Traverse County Commission
Regular Board Meeting
September 1, 2026

The meeting was called to order at 9:01 a.m. by Commission Chair Jerrel Olson. Other Commissioners present were Dwight Nelson, Kayla Schmidt, and Mark Gail. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Upon a motion by Schmidt and a second by Nelson, the agenda was unanimously approved with the following addition: 4-H Canteen donation approval. There were no conflicts of interest expressed. The August 18, 2026, regular meeting minutes were unanimously approved upon a motion by Gail and a second by Nelson.

Highway Department

County Engineer Chad Gillespie and Highway Maintenance Supervisor Brian Koch appeared before the Board. Gillespie asked for approval to purchase a FECON Skid Steer Tree Saw from Swanston Equipment for $18,954.07 and an Excavator Attachment Diamond Brush Cutter Pro X from RDO Equipment Co. for $24,200.00. Gillespie informed the Board that the State will reimburse the County for doing the work themselves, which would save the County money by not having the work contracted out. Upon a motion by Gail and seconded by Schmidt both purchases were approved unanimously. Gillespie asked for approval to purchase a new Pressure Washer from Heartland Land Company for $6,680.00, upon a motion by Nelson and seconded by Gail this purchase was approved unanimously. Gillespie went over the following informational items: field reviewed projects with the State Aid Engineer on August 25, 2026, which went well; Gillespie plans to apply for a LRIP grant for CSAH 6 West of Dumont for 2028; CSAH 16 culvert replacement, which was carried over from last year, with work starting next week; Gillespie will be extending the summer hours until early October to get gravel hauling, shouldering and tree trimming done. Gillespie informed the Board that someone backed over a pedestal at the County Park, so they are working with the electrician to replace it.

Law Enforcement Center

Sheriff Trevor Wright appeared before the Board. He introduced the new Deputy Cameron White. Wright went over the information he received regarding turning the jail into a Juvenile Detention Center. It is possible to do this; however, it would depend on the amount of investment the Commissioners would like to spend to get it up and running. We would need a secure outdoor recreational area, and we would also need to expand our recreation and program space. Juvenile Detention Centers require more programming compared to jails. We would need a gym large enough to handle recreation, therapeutic programming, chemical dependency programming, and educational programming. The admissions area would also need to be moved, as it needs to be in a completely private area. There would also be a different staffing ratio as well.

Viking Library System

Director Erin Smith along with Jacquie Peeples from the Wheaton Library and Bernice Piechowski from the Browns Valley Library appeared before the Board. Smith went over the 2025 Annual Report. VLS is one of 12 regional public library systems in Minnesota. VLS supports 11 member libraries and provides direct services through the bookmobile and outreach efforts to rural residents and specific communities in six counties: Douglas, Grant, Otter Tail, Pope, Stevens, and Traverse. Funding for VLS services is shared among member counties, the state, and member libraries. Smith went over the highlights from 2025 and 2026. Jacquie went over the Wheaton Library statistical report. Berenice went over programs. Smith went over the 2027 budget request of $38,609.00, which is a 2.5% increase over the

2026 funding level. Upon a motion by Schmidt and a second by Gail, the budget request was approved unanimously.

4-H Canteen Donation

Sara Gronfeld appeared on behalf of the 4-H Federation. Gronfeld asked for approval of a donation from Riverview to the Traverse County 4-H Canteen. The donation was made payable to Traverse County, approval is needed so that the donation can be turned over to the Federation. Nelson made a motion to approve the donation, seconded by Gail and it was approved unanimously.

Soil and Water Conservation District

Sara Gronfeld, District Manager appeared before the Board and discussed the District report. There were two SSTS Permit applications received, for the septic upgrade grant, there are three projects completed and one project awaiting construction. There was a review of the Bridge Project Delineation for the Wetland Conservation Act. Gronfeld went over other county business including comprehensive watershed management updates for the Bois de Sioux-Mustinka Plan. Lastly, she went over the SWCD updates which included a field day, field work, board meeting dates, soil health grants available, low interest agricultural best management practice loans and the County Fair.

County Coordinator

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

ADVANCED CORRECTIONAL HEALTHCARE, INC.	$6,072.58
HEARTLAND RANCH INC	$13,016.90
HOMETOWN PLANNING	$3,185.00
COMMISIONER OF TRANSPORTATION	$19,504.96
JOE RILEY CONSTRUCTION INC.	$2,800.00
JOHN DEERE FINANCIAL	$2,870.98
MINNEWASKA COMMUNITY HEALTH SERV	$13,510.80

Per M.S. §375.12, there were 39 claims of less than $2,000.00 totaling $12,380.93.

County Coordinator Lisa Zahl went over a report regarding video recording and archive discussion. It was decided that Schmidt would talk to the City of Browns Valley to see why they are no longer doing it. Zahl will discuss with County Attorney Matt Franzese about the legalities that come along with doing it. The Commissioners asked Zahl to check back with Grant County in a few months to see how it works for them. The discussion was tabled. There was discussion regarding the Extension Educator posting, Zahl informed them that it was posted on Monday of this week.

Public Comment Period

There was a comment regarding recording the meetings.

Commissioner Committee Reports

Schmidt attended the Bois de Sioux Watershed meeting. Nelson attended the Western Prairie Personnel meetings and Olson attended the Western Prairie Personnel meeting and inquired about having Western Prairie hold the Personnel and Executive Committee on the same day at the same location.

Chair Olson adjourned the meeting at 9:46 a.m.

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Lisa Zahl, County Coordinator Jerrel Olson, Chair