

**OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS
OF THE BOARD OF
COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
BENSON COUNTY
NORTH DAKOTA
July 21, 2026**

The Benson County commissioners met in regular session on Tuesday, July 21, 2026 at 8 a.m. in the commissioner room of the Benson County Courthouse, Minnewaukan, ND. Commissioners present: Doris M. Griffin, Ron Stadum, David Davidson and Tammy Kuk. Dick Horner was absent. The meeting was called to order by Chair Davidson. Other people present: Kelly Glover, Benson County Farmers Press; James P. Wang, Benson County state's attorney; Scott Todahl, DEM and highway superintendent; Joy Orvedal, highway department clerk; Liz Swenson; Robert Anderson and Marianne Sears.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

A motion was made by Griffin, seconded by Stadum, to approve the minutes from the regular meeting of July 7, 2026. All members voted yes. The motion carried.

Scott Todahl, DEM and highway superintendent, met with the board to give a report for the highway department.

Commissioner Dick Horner joined the meeting via Teams.

Alex Sabbe came to the meeting. Todahl presented his 2027 budget. Discussion was held on what to do with the house the county owns at Wood Lake. The board concluded to put this issue on the agenda for the next meeting.

At 8:10 a.m., the third public hearing was held on the proposed wind, solar and data processing ordinances. Stadum questioned if anyone has seen a data center firsthand. Swenson said there is a data processing center near Harvey and explained the issues with it as far as water and electrical use. Sears gave input on this issue and stated the US has 54% of the data centers in the world. State's Attorney Wang stated the zoning board reviewed the draft documents and submitted them to the commission for further review and approval.

Lisa Anderson came to the meeting.

Sears stated Wells County has a good policy on data centers. She

recommended a moratorium be put into place regarding the ordinances until these issues are explored further.

Kuk asked Sears if she would have the time to explore more possibilities with the ordinances and the regulations. State's Attorney Wang gave input on this issue and stated any moratorium should have a termination date. Sears stated any moratorium drafted should be made up according to the ND Century Code.

Horner spoke regarding the proposed ordinances. A motion was made by Horner to place a one-year moratorium on any proposed data centers in Benson County. He stated he thought the board could proceed with the adopting the wind and solar ordinances. The motion was seconded by Kuk. Roll call vote: Davidson--yes; Horner--yes; Griffin--yes; Stadum--yes and Kuk--yes. The motion carried. State's Attorney Wang stated he will draw up a moratorium document for the commission to review.

Swenson requested the wind and solar ordinances be changed to reflect a one-mile setback from any residence(s) rather than the 1/2 mile that is currently written. Horner stated the ND Code needs to be looked at regarding this to insure it is a possibility.

Nobody was present for the public comment period.

A motion was made by Horner to refer the wind and solar ordinances back to the Benson County Zoning Board for further review and input. The motion was seconded by Kuk. Roll call vote: Davidson--yes; Horner--yes; Griffin--yes; Stadum--yes and

Kuk--yes. The motion carried.

The auditor presented the clerk of court budget for 2027 as the position was vacant. The board reviewed a response email from Shawn Pederson, state court administration, regarding the issue of appointing Emily Yri to the clerk of court position prior to the general election being held. A motion was made by Kuk to appoint Yri to the position. Horner stated county hiring procedures should be followed and have Yri submit a job application with an interview to be held. State's Attorney Wang gave input on this issue and recommended the procedures be followed. Yri stated she did not need to go through this process when

appointed to the position previously. The auditor reviewed the minutes from 2023 which indicated there was an interview held with the board of commissioners. Kuk's motion died for lack of a second. The board concluded to have Yri submit a job application and that an interview be set up.

Denton Heisler, Lake Region District Health Unit, met with the board regarding the 2027 budget for the health unit.

Shelley Aabrekke, public health nurse, also met with the board to discuss her 2027 proposed departmental budget. Aabrekke stated she doesn't need or want clerical help in her office at this time as she's been through three employees within a little amount of time. She discussed how to advertise her clinics to the public.

Rhoda Pfeifer, county recorder, met with the board to discuss her 2027 proposed departmental budget.

Lucia Jacobson, superintendent of schools and water board secretary, came to the meeting to present her 2027 proposed departmental budgets.

Laura Wanzek, Benson County sheriff, met with the board to give her sheriff's report. She also presented her proposed 2027 departmental budget.

The board reviewed a letter of interest from Marianne Sears for appointment to the BC Zoning Board. A motion was made by Kuk, seconded by Horner, to appoint Sears to the board commencing today. All members voted yes. The motion carried.

The board reviewed four Certifications of Significant Community Support for the City of Maddock. A motion was made by Kuk, seconded by Griffin, to approve the signing of the certifications. All members voted yes. The motion carried.

Randy Thompson, tax equalization director, met with the board to discuss his 2027 departmental budget. He stated he is still interviewing people for the vacant position in his office.

Scott Knoke, ag Extension agent, presented his 2027 departmental budget.

James P. Wang, state's attorney, presented his 2027 departmental budget to the board.

Bonnie Erickson, auditor/treasurer, discussed the remaining 2027 departmental budgets with the

board.

The board discussed the uploading of commission meeting data to the Benson County website with the board.

The board discussed what to do with the house the county owns at Wood Lake. Wang suggested a survey be done to determine the property ownership line.

The board reviewed and discussed the monthly county bills needing to be paid prior to end of month. A motion was made by Kuk, seconded by Griffin, to pay the bills. All members voted yes. The motion carried unanimously.

A motion to adjourn was made at 9:40 a.m.

Bonnie Erickson
Benson County Auditor

David Davidson
Chair