

**OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS  
PENNINGTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
JUSTICE CENTER BOARD ROOM  
APRIL 14, 2026 – 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, April 14, 2026, at 10:00 a.m. Members Present: Seth Nelson, Bruce Lawrence, Roy Sourdif, Dave Sorenson, and Neil Peterson. Members absent: None.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Sorenson, 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 Sourdif, to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried.

Recognition of Citizens: None.

Motioned by Commissioner Sourdif, seconded by Commissioner Lawrence, to approve the County Board minutes of March 24, 2026, as written. Motion carried.

Motioned by Commissioner Nelson, seconded by Commissioner Lawrence, to approve the Auditor and Manual warrants for March 2026 totaling \$1,446,437.96 and the following Commissioner warrants. Motion carried.

County Revenue	\$269,718.58
Road & Bridge	\$ 85,291.37
Solid Waste Facility	\$ 5,720.00

Meal reimbursements and per diems in the amount of \$2,541.70 were also approved.

**Ann Joppru, Jim Retka – NW Regional Development Center**

Mr. Retka and Ms. Joppru met with the Board and presented an update on the agency's 2025 activities and projects. Mr. Retka noted a 2025 budget of \$8,043,481 and discussed their tax levy authority and tax capacity. The agency is currently developing a 10-year, regional solid waste plan for Pennington and 5 area counties. Other items discussed include the Northstar Neighbors Community Land Trust, Advance Thief River Childcare Collaborative, and Age Friendly MN. Ms. Joppru discussed Dancing Sky - Area Agency on Aging, of which 21 counties are part of and provide programs such as Matter of Balance, Living Well with Diabetes, and SAIL. In 2025, the revolving loan fund had 20 active loans in Pennington County totaling over \$12.2M. Mr. Retka discussed a \$760k grant for TRF to build a trail from Lincoln High School to the west side of the city, and a \$592k grant to build a trail near Franklin Middle School; both to be completed mid-2026. The Board thanked them for their report.

**Julie Sjostrand – Human Services Director**

Motioned by Commissioner Lawrence, seconded by Commissioner Peterson, to accept the resignation of Full-Time Office Support Specialist Shelby Barth effective April 10, 2026. Motion carried.

Motioned by Commissioner Peterson, seconded by Commissioner Lawrence, to authorize the Human Service Director to post, advertise, and hire for the vacant position of Full-Time Office Support Specialist. Motion carried.

Motioned by Commissioner Peterson, seconded by Commissioner Lawrence, to hire/transfer Full-Time Social Service Supervisor Elizabeth Gerhart to the position of Full-Time Human Services Director at wage step 3 (\$54.52/hour) effective April 20, 2026. Motion carried.

Motioned by Commissioner Lawrence, seconded by Commissioner Peterson, to approve advertising and posting for the full-time position of Social Service Supervisor. Motion carried.

### **Alex Bladow – Assistant County Engineer**

Mr. Bladow reviewed the quotes received for a new highway department pickup to be used for engineering services, including surveying and project inspections:

Northern Motors:	1) 2026 Chevrolet 1500 LD Silverado, 5.3L, 4WD	\$45,100
	2) 2026 Chevrolet 1500 LD Silverado, 2.7L, 4WD	\$44,115
Westside Motors:	1) 2026 Ram Tradesman, 3.0L, 4WD	\$44,321
	2) 2026 Ram Bighorn, 3.0L, 4WD	\$48,166
Neighbors Ford:	1) 2026 F-150 XLT, 3.5L, 4WD	\$58,794

Motioned by Commissioner Lawrence, seconded by Commissioner Peterson, to approve the quote of \$44,115 by Northern Motors for the purchase of a 2026 Chevrolet 1500 LD Silverado. Discussion followed with Mr. Bladow noting the pickup will be mainly used for travel, so the V-6 motor will be sufficient. Following discussion, the motion was carried.

Mr. Bladow noted that TrueNorth Steel has provided the county with a quote on culverts for 2026 and pricing did not change from 2025. Motioned by Commissioner Lawrence, seconded by Commissioner Peterson, to accept the quote from TrueNorth Steel for 2026 culvert purchases. Motion carried.

Mr. Bladow noted that the County has received Local Road Improvement Plan (LRIP) funding for full-depth reclamation and overlay of CSAH #22 from CSAH #3 to the Marshall County line, with the project slated for 2027.

Motioned by Commissioner Peterson, seconded by Commissioner Lawrence, to approve renewal of a contract with George Coulombe for County Surveyor services at the rate of \$75.00 per hour effective April 1, 2026, to April 1, 2027. Motion carried.

The Board discussed the employment contract of Mike Flaagan as Pennington County Engineer, which expires April 30, 2026. Commissioner Peterson noted that the Personnel Committee has discussed a new contract with Mr. Flaagan and in consideration of his 24+ years of great service to the county, the Committee is recommending approval of the proposed contract. Motioned by Commissioner Lawrence, seconded by Commissioner Peterson, to approve a four-year employment contract with Michael L. Flaagan as Pennington County Engineer effective May 1, 2026, with the following monthly salary effective May 1 of each year: 2026 = \$12,750, 2027 = \$13,133, 2028 = \$13,526, 2029 = \$13,932. Motion carried.

Mr. Bladow reviewed the upcoming highway department project plans for years 2026-2030 and construction allotments for annual regular state aid and municipal state aid.

### **Misty Manderud – Sheriff’s Office Manager**

Motioned by Commissioner Lawrence, seconded by Commissioner Peterson, to accept the resignation of Full-Time Jail Sergeant Cameron White effective April 17, 2026. Motion carried. Mr. White has accepted a Deputy Sheriff position in Traverse County, MN.

Motioned by Commissioner Lawrence, seconded by Commissioner Nelson, to approve the transfer of Stephanie Schwartz from Part-Time Dispatcher/Correctional Officer to Full-Time Dispatcher/Correctional Officer effective April 27, 2026. Motion carried.

Motioned by Commissioner Lawrence, seconded by Commissioner Peterson, to approve the transfer of Austyn Bourman from Part-Time Dispatcher/Correctional Officer to Full-Time Dispatcher/Correctional Officer effective April 27, 2026. Motion carried.

Motioned by Commissioner Nelson, seconded by Commissioner Sourdif, to approve the hire of Jason Clayton Klaven as Full-Time Sentence to Service Crew Leader with starting date yet to be determined. Motion carried.

### **County Auditor-Treasurer Items:**

Motioned by Commissioner Nelson, seconded by Commissioner Sourdif, to approve various tax abatements as presented for assessment year 2025, taxes payable 2026, to reflect errors in classifications, valuations, and exclusions. Motion carried.

Ms. Herzeberg stated that Enbridge Energy filed a tax court petition in October 2025 for tax assessment year 2025, taxes payable 2026. Enbridge appealed two orders from the Commissioner of Revenue - the first a valuation appeal of their operating property; the second a pollution control appeal which was denied in part and allowed the company’s request for a property tax exemption for property it claims is primarily used to abate pollution. The MN Department of Revenue and Enbridge Energy have agreed to a settlement of the valuation appeal, except for the original cost of property primarily used

to abate pollution. For this reason, it was agreed to stay the proceeding in the valuation appeal pending final determination of the pollution control appeal.

The Minnesota Energy tax court appeal has been settled for assessment year 2024, payable 2025, thereby reducing the property valuation from \$428,812,300 to \$321,600,000. This results in an approximate \$55,000 refund to be apportioned among the school, city, county, and other local taxing authorities, with an estimated county impact of \$18,000. Motioned by Commissioner Sourdif, seconded by Commissioner Nelson, to authorize the County Auditor-Treasurer to issue the refund payment to Minnesota Energy once all calculations have been finalized. Motion carried.

**County Coordinator Items:**

Motioned by Commissioner Lawrence, seconded by Commissioner Sourdif, to approve an agreement with Terracon Consultants, Inc. in the amount of \$2,424.32 for proof load testing of mechanical roof fasteners to be used during the re-roofing project at the Law Enforcement Center in 2026. Motion carried.

**County Attorney Items:** None.

**Committee Reports/Commissioner Updates:**

Commissioner Peterson stated that two representatives from MN Rural Counties are testifying in support of a bill to slow down the Act and various mandates being proposed. Northern Counties is working in opposition to the proposed trail closing for ATVs and snowmobiles.

Motioned by Commissioner Sourdif, seconded by Commissioner Nelson, to adjourn the Board meeting to April 28, 2026, at 10:00 a.m. Motion carried.

ATTEST:

Kevin Erickson, County Coordinator  
Pennington County

David Sorenson, Chairman  
Board of Commissioners