

The Barnes County Commission met in regular session on Tuesday, September 16, 2025, with Bill Carlbom, Mike Schwehr, Vicky Lovell, Pete Paulson and Shawn Olauson present. Chairman Bill Carlbom called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m., roll call was taken, the Pledge of Allegiance was recited, and the agenda was reviewed.

Planning & Zoning

A Variance Setback was presented for Tim Richman for placing drain tile within 75 feet of 38th St SE with several lines and an intake cage located in Springvale Township on Section 12-139-56. Pete Paulson made a motion to approve the variance application; Vicky Lovell seconded the motion. The motion carried with all members voting yes upon rollcall voted. Building permits were reviewed.

Highway Department

An approach application was submitted for Kevin O'Meara. The approach will be located in the SW¼ 29-140-61 in Eckelson township. Pete Paulson moved to approve the application; Mike Schwehr seconded the motion. The motion carried upon roll call vote with all members voting yes. Dwight Grotberg requested to replace a culvert on County Road 11 north of Sanborn with a larger culvert or add an additional culvert. Commission recommends looking at increasing culvert size when it is time to replace the culvert. RFP for the preliminary design and engineering on the Pederson Bridge replacement was discussed. Interviews with consultants and the interview committee will be rescheduled for September 25th.

Tax Equalization

Handling and scheduling hearings on abatements due to storm damage was discussed. Thirteen properties had complete loss on structures. Approximately \$14,700 in tax loss because of the damage. Consolidating hearings into one hearing township by township was suggested by Stacie to alleviate multiple hearings as well as talking to townships to set up hearings in December and bring all abatements to one hearing. This would enable the county to have one hearing at the county level to go through all the abatements. City of Valley City bought six properties and requested the properties be made tax exempt. These properties were not brought to the county to change prior to this request. In prior years, the tax was between the buyer and seller and the following year the property was made exempt. The property could not be changed mid-stream. This was presented to the States Attorney's Office for legal opinion.

Auditor's Office

Vicky Lovell moved to approve September 2, 2025, minutes as presented. Shawn Olauson seconded the motion. Motion carried with all members voting "aye". Vicky Lovell moved to approve Stacie Hansen as the NDACO delegate; Mike Schwehr seconded the motion. The motion carried upon roll call vote with all members voting yes. Michael Whisler would like to use the courthouse for the Valley Troubadours sing on December 15th at 7:00 p.m.

Commission Discussion

A request was received from the LaMoure County Commission to keep the current service contract rate of \$20,000 per year for the VSO position. Vicky Lovell moved to discontinue the VSO service contract with LaMoure County at the current rate of \$20,000; Shawn Olauson seconded the motion. The motion to discontinue the service carried with Bill, Mike, Vicky, and Shawn voting yes and Pete voting no. The grant funds for the van service are finished. Economic Development will be returning childcare grant funds that were not expended. Sanford Health is renting office space in the tech building. HFI would like to expand. Freedom Machine is down to four employees. Shawn attended the Water Board meeting. Geo Tech did a Clausen Springs dam study and are waiting for the results. There is a new contract for the trash rack. Hobart drain is not open. Sanborn drain is not open. Oriska Township has a water complaint. Buffalo Bridges Eligibility worker positions are fully staffed. The museum is hiring Arlene Andrus to work a few part-time hours to fill in until they find someone. Mike Schwehr is looking into bringing the jail nurse onto the county payroll. Jeremy Wolff will be doing some research and will bring it back to the commission. Ashley Horner is the Medical Director which would oversee the nursing position. The nurses take care of their training and licensing themselves. Bill reported there will be a walk through at the courthouse on Wednesday, September 17th for the HVAC system.

With no further business, Shawn Olauson made a motion, seconded by Pete Paulson, to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried unanimously, with all members voting "aye" and the meeting was adjourned at 8:44 a.m.

Bill Carlbom, Chairman
Barnes County Commission

Julie Mindt
Barnes County Auditor