

OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF
NIOBRARA COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
Tuesday, April 21, 2026
Commissioners' Office - Niobrara County Courthouse
424 S. Elm Street, Lusk, WY

The Niobrara Board of County Commissioners met in regular session on Tuesday, April 21, 2026, at 9:00 a.m. with Chairman Patrick Wade, Vice-Chair Elaine Griffith, Commissioner Jeb Hanson, and County Clerk Becky L. Freeman present.

Brandie Bartlett of *The Lusk Herald*, and John Midkiff were in the audience.

Chairman Wade led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Road & Bridge- Foreman Fred Thomas reported that 1876 Resources requested permission to place magnesium chloride on 20 Mile Road to control dust. The company will cover all costs associated with the application. Mr. Thomas agreed on the condition that 1876 Resources continues the program.

The waterline at the fairgrounds was repaired last week, and the truck hoods have arrived.

County Attorney - Attorney Anne Wasserburger met with the Commissioners to discuss contracts and salaries.

She advised that the Cooperative Agreement between Niobrara County and the Wyoming Department of Family Services (Child Support Services Program) was ready to be signed.

Ms. Wasserburger addressed the ESRI Small Municipal and County Government Enterprise Agreement (SGEA). She requested additional time to review the agreement and asked that it be laid back until the next meeting.

Ms. Wasserburger also provided an update on the legislative session, specifically as it related to county attorneys' salaries. She noted that county attorneys perform significant work for the State but are paid less than public defenders. The Legislature has directed funding toward salary increases to address this issue.

She stated that currently the state pays a portion of each county and prosecuting attorney and assistant county and prosecuting attorney's salaries per W.S.S. 18-3-107(f), which is \$50,000.00 or 50% of the salary of the county and prosecuting attorney, whichever is less, and \$30,000.00 or 50% of the salary of each assistant to the county and prosecuting attorney, whichever is less, per year.

She said that, in addition to the payments described above, the 2026 Budget Bill provided an additional \$22,123.90 for counties with county and prosecuting attorneys and \$13,805.31 for assistant county and prosecuting attorneys. If the money is used by the counties, the State will reimburse counties for the additional funds. She noted that this funding was only approved by the legislature for FY27 and FY28.

Executive Session- Commissioner Hanson moved to enter into executive session at 10:00 a.m. to discuss personnel issues pursuant to W.S.S. 16-4-405(a)(x). Vice-Chair Griffith seconded, and the motion carried.

Vice-Chair Griffith moved to leave executive session at 10:14 a.m. Commissioner Hanson seconded, and the motion carried. There was no action taken.

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Extension Office Phone Service Provider Discussion- Kellie Chichester met with the Commissioners to discuss the possibility of switching the Extension Office phone system to a Voice Over Internet Protocol (VOIP) through Visionary Broadband. She noted the current Century Link bill is high, and by switching to VOIP, it will provide a significant cost savings. She noted that there is a 36-month term contract; however, the existing numbers will remain the same.

Dru Consulting- Dru Bower met with the Commissioners via Zoom to provide updates on BLM Thunder Basin Grasslands as well as the Bridger Pipeline Expansion.

Sheriff Starkey- Vacation Leave Carry Forward Request Sheriff Starkey met with the Commissioners to request an increase in vacation leave carry forward hours for full-time employees. He requested that full-time employees working 40 hours per week be allowed to carry forward up to 60 hours of vacation leave. Sheriff Starkey stated this change would allow long-term employees with large accrual balances additional time to use their vacation without losing it.

Vice-Chair Griffith moved to amend the Employee Handbook, page 66, Section *Vacation Leave*, to state that vacation leave may be accumulated and carried forward from one fiscal year into the next as follows:

- Full-time employees (40 hours/week): up to 60 hours
- Full-time employees (35 hours/week): up to 50 hours
- No changes to carry forward limits for part-time employees (20 hours/week)

Commissioner Hanson seconded, and the motion carried.

New Business

Health Insurance Renewal- Vice-Chair Griffith moved to sign the health insurance employer plan renewal for FY27. Commissioner Hanson seconded, and the motion carried.

Bridger Pipeline Expansion- Commissioner Hanson moved to accept the Bureau of Land Management's invitation for Niobrara County to become a cooperator with the BLM in preparation for the Bridger Pipeline Expansion Project, and supporting Environmental Impact Statement. Vice-Chair Griffith seconded, and the motion carried.

Clerk of Court Chrisanna Lund met with the Commissioners and discussed the Cooperative Agreement between the Wyoming Department of Family Services, Child Support Program and Niobrara County Clerk of District Court authorizing her office to collect and distribute child support payments.

Vice-Chair Griffith moved to sign the Cooperative Agreement between the Wyoming Department of Family Services, Child Support Program and Niobrara County. Commissioner Hanson seconded, and the motion carried.

Clerk of Court Lund said that all technology in the courtroom is funded and maintained by the state supreme court, and they want to bring in their own fiber circuit, using Visionary Broadband.

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The Commissioners acknowledged the supreme court's desire to install the fiber circuit and asked that it be done in the least intrusive manner.

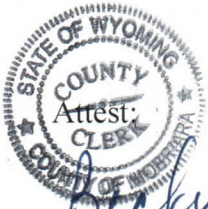
Consent Agenda-Commissioner Hanson moved to approve the consent agenda. Vice-Chair Griffith seconded, and the motion carried. Items on the consent agenda were the minutes of the April 7, 2026, meeting, receipts for the month of March from the Clerk of District Court for \$3,586.69, a tax roll supplement from New Horizon Resources, LLC. For \$13,921.85, and a Petition of Affidavit for Reduction in Taxes for Synergy Offshore LLC for \$5,112.90 and USA Energy LLC., for \$2,111.26.

There being no further business, Chairman Wade adjourned the meeting.

NIOBRARA COUNTY COMMISSIONERS



Patrick Wade, Chairman



Becky L. Freeman, County Clerk