

OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF
NIOBRARA COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
Tuesday, March 17, 2026
Commissioners' Office - Niobrara County Courthouse
424 S. Elm Street, Lusk, WY

The Niobrara Board of County Commissioners met in regular session on Tuesday, March 17, 2026, at 9:02 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* was also in attendance.

Chairman Wade led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Road & Bridge- Foreman Fred Thomas reported on road conditions and gravel inventory, noting that approximately 25,000 tons of gravel are currently stockpiled at the Manville Quarry.

He stated that spot graveling continues on 20 Mile Road, with approximately one mile remaining.

Mr. Thomas reported that replacement hoods for the large trucks cost \$2,350 each, with shipping costs exceeding \$900 alone. He noted the existing hoods cannot be rebuilt.

He also reported that all radios in road and bridge trucks and equipment are obsolete. He estimated that up to twenty-five radios will need to be replaced. He recommended higher watt radios for trucks and some blades, estimating a cost of \$10,000 per radio including installation, wiring, and antennas. Radio replacements would include eight pickups, five blades, and five trucks, with pickups and blades identified as top priorities. Chairman Wade recommended that radio replacements be implemented over multiple years.

Colby Thurston, Chair of the Niobrara County Rural Fire District, submitted a letter from Fire Warden Justin Kremers recommending the Commissioners implement an immediate fire ban due to low moisture, high wind forecasts, heightened wildfire risks, and current staffing levels being unable to sustain a major containment effort.

Old Business- The voluntary remediation project for the old jail is ongoing.

New Business-

2026 Funding for Responsible Gambling Behavior- Due to funds on hand and few expenditures, Vice-Chair Griffith moved to decline accepting funding for the 2026 grant money. Commissioner Hanson seconded, and the motion carried.

Resolution 22-08- Commissioner Hanson moved to rescind this resolution. Vice-Chair Griffith seconded, and the motion carried. A complete copy of the resolution can be found at: <https://www.niobraracounty.org/departments/commissioners/Resolutions.asp>.

Resolution 26-04- Revising the Niobrara County Employee Handbook- Title: Diversity, Section: Disability Accommodation. Commissioner Hanson moved to adopt Resolution 26-04. Vice-Chair Griffith seconded, and the motion carried. A complete copy of the resolution can be found at: <https://www.niobraracounty.org/departments/commissioners/Resolutions.asp>.

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County Attorney- Attorney Anne Wasserburger discussed the draft Planning and Zoning Regulations Manual and expressed her desire to conduct a legal review so she can better understand the document. She emphasized that she would not be advising the Planning & Zoning Commission or shaping policy but wanted to be prepared to answer questions from the public and the Commissioners once the document becomes public.

Chairman Wade voiced concerns regarding potential attorney–client privilege issues. The Commissioners noted they have not yet seen the draft and do not wish to review it until after legal review is completed. Commissioner Hanson stated the regulations impact citizens and should be reviewed openly and moved to authorize the County Attorney to review the document for legal purposes only. Chairman Wade reiterated the review would be legal, not policy-based and Attorney Wasserburger agreed that it was a legal review. Chairman Wade seconded, and the motion carried.

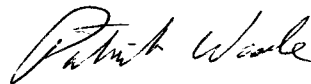
Resolution 26-05- Partial Fire Ban- Commissioner Hanson moved to approve Resolution 26-05- Imposing a Partial Fire Ban in the Unincorporated Areas of Niobrara County. Vice-Chair Griffith seconded, and the motion carried. A complete copy of the resolution can be found at: <https://www.niobraracounty.org/departments/commissioners/Resolutions.asp>.

Sheila Boldon addressed the Commissioners regarding the Niobrara County Fair Foundation minutes that listed proposed fairgrounds improvements, including “hook ups in a more open space for trailers and campers.” She expressed concern that such improvements could compete with local businesses, and she asked if there was some way to formalize that statement in a resolution or some other fashion. The Commissioners assured her that neither they nor the fair board intend to pursue this initiative for that reason.

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 March 3, 2026, meeting. and receipts for February from the clerk of court \$1,616.36, the sheriff for \$55.00, and \$4,000.52 for public health for the month of January.

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

NIOBRARA COUNTY COMMISSIONERS



Patrick Wade, Chairman



Attest



Becky L. Freeman, County Clerk