

PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Date: September 8, 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:

The Caledonia Argus Associate Editor Kaita Gorsuch, Finance Director Carol Lapham, Coordinator Brent Parker, EDA Director & Coordinator Support Allison Wagner, Engineer Brian Pogodzinski, Fiscal Supervisor Heidi Harms, Highway Accountant Sheila Schroeder, Maintenance Forman Jordan Goeden, Social Services Director Bethany Moen, Public Health Supervisor Jordan Knoke, Financial Assistance Director Karen Kohlmeyer, Sheriff Brian Swedberg, and Mikal Sylling

Board Workgroup Session

Coordinator Parker said the County's License Center had been open with limited hours due to staffing issues. The County was working on transitioning out of having the License Center and working with the State to ensure a smooth transition. The State had reached out and said that per statute the License Center needed to be open 40 hours a week. The County currently only had one person who was able to work in the center. Commissioner Wright said the public had been understanding of the limited hours and staff. She said the County should look at options for temporary help. Unfortunately, there was not an exact timeline from the State on the transition.

The Commissioners discussed 2027 budgets with Finance Director Lapham and various departments. The preliminary levy would need to be set by the end of September. After departments had submitted initial budgets and further reviewed them the County was currently at about a 14.126% increase. The Commissioners discussed further cuts with County departments to decrease the levy.

The Commissioners discussed Sheriff Swedberg's budget with him. Commissioner Myhre asked about shared vehicles, and the Sheriff said currently deputies did not share vehicles due to equipment needing to be moved between shifts. Commissioner Johnson asked why there was a reduction in revenue of \$150,000 for the Juvenile Center. The Sheriff said his office was only projecting one contract for 2027, and the number of juveniles being held was unpredictable and trending less than in the past. Commissioner Johnson said the County had taken on the Juvenile Detention Center thinking there was a need. Sheriff Swedberg said he thought the County would have had more contracts. Commissioner Schuldt asked why vehicle registration fees were higher than in the past. He asked about possible saving to the County in that area. The Sheriff said the only thing he could cut from his budget would be staff and said the schedule was chaotic with

staffing being difficult already. The Commissioners asked the Sheriff to continue to work on his budget and look for additional cuts. He was asked to return to the board with a revised budget at an upcoming meeting.

The Commissioners discussed the Road and Bridge budget with Engineer Pogodzinski, Highway Accountant Schroeder, and Maintenance Forman Goeden. Coordinator Parker said Engineer Pogodzinski had a lot of good ideas to help the overall budget. Engineer Pogodzinski proposed using some fund balance to help with the budget. He said in 2027 the County had two big projects that would be coming up. Commissioner Johnson asked about major equipment purchases for 2027 and if all the equipment was needed. Engineer Pogodzinski said he was hesitant to delay the purchasing schedule for equipment as that could increase the parts budget.

The Commissioners discussed the Public Health, Financial Assistance, and Social Services budgets with Fiscal Supervisor Harms, Public Health Supervisor Knoke, and Financial Assistance Director Kohlmeyer. The department heads were unsure how future legislative changes would affect their budgets. Most of the programs offered by the departments were mandated by the State. The County was reimbursed for some of the costs of those programs; however, it was anticipated that due to cost sharing changes more burden to fund those programs would be the responsibility of the County especially in the future looking ahead to 2028.

The Commissioners would continue to discuss the budget at the next regular meeting.

The workgroup session ended at 11:50 a.m.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

HOUSTON COUNTY, MINNESOTA

By: _____
Greg Myhre, Chairperson

Attest: _____
Brent Parker, Coordinator