

## MINUTES of the REGION 26 COUNCIL

February 24, 2026

### Region 26 Council:

#### Present:

Blaine Co: Matt Eggert  
Garfield Co: Diana Hurlburt  
Loup Co: Dave Larson  
Ord, City of: Branden Stoural  
Thomas Co: Joseph Smith  
Sherman Co: Tom Bandur, Vice-Chair  
Valley Co: Theresa Petska  
Wheeler Co: Doug Pokorny

#### Range Co. Municipalities:

Thomas, Blaine, Loup, Garfield, Wheeler  
Paige Ryschon

#### Tri-Co Municipalities:

Valley, Greeley, Sherman  
Jay Meyer, Chairman

#### Absent:

Greeley Co: Jordan Foltz  
Law Enforce: Joel Bergman

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

Visitors Present: Greg Gehl/Wheeler County Rural Fire Board, Caden Johnson/Dispatch, Kevin Stocker/Nebraska Public Service Commission, Scott Philbrick/Valley County Emergency Manager

The meeting was called to order at 6:35 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 Branden Stoural to approve the amended agenda.

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

Motion by Joseph Smith and seconded by Diana Hurlburt to approve the January 27, 2026 Minutes.

Ayes (8) Nays (0) Abstain (2).

Public Comment: Commissioner Kevin Stocker with the Public Service Commission wanted to stop by to talk to us on the Wireless Fund. Kevin reported that Region 26's wireless 911 funding increased from \$51,380 last year to \$60,622.94. He also discussed LB576, which would raise Douglas County's 50-cent cell phone surcharge to match the 70-cent rate in the rest of the state. Setting the entire state at 70 cents would generate about \$1.35 million in additional revenue. Kevin noted the votes may not be there for the full increase and encouraged everyone to contact their Senators in support of the bill so that there is parity across the state. Kevin also reported on the Public Service Commission and what he was wanting to see happen while he was there.

Motion by Dave Larson and seconded by Doug Pokorny to approve the January 2026 Financial Statement. Ayes (9) Nays (0) Abstain (1).

Virginia handed out a corrected Claims Sheet with amounts that were highlighted in gray to show what had been received in for payment after the meeting documents were sent out. Tom Bandur made a motion to approve the claims presented with a second from Diana Hurlburt.  
Ayes (10) Nays (0) Abstain (0).

#### Tower & Equipment Report:

The Greeley tower lights bill from the lightning damage had been received along with pictures of the damages and Alma asked about payment of the invoice since it was close to insurance deductible. After discussion on the cost, Theresa Petska made a motion to pay the bill with a second from Tom Bandur.  
Ayes (10) Nays (0) Abstain (0).

Alma reported on the lines that were accidentally cut by Hamilton leading to our tower that took down all radios. We were down for a period of time until repaired. Hamilton is currently working to get all copper lines changed over to fiber. Hamilton and Corey with Platte Valley met today in the office to determine what the radio loops from the building to the tower site south of town would look like when on fiber. Corey wanted to look at a multiplexer he had at our Ord tower site that could be used and will check into that. We were able to discontinue a couple of phone loops to the tower no longer in use. Platte Valley brought equipment up for the Sherman connection at our Sargent tower that the power supply was not working when we had a power bump and had to be manually rebooted each time. Alma did not have any information back from Custer County regarding the Ansley tower. They had met with the Ansley Village board to get approval for access if they owned the tower. Ansley had called to get any information that Region 26 held with the village. There were no documents in the files other than verbal agreements that the village maintained the grounds and allowed us access.

Branden Stoural reviewed the communications testing completed with the FirstNet equipment and shared the findings. He explained that while integrating the system directly into the Region 26 dispatch console had initially been considered, the experts advised that the most effective and manageable approach would be to build the system out at the county level instead. The cost to install the system within the Region 26 console would exceed any potential savings, making a county-based buildout with a four-port connection the more practical option. Branden noted that installing a Cubic device at each individual tower site would be simpler and more cost-effective. Each device is capable of supporting up to eight channels, with a one-time equipment purchase and a data plan. A four-port unit would support four agencies. He reported that the total cost to implement the system across all of Region 26 would be \$32,450, while a four-port setup for a single county would cost approximately \$13,000. There was discussion about how the system could function in Sherman County, which has three tower sites. Caden Johnson questioned why more than one port would be needed in Sherman County given the multiple towers. He noted that if law enforcement personnel were using the system anywhere in the county, their cell-based connection would reach the Sherman North tower and then transmit to Region 26 via analog radio. Scott Philbrick added to the discussion on how it would work in needing to reach to a base station then in to Region 26. Branden added that radio clarity remains an important factor when determining how many ports and tower connections may be necessary. Branden stated that this would be his final push in presenting the project. He noted that any further progress would depend on whether individual agencies wished to partner and share expenses, or whether Region 26 wanted to consider covering the costs itself.

Garage bid update. Chairman Jay Meyer revisited the bids discussed at last month's meeting and outlined the estimated costs for constructing a new building. He noted that labor, concrete, and erection of the structure electrical work could range from \$15,000 to \$25,000, with building materials bringing the cost near \$45,000. The Board also discussed tubular steel buildings, including enclosed carport-style structures equipped with an electric door opener as a possible option. The group reviewed the equipment and materials currently stored in the old dispatch building and discussed how best to dispose of or relocate those items. The building is planned to be torn down and

hauled to the Elba landfill. The goal is to complete demolition and site preparation for the new structure by April.

The Board discussed the Interlocal Agreement and the feedback that members received from their respective county boards. Several members reported on the discussions held locally and the questions that were brought back for consideration. It was noted that the current Interlocal does not address how a tie vote should be resolved now that the Board has an even number of members. The Board agreed that the document should be revised to state that the Chairperson will cast the deciding vote in the event of a tie. The Board also discussed the value of establishing a mission statement for Region 26. It was agreed that creating one would be beneficial. Catie will draft several mission statement options and distribute them to Board members for review. Any changes to the Interlocal Agreement—including the addition of tie-breaker language—will be held closer to the start of the next fiscal year. This timing will allow any potential changes related to Wheeler County to be incorporated at the same time.

Wheeler County had sent a request for six-month extension on their termination letter to allow them more time on checking equipment and make a determination if they are staying or leaving. Doug Pokorny had asked for this to be on our agenda so that they could discuss at their County monthly meeting tomorrow. This was not a board vote but what Doug wanted to take to his board tomorrow to give them time to see what they were going to do. The board did not feel it was in the best interest of Region 26 to allow a six-month extension since it would be in the middle of a fiscal year and not in our by-laws to do that. They would look at a one-year consideration and it was also determined that the counties would accept their termination letter to Region 26 to be rescinded. If they wanted to withdraw the termination letter with request signed by their board with minutes showing the request, then it would give them another year and if they choose to end at that time another request would need to be made that would end June 30, 2027.

Alma distributed a preliminary budget for the 2026–2027 fiscal year. Each line item was reviewed, with explanations provided on how the figures were calculated. Following discussion of the budget breakdown and assessments, the Board requested a more detailed version of the dispatch statistics to better understand how the assessments were determined.

Criminal Justice Board Report: No Report

Communications Center Report: Statistics breakdown for the previous month were passed out. They had 1463 Status checks, 305 Pages, 243 Wants/Warrants/Registrations, 126 Traffic Violations, 119 Messages for delivery, 90 Rescue Calls, 83 Minor Detail, 71 Gun Permits, 50 - 911 Accidental/ Disconnect, 38 Assist Other Agencies, 33 Assist Citizen, 30 Burn Permit, 28 Patient Transport, 25 Accidents, 21 Reckless Driver, 19 Livestock Complaint, 19 Standby for Events/Fire/Training, 18 Follow Up, 18 Paper Service, 17 Radio Test, 14 Animal Calls, 13 Disturbance/Harassment/Assault, 11 Motorist Assist, 11 Siren, 10 Suspicious Events, 9 Check Welfare, 8 Direct Traffic/Funeral/Escort, 7 Prisoner Transport, 7 Theft/Shop Lifting, 7 Traffic Hazard, 6 Arrests, 6 Fire Calls, 6 Suspicious Person, 5 Abandoned Vehicle, 5 Death Investigation, 5 Keys Locked in Vehicle, 4 Property Lost/ Recovered/ Dispute, 4 Suspicious Vehicle, 4 Uncontrollable Juvenile, 3 Alarms, 3 Burglary /Break In/Attempt, 3 City Ordinance Violation, 3 Miscellaneous Tasks, 3 Property Damage, 2 Drug Violation, 2 Fraudulent Activity, 2 Missing Person/Juvenile, 2 Mutual Aid, 2 Suicidal Threats/Attempts, 2 Trespassing, 1 Home Invasion and 6 various other incidents. Total number of incidents to the Communications Center for the month of January was 2992 including 220 - 911 calls and 1253 Administrative calls into Dispatch only.

Miki Gerten/Chief-Dispatcher reported on work in dispatch with updating information on contact logs for our departments since all the recent elections and also updating outdated forms. Caden Johnson has taken control of continuing education hours for dispatcher compliance. Miki has been very appreciative of the division of chores. She stated that the two trainees have been doing wonderful and

have started silent monitoring of calls and taking call notes. They have both helped with notes for the fires and we did have the 2-day period after the last snow that we received a record of 180 burn permits called in during that time. The trainees have worked up to 12-hour shifts. The Training Officer class that Miki had registered Caden for has been cancelled and she has not been able to find anything close to Nebraska at this time. Jay asked if there was any way they could help on burn permits on the best way to notify dispatch to cause the least amount of work. Mike suggested faxing the permit in would be the best or phone calls. It takes longer to check on emails and texting is not monitored. It was determined when they are that busy that another dispatcher could maybe have been called in to assist on the calls.

Catie Larsen gave the Deputy EM Report: She asked for the board confidentiality forms that she had not received back to be signed and turned in. She stated the North Central PET meeting is later this week working with the UNL Public Policy Center to get our Grant Justifications done and turned in for our 2026 Homeland Security Grant application. She will also be working Thursday on past grants to get some of the projects finalized money to be spent so that we will not be returning Homeland Security funds. She is working on the trainings that we have left. One of them is the ICS G402 training for Senior officials working in disasters that will be March 23<sup>rd</sup> in Ord. The Active Shooter training has been lined up for the speakers to come from the Parkland Florida school shooting. She reported on information she sent to fire departments on a grant for fire truck slides with water tanks/pumps. The Flock cameras are all up and working, except one was going to be moved to satisfy the State Roads Department. She found that texts were no longer available to receive on Page My Cell, only by using the Page My Cell app. Rapid SOS training has been scheduled for next week's staff meeting. The Storm Spotter meetings have been scheduled in each county and Catie had flyers there to take home.

Director's Report: Alma reported on the tabletop exercise that we hosted here this month for the Calamus and Davis Creek Reservoirs that was required by the Bureau of Reclamation. The attendees included the Irrigation District, County Emergency Managers, Law Enforcement, NEMA, Hastings and North Platte Weather Service, Dispatch and County board members. Our emergency action plans for the reservoirs were reviewed.

Other Business: Diana Hurlburt brought up the Deb Fischer grant that we need to apply again for funding if there is equipment still needed in dispatch.

Next regular meeting date will be March 31, 2026 at 6:30 pm.

Chairman Meyer adjourned the meeting at 9:52 pm.

Alma Beland, Director/Coordinator

## ACRONYMS

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