

ADJOURNED MEETING OF THE COUNTY BOARD
January 6th, 2026

The Board of Commissioners of Freeborn County met in the Freeborn County Boardroom at 8:30 a.m. on Tuesday, January 6th, 2026. Members present: Commissioners Severson, Edwin, Kaasa, Shoff and Eckstrom.

The meeting was opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

The County Administrator opened the meeting and requested nominations for the Freeborn county Board of Commissioners Chairperson for 2026.

Commissioner Kaasa nominated Commissioner Edwin as Board Chairperson. The County Administrator asked if there were any other nominations, hearing none, the Administrator asked if there were any objections to the nomination of Commissioner Edwin as Board Chair, and there were none. Brad Edwin, Board Chair opened up nominations for the Vice-Chairperson. Commissioner Kaasa nominated Commissioner Eckstrom as Vice-Chairperson. The Board Chair asked if there were any other nominations and there were none and nominations were closed.

Commissioner Shoff offered the following motion;

MOVED, approving the agenda as presented with the exception of removing the item under County Commissioner items to consider a resolution demanding State accountability for public fraud, mismanagement and unfunded burdens before imposing further financial expectations upon Minnesota Counties and revisit the topic.

Motion seconded by Commissioner Eckstrom.

After discussion, a vote was taken with Commissioners Eckstrom and Shoff voting yay, Commissioners Severson and Kaasa voting nay, and Commissioner Edwin abstaining from the vote; the Chair declared the motion failed and the item will remain on the agenda.

Commissioner Kaasa offered the following motion;

MOVED, approving the agenda as presented.

Motion seconded by Commissioner Eckstrom.

After discussion, a vote was taken and the Chair declared the motion approved.

Commissioner Eckstrom offered the following resolution;

RESOLUTION 26-001
Establishing Parliamentary Authority

RESOLVED, to adopt Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised 12th Edition, as the Parliamentary Authority of Order for 2026.

Resolution seconded by Commissioner Severson. This item will be discussed at an upcoming Workshop and be brought to the following Board meeting.

After discussion a vote was taken and the Chair declared the resolution adopted.

Commissioner Severson offered the following resolution;

RESOLUTION No. 26-002
Approval of the Freeborn County Board of Commissioners Consent Agenda as provided
in the Freeborn County Board Rule of Procedure 9(A)

WHEREAS, the Freeborn County Board is the governing body of Freeborn County, and;

WHEREAS, the Freeborn County Board has implemented a Consent agenda to perform the duties of the board in a more effective and efficient manner, and

WHEREAS, the following items have been placed for approval of the Freeborn County Board of Commissioners on the current Board meeting Consent Agenda as provided by the Board rules of procedure, being routine and of a regular action;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, to place the following are hereby approved for appropriate action:

- 1) Approval of the December 4th, 2025 Closed Session;
- 2) Approval of the December 16th, 2025 minutes with corrections;
- 3) Approval of the December 30th, 2025 Final Claims minutes;
- 4) Approval of Regular Full-Time Status employees;
- 5) Approval of Drainage Repairs

Resolution seconded by Commissioner Kaasa.

After discussion a vote was taken and the Chair declared the resolution adopted.

The Commissioners provided Board Committee updates.

Under Informational Items Only – Trevor Bordelon, Environmental Services spoke regarding the Planning Commissioner Report

Brad Herfindahl provided an update on the wait list notification for the Minnesota Statewide Solar on Public Buildings Program.

Chairman Edwin asked if there was any public comment and there was none.

Commissioner Severson offered the following resolution;

RESOLUTION NO. 26-003

TITLE: Resolution to Approve the Award of Opioid Settlement Funds to Albert Lea Fire Rescue for First Responder Overdose Response Equipment

WHEREAS, Freeborn County has received Opioid Settlement Funds intended for abatement activities that address the public health impacts of the opioid epidemic through prevention, treatment, recovery, and harm reduction strategies;

WHEREAS, the Freeborn County Opioid Settlement Advisory Committee developed and issued a competitive Request for Proposals (RFP) to identify local and regional projects that align with state settlement guidelines and County priorities;

WHEREAS, Albert Lea Fire Rescue (City of Albert Lea) submitted a proposal titled “Equipping First Responders” to strengthen emergency response capacity across Freeborn County by improving access to naloxone and advanced cardiac monitoring equipment for overdose response;

WHEREAS, the proposal seeks to equip all fifteen fire departments in Freeborn County with naloxone and establish a centralized cardiac monitoring and distribution capability through Albert Lea Fire Rescue to support overdose response, cardiac stabilization, and emergency medical intervention;

WHEREAS, the project addresses harm reduction and overdose response priorities by ensuring timely access to naloxone, improving patient outcomes during overdose emergencies, and supporting first responders who routinely serve low-income, rural, and medically underserved populations;

WHEREAS, the total project budget request is **\$61,000**, consisting of:

- \$55,000 for the purchase of a LIFEPAK 35 cardiac monitor/defibrillator, including required training, equipment, and shipping;
- \$6,000 for the purchase of naloxone (Narcan), calculated at \$30 per double-dose kit for approximately 200 doses;

WHEREAS, the application confirms that no funding is requested for salaries, benefits, travel, or administrative overhead, and that all requested funds are directly tied to equipment and supplies essential for emergency overdose response;

WHEREAS, the Opioid Advisory Committee reviewed the proposal and determined that it aligns with state opioid settlement guidelines, addresses a documented service gap in overdose response capacity, and represents a cost-effective, countywide investment in harm reduction and emergency preparedness;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Freeborn County Board of Commissioners, that:

1. The Board hereby approves the RFP Award using Opioid Settlement Funding to the Albert Lea Fire Rescue.
2. The Board authorizes the Opioid Advisory Committee to contract with Albert Lea Fire Rescue.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this resolution shall take effect immediately upon its adoption.

Resolution seconded by Commissioner Shoff.

After discussion a vote was taken and the Chair declared the resolution adopted.

Commissioner Kaasa offered the following resolution;

RESOLUTION NO. 26-004

TITLE: Change Fund / Impress Cash Fund for 2026

WHEREAS, The sum of \$2,715.00 is hereby appropriated out of the General Revenue Fund of Freeborn County for the purpose of creating a Change Fund/Impress Cash Fund to the following listed departments as custodians of these funds in Freeborn County:

		Custodian #1	Custodian #2	Custodian #3
County Treasurer	\$1,200.00	Amy Conner	JoDee Avery	
County Recorder	\$240.00	Heather Bagley	Krista Walton	
County Auditor/License Ctr.	\$550.00	Amy Conner	Megan Reule	
County Sheriff	\$350.00	Ryan Shea	Terri Zabrocki	Jess Dreyling
County Public Health	\$25.00	Sue Yost	Anita Majerus	Natalie Looock
Dept. Of Human Services	\$50.00	Suzanne Nerison	Emmylou Allen	Doug Miller
Environmental Services	\$300.00	Mark Goskeson	Gina Gullickson	
Total:	\$2715.00			

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the sum of \$500.00 be drawn upon the General Revenue Fund of Freeborn County for the purpose of creating a Petty Cash Fund held by the Auditor-Treasurer's Office with Amy Conner and JoDee Avery as custodians. This petty cash fund is to be used to reimburse various departments in Freeborn County for incidental postage paid for county business.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the sum of \$100.00 be drawn upon the General Revenue Fund of Freeborn County for the purpose of creating a Petty Cash Fund held by the Sheriff's Office with Ryan Shea, Terri Zabrocki and Jess Dreyling as custodians. This petty cash fund is to be used to reimburse the Sheriff's Department for Alcohol and Tobacco Compliance checks held in the county.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this resolution shall take effect immediately upon its adoption.

Resolution seconded by Commissioner Eckstrom.

After discussion, a vote was taken and the Chair declared the resolution approved.

Commissioner Kaasa offered the following resolution:

RESOLUTION NO. 26-005

TITLE: Freeborn County Crop Damage Rate for 2026 – Not Planted, Freeborn County Drainage Ditches

WHEREAS, it is the policy of Freeborn County to set a rate of pay for crop damages that may occur due to repair, improvement, or construction projects involving county drainage ditches;

WHEREAS, in anticipation of an upcoming project the County may occasionally ask a landowner not to plant the area to be worked on. This gives the contractor more time to complete projects and may also result in better quotes;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Freeborn County Board of Commissioners, that:

3. The rate of pay for not planted acres is \$525.00 per acre. This rate is based off from an average annual rental rate of approximately \$300;
 - The first year the unplanted acres would have no yield
 - The second year yield reduction would be approximately 50% because the soil has been disturbed
 - The third year yield reduction would be approximately 25% because the soil has been disturbed
 - The fourth year the yield should be back to normal

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this resolution shall take effect immediately upon its adoption.

Resolution was seconded by Commissioner Severson.
After discussion, a vote was taken and the Chair declared the resolution approved.

Commissioner Kaasa offered the following resolution:

RESOLUTION NO. 26-006

TITLE: Freeborn County Crop Damage Rate for 2026-Standing Crop, Freeborn County Drainage Ditches

WHEREAS, it is the policy of Freeborn County to set a rate of pay for crop damages that may occur due to repair, improvement, or construction projects involving county drainage ditches;

WHEREAS, the yield is determined by using a three- year average yield for Freeborn County from data received from the USDA (National Agricultural Statistics Services);

WHEREAS, the sale price is determined by using an average sale price for "new crop" corn and beans from three local elevators on November 28, 2025;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Freeborn County Board of Commissioners, that:

4. The following rate will be in place for 2026;
 - Corn Damage Rate 190.8 bushels @ \$4.15 = \$792 per acre
 - Bean Damage Rate 54.5 bushels @ 10.31 = \$562 per acre

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this resolution shall take effect immediately upon its adoption.

Resolution was seconded by Commissioner Eckstrom.
After discussion, a vote was taken and the Chair declared the resolution approved.

Commissioner Severson offered the following resolution:

RESOLUTION NO. 26-007

TITLE: Authorizing the Transfer Of \$1,500,000.00 From the General Fund Account to the Insurance Fund Account

WHEREAS, Freeborn County Board of Commissioners has approved the 2026 operating budget; and

WHEREAS, Freeborn County provides health insurance to its employees as an employment benefit; and

WHEREAS, the insurance payments for premiums and claims are directly debited from the Freeborn County bank account.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Freeborn County Board of Commissioners, that:

1. That the Freeborn County Board of Commissioners authorize the transfer of \$1,500,000.00 from the General Fund Account to the Insurance Fund Account to cover the advance needed for timely premium payment and claim processing.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this resolution shall take effect immediately upon its adoption.

Resolution was seconded by Commissioner Kaasa.

After discussion, a vote was taken and the Chair declared the resolution approved.

Commissioner Kaasa offered the following resolution:

RESOLUTION NO. 26-008

TITLE: Setting Bounty on Beaver Trapping, Freeborn County Drainage Authority

WHEREAS, the Freeborn County Board of Commissioners serving as Drainage Authority for Freeborn County has implemented a beaver bounty program as a way of preventing flooding of agricultural lands and other damages caused by the building of beaver dams throughout the Freeborn County drainage systems;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Freeborn County Board of Commissioners, that:

1. The Freeborn County Board of Commissioners, serving as the Drainage Authority for Freeborn County authorizes the payment of the bounty of \$75 per adult beaver tail turned in to the County's Drainage Inspectors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this resolution shall take effect immediately upon its adoption.

Resolution was seconded by Commissioner Shoff.

After discussion, a vote was taken and the Chair declared the resolution approved.

Commissioner Kaasa offered the following resolution:

RESOLVED AS, approving Resolution 26-009 City of Albert Lea request for purchase of Tax Forfeited parcels for the purpose of building modular homes, for the amount of school and county tax dollars that are owed.

Resolution was seconded by Commissioner Eckstrom.

After discussion, a vote was taken and the Chair declared the resolution approved.

Commissioner Eckstrom offered the following resolution:

RESOLUTION 26-010

RESOLUTION TO SET PUBLIC HEARING TO AUTHORIZE HOUSING TAX ABATEMENT ON PROPERTY WITHIN FREEBORN COUNTY FOR THE PURPOSE OF FUNDING DEVELOPMENT COSTS FOR CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW SINGLE FAMILY HOME

WHEREAS, By Resolution 22-037 Freeborn County has continued to Participate in the above program through December of 2026 in accordance with and subject to the requirements and limitations imposed by the policy adopted by the City of Albert Lea, with the specific additional condition that the City of Albert Lea provide timely notification to the Freeborn County Auditor/Treasurer of any construction in a given year that qualifies for tax abatement under the existing city policy;

WHEREAS, the City of Albert Lea has granted abatements to:

Lance Lamphear
502 Milrose Cr, Albert Lea, MN
Parcel No. 34.404.0090
Legal Description: CHAPEAU SHORES NINTH ADDITION Lot-8&9 Block-001 LOTS 8 & 9 BLK 1
CHAPEAU SHORES NINTH ADDITION CITY OF ALBERT LEA

WHEREAS Minnesota Statutes § 469.1813, Subd. 5(a) and (b) states: (a) The governing body of the political subdivision may approve an abatement under sections [469.1812](#) to [469.1815](#) only after holding a public hearing on the abatement.

(b) Notice of the hearing must be published in a newspaper of general circulation in the political subdivision at least once more than ten days but less than 30 days before the hearing. The newspaper must be one of general interest and readership in the community, and not one of limited subject matter. The newspaper must be published at least once per week. The notice must indicate that the governing body will consider granting a property tax abatement, identify the property or properties for which an abatement is under consideration, and the total estimated amount of the abatement.

NOW THEREFORE, a public hearing is hereby set for XXXXX

I hereby certify that the above is a true and correct copy of a resolution approved by the Freeborn County Board of Commissioners at their session on the 6th of January, 2026 and as appears on the Minutes of their record of proceedings.

Resolution was seconded by Commissioner Severson.
After discussion, a vote was taken and the Chair declared the resolution approved.

Commissioner Eckstrom offered the following resolution:

RESOLUTION No. 26-011, adopting amendments to Article I and Article IV, Chapter 8, Freeborn County Code of Ordinances

Resolution was seconded by Commissioner Kaasa.
After discussion, a vote was taken and the Chair declared the resolution approved.

Commissioner Eckstrom offered the following resolution:

RESOLUTION NO. 26-012
TITLE: A RESOLUTION APPOINTING MEMBER(S) TO THE FREEBORN COUNTY BOARD OF
ADJUSTMENT PURSUANT TO THE CODE OF ORDINANCES OF FREEBORN COUNTY,
MINNESOTA, CHAPTER 42

RESOLVED, that the following named person be and is hereby appointed to the Freeborn County Board of Adjustment for a first term ending December 31, 2027:

John Forman, 117 Bridge Avenue Albert Lea, MN 56007

* * * * *

I hereby certify that the above is a true and correct copy of a resolution adopted by the Board of County Commissioners at their session on the 6th day of January 2026, and as appears on the minutes of their record of proceedings.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this resolution shall take effect immediately upon its adoption.

Resolution was seconded by Commissioner Shoff.
After discussion, a vote was taken with Commissioners Severson, Eckstrom and Shoff voting yay, Commissioners Kaasa and Edwin voting nay, the Chair declared the resolution approved.

Commissioner Kaasa offered the following resolution:

RESOLUTION No. 26-013, approving an expansion to Special Exception Permit No.2 for the establishment of a miniature golf facility at the Albert Lea KOA Campground

Resolution was seconded by Commissioner Eckstrom.

After discussion, a vote was taken and the Chair declared the resolution approved.

Commissioner Severson offered the following resolution:

RESOLUTION NO. 26-014

TITLE: Resolution to approve the Purchase of Service Agreement for Child Care Licensing Services between Mower and Freeborn Counties

WHEREAS, Minnesota Statute mandates provision by local agencies of licensure for Family Child Care Providers; and

WHEREAS, the Freeborn County Department of Human Services is committed to providing quality services to meet the licensing needs for child care homes in Freeborn County; and

WHEREAS, the Freeborn County Department of Human Services and Mower County Health and Human Services have historically had an agreement for purchase of Mower County Child Care Licensure Services from Freeborn County; and

WHEREAS, Mower County Health and Human Services wishes to continue to purchase Child Care Licensure Services from the Freeborn County Department of Human Services; and

WHEREAS, the Freeborn County Department of Human Services is able and willing to provide this service; therefore

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Freeborn County Board of Commissioners, that:

1. The 2026-2027 Purchase of Service Agreement for Child Care Licensing Services between Freeborn and Mower Counties is approved.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this resolution shall take effect immediately upon its adoption.

Resolution was seconded by Commissioner Eckstrom.

After discussion, a vote was taken and the Chair declared the resolution approved.

Commissioner Kaasa offered the following resolution:

RESOLUTION NO. 26-015

TITLE: Resolution approving a contract with Workforce Development, Inc for calendar year 2026.

WHEREAS, the Freeborn County Department of Human Services is required to administer the Diversionary Work Program, Minnesota Family Investment Program, Family Stabilization Services, along with supports and qualifying extensions and/or sanctions to those programs; and

WHEREAS, the Freeborn County Department of Human Services has historically contracted with Workforce Development, Inc. for provision of Employment & Training and Family Stabilization Services with the goal of increasing economic stability of low-income families receiving MFIP and DWP within Freeborn County; and

WHEREAS, the 2026-2027 Biennial Service Agreement between Freeborn County and the State of Minnesota, required under Minnesota Statutes section 142G.76, subdivision. 4, and approved by the Freeborn County Board of Commissioners on October 21st, 2025, details the figures and expenses for each program in order for counties to receive MFIP Consolidated Funds from the State of Minnesota, necessary to administer said programs; and

WHEREAS, the Freeborn County Department of Human Services receives MFIP Consolidated Funding from the State of Minnesota that fully funds the services in the agreement provided by Workforce Development, Inc.; and

WHEREAS, the Freeborn County Department of Human Services has incorporated receipt of MFIP Consolidated Funds from the State, coinciding with the contracted services in the agreement with Workforce Development, Inc. into the budget in order to administer mandated programs; therefore

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Freeborn County Board of Commissioners, that:

1. The 2026 Purchase of Service Agreement between Workforce Development, Inc. and Freeborn County is approved.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this resolution shall take effect immediately upon its adoption.

Resolution was seconded by Commissioner Shoff.

After discussion, a vote was taken and the Chair declared the resolution approved.

Commissioner Severson offered the following resolution:

RESOLUTION NO. 26-016

TITLE: Resolution to approve the Purchase of Service Agreement with REM Woodvale for Semi-Independent Living Services

WHEREAS, Minnesota Statutes mandate provision of services to children and adults meeting specific disability and/or vulnerability criteria in order to ensure health, safety and wellbeing; and

WHEREAS, the Freeborn County Department of Human Services is committed to providing quality services to meet the needs of the population of individuals with disabilities; and

WHEREAS, the Freeborn County Department of Human Services ensures person centered and client directed semi-independent living services in order to maintain quality of life for individuals with disabilities in their homes or in the least restrictive setting possible; and

WHEREAS, REM Woodvale, Inc. is an approved vendor, according to Minnesota Statutes, of semi-independent living services to individuals with disabilities; and

WHEREAS, the Freeborn County Department of Human Services wishes to purchase specific services from REM Woodvale, Inc.;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Freeborn County Board of Commissioners, that:

1. The 2026-2027 Purchase of Service Agreement between the Freeborn County Department of Human Services and REM Woodvale, Inc. is hereby approved for the provision of Semi-Independent Living Services to eligible residents of Freeborn County.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this resolution shall take effect immediately upon its adoption.

Resolution was seconded by Commissioner Eckstrom.

After discussion, a vote was taken and the Chair declared the resolution approved.

Commissioner Kaasa offered the following resolution:

RESOLUTION NO. 26-017

TITLE: Resolution to approve the Purchase of Service Agreement with American Baptist Homes of the Midwest, dba Crest Services for Semi-Independent Living Services

WHEREAS, Minnesota Statutes mandate provision of services to children and adults meeting specific disability and/or vulnerability criteria in order to ensure health, safety and wellbeing; and

WHEREAS, the Freeborn County Department of Human Services is committed to providing quality services to meet the needs of the population of individuals with disabilities; and

WHEREAS, the Freeborn County Department of Human Services ensures person centered and client directed semi-independent living services in order to maintain quality of life for individuals with disabilities in their homes or in the least restrictive setting possible; and

WHEREAS, American Baptist Homes of the Midwest, dba Crest Services is an approved vendor, according to Minnesota Statutes, of semi-independent living services to individuals with disabilities; and

WHEREAS, the Freeborn County Department of Human Services wishes to purchase specific services from American Baptist Homes of the Midwest, dba Crest Services;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Freeborn County Board of Commissioners, that:

1. The 2026-2027 Purchase of Service Agreement between the Freeborn County Department of Human Services and American Baptist Homes of the Midwest, dba Crest Services is hereby approved for the provision of Semi-Independent Living Services to eligible residents of Freeborn County.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this resolution shall take effect immediately upon its adoption.

Resolution was seconded by Commissioner Eckstrom.

After discussion, a vote was taken and the Chair declared the resolution approved.

Commissioner Kaasa offered the following:

TITLE: Resolution to approve the Purchase of Service Agreement with Thomas Allen, Inc.

WHEREAS, Minnesota Statutes mandate provision of services to children and adults meeting specific disability and/or vulnerability criteria in order to ensure health, safety and wellbeing; and

WHEREAS, the Freeborn County Department of Human Services is committed to providing quality services to meet the needs of the population of individuals with disabilities; and

WHEREAS, the Freeborn County Department of Human Services ensures person centered and client directed case management services in order to maintain quality of life for individuals with disabilities in their homes or in the least restrictive setting possible; and

WHEREAS, Thomas Allen, Inc. is an approved vendor, according to Minnesota Statutes, of case management services to individuals with disabilities; and

WHEREAS, the Freeborn County Department of Human Services wishes to purchase specific services from Thomas Allen, Inc.;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Freeborn County Board of Commissioners, that:

1. The 2026-2027 Purchase of Service Agreement between the Freeborn County Department of Human Services and Thomas Allen, Inc. is hereby approved for the provision of case management services to identified and referred eligible residents of Freeborn County.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this resolution shall take effect immediately upon its adoption.

Resolution was seconded by Commissioner Severson.

After discussion, a vote was taken and the Chair declared the resolution approved.

Commissioner Severson offered the following resolution:

RESOLUTION NO. 26-019

TITLE: Resolution to accept a donation from Bear Lake Lutheran Church – Ruth Circle

WHEREAS, the Freeborn County Department of Human Services serves individuals, children and families who have been victims of abuse, neglect and crimes, have mental illness, developmental or other disabilities, and those whom require additional support to meet basic needs or to become self-sufficient; and

WHEREAS, there are instances when the needs of those served by the Human Services Department cannot be met with state, federal, or local funding options; and

WHEREAS, donations of money, gift cards, or specific items from individuals and organizations within our communities help meet needs not otherwise met; and

WHEREAS, the Freeborn County Department of Human Services has received a donation of four \$25 gift cards totaling \$100 to be used for individuals, children or families in need from the Bear Lake Lutheran Church – Ruth Circle.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Freeborn County Board of Commissioners, that:

1. The donation from the Bear Lake Lutheran Church – Ruth Circle is accepted.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this resolution shall take effect immediately upon its adoption.

Resolution was seconded by Commissioner Kaasa.

After discussion, a vote was taken and the Chair declared the resolution approved.

Commissioner Eckstrom offered the following resolution:

RESOLUTION NO. 26-020

TITLE: Five-Year Bridge Plan

WHEREAS, the Freeborn County Highway Department has the responsibility of maintaining the county road system; and

WHEREAS, Freeborn County has determined that the following deficient bridges on the County State Aid Highway, County Road, and Township systems are a high priority and require replacement or rehabilitation within the next five (5) years per the attached schedule, and

WHEREAS, local roads play an essential role in the overall state transportation network and local bridges are a critical component of the local road systems, and

WHEREAS, State support for the replacement or rehabilitation of local bridges continues to be crucial to maintaining the integrity of the local road systems and is necessary for the County and the Townships to proceed with the replacement or rehabilitation of the high priority deficient bridges described above, and

WHEREAS, Freeborn County intends to proceed with replacement, rehabilitation, or removal of these bridges as soon as possible when State Transportation Funds are available.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Freeborn County Board of Commissioners, that:

1. Freeborn County commits that it will proceed with the design and contract documents for these bridges immediately after being notified that funds are available in order to permit construction to take place within one year of notification; and,
2. Freeborn County does hereby request financial assistance with eligible approach grading and engineering costs on township bridges, as provided by law.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this resolution shall take effect immediately upon its adoption.

Resolution was seconded by Commissioner Kaasa.
After discussion, a vote was taken and the Chair declared the resolution approved.

Commissioner Eckstrom offered the following resolution:

RESOLUTION NO. 26-021

TITLE: Resolution Supporting the City of Albert Lea's Transportation Alternatives Grant Application for New Paved Trail from Madison Avenue to Fountain Street

WHEREAS, grant funding is available through the Minnesota Department of Transportation's Transportation Alternatives (TA) program for infrastructure projects; and

WHEREAS, it is acknowledged that TA funds can be used to reimburse construction costs on TA eligible items, and that construction costs above the TA infrastructure grant amount will need to have alternate funding sources; and

WHEREAS, the *Trail Action Plan*, completed in May 2023, envisioned a 15 mile long paved trail along the former Union Pacific Railroad grade in Freeborn County and was developed with Freeborn County and the City of Albert Lea, while engaging the public; and

WHEREAS, the City of Albert Lea is applying for TA grant funding for the segment of Songbird Trail from Madison Avenue to Fountain Street (the Project); and

WHEREAS, the first phase of construction for the Songbird Trail will be 6.4 miles long and run from Fountain Street in Albert Lea to 255th Street in Manchester and construction of this segment will begin in 2026; and

WHEREAS, this Project benefits people walking, biking, and rolling by connecting neighborhoods and expanding opportunities to be active outside; and

WHEREAS, this Project improves transportation safety by enhancing roadway crossings for people walking, biking, and rolling; and

WHEREAS, the Project is planned to be constructed in 2030 with TA funding and additional funding from alternate sources.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Freeborn County Board of Commissioners, that:

1. That the Board of Commissioners supports the City of Albert Lea's application for Transportation Alternative's Funding for construction of the Project; and
2. That the Joint Powers Agreement for UP Trail Maintenance (now Songbird Trail) dated May 4, 2022 shall govern maintenance responsibilities for the segment constructed; and
3. That additional funding will be required to complete this Project and that those funds shall be committed by the City of Albert Lea and Freeborn County and may include local or alternate funding sources prior to award of a construction contract.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this resolution shall take effect immediately upon its adoption.

Resolution was seconded by Commissioner Severson.
After discussion, a vote was taken and the Chair declared the resolution approved.

Commissioner Eckstrom offered the following resolution:

RESOLUTION NO. 26-022

TITLE: Resolution Sponsoring Transportation Alternatives Grant Application for Bridge over TH 13 on Songbird Trail.

WHEREAS, grant funding is available through the Minnesota Department of Transportation's Transportation Alternatives (TA) program for infrastructure projects; and

WHEREAS, it is acknowledged that TA funds can be used to reimburse construction costs on TA eligible items, and that construction costs above the TA infrastructure grant amount will need to have alternate funding sources; and

WHEREAS, the *Trail Action Plan*, completed in May 2023, envisioned a 15 mile long paved trail along the former Union Pacific Railroad grade in Freeborn County and was developed with Freeborn County and the City of Albert Lea, while engaging the public; and

WHEREAS, the City of Albert Lea is applying for TA grant funding for the segment of Songbird Trail from Madison Avenue to Fountain Street and that Freeborn County formally support their pursuit of funding for their project; and

WHEREAS, the first phase of construction for the Songbird Trail will be 6.4 miles long and run from Fountain Street in Albert Lea to 255th Street in Manchester and that this segment requires the crossing of TH 13, a busy four lane highway that warrants grade separation for pedestrians attempting to cross; and

WHEREAS, Freeborn County intends to construct a bridge and associated abutments and trail segments to cross Highway 13 (the Project) using TA funds, local funds, and additional grant funds; and

WHEREAS, the Project benefits people walking, biking, and rolling by connecting neighborhoods and expanding opportunities to be active outside; and

WHEREAS, the Project improves transportation safety by enhancing roadway crossings for people walking, biking, and rolling; and

WHEREAS, the Project is planned to be constructed in 2030 with TA funding and additional funding from alternate sources.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Freeborn County Board of Commissioners, that:

1. That the Board of Commissioners sponsors the application for Transportation Alternative's Funding for construction of the Project; and
2. That the Joint Powers Agreement for UP Trail Maintenance (now Songbird Trail) dated May 4, 2022 shall govern maintenance responsibilities for the segment constructed; and
3. That additional funding will be required to complete this Project and that those funds shall be committed by the City of Albert Lea and Freeborn County and may include local or alternate funding sources prior to award of a construction contract.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this resolution shall take effect immediately upon its adoption.

Resolution was seconded by Commissioner Severson.

After discussion, a vote was taken and the Chair declared the resolution approved.

Commissioner Eckstrom offered the following resolution:

RESOLUTION NO. 26-023

TITLE: Appointing the Official Freeborn County Newspaper for 2026

WHEREAS, Minnesota Statute 331A.04 requires a DESIGNATION OF A NEWSPAPER FOR OFFICIAL PUBLICATIONS; and

WHEREAS, The Albert Lea Tribune has presented a proposal for rates for publication for the year 2026 including all legal and public notices; and,

WHEREAS, Minnesota Statute 331A.12 allows for the publication of public notices to be made on the County website in place of or in addition to publication in the official newspaper;

WHEREAS, Minnesota Statute 331A.12 also requires that a publication be made in the newspaper for official publications a notice that states the advertisement of transportation projects will be made on its website.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Freeborn County Board of Commissioners, that:

1. The Albert Lea Tribune is hereby designated as the official newspaper of Freeborn County; and,
2. Public notices for the advertisement of transportation projects will be placed exclusively on the Freeborn County Public Works website and will not appear in the official newspaper as allowed by Minnesota Statute.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this resolution shall take effect immediately upon its adoption.

Resolution was seconded by Commissioner Shoff.

After discussion, a vote was taken and the Chair declared the resolution approved.

Commissioner Severson offered the following resolution:

RESOLUTION NO. 26-024

SETTING THE MINIMUM SALARY OF THE FREEBORN COUNTY ATTORNEY

WHEREAS, Minnesota Statutes § 388.18, subdivision 2, requires that at the January meeting prior to the first date on which applicants may file for the office of county attorney, the county board shall set by resolution the minimum salary to be paid to the county attorney for the term next following; and

WHEREAS, the Freeborn County Board of Commissioners has reviewed comparable county attorney salaries and the duties and responsibilities of the office;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Freeborn County Board of Commissioners that:

1. The minimum annual salary to be paid to the Freeborn County Attorney for the term of office beginning January 1, 2027, shall be \$157,081 per year, in accordance with Minn. Stat. § 388.18, subd. 2.
2. This resolution shall take effect January 1, 2027.

Adopted this 6th day of January, 2026, by the Freeborn County Board of Commissioners.

Resolution was seconded by Commissioner Kaasa.

After discussion, a vote was taken with Commissioners Severson, Kaasa and Shoff voting yay, Commissioners Eckstrom and Edwin voting nay, the Chair declared the resolution approved.

Commissioner Eckstrom offered the following resolution:

RESOLUTION NO. 26-025

SETTING THE MINIMUM SALARY OF THE FREEBORN COUNTY SHERIFF

WHEREAS, Minnesota Statutes § 387.20, subdivision 2(b), requires that at the January meeting prior to the first date on which applicants may file for the office of county sheriff, the county board shall set by resolution the minimum salary to be paid to the county sheriff for the term next following; and

WHEREAS, the Freeborn County Board of Commissioners has reviewed comparable county sheriff salaries and the duties and responsibilities of the office;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Freeborn County Board of Commissioners that:

1. The minimum annual salary to be paid to the Freeborn County Sheriff for the term of office beginning January 1, 2027, shall be \$157,081 per year, in accordance with Minn. Stat. § 387.20, subd. 2(b).
2. This resolution supersedes any prior resolutions or actions of the Board that are inconsistent with this resolution.

3. This resolution shall take effect January 1, 2027.

Adopted this 6th day of January, 2026, by the Freeborn County Board of Commissioners.

Resolution was seconded by Commissioner Kaasa.

After discussion, a vote was taken and the Chair declared the resolution approved.

Commissioner Severson offered the following resolution:

RESOLUTION No. 26-026, approving Commissioner appointments to Committees and Boards

Resolution was seconded by Commissioner Kaasa.

After discussion, a vote was taken and the Chair declared the resolution approved.

Commissioner Severson offered the following resolution:

RESOLUTION No. 26-027, approving the Freeborn County Dress Code Policy

Resolution was seconded by Commissioner Eckstrom.

After discussion, a vote was taken and the Chair declared the resolution approved.

Commissioner Severson offered the following resolution:

RESOLUTION No. 26-028, approving the Freeborn County Meal Reimbursement Policy

Resolution was seconded by Commissioner Kaasa.

After discussion, a vote was taken and the Chair declared the resolution approved.

Commissioner Eckstrom offered the following resolution:

RESOLUTION No. 26-029, approving the Freeborn County Telecommuting Policy

Resolution was seconded by Commissioner Severson.

After discussion, a vote was taken and the Chair declared the resolution approved.

Commissioner Kaasa offered the following resolution:

RESOLUTION No. 26-030, approving the Freeborn County Training, Conference & Committee Policy

Resolution was seconded by Commissioner Severson.

After discussion, a vote was taken and the Chair declared the resolution approved.

Rich Heffner, County Assessor gave an update regarding 2027 assessments.

Commissioner Severson offered the following resolution:

RESOLUTION 26-031

A RESOLUTION DEMANDING STATE ACCOUNTABILITY FOR PUBLIC FRAUD, MISMANAGEMENT, AND UNFUNDED BURDENS BEFORE IMPOSING FURTHER FINANCIAL EXPECTATIONS UPON MINNESOTA COUNTIES

WHEREAS, Minnesota counties are required under state law to administer a wide range of state-mandated programs, often without proportional funding from the State of Minnesota; and

WHEREAS, recent high-profile fraud, mismanagement, and program failures at the state level — including improper disbursements, insufficient oversight mechanisms, and the failure to prevent fraudulent activity — have severely undermined public confidence in the State of Minnesota's fiscal stewardship; and

WHEREAS, these failures have placed additional cost burdens, administrative pressures, and public expectations on counties who must continue to deliver mandated services regardless of state-level errors; and

WHEREAS, Freeborn County recognizes that local taxpayers should not bear the financial consequences of fraud and mismanagement occurring within state agencies or systems outside the county's control; and

WHEREAS, the Freeborn County Board of Commissioners believes that accountability, transparency, and corrective action at the state level are necessary preconditions to any additional expectations being placed upon Minnesota counties; and

WHEREAS, the Board further affirms its responsibility to adopt a balanced budget and levy as required by Minnesota Statutes, but also affirms its duty to advocate for the taxpayers of Freeborn County and demand responsible governance at all levels;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Freeborn County Board of Commissioners hereby calls upon the Governor, the Minnesota Legislature, and all relevant state agencies to:

1. Conduct full investigations into recent fraud and mismanagement incidents impacting statewide programs;

2. Pursue recovery of fraudulently obtained funds to the fullest extent permissible under law;

3. Implement mandatory oversight reforms to prevent recurrence of such failures;

4. Reevaluate unfunded mandates that disproportionately burden county taxpayers; and

5. Commit to transparent communication with counties regarding state program failures and financial impacts.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Freeborn County expresses its deep concern regarding the continued financial, administrative, and trust burdens placed on counties due to failures occurring at the state level, and asserts that taxpayer-funded counties should not be expected to absorb additional impacts until meaningful state accountability has been achieved.

Resolution was seconded by Commissioner Kaasa.

After discussion, a vote was taken with Commissioners Severson, Kaasa and Edwin voting yay, Commissioners Shoff and Eckstrom voting nay; the Chair declared the resolution approved.

Commissioner Eckstrom went on record to state that her vote was not that she doesn't agree with the concept of the resolution but would prefer to work on it together as a Board in a Workshop where we can give more specific examples that would lead to better results.

Commissioner Severson offered the following resolution:

RESOLUTION No. 26-032, setting the 2026 Freeborn County Board meetings to the first and third Tuesday of every month beginning at 8:30 a.m.

Resolution was seconded by Commissioner Kaasa.

After discussion, a vote was taken and the Chair declared the resolution approved.

Commissioner Severson offered the following resolution:

RESOLUTION No. 26-033, setting the 2026 Board Workshops to the second Tuesday of every month, beginning at 8:30 a.m.

Resolution was seconded by Commissioner Kaasa

After discussion, a vote was taken and the Chair declared the resolution approved.

Commissioner Shoff mentioned the Workshops that were just approved, it was noted that there was no cost to the county and thinks that needs to be looked at and formulated what that cost would actually be because there is a cost to it.

Commissioner Shoff also mentioned the Federal Funding for Rural Healthcare and thinks there should be some sort of resolution on the table in two weeks going forward.

Commissioner Kaasa offered the following resolution:

RESOLUTION No. 26-034
Approval of Claims

RESOLVED, that the following claims be allowed and paid on or before January 2nd, 2026.

<u>FUND</u>	<u>NAME</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
01	General Fund	\$ 154,774.03
03	County Road & Bridge	\$ 654.48
05	Human Services	\$ 6,514.18
06	Public Health	\$ 1,434.96
31	Capital Improvement	\$ 5,250.58
	FUND TOTALS	\$ 168,628.23

Number of Claims not exceeding \$300 – 161

Dollar amount of claims not exceeding \$300 – \$14,304.94

Resolution seconded by Commissioner Severson.

After discussion, a vote was taken and the Chair declared the resolution adopted.

Chair, Commissioner Edwin adjourned the meeting at 10:50 a.m. until 8:30 a.m. on Tuesday, January 20th, 2026.

By: _____
Brad Edwin
Chair

Attest: _____
Chelsea Barrett
County Clerk