

PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Date: March 3, 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, 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, Public Health Supervisor Jordan Knoke, Public Health Educator Bri Ceaser, Engineer Brian Pogodzinski, Social Services Supervisor Bethany Moen, Corey Baker, Steve Hartwick, Tammy Diersen, Dayva Goetzinger, Pam Snodgrass, John Haines, Joyce Roffler, Deb Hoskins, Liza Eng, Burce Eng, Donna Buckbee, Scott Halteli, Cindy Hatleli, Vicki Olson, Anne Yakle, Kristina Hauser, Duane Teschleer, John Pugleasa, and Sheila Schroeder

Presiding: Chairperson Myhre

Call to order.

Pledge of Allegiance.

Prior to any motions being made Wagner clarified the grant accepted the previous week had been from the Minnesota State Horticultural Society. Wagner said the mix up on the agenda had been her mistake. She also clarified that in the February 17, 2026 minutes the truck chassis was awarded to Towmaster for the Swenson Body. Motion was made by Commissioner Zehnder, seconded by Commissioner Schuldt, motion unanimously carried to approve the agenda.

Motion was made by Commissioner Johnson, seconded by Commissioner Schuldt, motion carried to approve the meeting minutes from February 24, 2026. All Commissioners voted yes, except for Commissioner Wright who abstained due to being absent from the meeting.

Public Comment:

Cynthia Crestwell-Hatleli said she owned property next to a proposed mine. She said mine density standards had changed in March of 2025. She said neighbors of the proposed mine should have been notified. She read to the board a timeline of events. She requested that amendments that were made in March of 2025 be reverted back to what they had been in 2014. She also spoke on behalf of her husband, Scott Halteli, who was concerned that with more mines there would be less building sites available. He did not think there was a shortage of sand. He too, wanted the rule reverted back to the way it was.

Corey Baker from Yucatan Township said he was bordered on one side by a mine. He said he was concerned about being bordered on another side by another mine. He said it would mean a lot to him to have protections put in place. Baker said he would like the Commissioners to look at and accept the petition. He said his children wanted to live near him in the future.

John Haines from Houston said he was worried the County was getting ready to make a decision that could not easily be reversed. He said if a quarry went in it would be hard for it to go out. He asked what the dust abatement plan would be. He asked about protecting water and said farmers needed water. He asked if anyone had talked to businesses. Haines said protecting investments the County had already made was a serious responsibility.

Joyce Roffler from Yucatan Township said she was one of the petition signers. She said people had been unaware of the changes that had taken place. She said the Argus was the Official County Newspaper, but that her paper was delivered late and the County did not have many newsstands. She was concerned about sand mines causing heavy traffic.

Ann Yakle said she had been a resident of Houston County since 1988. She said she would not want to have the Commissioners' jobs. She said she thought they would be seeing a lot of pressure regarding land use. She asked that the board try to balance economics with preserving the area. She said she specifically chose to move to Southeast Minnesota. She said compromises often had to happen. Yakle said she thought requiring ½ mile between mines was a good compromise. She said she knew some mines may be needed.

Donna Buckbee said she grew up in the twin cities. It was 50 years prior when she had laid her eyes on the beauty of Houston County. She said she fell in love with the County. She said Houston County was the most beautiful place on earth. Buckbee said she was not saying that mines were not needed, but she said "don't do it in the most beautiful" place.

Duane Teschleer from Fillmore County said to protect tourism in the area he was strongly opposed to mines. He said he came to the area from lower Alabama and returned from the gulf to be in a place that was pristine. He said frac sand mining was destructive and silica going into the air was bad. He said he loved living in the area.

Steve Hartwick from Money Creek Township said 250 people had signed the petition and their opinions mattered. He said he knew publishing things in the Caledonia Argus met the County's requirement, but he asked why something that affects the entire County would get such little publicity.

APPOINTMENTS

None.

CONSENT AGENDA

None.

ACTION ITEMS

File No. 1 – Commissioner Wright moved, Commissioner Zehnder seconded, motion unanimously carried to accept donation of \$100.00 from Winona Community Foundation on behalf of the Fastenal Blue Team Giving fund for foster care children in Houston County.

File No. 2 – Commissioner Zehnder moved, Commissioner Wright seconded, motion unanimously carried to approve Purchase Contract for Mosquito Abatement Services with Driftless Region Vector Control LLC.

File No. 3 – The Commissioners discussed approving the Airport Lease Agreement with the City of Caledonia, MN to lease a vehicle from the County to provide a courtesy car for the Houston County Airport with Engineer Pogodzinski. The County's insurance would not cover a courtesy car, however the City's insurance would cover the car as most small airports were owned by municipalities. Commissioner Wright moved, Commissioner Zehnder seconded, motion to approve the agreement. Commissioner Johnson asked if those using the car would be able to travel throughout Houston County or what the rules/conditions would be with the use of the car. Pogodzinski said it would be the City of Caledonia to set the rules as they would be carrying the insurance. After further discussion Commissioner Wright amended her motion to instead table the matter until more information about the rules could be determined. Commissioner Zehnder seconded and the Commissioners unanimously voted to table the matter. Commissioner Wright said she did want to see the agreement move forward after more information on the rules could be provided as having a courtesy car would be good for the area.

File No. 4 – Commissioners discussed with Engineer Pogodzinski the possibility of allowing the highway department to hire of one summer help employee. Pogodzinski said they would most likely hire an interested student. Commissioner Johnson asked if the temporary position would be advertised. Engineer Pogodzinski said in the past when working with students in the summer he did not think the positions had been advertised. Commissioner Johnson said the County should advertise the positions. Commissioner Zehnder moved, Commissioner Wright seconded, motion carried 4 to 1 to approve the hire of one summer help employee in the Highway department. Commissioners Wright, Zehnder, Schuldt and Myhre voted yes. Commissioner Johnson voted no.

File No. 4 – Commissioner Zehnder moved, Commissioner Wright seconded, motion unanimously carried to review and approve payments. Payments are below.

REQUEST APPROVAL FOR PAYMENT	
2026/03/03 COMMISSIONER WARRANTS:	
VENDOR NAME	AMOUNT
CALEDONIA OIL CO INC	5,647.00
DAHL AUTOMOTIVE	5,561.12
DAVE SYVERSON TRUCK CENTER	252,368.07
DLT SOLUTIONS LLC	5,383.04
MN STATE AUDITOR	10,844.50
VERIZON WIRELESS	2,947.35
WIEBKE TIRE CO	3,258.96
	286,010.04
20 VENDORS PAID LESS THAN \$2000.00	9,207.07
	295,217.11
PUBLIC HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES	25,611.66
	320,828.77

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Coordinator Parker said the final public hearing regarding the use of rifles in Houston County for deer hunting would take place that evening. Coordinator Parker said the County was having some tech issues with the cameras in the Board of Commissioner room, so when watching the recording the speakers would be seen from a side angle. The County was working to have the cameras fixed.

The Commissioners discussed recent and upcoming meetings including a Planning Commission, Safety, Feedlot, and Personnel meeting.

The Commissioners congratulated Coordinator Parker on his one-year anniversary with Houston County.

Commissioner Wright said she had questions regarding the sand mine ordinance. She said there should be clarification on what it was and what it wasn't. She said she would like to see the County look into four areas that were highlighted in the petition signed by 245 residents including:

1. A comprehensive review of current ordinances to restore and strengthen all mine density limits.
2. Clearly defined restrictions on the number and proximity of sand mines allowed in any area.
3. Stronger health and safety protections for residents and the environment.
4. Public hearings for community input before any new conditional use permits for mines are approved.

Closing Public Comment:

Joyce Roffler said more mines would impact property values. She said she would like to see public hearings take place on the matter.

Duane Teschleer said he was concerned citizens living in the area would be breathing in mining.

Cindy Crestwell discussed the timeline again. She said there was available sand that could be used. She said citizens' health and safety should come before a single family's profit. She asked the board to look into reverting the rule.

Donna Buckbee from Yucatan Township said she was one of the people who had collected signatures for the current petition and had also done so for past petitions. She said this time around she saw a difference in people's attitude. In regard to rifles she said it was her understanding a bullet from a rifle could travel three miles. She asked why the County would want people firing rifles that traveled so far.

John Haines said originally the shotgun/rifle rule had made sense. He asked if it was that big of a deal between a rifle and a shotgun now.

Steve Hartwick from Money Creek Township asked about upcoming meetings. He said he had read in a 40th anniversary edition of the Fillmore County Journal where news staff had been highlighted that every one of them had said the environment was why they decided to live in the area.

There being no further business, a motion was made by Commissioner Zehnder, seconded by Commissioner Wright, motion unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 10:15 a.m. The next meeting would be a workgroup session on March 10, 2026.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

HOUSTON COUNTY, MINNESOTA

By: _____
Greg Myhre, Chairperson

Attest: _____
Brent Parker, Coordinator