

MINUTES of the REGION 26 COUNCIL
November 25, 2026

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
Valley Co:	Theresa Petska
Wheeler Co:	Doug Pokorny
Law Enforce:	Joel Bergman

Range Co. Municipalities:

Thomas, Blaine, Loup, Garfield, Wheeler
Paige Ryschon

Tri-Co Municipalities:

Valley, Greeley, Sherman
Jay Meyer, Chairman

Staff Present: Alma Beland/Director, Virginia Michalski/Office Manager, Catie Larsen/Deputy Emergency Manager, Miki Gerten/Dispatch Trainer

Visitors Present: Scott Philbrick/Valley County Emergency Manager

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 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 Larson to approve the agenda.
The motion carried with Ayes (11) Nays (0) Abstain (0).

Motion by Joel Bergman and seconded by Doug Pokorny to approve the October 28, 2025 Minutes.
The motion carried with Ayes (10) Nays (0) Abstain (1).

Public Comment: None

Motion by Joseph Smith and seconded by Jordan Foltz to approve the October 2025 Financial Statement. Ayes (11) Nays (0) Abstain (0).

Tower & Equipment Report:

Alma reported that the lights on the Greeley tower are currently out. Platte Valley has been notified to perform the necessary repairs, and the FAA has also been informed. Stealth contacted Alma to seek board approval to add additional equipment to the tower. Alma requested that Stealth provide detailed information regarding the equipment specifications and the proposed tower height for board review. As

of today, this information has not yet been received.

Garfield Tower Project Update: Alma reported that sufficient funds were available to replace the used repeater associated with the Garfield tower project. Platte Valley has placed the order, and the replacement will be installed.

Sherman Frequencies Issue: Platte Valley identified a problem with the Sherman frequencies, which produced a prolonged loud noise when keyed up and eventually became continuous in dispatch. The issue was traced to the control station at the Sargent site, which was not shutting down properly. Platte Valley was able to manually reboot/power down the station to resolve the issue. We were advised to monitor the situation; with awareness of the cause should it recur.

Wheeler Frequency Update: The Wheeler frequency was successfully programmed and has been functioning well for the Sheriff's Office.

Ansley Tower Discussion: Alma raised the issue of the Ansley tower, which is currently used only as a backup for both Ansley and Mason City. The board noted that payments received from the departments are insufficient to cover maintenance costs. Alma suggested offering the tower to Custer County, as they are currently utilizing it, with the condition that Region 26 be allowed to keep our equipment there for backup purposes at no charge. Diana Hurlburt made a motion for Alma to offer the tower to Custer County for \$10,000, with the agreement that Region 26 would remain on the tower for backup to the Ansley and Mason City Departments. Dave Larson seconded the motion.

The motion carried with Ayes (11), Nays (0), Abstain (0). It was noted that this would require a written agreement between the boards.

Thedford Tower Issue: It was reported that the Thedford tower experienced a failure last Friday night, resulting in radios not functioning. Corey from Platte Valley traveled to the site and determined that the power supply had failed on the radio repeater. He was able to replace the power supply on-site.

Communications Center Report:

Miki Gerten, Dispatch CTO, reported on recent and upcoming training activities. Tamika and Jaimie completed training in Hastings on calls. On December 3rd, Miki and Taylor are scheduled to participate in NCIC training online.

Miki noted that Jaimie attended a departmental debriefing following a fatality call that required T-CPR, which is both helpful and necessary for dispatch staff when handling difficult incidents.

Miki also provided updates on various ongoing projects within dispatch. Miki stated she did not know how it would work for budgeting but would like to see another CTO sent for training since she is currently the only trainer and does dispatch and supervisor on three shifts a week. Tamika has to do her NCIC/teletype training at the academy. She reported that Brayden's last day was Friday and Donna will be out for a while with a family medical situation. We have received a few applications and are ready to move forward with interviews to possibly hire two to put into dispatch training.

Alma presented a draft letter prepared at the board's request from last month's meeting regarding changes to siren use for calls. This prompted extensive discussion among board members and dispatch staff about how the revised protocol would function and how it might be perceived by towns and departments. It was suggested that the matter be brought to the departments during upcoming mutual aid meetings to gather feedback on ways to improve response rates to pages, ensuring dispatch can confirm that departments are activating upon receipt. The board also agreed to schedule the annual meeting with EMS Captains in early January to hear their responses and potential solutions.

Alma reported on her findings regarding the teletype connections with Applied Connective. Workstation 3 has been configured to mirror Workstation 1, with the capability to revert back if needed.

Alma reported that the OnSolve/CodeRED emergency alerting system was recently compromised by a cyberattack. The company has shut the system down and is in the process of migrating contact information to its newest platform, CodeRED by Crisis24. The transition is expected to be completed by

Friday, at which time new system credentials will be provided and soon after we can migrate to new system. In the interim, if an emergency message needs to be sent out, assistance can be requested through NEMA or FEMA.

Virginia and Catie reported on their progress with the Time Sheets program, which is being implemented for electronic payroll. At the close of the current pay period, they successfully processed payroll with assistance from the Time Sheets support team online.

The company has agreed to extend the trial period for one additional pay cycle. The program's ongoing cost will be \$66 per month. Virginia and Catie noted that the system is working very well and expressed satisfaction with the decision to proceed with this company.

Handbook Committee Report:

Catie reported that the committee met just prior to the board meeting. She has prepared a rough draft of the employee handbook, based on NIRMA guidelines, and the committee is working through its contents. Updates include revising maternity leave to parental leave. The committee anticipates at least one additional meeting to finalize the draft and confirm revisions before presenting it to the board, followed by staff review.

Brandon requested that the draft be distributed to board members sufficiently in advance of the meeting to allow time for review.

Catie also noted that she has prepared a schedule for Emergency Manager training, which she did not have available at this meeting. She plans to bring the schedule, with additional updates, to the next meeting. She will also provide further information on bookkeeping to assist with cross-training in the office.

Theresa Petska discussed the need for office equipment, specifically laptops that could be taken home when necessary. This would allow staff to continue essential work, such as payroll, during inclement weather or other situations requiring remote access.

Catie reported that she had consulted with Applied Connective regarding security measures to ensure laptops could be safely used outside the office. The board also discussed potential grant opportunities to assist with equipment costs. Jay Meyer asked for Catie to pursue costs for two laptops from Applied Connective.

Catie noted that Applied Connective is preparing an application for an upcoming cybersecurity grant, due in early December. While the grant requires a cost share, it is expected to reduce long-term expenses currently paid to Applied Connective for security services. Theresa Petska made a motion to authorize Catie to proceed with applying for the grant in coordination with Applied Connective. Joseph Smith seconded the motion. The motion carried with Ayes (11) Nays (0) Abstain (0).

Brandon Stoural presented information regarding communication challenges within his department, noting that current systems are not satisfactory and have become an officer safety issue. He expressed concern that the signal needs to be boosted or that an alternative solution should be considered.

Brandon reported that he has explored options with FirstNet, specifically a RoIP LMR system utilizing LTE/cell phone connections. He recommended setting up a meeting with Jackie Duncan with First Net to further discuss this proposal, with participation from Region 26 and Corey from Platte Valley. He had a packet showing the cost of a RoIP connection box with FirstNet and explained how that would work having it at Region 26 and departments could use Push to Talk cell phone apps or radios that would communicate out to a Region 26 repeater and back to Region 26 on VHF radio frequencies. Brandon and Scott Philbrick discussed with the board how that might work for departments that have the need for hand held radios but cannot get good coverage away from their mobile radio. Jay asked Brandon to bring back to the next meeting information on cost and if it would work with our console.

Chairman Meyer asked for discussion on the CARES funds amount that was left setting in the equipment

line item. There was an original list that we were planning to spend the money on but did complete. and amount that was left in the fund. We had a list of items that were planned and needs have changed. Jay would like to see us go ahead with utilizing this fund. Diana said she had not heard CDBG grant. Jay said he would contact Karla on the CDBG Jay asked for a list to be brought back to the board of what our needs are that we could move forward with on the equipment fund.

The employee Simple IRA renewal needed approval from the board to continue and if they were keeping the maximum of 3% match. Theresa Petska made a motion with a second from Jordan Foltz to continue with the 3% match. The motion carried with Ayes (11) Nays (0) Abstain (0).

Criminal Justice Board Report: Sheriff Bergman reported on the quarterly Law Enforcement meeting held here this month. There was Game and Parks as well as State Patrol Troop C attended with a Sergeant, Investigator and a Trooper. Flock cameras were discussed and the progress.

Director's Report:

- Hastings Weather Service met with Catie to do some training with Catie on what she needs for weather communication. Also discussed have all of our Counties become Weather Ready designated counties.
- Alma attended the Purdum Fire meeting and discussed some of their communications issues
- Alma reported on two fires in southern Cherry and Hooker counties that required airplanes. Joel told about their fire that appeared to be arson. Have had combine fires.
- The North Central PET meeting was this past week. Custer County EM said that his county was planning to pull out of the North Central Region but did not give total reasons yet.
- North Central PET Training committee that Catie is on has met to develop plans for our funds.
- Virginia had NIRMA do a Safety Inspection here at our building.

Chairman asked for a motion to go into executive session to discuss contract negotiations. A motion was made by Joseph Smith and seconded by Doug Pokorny to go into executive session. Ayes (11) Nays (0) Abstained (0). Executive session entered at 8:40 pm.

A motion was made by Dave Larson and seconded by Doug Pokorny to reconvene to public session. Ayes (11) Nays (0) Abstained (0). Reconvened into regular session at 10:15 pm with no action taken.

Other Business: None

Next regular meeting date will be December 30th at 6:30 pm.

Chairman Meyer adjourned the meeting at 10:16 p.m.

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)
CTO – Chief Training Officer
DEE – was DEQ ... Changed to DWEE July 2025
DHHS – Department of Health & Human Services (State)
DHS – Department of Homeland Security
DR – Disaster Recovery
DOT – Department of Transportation - (NDOT) Nebraska
DWEE – Department of Water, Environmental & Energy (State)
E911 – Enhanced 911
EAS – Emergency Alert System (FEMA)
ECW – Emergency Call Works (Reg 26 911 Equip)
EM – Emergency Manager
EMID – 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
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
RoIP – Radio over Internet Protocol
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)