ADJOURNED MEETING OF THE COUNTY BOARD
Tuesday, May 5th, 2026

The Board of Commissioners of Freeborn County met in the Freeborn County Boardroom at 8:30 a.m. on Tuesday, May 5th, 2026. Members present: Commissioners Edwin, Kaasa, Shoff and Eckstrom. Commissioner Severson was absent.

The meeting was opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Commissioner Eckstrom offered the following motion;

MOVED, approving the agenda as presented with the following addition: Under Miscellaneous Business

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. 26–146
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 April 21st, 2026 minutes;
2) Approval of Regular Full-Time Status Employees & Resignations/Retirements
3) Approval of Drainage Repairs.

Resolution seconded by Commissioner Shoff.
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 the following citizens addressed the Board:
Jeff Brinkman – Cannabis Zone
Jennifer Vogt-Erickson – Minnesota Flag
Wes Tennis – County Ditch 32

Commissioner Kaasa offered the following resolution;

RESOLUTION NO. 26-147

TITLE: Proclamation Declaring May 2026 as Mental Health Awareness Month

WHEREAS, just over one in five adults and approximately one in five adolescents in the United States live with a mental illness; and

WHEREAS, identifying and addressing mental health concerns earlier improves the quality of life for adults and children and their chance to succeed; and

WHEREAS, county residents and employees alike face increasing pressures that may impact their mental health, including work-related stress, trauma, housing and economic insecurity, and limited access to care; and

WHEREAS, Freeborn County affirms the importance and has made a commitment to providing comprehensive and community-based systems of mental health care for all residents through services provided by the Human Services & Public Health departments, behavioral health programs, the Freeborn County Mental Health Center, employee wellness initiatives and community partnerships; and

WHEREAS, Freeborn County recognizes its role as both an employer and a service provider, and is committed to fostering a culture and communities that support mental wellness, reduces stigma, and ensures access to mental health resources and support;

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

1. May 2026 is hereby proclaimed Mental Health Awareness Month in Freeborn County;
2. We call on each business, school, government agency, healthcare provider, organization and citizen to recommit our communities to increasing awareness and understanding of mental health, steps our citizens can take to protect their mental health, and the need for appropriate and accessible services for all people with mental health conditions.

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

Commissioner Shoff offered the following resolution;

RESOLUTION NO. 26-148

TITLE: Accept donation in the amount of $25 to the Freeborn County Next Step Clubhouse

WHEREAS, the mission of the Freeborn County Next Step Clubhouse is to offer a safe environment that provides companionship, acceptance and support for consumers of mental health services; and

WHEREAS, the Freeborn County Next Step Clubhouse is a restorative environment for people living with mental illness who have the right to reach their full potential, to have fulfilling and productive lives in the community and who need the support of others who believe that recovery from mental illness is possible; and

WHEREAS, the Freeborn County Next Step Clubhouse plans events and activities to promote safety, integrity and health while allowing consumers to make individual choices to develop meaningful relationships through positive interaction with others; and

WHEREAS, a donation in the amount of $25 has been received from Greg & Janelle Rasmussen in memory of Laverne Hauge has been received by the Freeborn County Next Step Clubhouse;

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

1. A donation in the amount of $25 is accepted for the Freeborn County Next Step Clubhouse

Resolution 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. 26-149 TITLE: Department of Human Services and Administration is recommending to fill the Freeborn County Office Support Specialist, Sr. – Program Specialist position
WHEREAS, the Freeborn County employees have the responsibility for providing quality service with integrity and accountability to the citizens of Freeborn County;

WHEREAS, the Freeborn County Board is the appointing authority for all county employees, and;

WHEREAS, the position of an Office Support Specialist Sr. – Program Specialist has been reviewed by the department head, Human Resources and the Administrator to assess the ongoing need for the role and the responsibilities it entails;

WHEREAS, Joy Beebe, Freeborn County Office Support Specialist, Sr. – Program Specialist, has resigned her position effective May 18th, 2026;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the board approves the filling of the vacant Freeborn County Office Support Specialist, Sr. – Program Specialist position.

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. 26-150 TITLE: Department of Human Services and Administration is recommending to fill the Freeborn County Social Worker / Case Manager CPCW position

WHEREAS, the Freeborn County employees have the responsibility for providing quality service with integrity and accountability to the citizens of Freeborn County;

WHEREAS, the Freeborn County Board is the appointing authority for all county employees, and;

WHEREAS, the position of a Social Worker / Case Manager CPCW has been reviewed by the department head, Human Resources and the Administrator to assess the ongoing need for the role and the responsibilities it entails;

WHEREAS, Cara Casterton, Freeborn County Social Worker / Case Manager CPCW, has resigned her position effective May 5th, 2026;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the board approves the filling of the vacant Freeborn County Social Worker / Case Manager CPCW position.

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

Commissioner Eckstrom offered the following resolution:

RESOLUTION 26-151
A RESOLUTION APPROVING INTERFUND TRANSFERS AND BUDGET INCREASE PURSUANT TO BOARD FUND BALANCE POLICY

WHEREAS, the County Board has adopted a Fund Balance Policy establishing guidelines for the use and transfer of fund balances to ensure sound financial management and long-term fiscal stability; and
WHEREAS, it is necessary and appropriate to transfer fund balance between funds to properly account for expenditures and align financial resources with intended purposes; and

WHEREAS, the following interfund transfers are proposed:
• General Fund (Debit): $2,124,705
• Social Service Fund (Debit): $952,718
• Road & Bridge Fund (Credit): $3,077,423

WHEREAS, the total transfers balance, with total debits equaling total credits in the amount of $3,077,423; and

WHEREAS, in accordance with County policy and Minnesota statutes, a budget increase is required to recognize the receipt and expenditure authority associated with these transfers;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the County Board that the above interfund transfers are hereby approved in accordance with the Board's Fund Balance Policy; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the budget for the General Fund increased by $2,124,705, the Human Service Fund increased by $952,718, both for Transfers in, and the Road and Bridge Fund increased by $3,077,423 for Transfers out.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the County Auditor/Treasurer is authorized and directed to make the appropriate accounting entries to effectuate these transfers and budget adjustments.

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:

SELCO – FREEBORN COUNTY AGREEMENT FOR LIBRARY SERVICE
Resolution 26- 152

This Agreement made and entered into effective, by and among Southeastern Libraries Cooperating, a non-profit corporation as organized under Minnesota Statutes 317A, also designated as a regional public library system as recognized in Minnesota Statutes 134.20 (hereinafter referred to as "SELCO"), the County of Freeborn, State of Minnesota (hereinafter referred to as the "County") and the City of Albert Lea operating a public library established under Minnesota Statutes 134.08, Subd. 3 (hereinafter referred to as the "Library").

R E C I T A L S:

A. The State of Minnesota requires the County, pursuant to the provisions of Minnesota Statutes 134.34 and 134.341 to participate in a regional public library system, as assigned by the Minnesota Department of Education.

B. SELCO is a regional public library system created pursuant to Minnesota statutes and is designated to serve the County.

C. SELCO and the Library have the authority and responsibility to determine library services to be provided to the County's residents, as per this agreement.

D. SELCO, the County and the Library wish to set forth their relative responsibilities in connection with their relationship under Minnesota statutes. All parties shall provide employment and services to all people without discrimination and shall comply with all federal, state, and local laws, or ordinances, rules, regulations, and executive orders pertaining to unlawful discrimination on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, or status with regard to public assistance, disability, sexual orientation, or age.

E. The Board of Commissioners of the County has the continuing authority and responsibility to determine how to distribute the County property tax dollars, a portion of which is to pay for public library services.

NOW, THEREFORE, the parties hereto agree as follows:

1. The County will participate in SELCO.

2. The County will levy and collect funds on lands not otherwise taxed for library services for the support of library services in the County in accordance with Minnesota Statutes 134.34.

3. The County agrees to provide funding to the Library at levels determined through negotiation.

4. The Library and SELCO shall provide library service to the residents of the County at no additional fee beyond those imposed on all library users. By way of illustration, these services may include:

   a. Onsite use of all library materials, equipment and resources, including public access Internet computers;

   b. Onsite and remote access to licensed online electronic resources;

   c. Checkout/circulation privileges for all circulating materials. These may include, but are not necessarily limited to, such items as books, audio and video media, and magazines;

   d. Walk-in privileges at Minnesota public libraries;

e. Interlibrary loan service, accessing items in the 11 county area, as well as statewide access to MnLINK;

f. Access to children's services including school visits, preschool storytimes and summer library programs;

g. Onsite reference service;

h. Ease of return – check out material from any library and return to any SELCO library;

i. Programs for various age groups; and Page 1 of 3

j. Commitment to cooperate with other community groups.

5. The County shall process equal semiannual payments for distribution to the Library.

6. SELCO shall collect necessary data from the County and the Library to report to the Minnesota Department of Education by July 1 of each year. The Commissioner of Education will certify to the County and the Library the minimum level of support required by Minnesota Statutes 134.34.

7. The Library agrees to provide the County and SELCO with statistical data based on information gathered by the Minnesota Department of Education as referenced in Minnesota Statutes 134.13.

8. The County will appoint a representative to the SELCO Board of Directors pursuant to Minnesota Statutes 134.341. A vacancy in this position shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointment was made.

9. The term of this Agreement shall be for a period of three (3) years, January 2027-December 31, 2029 . The parties agree to negotiate additional terms in good faith, beginning a minimum of six (6) months prior to the termination date. If the parties fail to complete negotiations before the expiration of this Agreement, this Agreement shall remain in effect on a month-to-month basis until such negotiations are completed.

10. This Agreement may be terminated by written consent of the Parties.

a. By written notice from SELCO to the County with notification sent by registered mail, return receipt requested, six (6) months prior to such termination;

b. By written notice from the County to SELCO with notification sent by registered mail, return receipt requested, six (6) months prior to such termination.

10. This document states the entire Agreement among the parties about its subject matter. No agreement affecting the subject matter of this Agreement shall be entered into by any of the Parties, unless all Parties are signatories to such agreement. This Agreement may only be changed, modified, or amended through a written instrument signed by all of the parties to it expressly referencing this Agreement. Nothing in this Agreement is intended to limit or restrict County participation in individual city projects related to community infrastructure which may benefit the Library.

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:

PHASED RETIREMENT AND SEPARATION AGREEMENT FOR FINANCIAL MANAGER
RESOLUTION 26-153

It is my understanding that the County and the Financial Manager have been in discussions related to his upcoming retirement. As a long-term incumbent in a key position, the County has identified a value in a transition approach to the eventual separation. This transition approach allows the County to utilize the Financial Manger as part of the upcoming budget development process and related financial reviews while at the same time providing an asset during the recruitment and eventual onboarding of the individual who will be taking primary responsibility for the financial duties at the County.
The agreements related to this wind down approach are in two forms: 1) the phased retirement option under PERA; and 2) a separation agreement.
Phased Retirement Option (PRO)

This is an option specifically authorized by the Public Employees' Retirement Association that allows PERA Coordinated members age 62 and over to begin drawing their PERA pension while gradually cutting back on work hours instead of formally resigning from their position. Participation is at the discretion of the employer. To be eligible for the PRO, the employee must meet these requirements:

- be an active Coordinated member (not an elected official)
- be age 62 or older
- hold the same position with the same employer (last active with)
- be immediately eligible for a retirement pension from the General Plan (Coordinated or Basic members)
- have worked at least 1,044 hours in each of the five preceding years in a position covered by PERA
- reduce their regular work schedule by 25% in each pay period under the PRO and work less than 1,044 hours in a one-year period
- not currently receive PERA benefits
- be ineligible for state employee post-retirement option programs.

In the present case, the phased retirement program is consistent with the wind down and transition plan for the Financial Manager. Aside from the continued employment costs for the continued services, entering into the PRO does not have a negative budget impact.
Additional information related to this program is at https://mnpera.org/members/plan-retirement/phased-retirement-option

Separation Agreement
The Separation Agreement releases all claims that the Financial Manager has against the County related to his employment. As a result, there needs to be specific consideration associated with this release of all claims. In the present case, the consideration is entering into the PRO and providing a six-month separation payment. In addition, the employee will receive severance benefits outlined in County policy.
Recommended actions:

1. Motion and Second to authorize and direct the Board Chair and County Administrator to enter into a phased retirement option (PRO) agreement with the incumbent pursuant to the Public Employees' Retirement Association and enter into a separate wind down/separation agreement and release of all claims.

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

Commissioner Kaasa offered the following motion:

MOVED, approving the County Administrator to request the City of Albert Lea to install 2-hour parking signs on College Street.

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. 26-154 TITLE:
Administration is recommending to fill the Deputy County Administrator / CFO position

WHEREAS, the Freeborn County employees have the responsibility for providing quality service with integrity and accountability to the citizens of Freeborn County;

WHEREAS, the Freeborn County Board is the appointing authority for all county employees, and;

WHEREAS, Pat Paquin, Freeborn County Finance Manager, has retired from his position effective May 5th, 2026;

WHEREAS, the County has identified a need to restructure and enhance its financial and administrative leadership functions; and

WHEREAS, the Deputy County Administrator / Chief Financial Officer (CFO) position is a newly established role intended to support these functions;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Freeborn County Board of Commissioners hereby approves the establishment of the Deputy County Administrator / Chief Financial Officer (CFO) position and authorizes the recruitment and hiring for said position.

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 with Commissioner Kaasa and Eckstrom and Edwin voting yay, Commissioner Shoff voting nay; the Chair declared the resolution approved.

Commissioner Shoff offered the following resolution:

RESOLUTION No. 26-155
Approval of Claims

RESOLVED, that the following claims be allowed and paid on or before May 8th, 2026.

FUND	NAME	AMOUNT
01	General Fund	$ 575,287.73
03	County Road & Bridge	$ 460,953.40
05	Human Services	$ 225,676.10
06	Public Health	$ 94,240.74
07	Opioid Settlement Funds	$ 2,742.64
31	Capital Improvements	$ 29,256.70
40	County Ditch	$ 79,890.05
70	Trust & Agency	$ 16,963.53
73	Payroll Clearing Fund	$ 23,973.42
74	Turtle Creek Watershed	$ 9,259.76
	FUND TOTALS	$1,518,244.07

Number of Claims not exceeding $300 – 144
Dollar amount of claims not exceeding $300 – $12,183.08
Resolution seconded by Commissioner Kaasa.
After discussion, a vote was taken and the Chair declared the resolution adopted.

Chair, Commissioner Edwin adjourned the meeting at 9:45 a.m. until 8:30 a.m. on Tuesday, May 19th, 2026.

By: ______________________________
Brad Edwin
Chair

Attest: ______________________________
Chelsea Barrett
County Clerk