

Traverse County Commission
Regular Board Meeting
April 15, 2025

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. by Commission Chair Jerrel Olson. Other Commissioners present were Dwight Nelson and Kayla Schmidt. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. The agenda was approved unanimously (3-0) upon a motion by Schmidt and second by Nelson. There were no conflicts of interest expressed. The April 1, 2025 Board minutes were unanimously approved (3-0) upon a motion by Nelson and second by Schmidt.

Highway Department

County Engineer Chad Gillespie and Brian Koch, Highway Supervisor appeared before the Board with a department update. Gillespie gave a project overview for the County Park Road (SAP 078-600-002) and County Park Parking lot PWA. He is looking for approval to advertise for these two tied projects, upon a motion by Nelson and second by Schmidt this was approved unanimously (3-0). Gillespie asked for approval to sign the Project Contract for the previously awarded Roadway project SP 078-015-017, this is the Federal Project on CSAH 15 from CSAH 6 to State Highway 27, this was approved unanimously (3-0) upon a motion by Schmidt and seconded by Nelson. Approval to award the graveling project, CP 25-03, from CSAH 9 to South County Line to CSAH 4 to CT Sibson's Gravel & Crushing for \$93,675.00 was approved unanimously (3-0) upon a motion by Nelson and seconded by Schmidt. Gillespie went over the following informational items: dust control will be the same price as last year and the Highway Department will serve as the middleman. A bridge update was given, the bridge was opened to traffic at the end of the day on April 11, 2025. An update was given on the City of Wheaton's LRIP grant.

Public Hearing

The public hearing is to consider an Interim Use Permit Ordinance and a public hearing to repeal the 2009 Wind Ordinance. Ben Oleson, Zoning Administrator appeared via Zoom to discuss. There were no comments from the public. This will now go to the Planning Commission and then they will give their recommendation to the Board at the next meeting.

Traverse Care Center/Prairieview Place

Chris Knoll, Minnewaska Community Health Services, appeared before the Board he was here to give a quarterly update on the Traverse Care Center and Prairieview Place. Knoll explained that currently, Traverse Care Center has 44 beds with 5 beds on layaway. They would like to layaway another 4 beds for a total of 9 beds on layaway and leaving a 35 licensed bed count. This was approved unanimously (3-0) upon a motion by Schmidt and seconded by Nelson. Minnewaska received their Medicare number and can bill back from January 2024 moving forward. They applied for Critical Care Access Funding; the Traverse Care Center had this two years ago, but it stopped because of the change in management; they had to wait a year before applying again. They applied last year and did not receive it, so they applied again this year. The Department of Human Services has not responded to the request yet.

Red River Communication

Kari Kleingartner appeared before the Board looking for a letter of support for a Broadband Grant with the State of Minnesota for broadband in both the Northern and Southern portions of Traverse County. The grant does not need a financial obligation but if Traverse County would be willing to financially assist it may have a better change of going through. The grant deadline is Monday. Schmidt made a motion to table this until the next meeting, second by Nelson followed by discussion. The Commissioners just received this information late yesterday afternoon so Schmidt doesn't feel comfortable approving it without legal review. Olson would like to give approval based on legal review since there is no financial obligation. The motion passed 2-1 with Olson opposed.

Emergency Management

Lynn Siegel, Emergency Manager/Solid Waste Manager, appeared before the board asking for approval of the following Resolution and the Hazard Mitigation Plan:

25-12

Resolution Authorizing Execution of Sub-grant Agreement -

Be it resolved that Traverse County Commissioners enter into a sub-grant agreement with the Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management in the Minnesota Department of Public Safety for the program entitled Hazard Mitigation Assistance.

Lynn Siegel, Emergency Management Director, is hereby authorized to execute and sign such sub-grant agreements and any amendments hereto as are necessary to implement the project on behalf of Traverse County Commissioners.

I certify that the above resolution was adopted by the County Commissioners of Traverse County on 4/15/2025.

SIGNED:

WITNESSETH:

(Signature)

(Signature)

Board Chair

County Coordinator

(Date)

(Date)

Siegel gave the Commissioners an update on the County wide electronics pick-up day, which will coincide with each City’s pick-up day held in either May or June.

Auditor/Treasurer

County Auditor/Treasurer Kit Johnson appeared before the Board with a department update. Johnson went over the tax delinquent forfeiture sale and the parcels that weren’t sold during the sale. Nelson made a motion to approve the following resolution that sets the sale date and terms of the sale seconded by Schmidt and approved unanimously (3-0).

NOTICE OF PUBLIC SALE OF TAX-FORFEITED LANDS

May 29, 2025 – 10:00 am
Traverse County Courthouse Annex,
Commissioners Board Room
702 2nd Ave N, Wheaton, MN 56296

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the parcels of land described in the List of Tax Forfeited Land for Public Sale which is contained herein shall be sold to the highest bidder at public sale. The sale will be governed by the provisions of Minnesota statutes and by the resolution of the Traverse County Board of Commissioners authorizing such sale. The resolution reads as follows:

“Whereas, The County Board of Commissioners of the County of Traverse, State of Minnesota, desires to offer for sale certain parcels of land that have forfeited to the State of Minnesota for non-payment of taxes,

Whereas, said parcels of land have been viewed by the County Board of Commissioners and have been classified as non-conservation lands as provided for in Minnesota Statute 282.01.

Now, Therefore, Be It Resolved; That the Traverse County Board of Commissioners hereby certifies that all parcels of land have been viewed and comply with the provisions of Minnesota statutes that require the withholding of tax-forfeited lands from sale.

The terms and conditions of the public sale shall be described in the list contained here-in and approved by the Traverse County Board of Commissioners.”

Radon Warning: The Minnesota Department of Health strongly recommends that ALL homebuyers have an indoor radon test performed prior to purchase or taking occupancy and recommends having the radon levels mitigated if elevated radon concentrations are found. Elevated radon concentrations can easily be reduced by a qualified, certified, or licensed, if applicable, radon mitigator.

Every Buyer of an interest in residential real property is notified that the property may present exposure to dangerous levels of indoor radon gas that may place the occupants at risk of developing radon-induced lung cancer. Radon, a Class A human carcinogen, is the leading cause of lung cancer in nonsmokers and the second leading cause overall. The seller of any interest in residential property is required to provide the buyer with any information on radon tests results of the dwelling.

- Traverse County is not aware of any Radon testing conducted on these properties.
- Traverse County is not aware of any Radon records available from any prior testing conducted on these properties.
- The Radon concentration levels on these properties are unknown to Traverse County officials.
- Traverse County is not aware of any Radon mitigation system in place on these properties.

Information about the sale of tax-forfeited land in Traverse County can be obtained at the office of the County Auditor, Traverse County Courthouse, 702 - 2nd Avenue North, PO Box 428, Wheaton, Minnesota, 56296. Telephone: (320) 422-7740.

Given under my hand and official seal at Wheaton, Minnesota, this 15th day of April, 2025.

Kit D. Johnson

Traverse County Auditor/Treasurer /S/ Kit Johnson

Johnson received a request from a taxpayer who would like to cut down 3 cedar trees on the tax forfeited property at 307 10th St. S in Wheaton. The Commissioners discussed and they are going to deny the request due to liability and not offering it to all residents. Once the property is sold, the interested taxpayer can discuss this with the new owner. Johnson went over economic abatements, projects, taxes, inventory, and the election coming up in May. The audit entrance meeting is tomorrow, and the auditors will be here at the end of this month. The Extension Committee met yesterday, and the recommendation was to increase the per diem from \$35.00 to \$75.00, effective April 14, 2025. This may help to recruit the 2 open spots on the County Extension Committee. Schmidt made the motion to increase the per diem to \$75.00, seconded by Nelson and approved unanimously (3-0).

County Coordinator

Upon motion by Schmidt and second by Nelson, the following bills were approved unanimously.

ADVANCED CORRECTIONAL HEALTHCARE, INC.

\$11,470.16

COUNTIES PROVIDING TECHNOLOGY	\$5,614.57
ELAN FINANCIAL SERVICES	\$4,550.85
GAZETTE PUBLISHING, INC.	\$6,507.30
HORMANN, MARK	\$2,200.00
NOVA FIRE PROTECTION, INC.	\$2,306.00
OTTER TAIL POWER CO	\$3,221.00
REGENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MINNE	\$25,000.00
TOTAL RESPONSE	\$9,125.40
TRITECH SOFTWARE SYSTEMS (CENTRALSQUARE)	\$2,340.00
WHEATON EDA	\$2,000.00
KJ DIESEL LLC	\$4,066.10
L & O ACRES TRANSPORT, INC.	\$2,650.90
ZIEGLER, INC.	\$3,286.61
PRESBYTERIAN FAMILY FOUNDATION	\$8,377.53
CEP	\$5,222.34
DESIGN INTENT ARCHITECTS	\$2,475.00
DSI	\$7,780.13
COST EFFECTIVE HI	\$2,076.42
TRAVERSE COUNTY	\$2,500.00
PLACEMENTS	\$20,761.42

Per M.S. 375.12, the number of claims totaling \$2,000.00 or less were 67 in the amount of \$29,842.54.

Traverse County Veterans Service Officer, Jeremy Sharp, appeared before the Board to introduce himself. Sharp started in February. He is the shared VSO between Wilkin and Traverse County and is in Traverse County on Tuesdays and Thursdays. There was a discussion about the Browns Valley Food Shelf, they want financial help to repair their roof. Zahl is waiting on a response if the Council will fix the roof whether or not the County will help financially. They were also given the information on what they give to other organizations and the cost of utilities at the shared Extension and Wheaton Food Shelf building. Schmidt made a motion to table this until the 2026 budget discussion, seconded by Nelson, followed by discussion, which passed unanimously (3-0). The Red River Communications letter of support, resolution, and memorandum of understanding were revisited. Upon a motion by Schmidt and seconded by Nelson, the following resolution, along with the letter of support, and memorandum of understanding were approved unanimously (3-0) upon legal review:

RESOLUTION NO. 25-11

WHEREAS, Red River Communications plans to bring fiber broad service to two underserved areas in Traverse County; and

WHEREAS, businesses and residents of rural Traverse County are currently only served broadband access by a carrier that has chosen not to invest in the infrastructure necessary for our rural residents' current and future demands; and

WHEREAS, Red River Communications is applying for the MN DEED BEAD grant program to fund a project to install fiber-optic infrastructure to provide the same reliable high-speed internet services as the rest of Traverse County; and

WHEREAS, Traverse County faces a deep digital divide, our rural residents' ability to consider and implement educational and economic development programs mustn't be limited. With broadband access, these residents and business owners can connect to virtual education, telehealth appointments, precision ag farming, and advanced economic development within the area; and

WHEREAS, Broadband access through Red River Communications will also allow our rural communities to attract outside companies to the region, expanding job opportunities and enticing young professionals.

NOW THEREFORE, be it resolved that Traverse County agrees to support Red River Communications MN DEED BEAD grant application.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Traverse County will support Red River Communications for the expansion of its fiber optic infrastructure within Traverse County.

Adopted this 15th day of April 2025.

Attest:

Lisa Zahl,
County Coordinator

Commission Jerrel Olson, Chair
Traverse County Board of Commissioners

Public Comment Period

There were no public comments.

Committee Reports

Nelson attended the Western Prairie Technical meeting, PrimeWest, Western Prairie, Horizon Public Health, Traverse Care Center/Prairieview Place, and Extension meetings. Schmidt attended the Social Services Technology Committee, Western Prairie Social Services, Traverse Care Center/Prairieview Place, Legislative Update, City of Dumont, Watershed, Social Services Pre-placement, Horizon Public Health, and Extension meetings.

Olson adjourned the meeting at 11:25 a.m.

Olson called the meeting back to order at 11:38 a.m. to discuss whether a financial contribution should be given to Red River Communications for the Broadband grant. There was a consensus of the Board not to provide a financial contribution.

Olson adjourned the meeting at 11:45 a.m.

Lisa Zahl, County Coordinator

Jerrel Olson, Chair