

PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Date: June 9, 2026

9:00 a.m.

Place: Commissioners Room, Courthouse, Caledonia, MN

Members Present:

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

Others Present:

The Caledonia Argus Associate Editor Kaita Gorsuch, Finance Director Carol Lapham, Coordinator Brent Parker, EDA Director & Coordinator Support Allison Wagner, Public Health Supervisor Jordan Knoke, Interim Attorney Suzanne Bublitz, Diane Schuldt, Steve Bernhardt, Janene Hosch, Deb Wray, Rich Cordes, Paul Wiste, Cindy Hateli, and Scott Hateli

Board Workgroup Session

Members from the Friends of the Historic Jail Group discussed with the Commissioners ideas for the future of the historic jail. Both the group and the Commissioners agreed that they did not want to see taxpayer dollars being used to fix up the historic jail, but that they would like to see the building put to good use if funds could be gathered for a project through a combination of donations, grants, and the left over insurance money the County still had from back when the building had flooded years ago. The Historical Society could use their 501c3 status to take donations from the public once a project was decided on. Several members of the Friends of the Jail Group were also a part of the Houston County Historical Society. In addition, the Friends of the Jail Group had representation from throughout the County. The Friends of the Historic Jail Group had goals of preserving the building to pass on to the next generation, collaborating to promote County pride and draw other people and businesses to the area, meet a need in the community/County and design the facility to be easily adaptable for multiple uses, and to create a financially stable business plan that would be an investment for the long-term. The group was open to the idea of leasing the space from the County. Some ideas the group had for future use included a history room featuring military and law enforcement that would tie in nicely with the outdoor monument in the nearby County courtyard, County visitor center, local City library, historic museum, or meeting space for organizations in the community. Commissioner Zehnder said he liked the idea of a room featuring military and law enforcement. Overall, the board was open to the group's ideas. Later in the meeting it was discussed that it might be best to simply lease the building to one entity and not have additional sub leases such as to the City for a library. The Commissioners were open to the idea of saving the insurance money from the historic jail to put towards a future project for the historic property. Commissioner Wright suggested saving some of the insurance money for unknown expenses related to ongoing maintenance. It was decided that the County would look into the legalities of leasing the building, and also work with the County Engineer to determine the current condition of the building's roof. The Historic Jail group would work to narrow down their ideas, and would meet with the Commissioners again in the future. In

the meantime, EDA Director & Coordinator Support Wagner could help work as a liaison between the County board and the group to share information.

Coordinator Parker said the County would be working on a strategic plan for operations. He read an example of the executive summary from a Strategic Plan outline. The summary stated “Houston County faces increasing financial pressures driven by inflation, workforce challenges, aging infrastructure, technology demands, and rising public service expectations. This strategic plan provides a framework to improve long-term financial sustainability, increase operational efficiency, modernize County services, and maintain high-quality public service delivery while protecting taxpayers.” The plan would include a mission, vision, core values, and multiple strategic priorities. Parker said both the Commissioners and County Department Heads would work on the plan together at upcoming Department Head meetings and/or workgroup sessions. It was the general consensus of the Commissioners that they were in favor of working on the strategic plan. Commissioner Wright said she would like to see from County departments what their thoughts were and how each of their areas fit into the County’s overall plan.

Parker discussed with the board a capital equipment / financial planning for the County. He shared with the board an example of what another County had used for their capital equipment plan. The example included a column that listed the fund source for future planning. The Commissioners agreed it would be good for the County to put something similar into place to plan for the future.

Coordinator Parker said a majority of counties had board rules and procedures in place. This had been a topic at a recent AMC District 9 meeting. He said the rules outlined how a Board organizes its work, conducts meetings, handles public participation, and carries out official actions. Board rules and procedures helped ensure consistency, transparency, and smooth operations. Parker shared with the board two examples that had come from AMC for review. The board would discuss this further at a future meeting after reviewing the examples.

The workgroup session ended at 10:30 a.m.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

HOUSTON COUNTY, MINNESOTA

By: _____
Greg Myhre, Chairperson

Attest: _____
Brent Parker, Coordinator