

Bridgeport, Nebraska
Tuesday, January 27, 2026

The Morrill County Board of Commissioners met in an open and public regular meeting at 7:30 A.M., Tuesday, January 27, 2026 in the Commissioners' room at the Courthouse. Chairperson Metz announced that the Open Meetings Law was posted on the wall of the Commissioners' room. The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance. Notice of such meeting having been published in the Bridgeport News-Blade and Bayard Transcript on January 22, 2026. Copies of the Agenda, kept continuously current, were available from the County Clerk's office and were e-mailed to each of the Commissioners on January 22, 2026. On roll call Commissioners Jeff Metz, Chairman, Susanna Batterman and Josh Schmidt were present. Absent: None. Some of the Elected and appointed Officials were also present. Candace D. Panas, County Clerk, recorded the proceedings of the meeting.

Motion was made by Batterman, seconded by Schmidt, to approve the Agenda, and the minutes of the January 13, 2026 meeting. Yeas: Batterman, Schmidt and Metz. Nays: None. Motion carried.

There was no correspondence.

The Commissioners reviewed the following claims:

GENERAL FUND

Accelerated Receivables Solutions, Garnishment, \$230.72; American Family Life Insurance, Insurance, \$1,730.47; Ameritas Life Insurance Corp, Retirement, \$9,078.18; Allo Communications, Service, \$77.51; AT & T Mobility, Service, \$390.77; Bayard Transcript, Publishing, \$177.76; Black Hills Energy, Service, \$671.88; Bomgaars Supply Inc, Repairs & Supplies, \$22.49; Bridgeport News-Blade, Publishing, \$6.34; Capital Business Systems, Data Processing Costs, \$137.25; Century Business Products, Supplies, \$209.71; Century Link, Service, \$80.75; Charter Communications, Service, \$169.99; City of Bridgeport, Service, \$2,812.22; Colonial Life, Insurance, \$200.85; Dept of Revenue, State Tax, \$3,903.40; Docu-Shred LLC, Shred, \$175.00; Douglas, Kelly, Ostdiek, Snyder, Etc., Court Appointed Counsel, \$420.00; Eakes Office Solutions, Supplies, \$522.16; Holly Hjelmstad, Phone, \$40.00; Susan Kelly, Phone, \$40.00; Medical Air Services Assn, Insurance, \$476.00; MIPS, Service, \$102.00; Morrill County Clerk, Deposit Slips, \$63.64; Morrill County Court, \$17.00; Morrill County Health Plan, Emp Share, \$2,377.79; Morrill County Health Plan, Insurance, \$35,156.71; Morrill County Health Plan, Vision, \$504.40; Morrill County Highway Dept, Fuel, \$339.20; NACREC, Dues, \$50.00; NE Supreme Court, Law Books, \$273.15; NE Child Support, Child Support, \$274.16; \$236.31; Nossaman Pettitt Law Firm, PC LLO, Court Appointed Council, \$966.68; Karen Petersen, Mileage, \$49.00; Plummer Insurance, Notary Bond, \$41.08; Karen Petersen, Mileage, \$126.70; Platte Valley Bank, HSA Accts, \$797.91; Platte Valley Bank, Federal Withholding, Social Security & Medicare, \$14,734.51; Principal Life, Life Insurance, \$261.59; Snell Service Inc., Repairs, \$780.00; State of NE-Dept of Admin, Data Processing Costs & Equip, \$1,038.60; U S Bank, Data Processing Equip, Meals, Fuel, Dues, Uniforms, Board of Prisoners, Law Enforcement Costs, Supplies & Misc, \$4927.03; Vision Care Direct, Insurance, \$88.32; Xesi Document Solutions, Equip Lease, \$411.77; General Employees, Salaries, \$72,904.65

ROAD/BRIDGE FUND

American Family Life Insurance, Insurance, \$756.61; Ameritas Life Insurance Corp, Retirement, \$3,810.04; B & C Steel Corp, Steel Products, \$670.89; Bomgaars Supply Inc, Supplies, Repairs & Tools, \$371.76; Dana Cadwallader, Phone, \$40.00; Century Link, Service, \$137.51; Charter Communications, Service, \$119.99; City of Bayard, Service, \$527.69; Colonial Life Insurance, Insurance, \$22.16; Dept of Rev, State Tax, \$1,862.94; Dooley Oil Inc, Oil & Supplies, \$2758.42; Fat Boys Tire & Auto, Tires, \$252.00; Ronald G. Franklin, Phone, \$40.00; Bryan Hoerler, Phone, \$40.00; Lawson Products Inc. Supplies, \$8.37; Medical Air Service Assoc, Insurance, \$238.00; Justin Mitchell, Phone, \$40.00; Morrill County Health Plan, Emp Share, \$1,139.47; Morrill County Health Plan, Health Insurance, \$18,642.44; Morrill County Health Plan, Vision, \$271.60; Platte Valley Bank, HSA Accts, \$625.00; Platte Valley Bank, Federal Withholding, Social Security & Medicare, \$7,032.11; Mary Pohl, Gravel, \$1,314.40; Powerplan, Supplies, \$1,434.63; Principal Life, Life Insurance, \$128.62; Quill LLC, Supplies & Equip., \$107.09; Thompson Glass, Repairs, \$995.67; US Bank, Supplies, \$89.74; Vision Care Direct, Vision Ins., \$41.40; WPCI, Testing Fees, \$40.00, David Zwirn, Phone, \$40.00; Road Employees, Salaries, \$33,867.11.

HIGHWAY BRIDGE BUYBACK FUND

B & C Steel Corporation, Supplies, \$5572.00; Bomgaars Supply Inc., Supplies, \$129.98.

MORRILL COUNTY HEALTH FUND

Morrill County Health Plan, Health Claims, \$83,024.79.

911 FUND

Century Link, Service, \$182.58.

COURTHOUSE BUILDING FUND

US Bank, Supplies, \$142.76.

Motion was made by Batterman, seconded by Schmidt, that the above claims, after having been examined by the Commissioners, be approved and checks drawn on the various funds, delinquent personal property taxes deducted where owing. Yeas: Batterman, Schmidt and Metz. Nays: None. Motion carried.

The following 2025 monthly reports were received, reviewed and placed on file: December – I Cardenas, Co Sheriff, C Panas, Co Clerk, L McCoy, Co Treasurer and S Kelly, Clerk of District Court.

The December minutes of the Morrill/Scotts Bluff County Extension meeting were received, reviewed and placed on file.

The January minutes of the Veterans’ Service Board meeting were received, reviewed and placed on file.

The Quarterly report for the Highway Department was received, reviewed and placed on file.

The December Financial Report from the Hospital was received from Josh Schmidt.

Board of Equalization

See separate minutes for Board of Equalization.

Loretta McCoy, County Treasurer, presented a resolution to transfer \$50,000.00 into the Road Fund. Motion was made by Schmidt, seconded by Batterman, to approve the transfer and to adopt the following resolution:

RESOLUTION #2026-04
TRANSFER OF FUNDS

WHEREAS, the Road Fund monies were put into the General Fund at levy time, it is necessary to transfer those monies into the proper funds. The Morrill County Board of Commissioners orders the County Treasurer to transfer the funds in the amount of \$50,000.00 into the Road fund

PASSED AND APPROVED this 27th, day of January, 2026.

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

/s/Jeff Metz
Chairman

/s/Susanna Batterman
Board Member

/s/Josh Schmidt
Board Member

(S E A L)

ATTEST:

/s/Candace D. Panas
County Clerk-

Yeas: Schmidt, Batterman and Metz. Nays: None. Motion carried.

Bryan Hoerler, County Weed Superintendent, presented the annual report for the Weed. He reported the Weed Authority Board Roster has been updated and reviewed the activity report and control plan. Bryan noted an increase in Canada Thistle acres from 90 to 393 acres compared to last year, and an increase of 51 acres of phragmites. He also reviewed noxious weed petitioned by the county, including Field Bindweed and Scotch Thistle, noting that Field Bindweed is not a statewide noxious weed. Motion

was made by Batterman, seconded by Schmidt, to approve the Annual Weed Report and authorized Chairman Metz to sign. Yeas: Batterman, Schmidt & Metz. Nays: None. Motion carried.

Chairman Metz reported an opening on the Planning and Zoning Board due to the retirement of Kevin Stuart. He recommended appointing Steve Erdman to fill the vacancy, noting he is from the same area and agreed to serve. Motion was made by Schmidt, seconded by Batterman, to appoint Steve Erdman to the Planning and Zoning Board. Yeas: Schmidt & Metz. Nays: Batterman. Motion carried.

Candace Panas, County Clerk, reported difficulties transferring insurance accounts and accessing online portals that remain under Kathy Brandt's name. It was stated that formal action reflected in the meeting minutes is required to document the change in order to remove Kathy from accounts and grant Candace Panas necessary access and authority. Motion was made by Batterman, seconded by Schmidt to remove Kathleen Brandt from all County financial accounts, insurance and benefit plans, and to designate Candace Panas as the authorized signer and administrator to those accounts. Yeas: Batterman, Schmidt and Metz. Nays: None. Motion carried.

Gail Beyer, Mayor of Bridgeport, discussed the need for an updated and interactive website to support tourism and meet the requirements of the Downtown Revitalization Grant. It was noted that while some cities receive large grant awards, Bridgeport currently does not have a website that meets the necessary standards. Gail reported that she has independently developed an interactive website titled Historical Bridgeport Nebraska, which she has been funding out of pocket. She explained that the website focuses on promoting tourism by highlighting the historical aspects of Bridgeport, local businesses, landmarks and visitor experiences. The website will include links to businesses, landmark information, videos to better inform visitors of available attractions and encourage extended stays. The estimated cost to complete and maintain the website was discussed and Costa Lapaseotes would charge approximately \$2,500 annually plus monthly fees and domain.

Gail also reported that Camp Clarke has approximately 1,100 followers on its Facebook page, with recent post receiving strong views about the 150th Camp Clarke Days. She stated that social media continues to be an effective tool for promoting tourism and events as well. Gail provided overview of upcoming Camp Clarke Day events, noting that events are scheduled throughout the week except for Monday. Gail Beyer and Celine Hall proposed activities for Camp Clarke Days and requested visitor committee funding to support events, including a family scavenger hunt, bouncy houses and multiple nights of live bands. Gail and Celine stated that Camp Clarke tourism efforts will want to apply for \$5000 from Visitors funds to support planned activities.

Susanna Batterman, County Commissioner, reported receiving citizen concerns regarding the Courthouse and Jail Rock lighting project, noting several property owners submitting letters opposing the project. It was mentioned that the application process for funding to organizations was not established as intended when approved back in May, limiting organization ability to apply for funds to promote Morrill County. She stated one citizen had called the Historical Society and they have no formal position yet and would need to assess whether lighting could damage the rocks' historical value.

Jack Berg, Visitor's Committee Chair, reported he has been in contact with the State Historical Society regarding Courthouse and Jail Rock lighting project and they support it. Jack pointed out that some letter writers were disappointed he had not contacted them earlier. He explained he had spoken with resident that live close to Chimney Rock and they had no complaints and enjoyed the view but apologized that he didn't reach out to residents sooner. He reported that Historical Society report indicated an increase in registrations from 300 in 2024 to 1,114 in 2025, including participants from 12 foreign countries. He has worked with Adam Electric to bid on installing LED lighting, estimating electricity costs at approximately \$220 per month, which could be incorporated into the budget. He stated he would personally fund security cameras to address vandalism concerns. The county approved use of \$40,000 from the budget for the project back in the May meeting but remaining funds are to be secured from other sources. He expressed desire to help any organization that needs funds to promote Morrill County and encourages applications.

Tourism fund expenditures were discussed, including paying the county to maintain road, the three museums, and a magazine. Commissioners reviewed the funding application and expressed concern that the April 30 deadline would not allow sufficient time for Camp Clarke Days and Pioneer Days applicants. The application deadlines were revised to March 1 and October 31. Motion was made by Batterman, seconded by Schmidt, to approve application date changes and applications process. Yeas: Batterman, Schmidt & Metz. Nays: None. Motion carried.

Motion was made by Batterman, seconded by Schmidt to go into Executive Session at 9:09 A.M., in accordance with Ne. Statute 884-1410(1) for protection of the public interest and for the prevention of needless injury to the reputation of an individual. Yeas: Batterman, Schmidt and Metz. Nays: None. Motion carried. The board asked that the County Attorney, Kirk Fellhoelter, Loretta McCoy, County Treasurer and Lisa Peters, HR Administrator remain. Motion was made by Schmidt, seconded by

Batterman, to return to regular session at 9:44 A.M., with no action taken. Yeas: Schmidt, Batterman and Metz. Nays: None. Motion carried.

Chairman Metz reported that the Fair Board requested approval to hire architect Rod Laucomer to complete the exhibit hall project at the fairgrounds. He notes Laucomer's extensive experience and referenced local projects including First Baptist Church, Bridgeport Community Church and Morrill County Hospital Health Clinic. Kirk Fellhoelter, County Attorney, revised the agreement to set a maximum annual fee not to exceed \$10,000, with an initial down payment of \$2,500 and monthly payments of \$1,000. Motion was made by Batterman, seconded by Schmidt, to approve and sign contract with Rod Laucomer for purpose of the exhibit hall construction. Yeas: Batterman, Schmidt & Metz. Nays: None. Motion carried.

Chairman Metz reported that interviews for the Assessor position were held on the 15th and stated both resumes and interviews were very impressive. He thanked each applicant for applying, noting that the Assessor is not always a favorable position. During public discussion, Metz expressed deep gratitude to Allison Rauch and the Department of Revenue for stepping in and helping us. He stated his desire to restore integrity to the office and emphasized that customer service is the top priority for all county offices, as they work for the taxpayers who fund them. He indicated that he was in John Erickson's corner and thanked Jeanne for her commitment, noting she has been a valuable asset to the Assessor's office. Batterman echoed appreciation for Jeanne and stated her decision was also John Erickson but hopes that Jeanne stays with the county. Lastly, Schmidt stated he carefully considered the decision and thanked both for applying. He was impressed by John's goals for the office. Motion was made by Schmidt, seconded by Batterman, to appoint John Erickson to the position of Morrill County Assessor, beginning February 1, 2026. Yeas: Schmidt, Batterman & Metz. Nays: None. Motion carried.

A Subdivision of property was received for KLSJ, LLC. Motion was made by Schmidt, seconded by Batterman, to approve the subdivision and to adopt the following resolution:

RESOLUTION #2026-05

RESOLUTION APPROVING INSTRUMENT EFFECTING SUBDIVISION TO REAL ESTATE

BE IT RESOLVED, that the present record owners, KLSJ, LLC, a Nebraska Limited Liability Company, have applied for approval of an instrument effecting the subdivision of the below-described premises located in Morrill County, Nebraska.

NOW, THEREFORE, PURSUANT TO Sec. 23-372 R.R.S., et seq., the Board of County Commissioners of Morrill County, Nebraska, does hereby authorize and permit subdivision of the following described real estate in Morrill County, Nebraska:

A TRACT OF LAND SITUATED IN GOVERNMENT LOT 1 OF SECTION 17, TOWNSHIP 19 NORTH, RANGE 49 WEST OF THE 6TH PRINCIPAL MERIDIAN, MORRILL COUNTY, NEBRASKA, MORE PARTICULARLY DESCRIBED AS FOLLOWS:

BEGINNING AT THE NORTHWEST CORNER OF SAID SECTION 17; THENCE, ALONG THE WEST LINE OF SAID SECTION, S02°07'13"W FOR A DISTANCE OF 194.77 FEET, SAID POINT BEING THE TRUE POINT OF BEGINNING; THENCE, CONTINUING ALONG SAID WEST LINE, S02°07'13"W FOR A DISTANCE OF 137.18 FEET; THENCE, S82°46'32"E FOR A DISTANCE OF 161.64 FEET; THENCE, S52°34'36"E FOR A DISTANCE OF 89.39 FEET; THENCE, S87°34'22"E FOR A DISTANCE OF 418.85 FEET; THENCE, N05°56'32"E TO A POINT OF INTERSECTION WITH THE CENTERLINE OF COUNTY ROAD 88, AS CONSTRUCTED AND MAINTAINED, BEING A DISTANCE OF 121.94 FEET; THENCE, ALONG THE CENTERLINE OF SAID ROAD, N76°33'55"W FOR A DISTANCE OF 33.91 FEET; THENCE, ALONG A 3000.00 FEET RADIUS CURVE TO THE LEFT, SUPPORTING A CENTRAL ANGLE OF 05°36'33", CHORD BEING N79°22'12"W FOR 293.57 FEET, FOR AN ARC DISTANCE OF 293.69 FEET; THENCE, N82°10'28"W FOR A DISTANCE OF 339.01 FEET TO THE TRUE POINT OF BEGINNING, CONTAINING AN AREA OF 2.28 ACRES, MORE OR LESS, OF WHICH 0.58 ACRES ARE CONTAINED IN COUNTY ROAD RIGHT-OF-WAY.

NOTE: Any driveway, grading or culvert to be at owner expense.

NOTE: The Morrill County Zoning Administrator has reviewed the zoning and land use and has determined its compliance with Morrill County Zoning Regulations.

NOTE: Publication of this document for the newspapers and filing fees at owner expense.

Passed and approved this 27 day of January, 2026.

/s/Jeff Metz
Chairperson, County Board

/s/Susanna Batterman
Member, County Board

/s/Josh Schmidt

ATTEST:
/s/Candace D. Panas, County Clerk

The Board reported on meetings they had attended. Batterman reported she attended a Zoom meeting with Candace Meredith regarding an upcoming district meeting, including plans for a commissioner’s breakout on community Bicentennial celebrations. She also attended the Region 1 Behavioral Health meeting, where crisis stabilization progress and juvenile detention center were discussed. Schmidt reported on Hospital and Veterans Board meetings, noting 130 attendees at recent Veterans event and discussion of County Government Day. Upcoming events include a pancake feed on April 7 at the American Legion, a Memorial Day hotdog feed on May 25 at Veterans Park behind Sonny’s and a July 4 hamburger feed. The board also discussed moving Tim Marquez from hourly to salaried. Metz reported attending a Fair Board and AFAN (Alliance for Ag in Nebraska) meeting, noting that AFAN main priority is livestock development in counties and help producers get the proper permits.

During public comment, Milo Cardenas, County Sheriff informed them of why they discussed moving Tim Marquez to a salaried position due to uncertainty about the time clocks situation. Metz explained the county was unaware of the expensive monthly fees associated with the time clocks, so the clocks were returned to obtain a refund, and an alternative solution will be explored. County Government Day was discussed and a tentative date of April 8 was proposed. The Judge and local schools will need to be contacted to determine whether the date works for all parties.

Sue Wiggins commented on hiring practices, stating that the county should aim to hire experienced individuals best suited for positions. She expressed disagreement with the decision not to appoint Jeanne as Assessor as she has performed the job for many years. She stated that during the interviews one thing that John Erickson stated that she disagrees with was he will be open with the public, so everyone knows what is going on. She stated he does not do that in his own business, during the recall petition drive he would not allow us to put our information out there and she doesn’t think he’s best for the job.

There being no further discussion, Chairman Metz adjourned the meeting at 10:17 A.M. Next meeting will be on Tuesday, February 10, 2026.

/s/Jeff Metz,Chairman

ATTEST
/s/Candace D. Panas,County Clerk

Tuesday, January 27, 2026

The Morrill County Board of Equalization met in an open and public regular meeting at 7:45 A.M., Tuesday, January 27, 2026 in the Commissioners' room at the Courthouse. Chairperson Metz announced that the Open Meetings Law was posted on the wall of the Commissioners' room. Notice of such meeting having been published in the Bridgeport News-Blade and the Bayard Transcript on January 22, 2026. Copies of the Agenda, kept continuously current, were available from the County Clerk's office and were e-mailed to each of the Commissioners on January 22, 2026. On roll call Commissioners Jeff Metz, Chairman, Susanna Batterman and Josh Schmidt were present. Absent: None. Rose Nelson and Sue Wiggins were present. Candace D. Panas, County Clerk, recorded the proceedings of the meeting.

Motion was made by Batterman, seconded by Schmidt, to enter into Board of Equalization, according to Ne Statute #77-1233-04(6) at 7:42 A.M. Yeas: Batterman, Schmidt and Metz. Nays: None. Motion carried.

Chairman Metz, opened the public hearing at 7:46 A.M. for Vehicle Tax Exemption. Loretta McCoy, County Treasurer, presented an Exemption for Bridgeport Church of Christ. Hearing no public comment, Chairman Metz close the Public Hearing at 7:47 A.M. Motion was made by Batterman, seconded by Schmidt, to approve the Vehicle Tax Exemption. Yeas: Batterman, Schmidt and Metz. Nays: None. Motion carried.

Motion was made by Schmidt, seconded by Batterman, to return to regular session at 7:48 A.M. Yeas: Schmidt, Batterman and Metz. Nays: None. Motion carried.

/s/Jeff Metz, Chairman

ATTEST:

/s/Candace D. Panas, County Clerk

