

ADJOURNED MEETING OF THE COUNTY BOARD
Tuesday March 17th, 2026

The Board of Commissioners of Freeborn County met in the Freeborn County Boardroom at 8:30 a.m. on Tuesday, March 17th, 2026. Members present: Commissioners Severson, Edwin, Kaasa and Eckstrom. Commissioner Shoff was absent.

The meeting was opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Commissioner Severson offered the following motion;

MOVED, approving the agenda with the following addition; Ratification of the Board Chair's declared emergency and Administrators' Office closure.

Motion seconded by Commissioner Kaasa.

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

Commissioner Kaasa offered the following resolution;

RESOLUTION No. 26-092
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 March 3rd, 2026 minutes;

Resolution seconded by Commissioner Eckstrom.

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

The Commissioners provided Board Committee updates.

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

Commissioner Eckstrom offered the following resolution;

RESOLUTION NO. 26-093

TITLE: Resolution to Approve the Award of Opioid Settlement Funds to Albert Lea Area Schools for AED Replacement Project

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 Area Schools submitted a proposal requesting funding to replace outdated Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) across school district facilities in order to improve emergency preparedness and response capacity for students, staff, families, and community members who utilize school facilities;

WHEREAS, the proposal outlines a project to purchase and replace fifteen AED devices with updated units that include adult and pediatric capability and standard accessories to ensure reliable, accessible life-saving equipment across school district buildings;

WHEREAS, schools serve as central community hubs hosting daily educational activities as well as evening and weekend events, and maintaining modern AED equipment ensures rapid response to sudden cardiac emergencies for individuals of all ages and backgrounds;

WHEREAS, the project supports broader community health and harm reduction goals by strengthening emergency response capacity in locations that serve large and diverse populations, including individuals who may experience barriers to timely emergency medical services;

WHEREAS, the total project budget request is \$32,000, consisting of:

- \$32,000 for the purchase and replacement of 15 AED devices, including updated technology, adult and pediatric capability, and standard accessories;

WHEREAS, the application confirms that no funding is requested for salaries, benefits, travel, training, or maintenance, and that the school district will absorb ongoing operational costs through existing safety and facility budgets;

WHEREAS, the Opioid Advisory Committee reviewed the proposal and determined that it aligns with opioid settlement guidelines by strengthening emergency response capacity in high-use community facilities and represents a responsible, one-time investment in public safety infrastructure;

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 Area Schools in the amount of \$32,000 for the AED Replacement Project.
2. The Board authorizes Freeborn County Public Health to contract with Albert Lea Area Schools for implementation of the project.

Resolution seconded by Commissioner Severson.

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

Commissioner Severson offered the following resolution;

RESOLUTION No. 26-094

Resolution to Approve the Award of Opioid Settlement Funds to the Freeborn County Sheriff's Office for the 49 North "Mental Armor" First Responder Training Program

Commissioner Eckstrom seconded the resolution

Upon discussion the following Motion to amend the resolution was offered by Commissioner Edwin to add the following language: "include the condition that any delegated training duties funded through this request be assigned only to positions that already include training responsibilities in their job descriptions.

The motion to amend was seconded by Commissioner Kaasa.

A vote was taken and the Chair declared the Motion to amend approved.

The question then recurred on the resolution as amended.

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

Commissioner Kaasa offered the following resolution:

RESOLUTION NO. 25-095

TITLE: Resolution to Approve the Amendment of the CDC Public Health Infrastructure Grant Agreement with the Minnesota Department of Health

WHEREAS, the Freeborn County Community Health Board receives funding through the CDC Public Health Infrastructure Grant through the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH);

WHEREAS, MDH has requested an amendment to allow for temporary suspension of grant funding, rather than termination, in the event of delays in federal funding or appropriations;

WHEREAS, the purpose of this funding is to recruit, retain, and train a skilled and diverse public health workforce and strengthen public health infrastructure;

WHEREAS, the Freeborn County Community Health Board currently has approximately \$60,000 remaining of the original \$136,552 grant award, with the grant expiring on November 30, 2027.

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

1. The Board hereby approves the amendment of the CDC Public Health Infrastructure Grant Agreement with the Minnesota Department of Health.
2. The Board authorizes the Public Health Director/Community Health Services Administrator to execute all responsibilities and duties associated with the CDC Public Health Grant Agreement Amendment.

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 26-096

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE GRANTING STATEWIDE AFFORDABLE HOUSING AID FUNDS TO ALBERT LEA FAMILY HOUSING LP

WHEREAS, Freeborn County has received Statewide Affordable Housing Aid from the State of Minnesota for the purpose of aiding in the development of new affordable housing in accordance to Minnesota Statute 477A.36; and

WHEREAS, Freeborn County received \$108,364 in Statewide Affordable Housing Aid in 2024; and

WHEREAS, affordable housing that is safe and well managed is an essential need for this community; and

WHEREAS, affordable housing for the workforce in upper and lower medians of income is essential for continued business development in Freeborn County; and

WHEREAS, the City of Albert Lea is the owner of certain tracts or parcels of land situated in the City of Albert Lea, County of Freeborn, Minnesota, located between Garfield Avenue and the westerly extension of Eberhart Street ("the Property"), referred to as The Albert Lea Family Apartments and currently identified as Parcel 34.485.0210 & part of 34.485.0410; and

WHEREAS, the City of Albert Lea and Albert Lea Family Housing, LP ("Grantee") have entered into a Purchase and Sale Agreement, pursuant to which Grantee will purchase property from City; and

WHEREAS, Grantee intends to convert the Property into a sixty (60) unit affordable family housing complex (the "Intended Use"); and

WHEREAS, redevelopment of an environmentally damaged property requires assistance and subsidy; and

WHEREAS, the Grantee requires Low Income Housing Tax Credit to complete this project, and is applying for said tax credits with the Minnesota Housing and Finance Authority; and

WHEREAS, application scoring improves with a financial commitment from outside sources;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Freeborn County Board of Commissioners hereby approves the granting of the 2024 Freeborn County Statewide Affordable Housing Aid funds to Albert Lea Family Housing LP.

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. 26-097, APPROVING THE AGREEMENT BETWEEN FREEBORN COUNTY AND SHELL ROCK RIVER WATERSHED DISTRICT FOR AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES (AIS) PREVENTION AID FUNDS

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. 26-098

TITLE: Low Income SSTS Cost Share Decision Authority

WHEREAS, Freeborn County has received a State approved and locally adopted the Cedar Wapsipinicon Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan, the Shell Rock Winnebago Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan, and the Le Sueur River Comprehensive Watershed Management plan; and

WHEREAS, Freeborn County has received a State approved and locally adopted Comprehensive Water Plan; and

WHEREAS, Freeborn County has a State approved and locally adopted Sanitary Sewage Treatment System Ordinance; and

WHEREAS, Freeborn County has identified a need to provide financial incentive to low income families for the replacement of non-compliant sewer systems; and

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

1. The Board hereby authorizes the Environmental Health Coordinator and Director of Environmental Services decision-making authority of low income SSTS cost share funding.

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. 26-099

TITLE: Resolution to accept a \$750 donation to the Freeborn County CVCC from Jennifer Vogt-Erickson and Jeshua Erickson

WHEREAS, the Freeborn County Department of Human Services - Crime Victims Crisis Center directly serves those who have been victims of crime, domestic violence and sexual assault; and

WHEREAS, the Freeborn County Department of Human Services - Crime Victims Crisis Center plans events and campaigns bringing community awareness to the issues of crime, domestic violence and sexual assault; and

WHEREAS, Jennifer Vogt-Erickson and Jeshua Erickson have offered a donation to the Freeborn County Department of Human Services - Crime Victims Crisis Center in the amount of \$750 to be used for services provided by the CVCC; and

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

1. the Freeborn County Department of Human Services - Crime Victims Crisis Center accepts the donation in the amount of \$750 from Jennifer Vogt-Erickson and Jeshua Erickson to be used for services provided by the CVCC

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. 26-100

TITLE: Resolution to accept a donation to DHS in the amount of \$660

WHEREAS, the Freeborn County Department of Human Services serves individuals, children and families who have been victims of abuse, neglect and crimes, who have mental health issues, 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 traditional 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 matching donation of \$660, to be used for children who have experienced abuse or neglect, living in Freeborn County from a foundation wishing to remain anonymous; and

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

1. The donation of \$660 is accepted for distribution as deemed appropriate by Freeborn County DHS Director and Supervisors to be used for children who have experienced abuse or neglect, with needs that cannot be met with traditional state, federal or local funding options.

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. 26-101

TITLE: Resolution to approve Purchase Agreement with Televox, Inc.

WHEREAS, the Freeborn County Mental Health Center utilizes automated appointment reminder software for therapy and medication management appointments; and

WHEREAS, multiple studies published in the National Library of Medicine within the National Institutes of Health have shown increased appointment attendance and reduced no-show incidents when appointment reminders are used; and

WHEREAS, additionally, the benefits of automated appointment reminder software include but are not limited to cost-effectiveness, ease of use by provider and client, convenient for reference at a later time, accuracy and integration with electronic health records; and

WHEREAS, increasing appointment attendance while reducing no-show incidents in a cost-effective manner results in increased revenue to the Freeborn County Mental Health Center; and

WHEREAS, Televox has offered a service option with higher monthly volume to better meet the needs of the Mental Health Center, resulting in fewer overage charges and a lower overall monthly cost;

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

1. The purchase agreement with Televox, Inc. be approved effective April, 2026 through March, 2027.

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. 26-102

TITLE: Approval of three Veteran's Treatment Court team members to attend the National All Rise Conference

WHEREAS, Freeborn County is the fiscal agent for the Third Judicial District Veteran's Treatment Court, and;

WHEREAS, Freeborn County receives a state allocation and a federal grant to fund this program in its entirety, and;

WHEREAS, the State of Minnesota Third Judicial District oversees the distribution of the state allocation and allows for Veteran's Treatment Court team members to attend the National Drug Court Conference each year,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Freeborn County Board of Commissioners approve the out-of-state travel request for The Honorable Jeremy Clinefelter, The Honorable Christy Hormann, and Monty Vikdal to travel to Nashville, TN to attend the All Rise Conference the week of July 20, 2026 through July 23, 2026.

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. 26-103

TITLE: Approval of three Veteran's Treatment Court team members to attend Veteran's Mentor Training

WHEREAS, Freeborn County is the fiscal agent for the Third Judicial District Veteran's Treatment Court, and;

WHEREAS, Freeborn County receives a state allocation and a federal grant to fund this program in its entirety, and;

WHEREAS, the State of Minnesota Third Judicial District oversees the distribution of the state allocation and the allocation budget includes funds for team members to attend training sessions,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Freeborn County Board of Commissioners approve the out-of-state travel request for Kati Carpenter, Don Boutelle, and Jerry Obigelo to travel to Wisconsin Dells, WI to attend the Veteran's Mentor Training held on April 23, 2026 through April 24, 2026.

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. 26-104

TITLE: Resolution Supporting Regional Designation of Songbird Trail

WHEREAS, Freeborn County has partnered with Waseca County with the goal of creating a regional trail that will allow active transportation activities such as walking and biking along a 50 mile route and shall be known as Songbird Trail; and,

WHEREAS, Freeborn County and Waseca County have worked in cooperation to create a Regional Trail Masterplan that serves as the framework for the vision of the final trail.

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

1. Freeborn County will be the lead applicant and has the authority to act as legal public sponsor for the application for Regional Trail Designation from the Greater Minnesota Parks and Trails Commission; and,
2. Freeborn County is fully aware of the information provided in the application, including long-term maintenance commitments for trail built within Freeborn County as defined in the application and related masterplan; and,
3. If Songbird trail received formal designation as a Regional Trail in Greater Minnesota by the Commission, that as lead applicant Freeborn County has the legal authority to enter into formal designation and funding agreements with the Commission for the referenced trail; and,
4. Freeborn County certifies we will comply with all applicable laws and regulations associated with the regional designation and any future grant funding agreements with our respective portions of any project.

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. 26-105

TITLE: A RESOLUTION TO ACCEPT A DONATION OF A TRAILER FROM THE RED CROSS

WHEREAS, Minnesota State Statute 465.03 allows for counties to accept donations and grants through resolution by the board with a two-thirds majority vote;

WHEREAS, the Red Cross has donated a 2006 Pace American, 14 ft, enclosed, double axle trailer with VIN: 40LUB14226P133186, to the Freeborn County Sheriff's Office (FCSO);

WHEREAS, the FCSO has use for the trailer under Emergency Management operations;

WHEREAS, the Emergency Management Director has a vehicle assigned to him that is equipped to tow a trailer of this size;

WHEREAS, the Emergency Management Director can utilize this trailer to store and haul items necessary for sheltering; such as signage, cots, dog kennels, blankets, and other necessary supplies.

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

1. The Board hereby accepts the donation of a 2006 Pace American, 14 ft enclosed, double axle trailer with VIN: 40LUB14226P133186 from the Red Cross to be utilized by the Freeborn County Sheriff's Office.

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. 26-106

TITLE: A RESOLUTION DECLARING THE EXISTENCE AND SALE OF SURPLUS COUNTY PROPERTY

WHEREAS, Freeborn County has an inventory of property;

WHEREAS, Freeborn County has established a rotation schedule for a portion of the existing inventory of property;

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

3. Freeborn County has determined that a portion of the existing inventory has completed the rotation schedule and is considered to be surplus.
4. Freeborn County, by and through its Board of Commissioners consider the following property as surplus and authorize the sale of the following surplus property:
 - 2016 Ford F-250 VIN: 1FT7W2BT2GEB62449
 - TrackNGo, 4 tracks system and all associated hardware to attach to a Ford F-250 vehicle
 - 2020 Dodge Durango VIN:1C4SDJFTLC346232

Resolution was seconded by Commissioner Severson.

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

Commissioner Kaasa offered the following motion:

MOVED, accepting the resignation of Dave Claussen, Ditch Inspector, effective May 1st, 2026

Motion was seconded by Commissioner Severson.

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

Commissioner Eckstrom offered the following:

RESOLUTION No. 26-107, to fill the vacant Ditch Inspector position

Resolution was seconded by Commissioner Kaasa.

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

The Board Chair provided the following statement. “The Minnesota Legislation recently passed a law allowing rifles to be used for the deer firearm season throughout the entire state. Along with the legislation they gave counties the ability to opt out with the passage of their own ordinance to remain a shotgun only zone. At this time, it has been decided by this Board, that we will not be acting and in doing so this county will be following current Minnesota law that allows the use of rifles for the deer firearm season. This was a very difficult decision to make knowing that a large percentage of people would not be happy, no matter which direction was taken. On behalf of the Commissioners, I want to thank everyone who shared their views and concerns, we also wish everyone who participates in this long-standing hunting tradition a safe and successful season.

Commissioner Kaasa offered the following resolution:

RESOLUTION NO. 26-108

RESOLUTION RATIFYING EMERGENCY DECLARATION AND COUNTY OFFICE CLOSURE DUE TO SEVERE WEATHER CONDITIONS

WHEREAS, severe winter weather conditions occurred in Freeborn County, Minnesota, on or about March 15, 2026, creating hazardous travel conditions and posing risks to the safety of county employees and the public; and

WHEREAS, Minnesota Statutes Chapter 12 authorizes local governments to respond to emergency conditions and take actions necessary to protect life, safety, and property; and

WHEREAS, due to the immediate nature of the weather conditions, the Chair of the Freeborn County Board declared a local emergency in order to support response activities and protect the public welfare; and

WHEREAS, in coordination with that declaration and in the interest of employee and public safety, the Freeborn County Administrator authorized the closure of Freeborn County administrative offices on March 16, 2026; and

WHEREAS, the office closure allowed county emergency response and highway personnel to address weather-related conditions without additional operational complications and reduced unnecessary travel during hazardous conditions; and

WHEREAS, the Freeborn County Board of Commissioners finds that these actions were reasonable, necessary, and taken in the best interest of public safety and the efficient operation of county government.

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

1. **Ratifies and approves the emergency declaration issued by the Chair of the Freeborn County Board on March 15, 2026.**
2. **Ratifies and approves the decision of the Freeborn County Administrator to close Freeborn County administrative offices on March 16, 2026, due to severe weather conditions.**
3. **Approves the use of paid administrative leave for county employees affected by the office closure, consistent with Freeborn County personnel policies.**

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. 26-109
Approval of Claims

RESOLVED, that the following claims be allowed and paid on or before March 20th, 2026.

<u>FUND</u>	<u>NAME</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
01	General Fund	\$ 688,583.93
03	County Road & Bridge	\$ 632,306.87
05	Human Services	\$ 224,387.31
06	Public Health	\$ 83,487.37
40	County Ditch	\$ 10,574.30
70	Trust & Agency	\$ 4,800.89
73	Payroll Clearing Fund	\$ 14,754.86
77	Recorder's Clearing	\$ 4,512.00
	FUND TOTALS	\$ 1,663,407.53

Number of Claims not exceeding \$300 – 52

Dollar amount of claims not exceeding \$300 – \$6,657.99

Resolution seconded by Commissioner Eckstrom.

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

Chair, Commissioner Edwin adjourned the meeting at 9:20 a.m. until 8:30 a.m. on Tuesday, April 7th, 2026.

By: _____
Brad Edwin
Chair

Attest: _____
Chelsea Barrett
County Clerk