

# PROCEEDINGS OF THE RED LAKE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

October 14, 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 October 14<sup>th</sup>, 2025, at 10:00 am.

## **CALL TO ORDER**

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

## **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

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

Environmentalist, Kurt Casavan Re: Huot Park Update

## **ENVIRONMENTAL ANNOUNCEMENTS**

A public hearing was held prior to the Commissioner's meeting to consider the removal of Section 5.31 D: *Transfer of Properties* from the County's Septic (SSTS) Ordinance. This section required a compliance inspection and certificate of compliance prior to the sale or transfer of any property with a dwelling or structure served by an SSTS. It also included provisions regarding seller disclosure, escrow requirements for noncompliant systems, winter agreements, and specific exemptions to the inspection requirement. Following discussion, Commissioner Gerardy made a motion to approve the removal of Section 5.31 D, with Commissioner Mickelson offering a second. Motion carried following a roll call vote which was unanimous in support of the removal.

Kurt Casavan, Environmentalist discussed communication with attorney John Kolb of Rinke Noonan regarding Polk County's plans to conduct redeterminations of benefits on joint ditches shared with Red Lake County. Kolb recommended holding joint ditch board meetings between the counties to ensure all parties are properly informed and involved. Casavan explained that Polk County currently holds the majority of benefits on some joint ditches, which gives them a greater voting share (3–2) when decisions are made. If Polk County proceeds with redeterminations, Red Lake County may need to do the same to maintain equal benefit ratios between the counties. He noted that Red Lake County has been building and maintaining ditch funds to cover future projects without increasing assessments, aiming to keep assessments consistent for taxpayers. However, additional costs from Polk County's redetermination process may require adjustments to future assessments.

Casavan reported that Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) representative Aaron Salo stopped by to discuss Red Lake County's request for an extension on landfill closure deadlines. Casavan expressed frustration with the MPCA's unwillingness to grant the county additional time, noting that the county's tight budget, rising health care costs, and union negotiations make the current 2026 deadline unrealistic. He emphasized that extending the closure to December 2028 would ease the financial burden on taxpayers and align with proposed MPCA rule changes. The board agreed to push for the additional year and have further discussions with MPCA staff to reach a reasonable timeline for closure and compliance.

Casavan informed the board that the electricity has been shut off and the pump has been removed down at Huot Park for the season.

## **SHERIFF ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Sheriff Mitch Bernstein reported that the county's Emergency Operations Plan requires annual review. Last year's review was completed by Homeland Security and Emergency Management (HSEM), and this

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year it is the County Board's turn, as the review rotates every four years. The plan passed inspection from HSEM last year, and updates made this year primarily include revisions to the resource manual and minor updates to maintain compliance. The board reviewed and Commissioner Flage signed off on the plan.

### HIGHWAY ANNOUNCEMENTS

**RESOLUTION 10-01-2025** was offered by Commissioner Remick, seconded by Commissioner Mickelson, and carried unanimously. The resolution appoints the Minnesota Commissioner of Transportation as Red Lake County's agent to accept federal aid funds for eligible transportation projects. It also authorizes Chairman Anthony Flage and County Auditor Kelsey Gervais to execute MnDOT Agreement No. 1059841 on behalf of the county, outlining the terms and conditions for federal aid participation.

The Board reviewed the county's current culvert policy after receiving a complaint from a resident regarding replacement costs. Highway Engineer, Taylor Amiot provided an overview of the existing policy, which covers 30 feet of culvert material with the landowner responsible for installation, and shared comparisons from other counties showing a variety of practices. Discussion included whether the county should consider expanding coverage to 40 feet or assume installation responsibilities on state aid routes, noting potential funding availability and statutory guidance indicating that landowners are generally responsible unless otherwise adopted by policy. After discussion, the Board agreed to leave the culvert policy as currently written.

Amiot informed the Board that the 2024 Annual Highway Report has been completed and is available upon request. A copy has also been provided to the Auditor's Office.

### LABOR RELATION STRATEGY

Per Minnesota Statute §13D.03, Commissioner Moran moved to close the meeting to discuss labor relations strategy. Commissioner Mickelson seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously. Present during the closed session were Commissioners Chuck Flage, Eric Mickelson, Al Remick, Tony Gerardy, and Andy Moran, Human Resources Director Angie Lundeen, County Attorney Tanner Holten and Auditor Kelsey Gervais. The meeting was closed at 11:44 a.m.

Commissioner Mickelson moved to reopen the meeting at 12:35 p.m., with Commissioner Remick seconding the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

### MINUTES

Commissioner Mickelson moved, seconded by Commissioner Remick, and carried unanimously to approve the minutes from the meeting on September 23, 2025.

Commissioner Gerardy moved, seconded by Commissioner Moran, and carried unanimously to approve the minutes from the special meeting on September 30, 2025.

### EXPENDITURES

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

<u>Vendor</u>	<u>Amount</u>
City of Thief River Falls	\$ 10,421.00
Davidson Construction	\$105,127.50
Pomp's Tire Service, Inc.	\$ 2,444.84
Red Lake County Co-op	\$ 3,917.66
RJ Zavoral & Sons	\$197,067.28

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Saber Shred Solutions Inc	\$ 2,717.20
11 Payments less than \$2000	<u>\$ 5,745.40</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$327,440.88</b>

### COMMITTEE REPORTS

Remick- RLC Affordable Housing, Negotiation Meeting, Tri-County Corrections

Mickelson- RLC Opioid Committee,

Gerardy- None

Moran- Negotiation Meeting

Flage- Pennington & Red Lake Public Health & Home Care, Minnesota Rural Counties, Transportation Advisory Committee

### AUDITOR ANNOUNCEMENTS

Auditor Gervais presented a request from the Northwest Minnesota Multi-County Housing & Redevelopment Authority (HRA) for support in disbursing the Statewide Affordable Housing Aid (SAHA) funds the county has received and will receive in the future. The HRA Red Lake County Affordable Housing Loan Pool Program qualifies as an eligible project and provides home loans of up to \$20,000 to county residents, with a household income limit of \$128,600. Loans carry a five-year forgivable term, with \$4,000 forgiven each year the borrower occupies the home. If the property is sold before five years, remaining funds are returned to the county's Affordable Housing Fund for future use. The program is scheduled to run through December 31, 2027, in accordance with Department of Revenue guidelines. Motion by Commissioner Moran, seconded by Commissioner Gerardy, to approve participation in the joint venture. Motion carried unanimously.

### ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Commissioner Remick, seconded by Commissioner Moran, and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 1:23 p.m. The next regular meeting of the board is scheduled for Tuesday, October 28, 2025 at 10:00 a.m.

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_  
Kelsey Gervais, County Auditor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Anthony Flage, Chairman  
Board of Commissioner