

PROCEEDINGS OF THE RED LAKE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

January 27, 2026

Pursuant to adjournment of its last meeting, the Red Lake County Board of Commissioners duly met in regular session at the Courthouse in Red Lake Falls, MN on January 27, 2026, at 10:00 am.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Eric Mickelson called the meeting to order. Commissioners present: Al Remick, Chuck Flage, Tony Gerardy, Andy Moran and Eric Mickelson. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Commissioner Remick moved, seconded by Commissioner Moran and carried unanimously to approve the agenda with the following additions:

- Snow and Ice Policy
- Wideth Agreement with MPCA Excavation Report
- Diesel Exhaust Fluid Update

SHERIFF ANNOUNCEMENTS

Sheriff Mitch Bernstein was present to request approval of a Joint Powers Agreement between Red Lake County and the Minnesota Department of Public Safety, Bureau of Criminal Apprehension. Sheriff Bernstein explained that the JPA would allow the Sheriff's Department and County Attorney's Office to access the State Criminal Justice System for a five-year term. Commissioner Flage moved to approve **Resolution 01-03-2026**, seconded by Commissioner Gerardy. Motion carried unanimously. A complete copy of the agreement is available in the Sheriff's Office.

MEDICAL EXAMINER

County Attorney Taner Holtan met with the Board to discuss the county's long-standing contract with the University of North Dakota (UND) for medical examiner services, including UND's recent loss of accreditation and an alternative proposal from a medical examiner based in Anoka. After reviewing costs, logistics, training relationships, and operational impacts—such as transport of remains, scene response, and coordination with local funeral service, the board determined that continuing with UND was the most practical option at this time. The board noted that UND can continue to perform autopsies while working to regain accreditation, that neighboring counties are also remaining with UND, and that the current contract allows for termination with a 60-day notice if circumstances change. By consensus, the board agreed to stay with UND as the county's medical examiner and continue monitoring the situation.

HIGHWAY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Highway Engineer, Taylor Amiot met with the board to review the county's mailbox replacement policy and discussed clarification and consistency. It was noted that the existing policy provides that the county will repair or replace mailboxes only when they are struck by county equipment, while damage caused by flying snow or ice is the responsibility of the mailbox owner. The board discussed a recent request involving a higher-cost mailbox and agreed that the county should replace or reimburse mailboxes on a like-size basis and allow owners to pay the difference if they choose a more expensive mailbox.

Amiot requested approval on the Final Contract Voucher and Certificate of Final Acceptance for project SAP 063-630-004 (Hot-in-Place, Polk County Lead). Commissioner Moran moved to approve the request, with Commissioner Flage offering a second, motion carried.

Amiot discussed a recent snowstorm response in which a road was opened at the request of the Sheriff as a precaution, despite hazardous conditions, and reviewed whether such actions should occur outside of

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emergencies. Staff reported that many surrounding counties follow formal snow and ice policies that limit plowing during active storms and coordinate road access only through emergency services when necessary. Concerns were expressed regarding employee safety, staffing logistics, and the risk of encouraging travel during unsafe conditions. By consensus, the board supported developing a formal snow and ice policy stating that roads will not be cleared during severe weather unless an emergency exists and coordination is made through the Sheriff’s Office, with normal plowing to resume once conditions improve. Amiot will draft a proposed policy for future board consideration.

Amiot reported that the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) identified a past leak at the Plummer fuel tank site and is requesting an excavation report to formally close the matter, despite the tanks and pumps having already been removed. Due to the lack of a report on file, MPCA indicated potential enforcement action if documentation is not provided. After reviewing options, Amiot recommended authorizing Widseth to prepare the required excavation report at a cost not to exceed \$1,500 to complete the documentation. Commissioner Gerardy moved, seconded by Commissioner Moran to approve the authorization, carried unanimously.

Amiot provided an update on ongoing diesel exhaust fluid (DEF) system issues with one of the county trucks. Over the past five years, DEF-related repairs on the truck have totaled approximately \$12,000–\$13,000, which, while costly, is less than initially anticipated. The board discussed future fleet considerations, including evaluating alternative truck manufacturers, and generally agreed that continued maintenance and eventual replacement of the most problematic equipment is the prudent course of action.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Environmental Officer Kurt Casavan met with the board to request renewal of the county’s five-year recycling contract with Les’s Sanitation of Thief River Falls, which is set to expire on February 28, 2026. Casavan reported that owner Jerry Skjerven Jr. is willing to renew the agreement under the same terms and conditions at an annual cost of \$39,500. Commissioner Gerardy moved to approve the five-year renewal of the recycling contract with Les’s Sanitation at \$39,500 per year, seconded by Commissioner Flage; the motion carried unanimously. A complete copy of the agreement is on file in the Auditor’s Office for review.

Casavan reported receiving a request from Polk County Engineer Rich Sanders to hold a joint county ditch meeting on February 17, 2026, in Polk County, with a proposed start time of 11:00 a.m., to discuss several shared ditch systems. Polk County holds the majority interest in several of the affected ditches and is seeking to move forward with a redetermination of benefits, which would involve shared costs based on proportional benefit, with Polk County paying the larger share. While some concern was expressed regarding redetermination, Casavan indicated the matter would be discussed further at the joint meeting, along with potential maintenance and improvement projects on the ditch systems.

MINUTES

Commissioner Remick moved, seconded by Commissioner Moran, and carried unanimously to approve the minutes from the meeting on January 6th, 2026.

EXPENDITURES

Commissioner Gerardy moved, seconded by Commissioner Remick, and carried unanimously to approve the following expenditures for the period:

<u>Vendor</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Axon Enterprise Inc	\$ 20,080.73
DLT Solutions, LLC	\$ 9,007.60

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Polk County Highway Department	\$ 84,612.60
Pomp’s Tire Service, Inc.	\$ 2,600.00
Stantec Consulting Services Inc	\$ 5,758.92
Ziegler Cat	\$ 8,320.27
8 Payments less than \$2000	<u>\$ 3,798.37</u>
TOTAL	\$134,178.49

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Remick – Tri-County Community Corrections, Northwest Regional Emergency Board
Flage – Northwest Regional Transportation Coordination Council, Pennington & Red Lake Public Health
& Home Care, RLC Economic Development, Northwest Regional Development Commission
Gerardy – RLC Economic Development, RLC Soil & Water
Moran – Quin County Health
Mickelson – Inter-County Community Council, Northwest Minnesota Multi-County Housing &
Redevelopment Authority

AUDITOR ANNOUNCEMENTS

Auditor Kelsey Gervais requested approval for the 2025 Audit Engagement Letter with Hoffman, Philipp, & Martell, PLLC. Commissioner Gerardy moved, seconded by Commissioner Flage and carried unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Commissioner Remick, seconded by Commissioner Flage, and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 12:15 p.m. The next regular meeting of the board is scheduled for Tuesday, February 10th, 2026, at 10:00 a.m.

Attest: _____
Kelsey Gervais, County Auditor

Eric Mickelson, Chairman
Board of Commissioner