

PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Date: August 18, 2026

9:00 a.m.

Place: Commissioners Room, Courthouse, Caledonia, MN

Members Present: Cindy Wright, Eric Johnson, Kurt Zehnder, and Robert Schuldt

Others Present: Interim Auditor/Treasurer Polly Heberlein, Fillmore County Journal Reporter Charlene Selbee, The Caledonia Argus Associate Editor Kaita Gorsuch, Coordinator Brent Parker, EDA Director & Coordinator Support Allison Wagner, Finance Director Carol Lapham, Public Health Director Jordan Knoke, Interim Attorney Suzanne Bublitz, John Pugleasa, Kyle Johnson, Charles Wray, Sheila Schroeder, and Mikal Sylling

Presiding: Vice Chairperson Wright

Call to order.

Pledge of Allegiance.

Motion was made by Commissioner Johnson, seconded by Commissioner Zehnder, motion unanimously carried to approve the agenda.

Motion was made by Commissioner Schuldt, seconded by Commissioner Johnson, motion unanimously carried to approve the meeting minutes from August 4, 2026.

Motion was made by Commissioner Zehnder, seconded by Commissioner Johnson, motion unanimously carried to approve the meeting minutes from August 11, 2026.

Public Comment:

None.

APPOINTMENTS

None.

CONSENT AGENDA

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

- 1) Transfer Melissa Jordan to a 1 FTE Child Support Case Aide (B22, Step 9), Effective August 24th, 2026.
- 2) Transfer Lee Langager to a 1 FTE Certified Minnesota Appraiser (B23, Step 8), Effective August 24th, 2026.
- 3) Approve a competitive search for 1 FTE Assessor Tech Clerk (B22).
- 4) Accept Resignation from Karen Fryseth (Child Support Officer) Effective August 11th, 2026.
- 5) Approve a competitive search for 1 FTE Child Support Officer (B24).
- 6) Appoint Anne Yakle and Kate Snodgrass as Ballot Board members for the State General Election to be held on November 3rd (\$17.50 per hour).
- 7) Consider approving an Exempt Permit for Minnesota Lawful Gambling Application LG220 for Caledonia Girls Court Club INC for gambling (raffle) activities to be conducted at Ma Cal Grove Country Club in Caledonia Township with a drawing to be held on October 23, 2026, with no waiting period.
- 8) Review 2025 Annual Disclosure Report for the City of Spring Grove Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Districts for the year ended December 31, 2025.
- 9) Review 2025 Annual Disclosure Report for the City of La Crescent Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Districts for the year ended December 31, 2025.
- 10) Review and approve payments. Payments are below.

REQUEST APPROVAL FOR PAYMENTS

2026/08/18 COMMISSIONER WARRANTS:

VENDOR NAME	AMOUNT
ABILITY BUILDING COMMUNITY	2,664.50
ACENTEK	4,399.48
ADVANCED CORRECTIONAL HEALTHCAR	8,112.33
AVFUEL CORPORATION	22,715.53
BRUENING ROCK PRODUCTS INC	147,800.83
CALEDONIA OIL CO INC	7,590.00
CALEDONIA/CITY OF	21,645.42
ENTERPRISE FM	10,414.39
ENTERPRISE FM TRUST CAR SALES	13,479.56
HOUSTON COUNTY TREASURER	21,538.13
KWIK TRIP	5,912.95
LIBERTY TIRE RECYCLING LLC	3,918.80
LOFFLER COMPANIES	2,027.07
MACQUEEN	2,912.00
MATTISON CONTRACTORS INC	5,654.04
MEYERS LAWN SERVICE LLC	2,440.00

MILESTONE MATERIALS	33,960.58
MINNESOTA ENERGY RESOURCES	3,012.21
MN STATE TREASURER	5,357.50
OLYMPIC BUILDERS GENERAL CONTRAC	200,292.30
RICHARD'S SANITATION LLC	23,976.84
SCOTT CONSTRUCTION INC	485,580.25
STONEBROOKE ENGINEERING INC	6,604.69
WEX BANK	2,175.44
WEX BANK	4,735.79
	1,048,920.63
43 VENDORS PAID LESS THAN \$2000.00	20,490.53
	1,069,411.16
PUBLIC HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES	274,499.68
	1,343,910.84

ACTION ITEMS

File No. 1 – The Commissioners discussed the possibility of discontinuing operation of the County License Center and supporting a successor. This topic had been discussed at a recent Workgroup Session. Staffing the County License Center had been an ongoing issue, the County had been losing money in recent years on the License Center, and there were other centers in the area that were privately operated. The License Center in La Crescent was separate from the County. Currently due to a retirement and other staffing shortages there was only one person who was qualified to work in the License Center at the County. The employee who would be working in the License Center did not typically work there, and working the License Center would take away from the employee's normal duties working in the Auditor/Treasurer's office. Staff who issued passports were not able to also work in the License Center due to rules adding further to the shortage of staff. Coordinator Parker said if the County wanted to discontinue operation of the License Center the next step would be to approve a resolution to discontinue operations that would be sent to the State. The State would then study the area to determine a need and assuming a need was determined the State would advertise for a new successor to take over the services. It was anticipated that there would be a need, but if the State found otherwise the County could decide to continue with the License Center. The County would work with the State on a smooth transition and stay open until the successor could take over. Commissioner Johnson said there could be long lines, and thanked the public for their patience during the transition. The Commissioners agreed. Motion was made by Commissioner Zehnder, seconded by Commissioner Johnson, motion unanimously carried to approve Resolution 26-21: DISCONTINUE COUNTY OPERATION OF THE LICENSE CENTER AND SUPPORT THE CONTINUED PROVISION OF DRIVER AND VEHICLE SERVICES BY A SUCCESSOR OPERATOR. Resolution is below.

RESOLUTION NO. 26-21

**RESOLUTION TO DISCONTINUE COUNTY OPERATION OF THE LICENSE
CENTER AND SUPPORT THE CONTINUED PROVISION OF DRIVER AND
VEHICLE SERVICES BY A SUCCESSOR OPERATOR**

WHEREAS, Houston County currently provides motor vehicle registration, title, driver's license, identification card, and related Driver and Vehicle Services ("DVS") services to residents of Houston County and the surrounding area; and

WHEREAS, Minnesota Statutes § 168.33 provides for the appointment and administration of deputy registrars by the Minnesota Commissioner of Public Safety, and Minnesota Statutes § 171.061 governs the appointment and discontinuance of driver's license agents; and

WHEREAS, the Houston County Board of Commissioners has reviewed the County's continued operation of deputy registrar and driver's license services and has determined that the County should discontinue serving in this capacity; and

WHEREAS, the Houston County Board recognizes the importance of maintaining convenient access to motor vehicle registration, title, driver's license, identification card, and related services for Houston County residents; and

WHEREAS, the Board desires to work cooperatively with the Minnesota Department of Public Safety, Driver and Vehicle Services Division, to provide for an orderly transition and to minimize any interruption of services to the public; and

WHEREAS, the Board supports the State of Minnesota taking the necessary steps to identify, approve, and appoint a qualified replacement provider to continue DVS services within Houston County.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Houston County Board of Commissioners that:

1. **Discontinuation of County Services.** Houston County hereby provides notice of its intent to discontinue operating as a deputy registrar and driver's license agent and to relinquish its responsibility for providing the associated DVS services.
2. **Coordination with the State.** The Houston County Coordinator is authorized and directed to notify and work with the Minnesota Department of Public Safety, Driver and Vehicle Services Division, to establish an orderly transition plan and an appropriate effective date for discontinuation of County-operated services.
3. **Replacement Service Provider.** Houston County requests that the Minnesota Department of Public Safety initiate the appropriate process to identify and appoint a qualified replacement deputy registrar and/or driver's license agent to provide these services within Houston County.
4. **Continuity of Service.** It is the intent of the Houston County Board that County-operated services continue during a reasonable transition period, to the extent practicable and as

agreed upon with the Minnesota Department of Public Safety, in order to minimize or avoid a gap in services to the public.

5. **Transition Assistance.** County staff are authorized to cooperate with the Minnesota Department of Public Safety and any approved successor regarding equipment, records, facilities, public notification, operational transition, and other matters reasonably necessary to facilitate the transfer of services.
6. **County Facility.** Nothing in this Resolution commits Houston County to providing County-owned space, equipment, personnel, or financial support to a successor provider unless separately approved by the Houston County Board.
7. **Effective Date.** The final date on which Houston County will cease providing deputy registrar and driver's license agent services shall be established in coordination with the Minnesota Department of Public Safety and subsequently communicated to the public.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Houston County Board of Commissioners expresses its desire that deputy registrar and driver's license services remain available within Houston County following the County's withdrawal from providing these services directly.

Adopted by the Houston County Board of Commissioners on this 18th day of August 2026.

File No. 2 – Motion was made by Commissioner Johnson, seconded by Commissioner Schuldt, motion unanimously carried to approve Resolution No. 26-22: AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES PREVENTION AID. Resolution is below.

RESOLUTION NO. 26-22

AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES PREVENTION AID

August 18, 2026

WHEREAS, 2014 Session Law Chapter 308 enacted by the Legislature provides Minnesota counties a County Program Aid grant for Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) prevention. The amount designated for each county is based on the number of watercraft trailer launches as well as the number of watercraft trailer parking spaces within each county. Houston County was allocated \$11,248 for 2027 and years following (5 watercraft trailer launches and 50 watercraft trailer parking spaces), and

WHEREAS, the legislation requires that Houston County must establish, by resolution or through adoption of a plan, guidelines for the use of the proceeds which are to prevent the introduction or limit the spread of aquatic invasive species at all access sites within the county, and

WHEREAS, the county may appropriate the proceeds directly or may use any

portion of the proceeds to provide funding to a soil and water conservation district in the county, for a joint powers board or cooperative agreement with another political subdivision, a watershed district in the county, or a lake association located in the county. Any money appropriated by the county to a different entity or political subdivision must be used as required under this section, and

WHEREAS, the county must submit a copy of its guidelines for use of the proceeds to the Department of Natural Resources by December 31 of the year the payments are received, and

WHEREAS, maintaining an ongoing effort to inform the public of resource needs, resource impairments and resource protection matters has been identified as the most important tool in addressing water resource concerns in the Root River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan and the Mississippi River Winona/La Crescent (WinLaC) Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan for Houston County, the fight against Aquatic Invasive Species is included in this educational effort and will continue to be a cornerstone for Houston County.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED the Board of Commissioners of Houston County, Minnesota designate oversight of Houston County's AIS prevention efforts to the Root River Soil and Water Conservation District and delegates to them the responsibility to prepare, implement and report annually a plan to allocate the funding in accordance with the above legislation.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

The Commissioners discussed the Gopher to Badger Link 765 kV High Voltage Transmission Line Project. A comment period on the route was expected to be coming in the near future. The Commissioners would need to decide how they wanted to respond both as a board and individually.

Coordinator Parker said budget talks with the finance committee would be starting soon as preliminary budget data would soon be available. He said health insurance would only be a 5% increase coming in less than expected.

The Commissioners discussed recent and upcoming meetings including a WINLAC, Public Health and Human Services, Canvassing Board, Land Use, and Semcac meeting.

Commissioner Johnson thanked the County's maintenance staff for maintaining the County buildings and keeping them clean. He said it was much appreciated and the Commissioners agreed.

Closing Public Comment:

Charles Wray from the NO765MN group thanked the County board for their leadership. He said the most effective comments were those that had documentation. He said the comment period for the application and route would be coming soon. Wray referred to the County's resolution opposing the proposed 765kV transmission project within Houston County and said he was respectfully requesting the County to bring up the 5th paragraph again regarding human health. He said another important issue was the benefit cost analysis by MISO. Wray said an independent market monitor had said that MISO's analysis was flawed. He said alternatives should also be considered.

Houston County resident John Pugleasa said he was very involved in the NO765MN group. He said while working at Public Health they had done a lot of work on groundwater. He wondered what the impacts would be on karst geography of digging big holes. He had questions regarding the impact on ag land and the health of the people living under the line. Pugleasa said to his disappointment he had heard from the State that they were in favor of the line because it was a green energy project. He said he personally was in favor of green energy, but the effects of all energy should be studied. Pugleasa said he appreciated the work Houston County had done with the County's resolution opposing the proposed 765 kV "Gopher to Badger Link" transmission project within Houston County. He said he had a personal interest in the matter as the proposed line would be very near his house.

Kyle Johnson said he was a landowner, farmer, and business owner who lived in Crooked Creek. He said while the proposed transmission project was not specifically in his backyard he was concerned with the project. Johnson said the matter was not why to oppose the project, but how to oppose the project. He said he appreciated the County's resolution opposing the project. He said the companies involved in the project including Dairyland and Excel Energy had not been transparent. He urged the County to remain skeptical. He said the companies involved were using flawed metrics. Johnson said the County should use legal resources. He said Houston County must demand a response from the Minnesota Department of Health and Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. He asked the County to continue to stay engaged.

The Commissioners asked Coordinator Parker to find out when the next comment period would be for the proposed 765 kV transmission project. It was the general consensus of the Commissioners that they remained opposed to the 765 kV "Gopher to Badger Link" transmission project within Houston County and that the County should express this during the next comment period. Commissioner Wright asked that those who had spoken during public comment send further information to the board for review regarding their comments.

There being no further business, a motion was made by Commissioner Johnson, seconded by Commissioner Zehnder, motion unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 10:02 a.m. The next meeting would be a regular meeting on August 25, 2026.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

HOUSTON COUNTY, MINNESOTA

By: _____
Greg Myhre, Chairperson

Attest: _____
Brent Parker, Coordinator