

OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF
NIOBRARA COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
Tuesday, February 18, 2025, 9:00 a.m.
Commissioners' Office - Niobrara County Courthouse
424 S. Elm Street, Lusk, WY

The Niobrara Board of County Commissioners met in regular session on Tuesday, February 18, 2025, at 9:02 a.m. Those present were Chairman Patrick Wade, Vice-Chair Elaine Griffith, Commissioner Jeb Hanson, and County Clerk Becky L. Freeman. Members of the audience included Sheriff Randy Starkey, Brandie Collins with the *Lusk Herald*, and Mike Noonan, with Aspen Consulting.

Chairman Wade led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Road & Bridge- Foreman Fred Thomas and road and bridge employee Colby Thurston met with the Commissioners and discussed road and bridge business. Mr. Thomas said that due to the extremely cold temperatures and lack of moisture, they are working in the shop and performing maintenance on equipment.

Mr. Thomas also discussed the Jordan Towing property that is for sale and suggested the Commissioners might consider purchasing it as a new road and bridge shop as it has everything that they would need as far as vehicle lifts, garages, and space for the storage of all their equipment.

Old Business- There was nothing new to report on the old jail. Vice-Chair Griffith said four of the Community Juvenile Services Board members met informally with the new coordinator, Michelle Jackson. Ms. Jackson reported on her new role as the coordinator.

Commissioner Hanson said he spoke with Mike Mayville regarding snow removal at the public health office, and Mr. Mayville said he would not be opposed if the Commissioners could find someone else to manage the task.

County Attorney- Attorney Anne Wasserburger met with the Commissioners and they discussed the public health cleaning agreement with Jameson Cleaning and Maintenance. Vice-Chair Griffith mentioned there might be amendments to this agreement to include snow removal at public health, however, Matt Jameson has not been contacted about it.

Consent Agenda- Vice-Chair Griffith moved to approve the consent agenda. Commissioner Hanson seconded, and the motion carried. Items on the consent agenda were the minutes of the February 4, 2025, meeting and receipts for January from the Public Health Nurse for \$632.19, and from the Sheriff for \$257.50.

Commissioner Wade recessed the regular meeting at 10:00 a.m. for the Local Emergency Management Coordinator (LEPC) meeting. The regular meeting was reconvened at 10:35 a.m.

Marcus Erickson with the Eastern Wyoming Nature Center in Lusk met with the Commissioners via Zoom to give a presentation on dinosaur digs in Niobrara County and his plans for the future of the Center to promote Niobrara County's rich fossil history. Morgan McCauslin-Nolan, Niobrara Chamber of Commerce, and Leslie Stewart were also present.

Draft Land Use Plan Discussion- Landowners Jeff Reed, Jordan Reed, Danny Hanson, Dan H. Hanson, Aspen Consulting Services President Mike Noonan, and via telephone BenchMark of Torrington Engineers Rachele Anderson, Brian Wakefield, and Bob Taylor met with the Commissioners to discuss the draft land use plan and address concerns which arose during the most recent public hearing in particular clearer definitions of private property and custom and culture.

OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF
NIOBRARA COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Tuesday, February 18, 2025, 9:00 a.m.

Commissioners' Office - Niobrara County Courthouse
424 S. Elm Street, Lusk, WY

Private Property- Commissioner Griffith moved to insert the following language from the Natural Resource Management Plan of August 2021 following paragraph 2 of Chapter 1 Purpose as follows: The Niobrara County Commissioners believe that the American concept of government of the people, by the people, and for the people is best served when government affairs are conducted as close to the people as possible (i.e., at the local government level). We find it desirable to address the use and management of these important resources, especially rangelands, soil, and water conservation, within the political jurisdiction of the County as the heart of its comprehensive planning efforts. The Commissioners understand one goal of the County's citizens and, therefore, its government has been the continuation of a lifestyle, which assures the quiet enjoyment of private property rights and property interest and provides the highest degree of protection for these rights. Property rights and interests are important to the people living and working in this remote, rugged county, which is the least populated county in the least populated state. Many people who live in Niobrara County rely on the land and its productive use. Private ownership and the incentives provided by private ownership are driving forces that support the livelihood of many Niobrara County citizens ownership. Commissioner Hanson seconded and the motion carried by unanimous aye votes.

Custom and Culture- Commissioner Griffith moved to insert the following language from the 1996 Land Use Plan after the new paragraph 3 of Chapter 1 Purpose- The citizens have defined Niobrara County's culture as having a low population density and a high quality of life, followed closely by self-sustaining environmental quality and diversity in use of natural resources, and a low crime rate. The citizens have defined Niobrara County's custom as resolutely independent with strong family values, quality of education, unity and community involvement when facing adversity and mutual respect for each individual. It is important to note that our custom and culture is the direct result of the freedom that citizens have always had in order to innovate and make management decisions on their property. She also added that due to this updated definition, the entire Title 15 could be deleted and the plan renumbered. Commissioner Hanson seconded and the motion carried by unanimous aye votes.

There being no further business, Commissioner Hanson moved to adjourn the meeting at 1:05 p.m. Vice-Chair Griffith seconded, and the motion carried.

NIOBRARA COUNTY COMMISSIONERS



Patrick Wade, Chairman

Attest:



Becky L. Freeman, County Clerk

