

MINUTES of the REGION 26 COUNCIL

January 27, 2026

Region 26 Council:

Present:

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

Absent:

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

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

Visitors Present: Caden Johnson/Dispatch, Scott Philbrick/Valley County EM, Jack Van Slyke/Valley County Supervisor

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/municipality for posting and given in advance to all members of the Board.

Roll Call was taken with nine (9) 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.

Joseph Smith made a motion to approve the meeting agenda with a second from Doug Pokorny. Ayes (9) Nays (0) Abstain (0).

Chairman Meyer asked for correction to the December 30, 2025 minutes for time out of executive session to be corrected to 8:52 pm instead of 9:52 pm. He then made the motion with a second by Joel Bergman to approve minutes with the correction. Ayes (8) Nays (0) Abstain (1).

Public Comment: None

Branden Stoural entered the meeting at 6:33 pm.

Chairman Meyer asked for a line item to approve the claims and have them sent out with meeting notice and agenda for the board to see prior to meeting. Currently only the check signers have reviewed the claims. Motion by Joseph Smith and seconded by Jordan Foltz to approve the December financial statement. Ayes (10) Nays (0) Abstain (0).

Towers & Equipment:

- The lights have been repaired on the Greeley tower as per Aaron with Grand Island. We have

not received a cost yet for repairs. There were several trips made to the tower and found that a lightning strike had melted wiring inside the strobe along with a couple of components at the top and also in the building. He will send the cost with pictures. Discussion on getting the costs and compare with insurance deductible.

- The Loup City tower had damage during recent planned power outage that required Power Tech, which they found a bad coil and switch. They also found that an electrician was needed to replace the disconnect box at the building. The electrician has been contacted.
- At the Arcadia repeater there was a bad power supply and Platte Valley has been contacted to replace the internal power supply.
- Alma had attended the Custer County Supervisors meeting this morning to discuss the Ansley tower for them to purchase with the agreement that our antennas can remain on the tower at no charge as they have been on the tower at no charge from us and were to have a generator in place that did not happen. Custer County will be attending the Ansley Village board to see that it will be okay for access to the tower site since it is on village ground. They will get back to us. While there the insurance coverage for the NRIN equipment on our Sargent tower was taken care of.

Communications Center Report: Statistics breakdown for the month of December were passed out. They had 1252 Status Checks, 296 Pages, 241 Wants/Warrants/Registrations, 154 Traffic Violations, 119 Messages, 86 Rescue Calls 75 Minor Detail, 71 Gun Permit, 53 Assist Other Agencies, 38 - 911 Accidental/Disconnect/Test, 31 Assist Citizen, 30 Accidents, 30 Paper Service, 24 Reckless Driver, 23 Livestock complaint, 20 Burn Permit, 17 Patient Transport, 17 Standby for Events/Fire/Training, 13 Mutual Aid, 10 Arrests, 9 Animal Calls, 8 Alarms, 8 Direct Traffic/Funeral/Escort, 7 Keys Locked in Vehicle, 7 Traffic Hazard, 6 Fire Calls, 6 Siren, 5 Follow Up, 5 Motorist Assist, 5 Prisoner Transport, 5 Suspicious Events, 5 Suspicious Person, 5 Suspicious Vehicle, 5 Transfer 911 Calls, 4 Check Welfare, 4 Death Investigation, 4 Disturbance/Harassment/Assault, 4 Radio Test, 4 Trespassing, 3 Terroristic Threats, 3 Theft, 3 Uncontrollable Juvenile, 3 Utilities Complaint/Outage, 2 Abandoned Vehicles, 2 Civil Matters, 2 Gas Drive-Off, 2 Miscellaneous Tasks, 2 Property Damage, 2 Suicidal Threats/Attempts, 2 Weather and 12 various other incidents. Total number of contacts to the Communications Center for the month of December was 2744 including 206 - 911 calls and 1224 Administrative calls into Dispatch only. Miki Gerten/Dispatch CTO reported on the recent EMS Captain meeting and the Mutual Aid Meeting that she attended that there was a consensus from them and the dispatchers on the paging protocol that if a second page was needed, it would come after a five-minute interval and the third page would be a three-minute interval with mutual aid also being called at that time. The additional two minutes on the first page they felt would give them enough time to make a difference on needing a second or third page. They are understanding we are wanting to hear from them if a crew is getting together so it would not require an additional page. Joseph said the west counties fire chiefs were in agreement that the 5-3 interval sounded good. After discussion Joseph Smith made a motion to go with a 5-3 interval of paging with a follow up to EMS Captain or Fire Chief to see which Mutual Aid to call if needed. Branden Stoural seconded the motion. Ayes (10) Nays (0) Abstain (0). Miki explained how the cross training was progressing with the tasks in dispatch. Miki and Catie had a conference call with the NIRMA attorney to see what wording needs corrected in the handbook on the benefits due to differences from dispatch to emergency management for probation period. The scheduling was also discussed in the conference call since there have been some issues in dispatch. Miki had suggested a possible pay differential for night shift vs day shift to encourage working on night shift. Alma reported on the Emergency Call Works ECW that we still have tickets open for maintenance due to some mostly some mapping issues that they are still working on.

Branden Stoural handed out a packet on the First Net install they had at Ord Police Department to do testing on the radio communications that we had discussed at last meeting. He gave a step-by-step explanation of the equipment and how it would work. Branden did find that the Cubic devise does have

a 1-year warranty and can get a 5-year extended warranty. He felt in testing that the static they have had on their portable radios is gone with this equipment. It is more like a digital format for sound. It does have some delay that we knew would be there due to the path it is taking from the cell phone network to radio and then the radio repeater. The delay does not degrade the communications but will just work with the extra second or so that it would take. Branden said they are ready to move forward with it at Ord Police Department but he wanted to be able for Region 26 to know what was available if more departments were interested and could have it installed at Region 26. Jay asked him to report back on it next month if he can get some costs. There was discussion on what we could do with the test kit that is currently signed out to Ord PD and would need to be changed to another frequency to take elsewhere if First Net would allow it. There was some grant discussion for a possibility. Scott Philbrick did explain how the channels would work with those that would be using their regular radios and will still be able to communicate with those using the First Net device. He also brought up the importance he felt of having this located at Region 26 so if a tower would go down you would still have this to communicate and mobile radios would not, and the latency would possibly be shorter.

Building/Garage Bids: Dave Larson had sent out for a bid from Ansley Lumber for a garage to be constructed in place of the old dispatch building. Jay Meyer had forwarded it on to five additional lumber yards within Region 26. He passed the bids around for the board to review for both a pole shed and a stick built with the dimensions of a 20 x 40 x 12 building. Jay had talked about the cost of putting down the concrete. There were a few that sent bids and stating they had someone that could do the construction. Jay felt that the demolition could be done by end of March if the building could have everything cleared out and put into the rented garage until construction was done. Jay would contact the top three or four material bidders and see who had someone that could do the construction and give us costs for that.

Budget Line Items & County Assessment: Theresa Petska asked for a better breakdown on the line items in the budget moving forward. They would prefer to see what makes up each line as well as doing a breakdown of what is in the assessment going to the county/municipality members. There was question on the base amount of the assessment and how it is calculated and she asked for a better breakdown. The board asked for a preliminary budget to be presented at the February board meeting instead of April or May to have more time for discussion ahead of the required June budget approval.

Criminal Justice Board Report: Sheriff Bergman reported there would be a Law Enforcement meeting on Friday, February 6th.

Interlocal Agreement: Catie had sent a draft copy of the Interlocal agreement to Attorney Heather Sikyta to review. The draft was handed out with footnotes that Heather sent back. It was determined that our By-Laws no longer match the Interlocal Agreement. The Interlocal also needed changed due to statues. Jay stated the board cannot approve the Interlocal Agreement; it would be up to the Counties and City of Ord to approve. The Interlocal cannot be approved until the by-laws are upgraded. Theresa stated that the needed adjustments were made with all of the counties and municipality in mind. The discussion with Wheeler County listed on the Interlocal draft however, they have not asked to be accepted back. Jay stated it would be up to each member county/municipality to approve the request. Discussion was held on the need for developing a process for an entity to go through that was wanting to join Region 26 moving forward. Jay asked that each board member present this Interlocal draft that was sent out to their respective county/city boards for approval before we move forward. Catie will send the By-Laws to Heather Sikyta as well to review before the March meeting.

Director's Report:

- Alma reported on the Senator Deb Fischer appropriations grant that Region 26 was listed to receive in for the amount of \$415,000.00 for radio equipment.

- Great Plains made the fiber connection from our NRIN Equipment in the back room to Ainsworth. There is now a passthrough for our 911 connections that will give redundancy if there is an outage on incoming equipment.
- The EMS Captain/Co-Captain meeting was held on January 7th with thirteen ambulance squads represented and it was scheduled to become an annual meeting. Loup Valley and Sandhills mutual fire meeting were attended in Arcadia and Thedford.
- NEMA Asst. Director Erv Portis is holding an emergency managers conference call tomorrow to give an update on the Homeland Security situation. We may know more at that time if the 2025 grant is coming through.
- The 2026 grant Invest Justification meeting is scheduled for the February 5th with the North Central Region.
- Alma will attend the Wheeler County board meeting in the morning for approval of their County emergency plan (LEPC)
- There will be a Municipality tour coming through dispatch tomorrow morning.
- Thursday will be a Salamander exercise here with the North Central PET Emergency Managers to set up our badging equipment together in an exercise that we could mobilize.

Deputy EM Report:

- She reported on the work done for the Interlocal Agreement.
- For the North Central PET – Jess Pozehl/Brown-Rock Deputy EM and Catie are working together on their committee on the 2023 and 2024 grants to get funds spent down. There were changes that were required and getting in the request for those to NEMA.
- Catie reported on the scheduled trainings coming up. The Elected officials training for work during a disaster is in Ord on March 23rd in Ord and will need to register for that. There is another Elected Official training in Ainsworth.
- There was an update for Flock cameras and the training that had been done. They are waiting on more breakaway poles to come in that are required by NDOT. Install schedule will be sent out. Joel Bergman came for training to get connected into the cameras including help from Ashley Spanel with Loup County Sheriff's office.
- Catie has been doing research with Page my Cell and found they are working to be able to drop a pin to the departments for an incident and found that they could possibly work with JDS. Also, she is looking into Rapid SOS to see what they offer for the same thing and come for training.
- She was asked to look into AARP funding and has been trying to research that.
- She has been working on a contact list for both Dispatch and Emergency Management together and having one location to update all at same time.
- There has been cross training on grant management software requesting reimbursements.
- Other things for doing cross training has been fiscal agent work, learning the towers and reporting things not working, attending Mutual Aid and Task Force Meeting, sending Incident status reports to NEMA among other things.

Chairman Meyer asked for a motion to go into executive session to discuss personnel with Miki Gerten.

A motion was made by Joseph Smith and seconded by Jordan Foltz to go into executive session.

Ayes (10) Nays (0) Abstained (0). Executive session entered into at 9:15 pm.

A motion was made by Branden Stoural and seconded by Joseph Smith to reconvene to public session at 10:13 pm. Ayes (10) Nays (0) Abstained (0).

Findings: Tom Bandur made a motion to move Mike Gerten to Chief Dispatcher. Jordan Foltz seconded the motion. Ayes (10) Nays (0) Abstained (0).

Other Business: None

Next regular meeting date will be February 24th.

Chairman Meyer adjourned the meeting at 10:17 pm.

Alma Beland, Director/Coordinator

ACRONYMS

ALI – Automatic Location Identification (for 911)	LBF – Lee Bird Field – North Platte (Airport) Weather Service Location
ANI – Automatic Number Identification (for 911)	LBPHD – Loup Basin Public Health Department (covers Blaine, Loup, Garfield, Wheeler, Greeley, Valley, Sherman)
APCO – Assoc. of Public Communications Officials	LE – Law Enforcement
ASR # – Antenna Structure Registration (Tower ID #)	LEPC – Local Emergency Planning Committee
CAD – Computer Aided Dispatch	LEDRS – Livestock Emergency Disease Response System
CC – Communications Center	LEOP – Local Emergency Operations Plan
CERT – Community Emergency Response Team	MACH – Mobile Architecture for Communications Handling
CJIS – Criminal Justice Information System	MRC – Medical Reserve Corp
COADs – Community Organizations Active in Disasters	NACO – Nebraska Association of County Officials
COOP – Continuity of Operations Planning	NAEM – Nebr. Association of Emergency Managers
COVID-19 – Coronavirus Disease 2019	NEMA – Nebraska Emergency Management Agency
C.R.I.M.E.S. – Calls & Records Information Management Software (part of Justice Data Solutions)	NENA – National Emergency Number Association
CTO – Chief Training Officer	NESCA – NE Emergency Services Communicators Association
DEE – was DEQ ... Changed to DWEE July 2025	*NCR – North Central Region* (see below)
DHHS – Department of Health & Human Services (State)	NIMS – National Incident Management System
DHS – Department of Homeland Security	NIRMA – NE Intergovernmental Risk Management Association
DR – Disaster Recovery	NRIN – Nebraska Regional Interoperable Network
DOT – Department of Transportation - (NDOT) Nebraska	NX-Gen – Next Generation 911
DWEE – Department of Water, Environmental & Energy (State)	PD – Police Department
E911 – Enhanced 911	*PET – Planning Exercise Training* (see below)
EAS – Emergency Alert System (FEMA)	POD – Points of Dispensing (Immunization)
ECW – Emergency Call Works (Reg 26 911 Equip)	PPE – Personal Protective Equipment
EM – Emergency Manager	PMC – Page My Cell (secondary Paging to Depts.)
EMD – Emergency Medical Dispatch	PSAP – Public Safety Answering Point (911 Centers)
EMPG – Emergency Management Performance Grant	PSC – Public Service Commission
EMS – Emergency Medical Services	PVC – Platte Valley Communications
EMT – Emergency Medical Technician	RFP – Request for Proposal
EOC – Emergency Operations Center	RoIP – Radio over Internet Protocol
EPA – Environmental Protection Agency (Federal)	SEAT – Single Engine Air Tanker
ERG – Emergency Response Guide (Orange Book – Hazardous Materials)	SEOC – State Emergency Operation Center
FAA – Federal Aviation Admin. (Report tower light outages)	SHSP – State Homeland Security Program
FADD – Foreign Animal Disease Diagnostician	SME – Subject Matter Expert (Homeland Security Grants)
FCC – Federal Communications Commission (for Radio Frequency Licenses)	SO – Sheriff's Office
FEMA – Federal Emergency Management Agency	SRS – State Radio System
FMD – Foot and Mouth Disease (Livestock)	T-CPR – Telecommunicator CPR
FY – Fiscal Year	THIRA – Threat & Hazard Identification & Risk Assessment
GAN – Grant Adjustment Notice (aka Grant Award)	UPS – Universal Power Supply (workstation backup power supply until generator starts)
GIS – Geographic Information System	VFD – Volunteer Fire Department
GPS – Global Positioning System	VOAD – Volunteer Organization Aiding Disasters
gWORKS – Public information on Property by County	VoIP – Voice over Internet Protocol
HAZMAT – Hazardous Materials	V-TAC – Mutual Aid VHF Frequency Channels
HHS – Health and Human Services (Federal)	WEA – Wireless Emergency Alert
HSGP – Homeland Security Grant Program	WCDHD – West Cent. District Hlth Dept. (Covers Thomas)
ICS – Incident Command System	W.H.O. – World Health Organization
IPAWS – Integrated Public Alert Warning System	WPC – Weather Prediction Center – Norman, OK
IPPW – Integrated Preparedness Planning Workshop	WIRAT – Wildland Incident Response Assistance Team
J.A.M.I.N. – Jail Administration Management Information Network (Part of Justice Data Solutions)	WMD – Weapons of Mass Destruction
JDS – Justice Data Solutions (Law Enforcement Records Management & CAD software system)	* North Central PET Region Includes:
LASO – Local Agency Security Officer	Keith, Arthur, Grant, Hooker, McPherson, Logan, Cherry-Keya Paha, Brown-Rock, Boyd-Holt and Region 26: (Thomas, Blaine, Loup, Garfield, Wheeler, Greeley, Valley and Sherman)