

Traverse County Commission
Regular Board Meeting
May 5, 2026

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m. by Commission Chair Jerrel Olson. Other Commissioners present were Dwight Nelson, Chad Metz, Mark Gail, and Kayla Schmidt. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Upon a motion by Metz and a second by Nelson, the agenda was unanimously approved with the following additions: discussion of a Slow-No Wake Watercraft Restrictions Ordinance and the Southern MN Tourism Association 2027 funding request. There were no conflicts of interest expressed. The April 21, 2026, meeting minutes were unanimously approved upon a motion by Schmidt and a second by Metz.

Highway Department

County Engineer Chad Gillespie appeared before the Board. Gillespie requested the Board's signature on the contract for SAP 078-609-022. He informed the Board that they plan to start the CSAH 9 project, SAP 078-609-022, on May 6, 2026. Gillespie requested reimbursement from the MN DNR (Get Out MORE Grant) for the County Park project for work and payments made so far in the amount of \$415,346.26. An audit was completed for the federal project on CSAH 15 SP 078-615-017. There was discussion regarding two roads in Browns Valley, when those roads are redone, the issues will be addressed.

Law Enforcement Center

Sheriff Trevor Wright appeared before the Board. Wright provided an update on an incident at the jail. With this type of incident, it has to be reported to the Department of Corrections. An inspector came and reviewed the incident, and we will be written up for observation timing, although we do observe through video when someone is put on medical watch. Our medical provider was updated on the incident, and they did an investigation, and they were pleased with how our staff handled the situation and nominated three of our staff members for a heroic intervention award. Wright and Chief Deputy Miller are looking at purchasing a cell phone reader that will extract information from a cell phone, this is a great investigation tool. They are going to go out for quotes and will bring the information back to the Commissioners. Currently, our Task Force does this for us. They also help us with other equipment, assist us with search warrants, and provide other valuable support. The Task Force and SWAT teams are valuable assets to our community.

Soil and Water Conservation District

District Administrative Manager Sara Gronfeld appeared before the Board. County program updates were provided. There were two new SSTS permit applications. The SSTS Low-Income Upgrade Grant funding is limited but still available. Comprehensive Watershed Management updates were provided for the Bois de Sioux–Mustinka Plan and the Upper Minnesota River Plan. SWCD spring fieldwork is underway. Soil Health Grants are available, however, funding is currently limited for cover crops, strip-till/no-till, and other practices. Federal funding contracts are accepting new applications. Soil sampling has been completed, and a grant application has been submitted.

County Coordinator

Upon a motion by Schmidt and a second from Gail, the following bills were approved unanimously.

AMERICAN SOLUTIONS FOR BUSINESS	\$2,135.82
CITY OF BROWNS VALLEY	\$2,863.22

MORRIS ELECTRONICS	\$2,063.17
SUMMIT FIRE PROTECTION	\$2,089.45
MINNEWASKA COMMUNITY HEALTH SER	\$15,383.30

Per M.S. §375.12, there were 24 claims of less than \$2,000.00 totaling \$8,605.10.

The Commissioners discussed the Feasibility Study, and they are waiting on possible funding options. County Coordinator Lisa Zahl brought forward a quote for new phones from Voyant in the amount of \$7,819.76 for the purchase of new phones for Highway, Law Enforcement, and the Courthouse, with an approximate monthly fee of \$657.97. Currently, we are paying roughly \$1,765.00 per month with our current carriers. The quote was approved unanimously upon a motion by Gail and seconded by Metz. County Attorney Matt Franzese asked the Board if they would like to consider a Slow-No Wake Watercraft Restriction Ordinance. At this time the Board doesn't want to consider putting one into place. Traverse County received a request from the Southern MN Tourism Association for 2027 funding. Since they haven't done it in the past, there was no interest in doing it for 2027.

Public Comment Period

There were no public comments.

Commissioner Committee Reports

Nelson attended the Western Prairie Executive Committee meeting, the Western Prairie Board meeting, and the RMC. Schmidt attended the Western Prairie Board meeting and the RMC meeting.

Olson adjourned the meeting at 9:47 a.m.

Lisa Zahl, County Coordinator

Jerrel Olson, Chair