

MINUTES of the REGION 26 COUNCIL

October 28, 2025

Region 26 Council:

Present:

Blaine Co: Matt Eggert
Garfield Co: Diana Hurlburt
Greeley Co: Jordan Foltz
Loup Co: Dave Larson
Ord, City of: Branden Stoural
Thomas Co: Joseph Smith
Sherman Co: Tom Bandur, Vice-Chair
Valley Co: Theresa Petska, Alternate
Wheeler Co: Doug Pokorny
Law Enforce: Joel Bergman
Tri-Co Municipalities:
Valley, Greeley, Sherman
Jay Meyer, Chairman

Absent:

Range Co. Municipalities:
Thomas, Blaine, Loup, Garfield, Wheeler
Paige Ryschon

Staff Present: Alma Beland/Director, Virginia Michalski/Office Manager, Catie Larsen/Deputy
Emergency Manager, Donna Steckel/Chief Dispatcher

Visitors Present: Miki Gerten/Dispatch, Caden Johnson/Dispatch

The meeting was called to order at 7:04 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 eleven (11) 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 Dave Larsen to approve the agenda.
Ayes (11) Nays (0) Abstain (0).

Motion by Theresa Petska and seconded by Doug Pokorny to approve the September 30, 2025 Minutes.
Ayes (9) Nays (0) Abstain (2).

Public Comment: None

Alma showed the financial statement with new line item added on the Fiduciary Fund sheet showing the payments Region 26 has made as Fiscal Agent for the North Central Region Homeland Security grants that will show payments and grant reimbursements.

Alma asked about the interest received on NPAIT accounts that it was discussed in the past to move the interest to an account to have for projects. Diana Hurlburt talked of what their county does with the funds. It was discussed and Alma stated she could consult with accountant at next month's audit. No decision was made. Joseph Smith made a motion with a second from Dave Larson to approve the September 2025 Financial Statement. Ayes (11) Nays (0) Abstain (0).

Tower & Equipment Report:

- a. Alma reported on the Litchfield generator being installed on September 15th and all is working well. Alma inquired about the status of the old Generac generator currently located at Tim Woods' property in St. Paul and whether it could be listed as surplus. Dave Larson moved to declare the Generac generator from Litchfield as surplus and authorize its sale at auction. The motion was seconded by Tom Bandur. Ayes (11) Nays (0) Abstain (0).
- b. The Garfield radio project is nearing completion. Radios have been successfully reprogrammed for Burwell, with assistance from Platte Valley for the Motorola units and Midland Telecom for the newer Kenwood models. Work is currently underway on the Ericson radios. Alma inquired with Diana Hurlburt about including the new Garfield frequency in the Bartlett radios, as they provide mutual aid to Burwell on the county's east side. Diana said yes if it fits into the project.
- c. The Wheeler County Sheriff mobile radio was installed in equipment room to connect to his state radios. There was some radio programming that still needed corrected on the Sheriff's side.

Communications Center Report:

Donna reported on dispatchers Miki and Taylor attending the APCO/NENA 911 Conference in Lincoln and came back with training that included dealing with high stress calls, team building, office morale and call complacency and hearing speakers discuss working with AI in dispatch. There were statistics of 82% of all 911 centers being understaffed and 85% have burnout. Donna stressed that we are doing well at Region 26. She said that Jaimie will soon be out of training and with one soon gone on maternity leave that we need to start advertising for another dispatcher to train. Donna said that Miki and Catie will be going to Bartlett schools for talk on 911 during their safety day. She stated that some of the dispatchers expressed interest to get out in the community to talk to people when the opportunity comes up and not just for schools. Miki brought up how the work is going with training and dispatching. She said that she would like to see Donna be able to drop down to two days a week by next month and work one day a week as dispatch and the other day spread out to how she sees fit with the benefit of keeping her insurance stipend.

The equipment issues were explained by Virginia and Alma on the Emergency Call works problems for the last several weeks and noise on the telephone calls that has been corrected. We are still trying to get the maps working right and loading properly with ECW and support has escalated the service ticket to engineering to find the problem.

Donna brought up the three minute intervals on paging that we have changed to by the direction of the board and getting adjusted to it. She said they are receiving more calls from departments now to let dispatch know they have received their page and gathering a crew. Alma let the board know of the calls she had received asking about the change and that some were not happy about it and others were trying to adjust. Alma had told them it was not a dispatch decision but a board decision and they were welcome to come to a board meeting.

After dispatch had expressed concern on what has happened on some of the calls getting answered during the night, and discussion from the board to dispatch, the decision was to notify the departments that we will be setting off siren after third page with no response. Jay Meyer asked for a motion to have Alma draft a letter to the EMS Captains, Fire Chiefs and Rural Boards to let them know that we will be changing protocol to set off siren after the third page with no response and then paging mutual aid. Branden Stoural made the motion with a second from Tom Bandur. Ayes (11) Nays (0) Abstain (0).

Statistics breakdown for the previous month were passed out. They had 1286 Status Checks, 319 Pages, 259 Wants/Warrants/Registrations, 128 Traffic Violations, 109 Messages, 100 Minor Detail, 98 assist Other Agencies, 74 – 911 Accidental/Disconnect/Test, 74 Rescue Calls, 58 Livestock Complaint, 58 Standby for Events/Fire/Training, 48 Gun permit, 46 Burn Permit, 32 Accidents, 29 Paper Service, 20 Reckless Driver, 18 Patient Transport, 17 Miscellaneous Tasks, 14 Alarms, 13 Animal Calls, 13 Disturbance/Harassment/Assault, 12 Follow Up, 10 Radio Test, 10 Siren, 10 Suspicious Person, 10 Weather, 9 Suspicious Events, 8 Arrests, 8 Fire Calls, 8 Traffic Hazard, 7 Direct Traffic/Funeral/Escort,

7 Keys Locked in Vehicle, 6 Abandoned Vehicle, 6 Check Welfare, 6 Civil Matters, 6 Motorist Assist, 5 Assist Citizen, 5 Mutual Aid, 4 Suspicious Vehicle, 4 Theft, 4 Uncontrollable Juvenile, 3 Burglary/Break In/Attempt, 3 Prisoner Transport, 3 Transfer 911 Call, 3 Utilities Complaints/Outage, 2 Criminal Mischief, 2 Fraudulent Activity, 2 Gas Drive-Off, 2 Gas Leak, 2 Special Assignment, 2 Trespassing, 1 Child Abuse, 1 Contributing to Delinquent and 9 various other incidents. Total number of contacts to the Communications Center for the month of September was 2993 including 282 – 911 calls with 23 that were abandoned calls and 1 – Text to 911 call. There were 1450 administrative calls into Dispatch only.

Theresa Petska provided an update on the Interlocal Agreement and summarized the recent meeting with Sheriff Dale King and four board members. Sheriff King expressed his belief that he should be a signatory to the agreement alongside the board. Following further discussion regarding the agreement and the Wheeler County Board's interpretation, Jay Meyer stated that clarification is needed on who will sign the agreement on behalf of Wheeler County before proceeding. Tom Bandur made a motion to authorize Jay Meyer to serve as the board's representative in discussions with Attorney Heather Sikyta regarding the Interlocal Agreement. Diana Hurlburt seconded the motion. Ayes (11) Nays (0) Abstain (0).

Catie Larsen explained the purpose of having a time clock system that would work with our QuickBooks system electronically and they had discussed at the Personnel Handbook committee meeting. Jay had pointed out the purpose of having a system that would save time and be more accurate. Jay asked for a motion to allow Catie and Virginia to find a system that would fit our needs the best after Catie had given the approximate cost per month of a software system. Branden Stoural made a motion and seconded by Jordan Foltz. Ayes (11) Nays (0) Abstain (0).

Jay Meyer discussed the need to establish a Personnel Committee, separate from the existing Personnel Handbook Committee. The proposed committee would serve as a point of contact for staff concerns and grievances, and report back to the board as needed. Jay recommended a committee of three to four members and requested volunteers. Staff members Caden Johnson and Catie Larsen, along with board members Diana Hurlburt, Jay Meyer, and Theresa Petska volunteered to serve, with Dave Larsen volunteering as an alternate. Dave Larson made a motion to approve the committee members as presented, with a second from Tom Bandur. Ayes (9) Nays (0) Abstain (2).

Catie Larsen provided an update on the Personnel Handbook Committee's progress following two meetings held this month. The committee reviewed the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), noting that Region 26 employees do not meet the eligibility requirements. They also examined a handbook template aligned with NIRMA guidelines to assist in rewriting the current handbook to better suit Region 26's needs. While the committee has made a solid start, considerable work remains.

Jay had asked the board's opinion on having special meetings if needed when we have a lot of things that need decisions and a month is too long to wait. No vote was taken but all were in agreement as needed.

Catie Larsen asked about changing our Facebook page to a new one that was not attached to a personal page like we have now where it is attached to Alma's personal page. She has looked at starting a new Facebook page at the direction of NIRMA Insurance. She also would like to request that dispatch also has ability to add things to the page if we are not in office. Branden suggested looking into a class on posting on social media and to put into operating procedures.

Jay Meyer had brought before the board the need for decommissioning the command unit as it has not been used for some time and currently taking up space. It is a 4-wheel drive ambulance that was received through the forestry service. Radios, dispatch console, cameras and telescoping antenna were

installed. It needs kept in a place with heat and plugged in to be usable. After discussion on removing the equipment, Joseph Smith made a motion to have equipment stripped out and decommission the unit to return to the forestry service. Joel Bergman seconded the motion.
Ayes (11) Nays (0) Abstain (0).

Criminal Justice Board Report: Sheriff Bergman reported quarterly meeting coming up November 7th.

Director's Report:

- The auction proceeds from the 2000 Ford Explorer was \$2464.00 and had approximately \$500 in cost to get it ready for auction including removing Emergency Management radios, antennas installing a battery and transport to auction.
- Public Service Commission audit was completed on the wireless fund account for last year.
- Alma and Catie attended the APCO/NENA Conference in Lincoln
- NIRMA Insurance appraiser was here on October 16th and 17th to visit all sites. Alma and Catie took him to 13 of our 22 sites in Region 26 which allowed Catie to know some of our equipment.
- The Sandhills Mutual Aid in Thedford was this month. Alma had invited the pilots from both Broken Bow and Kearney along with Justin Nickless with the SEAT plane to talk to the Firemen for going into dry fall and winter with a lot of fuel.
- Alma and Catie attended a safety meeting at St. Mary's and looking at an exercise for evacuation.
- Region 26 hosted a flu clinic here last week for Loup Basin Public Health
- North Central PET Meeting was held virtually. It was mostly NEMA representative giving more information on the grants that are being frozen currently with Government shutdown and a hold on the 2025 grant award.
- Virginia and Catie attended the NIRMA Conference in Kearney
- Alma attended a FirstNet meeting at Valley County Sheriff's office. Branden also discussed what he is looking at for Ord on how the FirstNet phones could work as push to talk for handhelds.
- Alma will be attending NRIN meeting this Friday
- The annual financial audit will be next month.

Other Business: Diana Hurlburt asked about having a training plan or timeline for Catie moving forward.

Next regular meeting date will be Tuesday, November 25th at 6:30 pm.

Chairman Meyer adjourned the meeting at 9:06 pm.

Alma Beland, Director/Coordinator

ACRONYMS

ALI – Automatic Location Identification (for 911)
ANI – Automatic Number Identification (for 911)
APCO – Assoc. of Public Communications Officials
ASR # – Antenna Structure Registration (Tower ID #)
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
DOT – Department of Transportation - (NDOT) Nebraska
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 (secondary Paging to Depts.)
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
SME – Subject Matter Expert (Homeland Security Grants)
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)