

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

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The Niobrara Board of County Commissioners met in regular session on Tuesday, March 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 Dan Ritter.

Chairman Wade led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Dan Ritter met with the Commissioners to ask if they had any additional knowledge about the Sidewinder H2 project. He voiced concerns regarding the informational letter Sidewinder mailed out. His main concerns focused on the proposed deep wells and brackish water and how, if established in Niobrara County, it could affect the water tables.

County Attorney- County Attorney Anne Wasserburger met with the Commissioners and discussed the Community Juvenile Services Program funding. The grant expired in June of 2024, so she was unsure of how Wyo Help is operating and what their funding source is. She said she would touch base with Kyle Borger, the director of Goshen Help, (Wyo Help) which oversees the grant funding for this program, for clarification.

Old Business- There was nothing new to report on the old jail.

Dru Bower, with Dru Consulting, met with the Commissioners via Zoom and updated them on BLM matters.

Health Insurance Renewal- Vice-Chair Griffith moved to approve the health insurance renewal plan with Wyoming Educator's Benefit Trust (WEBT) with the County paying 100% of the employees' premium only. Commissioner Hanson seconded, and the motion carried.

Wildland Fire Management Annual Operating Plan- Commissioner Hanson moved to sign the Wildland Fire Management Annual Operating Plan. Vice-Chair Griffith seconded, and the motion carried.

The Commissioners signed a letter of recognition for the Community Service Project that is being presented by the Niobrara County High School SkillsUSA Chapter. The Dirt Bike Track Renovation Project demonstrated personal and technical skills as well as providing a benefit to the community.

Draft Land Use Plan Discussion- The Commissioners continued discussion on the draft Land Use Plan. Mark Groh, Ronda Pfister, Heidi Sturman and Lisa Shaw, Niobrara Conservation District, and Rachelle Anderson, BenchMark of Torrington, were in attendance.

Commissioner Hanson moved to change the name of the plan to the 2025 Land Use Plan. Vice-Chair Griffith seconded, all members voted aye, and the motion carried.

Vice-Chair Griffith moved to add the following language to 1.3.040 Policy- "The Niobrara County Natural Resource Management Plan dated August 3, 2021, is hereby incorporated by reference into this 2025 Land Use Plan." Commissioner Hanson seconded, all members voted aye, and the motion carried.

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Vice-Chair Griffith moved to add #5 under the section Large Industrial as follows: "Non-regulated environmental emissions such as ambient noise, noise pollution, vibration pollution, light pollution and water vapor emissions should be mitigated to preserve the county's quiet rural atmosphere." Commissioner Hanson seconded, all members voted aye, and the motion carried.

Commissioner Hanson moved to approve Resolution 25-05- a Resolution adopting the 2025 Land Use Plan. Vice-Chair Griffith seconded, all members voted aye, and the motion carried. A copy of the resolution is on file with the County Clerk or on the county's website: <https://www.niobraracounty.org/departments/commissioners/Resolutions.asp>

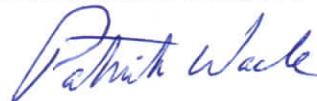
Andy Nelson, (via Zoom) and Jim Kruse, both representing the Wyoming Cowboy Hall of Fame, met with the Commissioners to introduce them to the WCHF. Mr. Nelson said the goal of the WCHF is "To preserve, promote, perpetuate, publish, and document Wyoming's working cowboy and ranching history." There were also videos of Niobrara County inductees Donnie Heckert, and Artie Joss, who were inducted into the WCHF in 2020 and 2022 respectively.

In addition to the introduction of the WCHF, the purpose of the meeting was to ask for an annual contribution of \$1,500.00 to support the project, including photo preservation and video production. The Commissioners said that while the project was worthwhile, it was not the best use of taxpayer dollars.

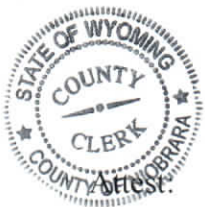
Consent Agenda- Chair Griffith moved to approve the consent agenda. Commissioner Hanson seconded, and the motion carried. Items on the consent agenda were the minutes of the March 4, 2025, meeting, and receipts for February from the Sheriff for \$309.25.

There being no further business, Vice-Chair Griffith moved to adjourn the meeting at 2:09 p.m. Commissioner Hanson seconded, and the motion carried.

NIOBRARA COUNTY COMMISSIONERS



Patrick Wade, Chairman



Becky L. Freeman, County Clerk