

MINUTES of the REGION 26 COUNCIL

April 29, 2025

Region 26 Council:

Present:

Blaine Co: Matt Eggert
Garfield Co: Diana Hurlburt
Greeley Co: Jordan Foltz
Loup Co: Dave Larson
Thomas Co: Joseph Smith
Valley Co: Jack Van Slyke
Wheeler Co: Doug Pokorny
Law Enforce: Joel Bergman
Range Co. Municipalities:

Thomas, Blaine, Loup, Garfield, Wheeler
Paige Martindale

Tri-Co Municipalities:

Valley, Greeley, Sherman
Jay Meyer, Chairman

Absent:

Sherman Co: Tom Bandur, Vice-Chair

Staff Present: Alma Beland/Director, Virginia Michalski/Office Manager & Stena Seamann/Deputy EM, Dispatch Supervisor

Visitors Present: Travis Heinz and Roy Plugge

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm by Chairman Meyer. Notice of the meeting and agenda were sent to County Clerks of each member county for posting and given in advance to all members of the Board.

Roll Call was taken with ten (10) members present.

The meeting being duly posted and a quorum present, the Chairman proclaimed this meeting to be a legal meeting and acknowledged that the Open Meeting Act was posted in the meeting room.

Motion by Joseph Smith and seconded by Diana Hurlburt to approve the agenda.

Ayes (10) Nays (0) Abstain (0).

Motion by Diana Hurlburt and seconded by Dave Larson to approve the March 25, 2025 minutes.

Ayes (9) Nays (0) Abstain (1).

Public Comment: None

Alma reviewed the Financial Statement and provided an update on the purchase of cameras for the Sheriff's departments under the grant project. Since the participating counties paid for the cameras upfront with the expectation of reimbursement from FEMA, Alma consulted with the accountant to ensure proper fund management. Approval was given to temporarily hold the funds in an NPAIT account until all payments were collected and the vendor was paid. Once FEMA reimburses the purchase through grant funds, the respective counties will be reimbursed accordingly.

Motion by Joseph Smith and seconded by Joel Bergman to approve the March 2025 Financial Statement.
Ayes (10) Nays (0) Abstain (0).

Alma reported that she had been asked to place Wheeler County on the agenda again to discuss their letter of intent to leave Region 26. Some members felt there had not been enough opportunity to address any concerns or misunderstandings. Commissioners Travis Heinz and Roy Plugge, along with board member Doug Pokorny, were present.

Commissioner Heinz had questions brought to him whether Region 26 was receiving any fire or grant funding on behalf of Wheeler County. Alma and Stena explained the response to the Bartlett fire, including coordination with NEMA. Reimbursement was received for aerial resources, while remaining costs—such as fuel and food provided by local residents was not going to be covered. We always work toward getting reimbursement, but NEMA will reimburse through the Governors emergency fund when state resources are required such as equipment or personnel and when it goes into a second day. It is not considered by how many Mutual Aid departments, firemen or acres burned. Thanks to strong mutual aid, the fire was contained quickly and we found that this fire was not eligible other than for the costs of the aerial suppression. Discussion followed regarding Homeland Security grant procedures. If Sheriffs are requesting funds, they are encouraged to attend Law Enforcement meetings to ensure coordination across the 21-county North Central PET Region that Region 26 is a part of. Sheriffs on the board also addressed Wheeler County's questions about the Justice Data System and issues that they had in the past. Region 26 expressed willingness to work through any concerns and hopes Wheeler County will reconsider its decision.

Alma reported that FEMA now requires proof of payment before reimbursing Homeland Security grants. Since Region 26 cannot front the grant funds within its budget, it can no longer serve as the Fiscal Agent for the North Central PET Region. Alma informed Jay that she spoke with the Custer County Emergency Manager to see if their county could take over the Fiscal Agent role, pending approval from their board. The board reviewed remaining grant amounts and deadlines, noting two grants must be spent by the end of August. If Custer County is unable to take on the role, Alma will explore whether other counties could manage portions of the grants until FEMA reimbursement is received.

Towers & Equipment Report:

Sherman East Tower: Installation is on hold as we are still awaiting the corrected tower ID for the Loup City tower. All equipment for the site has been received and is currently at Platte Valley.

Garfield Tower: Efforts to gain access to the MJ Leasing tower have been unsuccessful due to rental fee demands. Diana expressed concern over the lack of progress and took the initiative to speak directly with Mark Jensen. She learned that he is not open to allowing our equipment on the tower and was disappointed that no prior contact had been made beyond the earlier NRIN-related discussions. The tower location had previously been used for NRIN emergency service equipment. Alternative solutions are now being explored.

Paging Issues have been reported in Ord, North Loup, and Scotia. Corey from Platte Valley is scheduled to be onsite tomorrow to investigate these issues as part of his annual preventive maintenance checks.

Alma reported that the two laptops currently used in the Dispatch Center are reaching end-of-life. These laptops, which are separate from the primary console computers, are essential for running additional 911-related programs and are becoming increasingly difficult to reboot. Alma informed the board that there are sufficient funds available in the Communications Center budget to support the purchase of replacements. Based on recent pricing, she believes both laptops can be acquired for under \$2,500. Dave Larson made a motion, seconded by Joseph Smith, to authorize up to \$2,500 for the purchase of two replacement laptops. The motion carried. Ayes (10) Nays (0) Abstain (0).

Alma reported on the Senator Deb Fischer grant opportunity, which was referred to her by Diana Hurlburt. She secured a quote for a much-needed radio console for dispatch and submitted a grant

application in the amount of \$415,000.00 before the deadline. Per Diana Hurlburt, grant awards are expected to be announced next year.

Diana Hurlburt presented the funds raised for Region 26 from the fundraiser she organized earlier this month in Burwell, in collaboration with the Mexcellent Food Truck. The event brought in nearly \$1,800, which was greatly appreciated, along with Diana's efforts in coordinating it. Alma also reported that the Scotia Fire Department contributed \$1,500 in donations, which were received as checks from their Benefit Fund, the Fire Department, and the Scotia Rural Board. Alma stated that an NPAIT account has been established to receive donations specifically designated for communications center equipment.

Criminal Justice Board Report: Sheriff Joel Bergman said they were planning a meeting for quarterly Law Enforcement meeting for Friday, May 2nd.

Communications Center Report: Statistics breakdown for the previous month were passed out. They had 1355 Status, 320 Paging, 229 Wants/Warrants/Registrations, 155 Messages, 104 Traffic Violations, 80 Minor Detail, 74 911-Accidental/Disconnect/Test, 68 Rescue Calls, 65 Assist Citizen, 63 Burn Permit, 56 Gun Permit, 54 Mutual Aid, 47 Assist Other Agencies, 34 Fire Calls, 30 Standby for Events/Fire/Training, 25 Accidents, 21 Reckless Driver, 20 Patient Transport, 17 Paper Service, 16 Siren, 13 Alarms, 13 Miscellaneous Tasks, 12 Disturbance/Harassment/Assault, 11 Livestock Complaint, 10 Motorist Assist, 8 Radio Test, 7 Arrests, 7 Direct Traffic/Funeral/Escort, 7 Keys Locked in Vehicle, 7 Traffic Hazard, 6 Animal Calls, 6 Check Welfare, 6 Suicidal Treats/Attempts, 6 Suspicious Person, 4 Abandoned Vehicle, 4 Suspicious Events,, 4 Suspicious Vehicle, 4 Utilities Complaint/Outage, 3 Death Investigation, 3 Fraudulent Activity, 3 Property Damage, 3 Transfer 911 Call, 3 Vandalism, 2 Burn Ban Violation/Burn without Permit/ 2 Criminal Mischief, 2 Follow Up, 2 Littering/Dumping, 2 Prisoner Transport, 2 Theft, 2 Uncontrollable Juvenile and 7 various additional incidents. Total number of contacts to the Communications Center for the month of March was 3004 including 226 - 911 calls and 1486 Administrative calls into Dispatch only.

Dispatch Supervisor/Stena Seamann reported on work in the dispatch center. Dispatcher Appreciation Week received a strong response. Dispatchers were very pleased with the support shown by Fire/EMS, Law Enforcement, and the public. They received many thank-you messages along with snacks, fruit, cookies, water tumblers, pies, and meals—all of which were greatly appreciated as recognition for their work.

Stena attended the NIRMA HR Personnel training, which will assist in updating the Region 26 personnel handbook. She is also currently working on the five-year LEOP rewrites for Thomas and Wheeler Counties.

Stena reported on her involvement with the Plum Creek Fire near Johnstown, where she assisted local Emergency Managers and got an understanding of the flow of extended fire incidents involving State assistance and shift coordination and doing truck tickets on site. She also provided cots and blankets from Region 26 to support firefighter accommodations.

Directors Report:

- Alma reported on a town that had asked about having services done through Region 26
- Steve Carey with CJIS Operations Protection Consultant that we had contracted was here this week to assist with teletype audits and reports that was very beneficial.
- Alma and Stena met with representatives from area Lions Clubs that were wanting to know how they could assist us in disaster situations.
- Attended the Loup Valley and Sandhills Mutual Aid Meetings. This last week all three of the Task Forces in Region 26 were activated for assistance at the Plum Creek Fire at Johnstown.
- The North Central PET meeting was held in North Platte where we discussed the Homeland

Security Grant situation with the Fiscal Agent help needed and discussed how to move forward with the grants.

- Alma reported on the NRIN meeting in Kearney that her and Jay's nominations went through for the NRIN board and the ballots will be sent out next month.
- Alma had proposed shifting the cost of the JDS system to the County, rather than billing each individual law enforcement agency. This change is intended to simplify bookkeeping for Region 26 and for Law Enforcement and improve overall fund management. The NPAIT account has the maintenance funds collected annually from the agencies which is listed on our budget report monthly that has been paying for server maintenance and monitoring and license renewal for the JDS system.
- The Fiscal year 2025-2026 preliminary budget was passed out. Alma went over the budget and wanted the board to look it over. Jay had asked on looking at interest on our account comparing to the loan that is left on 911 upgrades.
- Alma asked the board on the Region 26 Interlocal Agreement renewing on July 1, 2025 if they want to keep it as a 5-year automatic renewal requesting new county and member city signatures, which they all were in agreement to keep the same.

Other Business:

Next regular meeting date will be May 27, 2025 at 7pm.

Chairman Meyer adjourned the meeting at 9:44 pm.

Alma Beland, Director/Coordinator

ACRONYMS

ALI – Automatic Location Identification
ANI – Automatic Number Identification
APCO – Assoc. of Public Communications Officials
CAD – Computer Aided Dispatch
CC – Communications Center
CERT – Community Emergency Response Team
CJIS – Criminal Justice Information System
COADs – Community Organizations Active in Disasters
COOP – Continuity of Operations Planning
COVID-19 – Coronavirus Disease 2019
C.R.I.M.E.S. – Calls & Records Information Management Software (part of Justice Data Solutions)
DEE – Depart. of Environmental & Energy (State)
DHHS – Department of Health & Human Services (State)
DHS – Department of Homeland Security
DR – Disaster Recovery
DOR – Department of Roads
E911 – Enhanced 911
EAS – Emergency Alert System (FEMA)
ECW – Emergency Call Works (Reg 26 911 Equip)
EM – Emergency Manager
EMD – Emergency Medical Dispatch
EMPG – Emergency Management Performance Grant
EMS – Emergency Medical Services
EMT – Emergency Medical Technician
EOC – Emergency Operations Center
EPA – Environmental Protection Agency (Federal)
ERG – Emergency Response Guide (Orange Book – Hazardous Materials)
FAA – Federal Aviation Admin. (Report tower light outages)
FADD – Foreign Animal Disease Diagnostician
FCC – Federal Communications Commission (for Radio Frequency Licenses)
FEMA – Federal Emergency Management Agency
FMD – Foot and Mouth Disease (Livestock)
FY – Fiscal Year
GAN – Grant Adjustment Notice (aka Grant Award)
GIS – Geographic Information System
GPS – Global Positioning System
gWORKS – Public information on Property by County
HAZMAT – Hazardous Materials
HHS – Health and Human Services (Federal)
HSGP – Homeland Security Grant Program
ICS – Incident Command System
IPAWS – Integrated Public Alert Warning System
IPPW – Integrated Preparedness Planning Workshop
J.A.M.I.N. – Jail Administration Management Information Network (Part of Justice Data Solutions)
JDS – Justice Data Solutions (Law Enforcement Records Management & CAD software system)
LASO – Local Agency Security Officer
LBF – Lee Bird Field – North Platte (Airport) Weather Service Location

LBPHD – Loup Basin Public Health Department (covers Blaine, Loup, Garfield, Wheeler, Greeley, Valley, Sherman)
LE – Law Enforcement
LEPC – Local Emergency Planning Committee
LEDRS – Livestock Emergency Disease Response System
LEOP – Local Emergency Operations Plan
MACH – Mobile Architecture for Communications Handling
MRC – Medical Reserve Corp
NA911 – Nebraska Association of 911 Managers
NACO – Nebraska Association of County Officials
NAEM – Nebr. Association of Emergency Managers
NEMA – Nebraska Emergency Management Agency
NENA – National Emergency Number Association
NESCA – NE Emergency Services Communicators Association
***NCR** – North Central Region* (see below)
NIMS – National Incident Management System
NIRMA – NE Intergovernmental Risk Management Association
NRIN – Nebraska Regional Interoperable Network
NX-Gen – Next Generation 911
PD – Police Department
***PET** – Planning Exercise Training* (see below)
POD – Points of Dispensing (Immunization)
PPE – Personal Protective Equipment
PMC – Page My Cell (to Page out Departments)
PSAP – Public Safety Answering Point (911 Centers)
PSC – Public Service Commission
PVC – Platte Valley Communications
RFP – Request for Proposal
SEAT – Single Engine Air Tanker
SEOC – State Emergency Operation Center
SHSP – State Homeland Security Program
SO – Sheriff's Office
SRS – State Radio System
T-CPR – Telecommunicator CPR
THIRA – Threat & Hazard Identification & Risk Assessment
UPS – Universal Power Supply (workstation backup power supply until generator starts)
VFD – Volunteer Fire Department
VOAD – Volunteer Organization Aiding Disasters
VOIP – Voice over Internet Protocol
V-TAC – Mutual Aid VHF Frequency Channels
WEA – Wireless Emergency Alert
WCDHD – West Cent. District Hlth Dept. (Covers Thomas)
W.H.O. – World Health Organization
WPC – Weather Prediction Center – Norman, OK
WIRAT – Wildland Incident Response Assistance Team
WMD – Weapons of Mass Destruction

*** North Central PET Region Includes:**

Keith, Arthur, Grant, Hooker, McPherson, Logan, Custer, Cherry-Keya Paha, Brown-Rock, Boyd-Holt and Region 26: (Thomas, Blaine, Loup, Garfield, Wheeler, Greeley, Valley and Sherman)