

PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Date: April 14, 2026

9:00 a.m.

Place: Commissioners Room, Courthouse, Caledonia, MN

Members Present:

Cindy Wright, Eric Johnson, Kurt Zehnder, Robert Schuldt, and Greg Myhre

Others Present:

Interim Auditor/Treasurer Polly Heberlein, The Caledonia Argus Associate Editor Katia Gorsuch, Finance Director Carol Lapham, Coordinator Brent Parker, EDA Director & Coordinator Support Allison Wagner, Public Health Supervisor Jordan Knoke, Environmental Services Director Amelia Meiners, Interim Attorney Suzanne Bublitz, Sheriff Brian Swedberg, Cindy Hateli, Scott Hateli, Steve Hartwick, Cory Baker, and Donna Buckbee

Board Workgroup Session

Coordinator Parker told the board he had attended the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) meeting on Thursday April 9, 2026 regarding the Gopher to Badger Link 765 kV transmission line project. The County had been invited to participate in the process after passing a resolution opposing the project. Parker had attended in person and Commissioners Wright and Myhre had attended virtually. Parker said while the County had questions regarding the completeness of the application at the PUC meeting the County learned that the applicants had met the bare minimum requirements required by the PUC. Parker said the form had been filled out. The application would next be transferred to the Minnesota Department of Commerce and comments could be directed there. At the PUC meeting a stay had been put on the certificate of need meaning that the route and certificate of need would be reviewed jointly in October 2026. Commissioner Wright said she thought it was good for the PUC to see the County represented at the meeting. She said she had also attended a separate meeting with the No765MN group. She said the lawyer representing that group had a lot of experience, and that there were similar groups for example in Wisconsin. Dairyland Power had responded to the County's resolution, but mostly the response directed the County back to pages in the original application, and the County still had questions in some of those areas.

Coordinator Parker said at one point many counties had transferred their Department of Corrections jobs to the State. He said Houston County had had these jobs as County jobs at one time, but currently they were State employees. Parker said he had been researching the matter for a while as many counties were now reverting back to the county model. He would be researching cost effectiveness, and different models that were involved.

Commissioner Wright said she had attended the City of La Crescent City Council meeting the night prior. She said the City would be losing their paper that they used as their official

newspaper. They were looking into other options including the Caledonia Argus and a Minnesota Newspaper Association paper.

Commissioner Wright said she thought the County should look into an ordinance regarding data centers, commercial solar, battery storage, and other related items. She said many topics that had come before the board recently had a common theme.

The County had been given an extension and would have 104 days to pass an ordinance in order to be in compliance after a recent Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) audit.

Sheriff Swedberg said he was concerned with the upcoming County ordinance regarding having Houston County be shotgun only and not allowing rifles. He said he had concerns about enforcement and said neighboring Counties around Houston County would not be enforcing the rule. The same bullets could be used in some rifles and legal hunting guns. The Sheriff said there was confusion on if the DNR would enforce the rule and what should happen when it came to forfeiting deer and firearms if people violated the ordinance. Attorney Bublitz said a discussion would need to be had with the DNR and she recommended a joint enforcement approach.

The workgroup session ended at 9:57 a.m.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

HOUSTON COUNTY, MINNESOTA

By: _____
Greg Myhre, Chairperson

Attest: _____
Brent Parker, Coordinator