

PROCEEDINGS OF THE RED LAKE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

August 26, 2025

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 August 26th, 2025, at 10:00 am.

CALL TO ORDER

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

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

Highway Engineer, Taylor Amiot Re: Project Updates and County Road Safety Plan

NW MN MULTI-COUNTY HRA

Charity Brault from the Northwest Minnesota Multi-County HRA reviewed the levy process, explaining that Red Lake County's levy increased from \$48,843 last year to \$61,775 this year due to rising market values, with funds supporting community development, housing, and assistance programs. Finance Manager Heather Harbott provided details on current and past grants, including \$25,000 in levy funds committed to the Red Lake Falls Small Cities Grant, which supports owner-occupied, rental, and commercial rehabilitation. Brault also highlighted down payment assistance programs, challenges in securing contractors, and ongoing Section 8 housing choice vouchers, which currently assist 815 families across the region. She reported the HRA continues to advocate for housing and community development funding at the state level and invited questions or input on future county needs.

ANNUAL SOLID WASTE HAULER LICENSE TRANSITION

Kurt Casavan, Environmentalist gave an update on the transition of Sanitary Services & Recycling from Calvin Eckstein to Paul and Holly Eckstein, who will operate as Eckstein Enterprises LLC dba Sanitary Services and Recycling. A new solid waste hauler application was submitted, with all paperwork and vehicle DOT requirements in order. Casavan recommended approval, noting a new application process will take place again in December as the license will expire. Following discussion, Commissioner Moran moved to approve the license, with Commissioner Remick offering a second. Motion Carried.

RLC SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Tanya Waldo, District Manager of the Red Lake County SWCD presented the 2026 budget, showing an overall increase from last year primarily due to the inclusion of BWSR Clean Water Fund grants, with approximately \$535,000 allocated to landowners for erosion control practices. Most other budget areas remain consistent, with adjustments for rising expenses such as personnel, services, subscriptions, training, and annual audits. The county allocation request increased from \$70,000 to \$73,500, while some state block grant funding has been reduced for 2026–2027.

Waldo also gave an update on the Buffer Law program, which continues to be challenging to implement due to inconsistent compliance among landowners—some maintaining strong perennial vegetation while others do the bare minimum or nothing at all. Site visits and compliance notices are ongoing, with corrective action letters planned for non-compliant landowners, and penalties possible after 11 months if no progress is made. A key issue is clarifying county ditch system right-of-way measurements, as this would help SWCD staff enforce buffer requirements and provide clear guidance to landowners. The

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discussion also covered historical requirements for one-rod strips, the costs and processes of potential redetermination of ditch benefits, and how ditch maintenance and buffer enforcement intersect. Overall, frustration was expressed over inconsistent standards, lack of clarity, and the need for stronger county support to ensure compliance and fairness.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Environmental Officer Kurt Casavan provided an update on recent MPCA meetings regarding rule changes for C&D landfills. The discussions were largely informational, though concerns were raised that new rules appear restrictive and inconsistent. The County continues to wait for a formal MPCA response to its closure extension request for the Red Lake Falls landfill, submitted over five weeks ago. Preliminary closure plans have been shared with MPCA staff, who indicated they may allow more flexibility with cover requirements and timelines, though nothing has been confirmed in writing. Frustration was expressed over delays in receiving responses, as the County faces penalties for noncompliance while MPCA delays extend timelines. Additional discussion included landfill costs, potential use of alternative disposal or recycling options and ongoing challenges with weed spraying and property maintenance compliance, particularly with a noncompliant landowner who has repeatedly failed to address noxious weed control despite assessments. The Board will continue to monitor these issues and review cost options at future meetings.

RESOLUTION DECLARING STATE OF EMERGENCY

Sheriff, Mitch Bernstein gave an update on storm damage from high winds in Red Lake Falls on August 8, which impacted county, city and school infrastructures including the hockey arena, bus garage, light poles, baseball field structures, and fencing. While most damages were insured, some items such as light poles were not, allowing the County to meet the state disaster threshold of \$9,000 in uninsured losses. Preliminary estimates of uncovered damages total approximately \$49,000. Commissioner Gerardy moved, seconded by Commissioner Moran and carried unanimously to approve **RESOLUTION 08-01-2025** declaring a local disaster to enable reimbursement for eligible costs.

HIGHWAY ANNOUNCEMENTS

The board received highway department updates from Taylor Amiot, Highway Engineer, noting that paving on the bypass project and Highway 32 was expected to be completed by the end of the day, with shouldering, striping, and other finishing work to follow. A hot-in-place recycling project also began near Dorothy, covering 0.6 miles in Red Lake County, with potential future applications discussed. The Board also reviewed participation in the County Road Safety Plan Phase IV, with a total project cost of \$99,346.51, 80% federally funded, leaving a local share of \$19,869.30 to be covered with maintenance funds. After discussion, Commissioner Gerardy moved to approve participation in the County Road Safety Plan, with Commissioner Moran seconding the motion. The motion carried.

MINUTES

Commissioner Remick moved, seconded by Commissioner Moran, and carried unanimously to approve the minutes from the meeting on August 12, 2025.

EXPENDITURES

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

<u>Vendor</u>	<u>Amount</u>
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Election Systems & Software Inc	\$ 5,243.57
Hawkinson Construction Co., Inc.	\$ 62,139.95
Houston Engineering, Inc	\$ 32,768.25
Polk County Highway Department	\$110,564.80
Pomp's Tire Service, Inc.	\$ 2,283.37
RDO Equipment Co.	\$ 2,137.54
S&S Truck Repair, LLC	\$ 3,773.25
Stantec Consulting Services Inc	\$ 2,384.00
Thibert Chev-Buick	\$ 5,059.62
16 Payments less than \$2000	<u>\$ 9,664.50</u>
TOTAL	\$236,018.85

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Remick- MPCA New Rules Meeting

Remick- Household Hazardous Waste

Moran- Huot Park Boat Ramp Cleanup, Chataqua

Flage- Pennington & Red Lake Public Health & Home Care

AUDITOR ANNOUNCEMENTS

Auditor Kelsey Gervais presented few items to the board. A motion was made by Commissioner Gerardy, seconded by Commissioner Remick, to approve Gervais as the Identified Official with Authority for Education Identity and Access Management with the State of Minnesota Education secure systems. Motion carried. Gervais informed the board that the House of Representatives Capital Investment Committee will conduct a site visit on Wednesday, September 24th at 12:00 p.m. regarding the ventilation and cooling project grant submitted in May. She also presented the Maintenance and Support Renewal contract with Strategic Technologies (STI) for MCAPS, the attorney's office case management software managed through MnCCC. The contract has been approved by both the MnCCC County Attorney User Group and the MnCCC Board and will be effective January 1, 2026, through December 31, 2028. Commissioner Remick moved to approve the contract, seconded by Commissioner Moran. Motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Commissioner Gerardy, seconded by Commissioner Remick, and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 1:04 p.m. The next regular meeting of the board is scheduled for Tuesday, September 9th, 2026, at 10:00 a.m.

Attest: _____
Kelsey Gervais, County Auditor

Chuck Flage, Chairman
Board of Commissioner