

The Barnes County Commission met in regular session on Tuesday, May 19, 2026, with Bill Carlblom, Mike Schwehr, Vicky Lovell, Pete Paulson, and Shawn Olauson. Chairman Bill Carlblom called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m., roll call was taken, the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Mike Schwehr made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Vicky Lovell seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously with all members voting yes.

#### **Public Comments**

No requests received.

#### **Planning & Zoning**

Justin Enger submitted a Setback Variance for replacing two small existing bins with one new larger bin, 120' from the center of Barnes County #32 located on the SE¼ 11-138-61 in Meadowlake Township. Vicky Lovell moved to approve the application; Mike Schwehr seconded the motion. Motion carried with all members voting yes. Devin Weber submitted a Setback Variance application for installing a tile line and gravity outlet within 75' of 31<sup>st</sup> ST SE, but not within road row and will be installing numerous tile lines within 75' of 124<sup>th</sup> Ave SE but not within the road row located in NNW¼ 11-140-57 in Alta Township. Pete Paulson made a motion to approve the application; Vicky Lovell seconded the motion. Motion carried with all members voting yes. Jessica requested a county budget for participating in Summer Nights on Central. This was tabled for a future meeting. Building permits were reviewed. A moratorium is a temporary suspension or authorized delay of a specific activity or legal obligation. It typically pauses actions such as debt repayments, construction, or certain business practices until specific conditions are met or an emergency passes. It is a temporary halt on issuing any new building permits on construction properties in any area. There is a rumor that a data center is coming to southern Barnes County. The county has not had anyone come forward regarding a data center in Barnes County. Because of the rumor and the surrounding areas building data centers, Planning and Zoning is requesting a six-month moratorium for data centers be put in place so we have time for research and to get our ordinances and new regulations in place so that if something does come in, the county will be ready. Jessica Jenrich is requesting a six-month Moratorium for data centers be put in place so that we can be proactive. State's Attorney Tonya Duffy recommended a six-month moratorium as a good timeline and a year would be too long. Pete Paulson moved to approve a six-month Moratorium for data centers; Mike Schwehr seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously with all members voting yes. There are several counties that have ordinances in place that we can look at. No one has approached the county, city, or Economic Development regarding data centers. Several concerned citizens attended and spoke about their concerns regarding the data center issue. Many felt the six-month moratorium was too short of a timeline and would like to see a year-long moratorium. Many of the citizens feel the county will be the last to know the data center is coming until it is a done deal. Everything will be in place; land gets bought up with a no disclosure clause and no one will know until it's here. The county will be the last to know and the county will be forced to deal with it. The feds have approved legislation for data centers to get approved and pushed through. Environmental Impact Statements are basically getting voided for these centers to come in. It was strongly suggested that the county study the law so that we know what the law says to shape the planning and zoning laws and it will take more than six months to know everything that is needed to know. The impact on the water is incredible. In other states, data centers require 20 to 60 million gallons of water per day and where will that water come from. Check congress.gov and look up data centers. Once the data center has bought the land, it is a done deal, and we will be forced to deal with it. It was requested to amend the moratorium and make it at least one year. It was also stated some local entities have also been approached to sign non-disclosure agreements. Sam Wagner, City Council President of Casselton submitted what they have passed in Casselton. They took interim development control on data centers. They did a one-year moratorium because by May of the next year, the ND State Legislature would have been in session and likely be tackling this issue. They did not want to make their own local laws and have everything set up only to have the state laws supersede the city laws. Sam also brought a list of talking points brought forth by the Dakota Resource Council regarding data centers. Tonya Duffy stated that any non-disclosure agreements should not be signed until legal advice is given. She also explained that Planning and Zoning has ordinances to follow, and their decision is not the final decision. The final decision would come to the Board of County Commissioners.

#### **Highway Department**

Tim Tangen stated all restrictions are off of the paved roads with the exception of the Peak Road. Restrictions will remain on the gravel roads. Andrew Jewett submitted an application to install an approach in section 30-143-60 off Barnes County #7 allowing access to unfarmed acres to be used for haying and/or grazing. Currently, there are six approaches in this mile on the west side of the road. County policy is to allow five access points per mile per side including the section line. As a recommendation if approved, Jamie recommends having Mr. Jewett remove approach #1 as a condition to approve a new approach approximately 550' south of Barnes County #4. Pete Paulson made a motion to approve the approach application with the condition that Mr. Jewett remove existing approach #1; Vicky Lovell seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously with all members voting yes. Tim presented a quote of \$46,000 for a used 2021 Construction Trailer Specialist. The trailer has been completely gone through by Gilbertson Truck. This trailer will be used for gravel and will be a replacement for one currently being used that has had some costly repairs in the last couple of years. The old one will be sold. Bill Carlblom made a motion to approve purchasing the trailer; Shawn Olauson seconded the motion. The motion carried upon roll call vote with all members

voting yes. A quote of \$43,000 was also presented for a used 2018 Kenworth T680 with 415,694 miles and a 13-speed automatic transmission. It does have new tires, and they will add a new driver's seat if we purchase the truck and trailer. The commission made the recommendation to keep looking for one with a better price. Brian Tykwinski presented a project resolution for the Viking Drive bridge project and a resolution for County Rd 11 Mill and Overlay project for approval. Shawn Olauson made a motion to approve the resolutions; Vicky Lovell seconded the motion. The motion carried upon roll call vote with all members voting yes.

#### **Sheriff's Office**

For security purposes, Randy presented quotes for one 12,000 BTU U-shaped air conditioner at a cost of \$459.00 and two 10,000 BTU U-shaped air conditioners at a cost of \$419.00 each for a total of \$1,297.00. Pete Paulson made a motion to approve the air condition purchase; Shawn Olauson seconded the motion. Motion carried with all members voting yes.

#### **Auditor's Office**

Vicky Lovell moved to approve May 5, 2026, minutes as presented. Pete Paulson seconded the motion. Motion carried upon roll call vote with all members voting yes.

#### **Commission Discussion**

Pete stated 2,399 miles were put on the VSO van with 44 rides. Total mileage is now 97,136 miles. They are still looking for a part-time van driver. Shawn reported that Buffalo Bridges is now meeting every other month. Child welfare has 45 open cases. There are 11,242 cases on back log. Economic Development is hiring a part-time tourism employee at the Rosebud. The trash rack at Clausen Springs is still being worked on. Updates on the Hobart Drain and Sanborn Drain levels were given. The Brown Dam project is waiting on Game and Fish to see how much they will cover on the project. Weed spraying will be done on the edges for progressive weeds at Clausen Springs. Vicky reminded the commissioners of the June 2<sup>nd</sup> pipeline meeting in Jamestown and June 4<sup>th</sup> in Casselton. Bill stated the Winter Show had a good year. The Recorder's Office has donated some antique items to the museum.

With no further business, Vicky Lovell made a motion, seconded by Shawn Olauson, to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried unanimously, with all members voting "aye" and the meeting was adjourned at 9:34 a.m.

Bill Carlblom, Chairman  
Barnes County Commission

Julie Mindt  
Barnes County Auditor