

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MINUTES

January 27, 2026

The Cherry County Board of Commissioners convened in regular session on January 27, 2026 in the Commissioners Meeting Room of the Cherry County Courthouse, as per notice in the Valentine Midland News every week, with the agenda being on file in the office of the County Clerk. The meeting was called to order at 10:01 a.m. by McConaughey. Roll call was taken. Present for the meeting were Commissioners Mike McConaughey, Martin DeNaeyer, Nina Nelson, and Clerk Samantha Leonard. The Open Meetings Act Poster was acknowledged by McConaughey and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

The Board of Commissioners' meeting minutes from January 13, 2026 were read. DeNaeyer moved and Nelson seconded to approve minutes as read. Roll call vote: Aye – DeNaeyer, Nelson, McConaughey. The motion carried.

No comments from the public were received during the allotted time.

Emergency Management Director Jessica Coyle provided an update re: state radio interferences, NC911, updating 911 addresses with dispatch and GEOCOM, NEMA meetings, small structural fire, training, Microsoft email outage, and storm spotter training.

Road Foreman Steve Stichka provided an update for District 2 re: routine equipment & road maintenance, shop work, hauling material for Whitman Road, and yearly evaluations of employees completed and filed with payroll. Foreman Brent Collier provided an update for District 3 re: routine maintenance with roads & equipment, working on autogates, and shop work. Foreman Jay D Osburn with District 1 provided an update re: routine equipment & road maintenance, shop work, and fixing signs.

At 10:35 a.m. the board met with Sarah Dickmeyer with Schneider Geospatial via Zoom to discuss Beacon upgrades. Sarah informed the board visits to the Beacon website have been rising since 2023. The upgrade bundle would include additional options including comparable search, data extract tool, property tax dollars, document access, advertising, and bulk printing.

At 11:04 a.m. Ag Society members John Witt, Richard Schrunk, Neil Wescott, and Duane Witte met with the board for a request for 4th of July firework funds. Members of the Ag Society stated the Knights of Columbus turned over the firework show to the Ag Society because of lack of members able to help. The Ag Society stated the City of Valentine are willing to find 1/3 of the cost if the county also funds 1/3. Commissioner Nelson informed the board she visited with the State Auditors office and shared an email stating there is no statute that allows the board to use public funds for entertainment, meals, and donations, but the Ag Society could ask the Visitor Promotion Board for a day-event grant and those funds would help fund promoting the show; however, those funds cannot be used for the purchase of the fireworks. Mr. Witt explained the quote they received from Jackson Fireworks was \$12,000-\$15,000. The Ag Society is asking the county and city for a 1/3 each, and the Ag Society would fund the remaining 1/3 of the cost. Ag Society Member Duane Witte asked the board if there is a different way to structure the expense so the board would be able to help them fund the firework expense. It was a consensus of the board to discuss it with County Attorney Eric Scott. No board action taken.

At 11:20 a.m. the board met via phone with Todd Wicken, NDOT, to discuss the letter of interest in purchasing the state maintenance yard sent by the State of Nebraska to the county, city, and school. Mr. Wicken stated he has received word that the county and city are both interested. If written interest is received by any of the three entities, the sealed bid process will begin for all entities interested. Mr. Wicken stated there is room for negotiations and the State can sell the property at the bid in the letter, not the appraisal price. The board will meet with Dennis Connot this afternoon to tour the property.

At 11:35 a.m. the board met with the Tourism Board to discuss a request for additional funds for the MPCC Convention Center. The Tourism Board informed the board that they can receive Foundation Funds; however, they must have a specific amount of money received prior to the Foundation giving funds. The board expressed their concern of how much they are statutorily able to give for a single project. It was a consensus of the board to visit County Attorney Eric Scott on the request of funds.

McConaughey moved and DeNaeyer seconded to appoint Jay D Osburn as the Cherry County Highway Superintendent for 2026, effective January 1, 2026. Roll call vote: Aye – Nelson, McConaughey, DeNaeyer. The motion carried.

Highway Superintendent Jay D Osburn presented a proposal for a Highway Superintendent wage increase. The proposal stated an increase of \$10,000/year of which Mr. Osburn stated he included in his 2025-2026 budget. Discussion was had of already receiving a full-time wage for the road foreman position, with \$9,000/year for the Highway Superintendent position, using county resources, obtaining a different Class License of which the county receives approximately \$5,250/year from the State. Mr. Osburn informed the board he must hold a Highway Superintendent license and be active for 2 years prior to obtaining a Class A License, of which the county would receive approximately \$9,000/year from the State of Nebraska. It was a consensus of the board to discuss wage options next year after obtaining a Class A license. No board action taken.

Highway Superintendent Jay D Osburn provided an update re: a Kilgore project with District #3 Foreman Brent Collier, beginning work on the 1- & 6-year plan, and the inspection for the privately owned bridge on Anderson Bridge Road. Mr. Osburn stated Mainelli Wagner has contacted him, but he does not have a written report at this time. Mainelli Wagner stated to Mr. Osburn that they have concerns of the bridge being used for public use as there has been no hydrological study on the bridge and it does not meet standard width regulations. The county would have to complete the 2nd part of the quote for the load rating inspection, if they want only the county and emergency personnel to use the bridge. It was stated the bridge is very substantial; however, the structure is not compliant, and the bridge is 4" short of the standard width regulations. The board expressed their concerns about emergency personnel needing access to cross that bridge in case of an emergency. It was a consensus of the board to move forward with Mainelli Wagner completing the 2nd part of the inspection quote for load rating.

DeNaeyer moved and Nelson seconded to approve Form 457 - Application for Motor Vehicle Tax Exemption for Sandhills Church of Hope. Roll call vote: Aye – McConaughey, DeNaeyer, Nelson. The motion carried.

McConaughey moved and DeNaeyer seconded to approve Resolution #2026-03 Fund Transfer per the adopted FY 2025-2026 Budget. Roll call vote: Aye – DeNaeyer, Nelson, McConaughey. The motion carried.

The board discussed options for funding the Bookmobile Fund. Funds received from Forest Reserve have decreased drastically in the last two years. However, based on the Secure Rural Schools Public Law 119-58 passed on December 18, 2025, funds are to be retroactively dispersed to counties for 2024 and 2025 within 45 days of the law being passed. It was a consensus of the board to wait on transferring funds to the Bookmobile Fund until the 45 days have passed. The board will discuss at their February 24, 2026 regular meeting. No board action taken.

The board recessed from 12:31 p.m. to 1:05 p.m.

The board recessed from 1:05 p.m. to 1:10 p.m. to convene as a Board of Equalization.

The board discussed the Beacon upgrade bundle with Assessor Bancroft. The one time set up fee would be \$3,500 and the upgrade bundle would be \$3,000/year in addition to the current annual subscription rate for a total of \$31,549 for fiscal year 2026-2027. These fees would be due to Schneider Geospatial in June 2026 to align with the fiscal year. Assessor Bancroft discussed subscription costs, and that the Reappraisal budget currently funds the county offices subscriptions; however, the reappraisal budget does not receive the revenue from the public's subscriptions. Clerk Leonard informed the board these budgets are all within the General Fund and revenue from multiple offices goes directly to the General Fund, not each specific office budget. The board will discuss expenses during 2026-2027 budget workshop. McConaughey moved and DeNaeyer seconded to approve the Beacon Upgrade Bundle with the \$3,500 one time set up fee to be paid from the Miscellaneous General Fund. Roll call vote: Aye – McConaughey, DeNaeyer, Nelson. The motion carried.

The board recessed from 1:32 p.m. to 1:41 p.m. to convene as Board of Corrections.

DeNaeyer moved and McConaughey seconded to approve claims as presented. Roll call vote: Aye – DeNaeyer, Nelson, McConaughey. The motion carried.

January 27, 2026

CHERRY COUNTY CLAIMS LISTING

Claims were presented in the amount of	\$	268,076.08	.
and disallowed in the amount of	\$	-	.
A warrant was ordered drawn on the General Fund in the amount of		\$	268,076.08
GENERAL FUND			
AFLAC	Withholdings/Insurance	\$3,121.36	
AFLAC Dental	Withholdings/Insurance	\$2,522.12	
Ameritas Life Insurance/Retirement	Withholdings/Retirement	\$20,041.51	
Credit Management Services	Garnishment	\$566.81	
EFTPS	Withholdings/Taxes	\$34,165.39	
Lincoln Financial Group	Withholdings/Insurance	\$357.75	
Medica Health Insurance	Withholdings/Insurance	\$66,904.88	
AUL Health Benefit Trust	Health Reimbursement Arrangement Funding	\$5,100.00	
Midland Printing	Services	\$75.00	
NE Department of Revenue	Withholdings/Taxes	\$4,564.35	
Security 1st Health Savings Account	Withholdings/Insurance	\$4,033.33	
Vision Service Plan	Withholdings/Insurance	\$562.34	
Andre, Andrea	Gross Wages	\$3,740.39	
Bancroft, Melissa	Gross Salary	\$5,077.09	
Blume, Ashley	Gross Wages	\$3,938.04	
Brockley, Billie	Gross Salary	\$4,120.00	
Bruning, Jerri	Gross Wages	\$2,676.97	
Coates, Sonia	Gross Wages	\$4,158.92	
DeNaeyer, Martin	Gross Salary	\$2,012.50	
Dobbins, Cynthia	Gross Wages	\$3,034.46	
Duffield, Janette	Gross Wages	\$4,128.71	

Froning, Ellen	Gross Wages	\$860.31
Ghost Bear, Tamara	Gross Wages	\$4,599.24
Goodrich, Dustina	Gross Wages	\$3,030.36
Goodrich, Weston	Gross Wages	\$4,940.13
Greenough, Pat	Gross Wages	\$4,164.41
Hammond, Kathy	Gross Salary	\$5,077.09
Hanson, Jessica	Gross Wages	\$5,077.09
Hanson, Timothy	Gross Salary	\$2,538.54
Hesse, Sharon	Gross Salary	\$5,364.58
Hoefs, Jasmine	Gross Wages	\$3,052.68
Hooper, Patrick	Gross Wages	\$2,183.12
Jackson, Gary	Gross Wages	\$6,090.05
Johnson, Andrew	Gross Salary	\$3,716.50
Knox, Calvin	Gross Wages	\$4,212.36
Leonard, Samantha	Gross Salary	\$5,077.09
Lopez, Vincent	Gross Wages	\$1,519.08
Lutter, Tammy	Gross Wages	\$2,992.05
McConaughey, Michael	Gross Salary	\$2,012.50
McSweeney, Ryan	Gross Wages	\$5,297.36
Menze, Caitlyn	Gross Wages	\$2,171.09
Nelson, Nina	Gross Salary	\$2,012.50
Ormesher, Katie	Gross Wages	\$1,809.36
Osborne, Joanie	Gross Wages	\$551.14
Osburn, Albert	Gross Salary	\$5,239.63
Peterson, Ehran	Gross Wages	\$2,831.08
Pier, Shelley	Gross Wages	\$3,201.42
Price, Cassandra	Gross Wages	\$4,327.02
Red Fish, Cheyenne	Gross Wages	\$4,059.20
Renning, Maxwell	Gross Wages	\$5,257.28
Scott, Eric	Gross Salary	\$5,717.69
Starr, Christopher	Gross Wages	\$5,622.63
Stec, Nicholas	Gross Wages	\$5,126.95
Stoeger, David	Gross Wages	\$4,571.02
Stolzenburg, Jane	Gross Wages	\$3,720.74
Thomsen, Clarissa	Gross Wages	\$3,585.42
Wickman, Erick	Gross Wages	\$5,333.49
	GROSS TOTAL	\$311,844.12
	Adjustment for employees' share of withholdings	(\$43,768.04)
	NET TOTAL	\$268,076.08

Claims were presented in the amount of	\$	111,683.18
and disallowed in the amount of	\$	
A warrant was ordered drawn on the Road Fund in the amount of	\$	111,683.18
ROAD FUND		
AFLAC	Withholdings/Insurance	\$2,236.67
AFLAC Dental	Withholdings/Insurance	\$1,065.18
Ameritas Life Insurance/Retirement	Withholdings/Retirement	8609.91
EFTPS	Taxes/Withholdings	\$15,393.92
JLH Construction	Services	\$11,548.00
Journal Entry	Void Ck# 26017663	(\$22,100.00)
Legal Shield	Services	\$33.90
Medica Health Insurance	Withholdings/Insurance	\$30,586.40
AUL Health Benefit Trust	Health Reimbursement Arrangement Funding	\$2,100.00
NE Department of Revenue	Taxes/Withholdings	\$2,119.43
Sandhills Ranch Supply	Services	\$1,108.40
Security 1st Health Savings Account	Withholdings/Insurance	\$1,800.00
Vision Service Plan	Withholdings/Insurance	\$215.59
Buechle, Jordan	Gross Wages	\$5,098.70
Bunner, Bradley	Gross Wages	\$4,118.46
Cash, Tyler	Gross Wages	\$4,607.42
Coetzee, Daniel	Gross Wages	\$3,750.66
Collier, David	Gross Salary	\$5,150.00
Egger, Garrett	Gross Wages	\$4,278.62
Fernau, Bradly	Gross Wages	\$3,683.95
Graeff, Randy	Gross Wages	\$5,037.31
Hampton, Donald	Gross Wages	\$369.36
McWhirter, Bentz	Gross Wages	\$4,739.83
Olson, Arnold	Gross Wages	\$906.44
Osburn, Jay D	Gross Salary	\$5,900.00
Pearman, Terry	Gross Wages	\$4,804.21
Reese, Kay	Gross Wages	\$2,202.02

Songer, LeRoy	Gross Wages	\$4,290.20
Szakacs, Ryan	Gross Wages	\$3,962.62
Stichka, Steven	Gross Salary	\$5,150.00
Thompson, Shawn	Gross Wages	\$4,816.60
Vest, Daniel	Gross Wages	\$4,065.87
	GROSS TOTAL	\$131,649.67
	Adjustment for employees' share of withholdings	(\$19,966.49)
	NET TOTAL	\$111,683.18
Claims were presented in the amount of	\$	5,832.10
and disallowed in the amount of	\$	-
A warrant was ordered drawn on the Visitors Promotion Fund in the amount of	\$	5,832.10
VISITORS PROMOTION FUND		
AFLAC	Withholdings/Insurance	97.37
AFLAC Dental	Withholdings/Insurance	55.63
Ameritas Life Insurance/Retirement	Withholdings/Retirement	\$574.68
EFTPS	Taxes/Withholdings	\$959.57
NE Department of Revenue	Taxes/Withholdings	\$104.85
Vision Service Plan	Withholdings/Insurance	\$31.84
Braun, Regina	Gross Wages	\$3,953.29
Graeff, Lynn	Gross Wages	\$1,154.92
	GROSS TOTAL	\$6,932.15
	Adjustment for employees' share of withholdings	(\$1,100.05)
	NET TOTAL	\$5,832.10
Claims were presented in the amount of	\$	9,451.83
and disallowed in the amount of	\$	-
A warrant was ordered drawn on the Emergency Management Fund in the amount of	\$	9,451.83
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT FUND		
AFLAC	Withholdings/Insurance	151.04
AFLAC Dental	Withholdings/Insurance	77.81
Ameritas Life Insurance/Retirement	Withholdings/Retirement	\$686.34
EFTPS	Taxes/Withholdings	\$1,334.37
Medica Health Insurance	Withholdings/Insurance	\$2,155.10
NE Department of Revenue	Taxes/Withholdings	\$168.70
Security 1st Health Savings Account	Withholdings/Insurance	\$500.00
Vision Service Plan	Withholdings/Insurance	\$31.84
Coyle, Jessica	Gross Salary	\$5,034.64
Reese, Kay	Gross Wages	\$1,066.13
	GROSS TOTAL	\$11,205.97
	Adjustment for employees' share of withholdings	(\$1,754.14)
	NET TOTAL	\$9,451.83
Claims were presented in the amount of	\$	15,058.08
and disallowed in the amount of	\$	-
A warrant was ordered drawn on the Courthouse (Special Building) Fund in the amount of	\$	15,058.08
Courthouse (Special Building)		
Monroe HVAC Inc	Services	\$11,850.00
Ron Lower Construction	Services South Building	\$3,208.08
	NET TOTAL	\$15,058.08

The board and Clerk Leonard toured the State of Nebraska Road Maintenance Yard from 1:46 p.m. to 2:24 p.m. with Nebraska Highway Maintenance Superintendent Dennis Connot.

The board and Clerk Leonard returned to the Commissioners Meeting Room at 2:24 p.m. to discuss the State of Nebraska Road Maintenance Yard. At 2:25 p.m. DeNaeyer moved and Nelson seconded to enter executive session to discuss the potential letter of intent for a possible real estate transaction with the Board and Clerk to be present and will engage County Attorney Eric Scott via phone. Roll call vote: Aye – Nelson, McConaughey, DeNaeyer. The motion carried. At 2:26 p.m. the public was asked to exit the room, and the meeting doors were closed. At 3:08 p.m. the meeting doors were reopened and the public was allowed to enter. Nelson moved and DeNaeyer seconded to exit executive session. Roll call vote: Aye – McConaughey, DeNaeyer, Nelson. The motion carried. Chairman McConaughey restated for the room the purpose of executive session was to discuss the potential letter of intent for a possible real estate transaction. DeNaeyer moved and Nelson seconded to authorize County Attorney Eric Scott to draft a letter of intent of interest in the State Maintenance Yard to be sent to Todd Wicken at the State of Nebraska Department of Transportation Division. Roll call vote: Aye – DeNaeyer, Nelson, McConaughey. The motion carried. It was a consensus of the board for Chairman McConaughey to reach out to Mr. Scott to ask for the letter to be sent to all board members prior to him sending the letter to Mr. Wicken at the State of Nebraska.

At 3:13 p.m. Chairman McConaughay adjourned the meeting.

State of Nebraska,)
) SS.
County of Cherry,)

I, Samantha Leonard, the undersigned County Clerk of Cherry County, Nebraska, do hereby certify the foregoing minutes are true and are part of the official records of this office. IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed my seal this 10th day of February 2026.

Samantha Leonard
Cherry County Clerk

Mike McConaughay, Chairperson
Cherry County Board of Commissioners

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