

PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Date: April 28, 2026

9:00 a.m.

Place: Commissioners Room, Courthouse, Caledonia, MN

Members Present: Cindy Wright, Eric Johnson, Robert Schuldt, and Greg Myhre

Others Present: Interim Auditor/Treasurer Polly Heberlein, Fillmore County Journal Reporter Charlene Selbee, The Caledonia Argus Associate Editor Katia Gorsuch, Finance Director Carol Lapham, Coordinator Brent Parker, EDA Director & Coordinator Support Allison Wagner, Social Services Director Bethany Moen, Environmental Services Director Amelia Meiners, UMN Extension Regional Director Lisa Dierks, UMN Extension Educator Katie Drewitz, and Mark Klinski

Presiding: Chairperson Myhre

Call to order.

Pledge of Allegiance.

Motion was made by Commissioner Wright, seconded by Commissioner Schuldt motion unanimously carried to approve the agenda.

Motion was made by Commissioner Johnson, seconded by Commissioner Wright, motion unanimously carried to approve the meeting minutes from April 21, 2026.

Public Comment:

None.

APPOINTMENTS

Lisa Dierks, Extension Regional Director, and Katie Drewitz, Extension Educator gave a am UMN Extension Update on Agriculture & Horticulture Programing to the board. Drewitz shared two impact statements with the board from 2025. One discussed the year in review and the other highlighted the 19 active members and 4 emeritus active volunteers from the Houston County Extension Master Gardeners. In 2025 the Master Gardeners had put in 1,865.45 volunteer hours. Drewitz discussed Extension annual programming, events, and activities including private pesticide applicator training, gardening webinars, Tessmer Farm Safety Day, Youth Tractor Safety, Farm Family of the Year, Land Rent Survey, Houston County Extension Master Gardeners, Farm Transition Workshop, Pruning Workshops, and attending the Bluff Country Collaborative Career Fair and Hiring Event. The pesticide applicator training was a

requirement, and the training had reached 164 applicators in Houston County. The gardening workshops had an average of 500+ viewers. The Tesmer Farm Safety Day was available to all public, private, and home schoolers. 200-300 4th grade students were expected to attend in 2026. The event had 50+ community volunteers and 35+ community sponsors. Youth ages 14+ were offered Youth Tractor Safety. The safety course was required to operate machinery over 20hP on farms or businesses not owned by parents for youth 14-15 years of age. It included 10 hours of online education in addition to 16 hours of in-person training. In 2025 the Lee, Jordan, and Rachelle Meyer Family had been the Farm Family of the year. Dierks and Drewitz thanked the County board for their support. The Commissioners thanked Extension for their work.

EDA Director & Coordinator Support Wagner presented the 2025 Economic Development Authority Annual Report to the board. She said connecting people was a huge part of what the EDA board and their partners did each year. She said this could be connecting a new entrepreneur to a longstanding business leader for mentorship, connecting a business to working capital, helping a community organization find grant funding, bringing together industry partners to brainstorm sustainability ideas, and connecting people to one another. Wagner said one of the EDA's goals in 2026 was to try to connect people to anything they may need right in Houston County. The EDA knew Houston County was vibrant with lots of opportunities, local events, and resources, but sometimes there were misconceptions and people did not look for things in the County simply because they did not realize they existed. The EDA worked hard to educate the public on all the County had to offer. The EDA was dedicated to promoting and developing a healthy business community. The EDA had a low interest loan program that could be used as gap financing for starting or expanding businesses in Houston County. The 2026 rate and terms were 3.5% for seven or 10 years. At the end of 2025 there were 14 active EDA loans, loaned to Houston County businesses, and to date the EDA revolving loan fund had \$246,671.77 available to lend. Wagner said in 2025 the EDA's featured project was the Sno Pac Foods cold storage facility. This had been the largest project to cross the desks of the EDA board. This was a 7 million dollar project that would create much needed cold storage space not only for Sno Pac Foods but also for other smaller local businesses in the County that Sno Pac would rent cold storage space to. EDA partnerships included the Bluff Country Collaborative, Childcare Initiative, Farming Initiative, Houston Area Preservation Initiative, and Housing Initiative. EDA area partnerships included Keep Company Co-Working Space in La Crescent and the Root River Trail Expansion partnership between the County and cities of Houston, Hokah, and La Crescent. The Bluff Country Collaborative had celebrated 8 years in 2025. This was a partnership between Houston and Fillmore County EDA, area schools including all Houston County High Schools, Workforce Development Inc., Perkins, SSC, and local businesses. The collaborative created work-based learning opportunities for local students strengthening workforce pipelines. Each year the EDA helped find grants and collect business contributions to continue the program. In 2025 the Houston County Childcare Core Team awarded \$38,558.20 in grant dollars to Houston County Childcare providers. This added 16 slots and preserved 16 additional slots. In total, since starting to use the funding, the Houston County Childcare Core Team had helped preserve 137 slots, and helped create 26 new slots with the funding. In 2026 funds had been awarded to Caledonia CAPS Care and Eagle Care for their childcare expansion in La Crescent.

CONSENT AGENDA

Commissioner Zehnder moved, Commissioner Wright seconded, motion unanimously carried to approve the consent agenda. Approved items are below.

- 1) Hire Jessica Meyer as a 1 FTE Adult Social Worker (C41 – Step 3). With a start date of May 18, 2026.
- 2) Transfer Melissa Jordan from 1 FTE Child Support Officer (B24) to a 1 FTE Appraiser Trainee (B22 step 9) effective 5/4/2026.
- 3) Review and approve payments. Payments are below.

REQUEST APPROVAL FOR PAYMENTS

2026/04/28 COMMISSIONER WARRANTS:

VENDOR NAME	AMOUNT
ERICKSON ENGINEERING LLC	3,300.00
INSIGHT PUBLIC SECTOR	5,474.14
LIBERTY TIRE RECYCLING LLC	6,939.85
NEWMAN SIGNS INC	2,153.77
RDO EQUIPMENT CO INC	59,437.20
TRIMIN SYSTEMS INC	7,500.00
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	84,804.96
18 VENDORS PAID LESS THAN \$2000.00	8,809.25
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	93,614.21
PUBLIC HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES	40,292.78
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	133,906.99
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ACTION ITEMS

File No. 1 – The Commissioners discussed the possibility of approving a competitive search for 1 FTE Environmental Services Specialist for land use. Commissioner Myhre questioned the need for the position. Parker said the goal was to look at making a land use department. Although the position was not budgeted the plan was to not replace a future retirement in July in the Surveyor’s office. The land use department would include surveying. Commissioner Wright said she did not see the workload decreasing in land use. She said the County had a duty to the public to process applications in a timely manner. Environmental Services Director Meiners said the position was needed to keep up with the workload and provide faster service to the public. Motion was made by Commissioner Johnson, seconded by Commissioner Schuldt, motion

unanimously carried to approve a competitive search for 1 FTE Environmental Services Specialist (Land Use) (B24). The Commissioners voted by roll. All Commissioners voted yes.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Coordinator Parker said the Clean Sweep Event the previous weekend had went well. 164 people had come through the line. The event had record attendance. A total of 3,803 bulbs had been collected in addition to other items. The event had been busy, but very efficient.

The Commissioners discussed recent and upcoming meetings including a Department Head, Planning Commission, Extension, and Airport meeting.

Commissioner Myhre said he wanted to look into changing the quarter, quarter rule. Commissioner Myhre was in favor of changing the rule to increase housing density in the County and he thought there were six townships who wanted the rule changed, too. Commissioner Johnson said he disagreed. The matter had been discussed at a recent meeting with the Townships and in a full room only two people representing the townships had raised their hands in favor of the possibility of changing the rule. The Townships had been asked by Commissioner Myhre at the meeting to send results of discussions on the matter from their annual meetings to the County. Only six townships out of 17 had responded and the results were mixed. Commissioner Schuldt said he thought the matter should be looked into. Commissioner Wright said many of the townships still had additional questions. It was discussed that information on the current rule should be shared with the public to make sure they understood the current rule as there was some confusion. Environmental Services Director Meiners offered to attend Township meetings over the summer to discuss the current rule and if Townships had concerns or questions. It was also discussed that Townships could possibly be invited to workgroup sessions to discuss the matter. The possibility of holding public hearings on the matter was also mentioned. No official decisions were made.

Closing Public Comment:

Commissioner Myhre asked Mark Klinski from one of the townships his opinion on the possibility of changing the quarter, quarter rule. Klinski said he thought the townships should be involved in the discussion and suggested inviting Township officers to workgroup sessions to discuss.

There being no further business, a motion was made by Commissioner Wright, seconded by Commissioner Johnson, motion unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 10:34 a.m. The next meeting would be a regular meeting on May 5, 2026.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

HOUSTON COUNTY, MINNESOTA

By: _____
Greg Myhre, Chairperson

Attest: _____
Brent Parker, Coordinator