

PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Date: September 22, 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 Kaita Gorsuch, Coordinator Brent Parker, EDA Director & Coordinator Support Allison Wagner, Finance Director Carol Lapham, Interim County Attorney Suzanne Bublitz, Highway Accountant Sheila Schroeder, Fiscal Supervisor Heidi Harms, Public Health Director Jordan Knoke, Human Services Director Bethany Moen, Environmental Services Director Amelia Meiners, Interim Recorder Michelle Werner, Community Health Educator Bri Ceaser, Sheriff Brian Swedberg, Mikal Sylling, and Karl Sylling

Presiding: Chairperson Myhre

Call to order.

Pledge of Allegiance.

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

Motion was made by Commissioner Johnson, seconded by Commissioner Schuldt, motion unanimously carried to approve the meeting minutes from September 15, 2026.

Public Comment:

None.

APPOINTMENTS

Bri Ceaser, Houston County Health Educator gave a Houston County Community Health Assessment presentation to the board. Ceaser said the County was currently asking residents to take a Community Health Survey that would be open until October 31st. The input from the survey helped shape local programs, services, and priorities that supported a healthier future for everyone. The survey could be found at www.compassnow.org. Compass was established in 1995 to conduct a community health needs assessment using a regional model developed in partnership with the United Way in La Crosse, WI. The purpose was to use the data to identify crucial needs or issues in Houston County, identify assets, and determine community health

improvement initiatives. Past priorities had included healthy eating, mental health, active living, environmental, and access to health services. Outcomes included child and teen check ups, nutrition education at Houston ECFE night, WIC nutrition education, upgrades to food carts for school nutrition, community gardens, an annual bike rodeo, walk bike school days, bike education safety, Bridges Health foot and nail clinics, Children's Dental mobile clinic, water testing, free short term radon testing kits, and more.

CONSENT AGENDA

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

- 1) Hire James Yohe as a Veterans Services Driver 67 – Day Employee at the rate of \$17.50 an hour.
- 2) Hire Danny O'Heron as a Recycling Lead 67 – Day Employee (B23, Step 1).
- 3) Accept resignation from Amy Sylling, Deputy Auditor Treasurer, effective October 2, 2026.
- 4) Review and approve payments. Payments are below.

REQUEST APPROVAL FOR PAYMENTS

2026/09/22 COMMISSIONER WARRANTS:

VENDOR NAME	AMOUNT
BRUENING ROCK PRODUCTS INC	6,468.15
CALEDONIA OIL CO INC	10,246.00
COMPUTER FORENSIC SERVICES LLC	48,301.41
ICON CONSTRUCTORS LLC	102,105.00
KWIK TRIP	6,604.53
LA CROSSE GLASS & OVERHEAD DOOR	59,328.00
MIENERGY COOPERATIVE	6,623.28
MN COUNTIES INTERGOVERNMENTAL TR	2,500.00
RICHARD'S SANITATION LLC	24,874.07
SEIDEL'S SEAMLESS GUTTERS	3,480.00
TITAN MACHINERY INC	2,286.00
TRI STATE DOORS LLC	31,986.50
WABASHA COUNTY AUDITOR/TREASURER	32,139.63
WELLS FARGO BANK	16,013.75
	352,956.32
25 VENDORS PAID LESS THAN \$2000.00	11,074.80
	364,031.12

PUBLIC HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES	7,932.87
	371,963.99

REVIEW LICENSE CENTER PAYMENTS

2026/09/14 AUDITOR WARRANTS:

VENDOR NAME	AMOUNT
IOWA DNR STATE FOREST NURSERY	3,942.50
OLMSTED SWCD	7,748.83
PHEASANTS FOREVER INC	2,500.00
	14,191.33
12 VENDORS PAID LESS THAN \$2000.00	2,506.61
	16,697.94

ACTION ITEMS

File No. 1 – Coordinator Parker reviewed a spreadsheet with the Commissioners and discussed the proposed preliminary budget and levy. Initially after departments had submitted preliminary numbers the County had started with what looked like a 17% increase. Coordinator Parker, the Finance Department, and Department heads had worked hard to look for cuts to the budget and find savings. After initial savings were found Coordinator Parker showed the Commissioners on the spreadsheet that by using fund balance of \$400,000 from the general fund, and additional fund balance of \$310,000 from Road and Bridge, and fund balance of \$100,000 from Public Health and Human Services the preliminary levy could be set at 8.41%. Additional cuts could still be made once the preliminary levy was set, however once it was set the preliminary levy and budget could not be increased. The Commissioners discussed frustration with the State as they mandated the County have many programs but were decreasing money provided to the County for those programs. Cost shifts from the State were expected to increase even more in 2027. The Commissioners discussed the importance of speaking to legislators about these mandated programs and increasing cost shifts. The Commissioners discussed wanting to decrease the preliminary levy even more to 7.72%. Coordinator Parker said he thought this adjustment would be possible. Commissioner Schuldt said he would still like to see the final levy be even lower, and the Commissioners agreed.

File No. 2 – Motion was made by Commissioner Zehnder, seconded by Commissioner Wright, motion unanimously carried to adopt Resolution No. 26-25 Adopting 2026 Proposed Levy. The Commissioners voted by roll, all Commissioner voted yes. The preliminary levy would be set at 7.72%. Resolution is below.

RESOLUTION NO. 26-25

BE IT RESOLVED, that the proposed levy after the deduction of County Program Aid (CPA), in the amount of \$16,982,923 be made on all taxable property in the County of Houston for taxes payable in 2027 in the following amounts by County Fund:

County Revenue	\$ 10,681,152
Road & Bridge	2,766,011
Public Health & Human Services	3,488,289
Bond Fund – 2017A Jail Bonds	1,383,795

Total	\$ 18,319,247
Less CPA	1,336,324

Total Levy	\$ 16,982,923
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File No. 3 – Motion was made by Commissioner Johnson, seconded by Commissioner Wright, motion unanimously carried to adopt Resolution No. 26-26 Adopting 2026 Proposed Budget. Resolution is below.

RESOLUTION NO. 26-26 RESOLUTION ADOPTING 2027 PROPOSED OPERATING BUDGET

	Revenue	Expenditures	Revenues Over (Under) Expenditures
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County Revenue	\$15,691,903	\$15,760,820	\$ (68,917)
Road & Bridge	17,323,987	17,341,834	(17,847)
Public Health & Human Services	9,100,241	9,122,748	(22,507)
Debt Service	1,598,973	1,598,973	0
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Grand Total	\$43,715,104	\$43,824,375	\$(109,271)
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File No. 4 – Prior to any motions being made Sheriff Swedberg said numbers were still coming in from townships, but that so far with only six townships reporting an estimated \$470,000 worth of damage had been reported from storms the previous week. He said the City of Hokah also had damage. Motion was made by Commissioner Johnson, seconded by Commissioner Schuldt, motion unanimously carried to adopt Resolution No. 26-27, a resolution declaring a state of emergency for conditions resulting from the severe storms, heavy rains, and flooding of September 19, 2026. Resolution is below.

Resolution Declaring a State of Emergency
Resolution # 26-27

WHEREAS the severe storms, heavy rains, and flooding impacted the population of Houston County and its cities, townships, and public utilities; and

WHEREAS the severe storms, heavy rains, and flooding event has caused a significant amount of debris, and roadway damage; and

WHEREAS the Houston County Department of Emergency Management requests the Houston County Board of Commissioners to declare Houston County in a STATE OF EMERGENCY for the September 19th event of 2026;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Houston County Board of Commissioners declares Houston County in a State of Emergency for conditions resulting from the severe storms, heavy rains, and flooding event of September 19, 2026.

Adopted by the Houston County Board of Commissioners this 22nd day of September, 2026.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Coordinator Parker said with the recent resignation the license center would most likely need to be closed starting on October 3rd as no one else at the County was qualified to operate it. The truth and taxation meeting was set for December 1st, 2026 at 6:00 p.m. in the Commissioners Room 222 in the Historic Courthouse.

The Commissioners discussed recent and upcoming meetings and events including a Solid Waste, ECB, Extension, Bluffland Coalition, Bluff Country Collaborative CTE Exploration Day, and NO765MN meeting in La Crescent.

Economic Development Director & Coordinator Support Wagner said the Friends of the Historic Jail group was holding a County wide Town Hall meeting. It would be at the Houston County Historical Society on Sunday October 11, 2026 at 1 p.m.

The Commissioners thanked Keyloe Xiong from the IT Department with his help with the technology during the board meeting.

Closing Public Comment:

Interim Recorder Werner said her office was getting questions about hunting licenses with the license center being closed. Commissioner Zehnder said the State was encouraging people to purchase hunting licenses online.

Karl Sylling from Wilmington Township said the Commissioners could not have a license center open without staffing it. He said now the State had decided for the Commissioners.

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 October 6, 2026.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

HOUSTON COUNTY, MINNESOTA

By: _____
Greg Myhre, Chairperson

Attest: _____
Brent Parker, Coordinator