provide a quote on an indirect tank water heater option. Following discussion, the motion was carried.

County Attorney Items:

Mr. Haase discussed an opportunity to hire a paid law internship for his office. Abigail Flaagan is planning to attend law school this fall and has expressed interest in a paid internship. If approved she could begin on January 5, 2026. Mr. Haase noted that he has budgeted for 1-2 interns in 2026 at a rate of \$18.00/hour. Motioned by Commissioner Lawrence, seconded by Commissioner Sorenson, to approve the hire of Abigail Flaagan as an intern in the County Attorney's office at a rate of \$18.00/hour, effective January 5, 2026. Motion carried.

Committee Reports / Commissioner Updates: None.

Motioned by Commissioner Nelson, seconded by Commissioner Sorenson, to adjourn the Board meeting to January 6, 2026, at 10:00 a.m. Motion carried.

ATTEST:

Kevin Erickson, County Coordinator  
Pennington County

Roy Sourdif, Chairman  
Board of Commissioners