

Bridgeport, Nebraska
Tuesday, January 13, 2026

The Morrill County Board of Commissioners met in an open and public regular meeting at 7:30 A.M., Tuesday, January 13, 2026 in the Commissioners' room at the Courthouse. Chairperson Metz announced that the new 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 Bayard Transcript and the Bridgeport News-Blade on January 8, 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 8, 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 present. Candace D. Panas, County Clerk, recorded the proceedings of the meeting.

Motion was made by Batterman, seconded by Schmidt, to approve the Agenda with the deletion of Board of Equalization and approve the minutes of the December 23, 2025 meeting. Yeas: Batterman, Schmidt and Metz. Nays: None. Motion carried.

Correspondence was received and read.

The Commissioners reviewed the following claims:

GENERAL FUND

Accelerated Receivables Solution, Garnishment, \$230.72; Allo Communications, Service, \$1,296.34; American Family Life, Insurance, \$1722.63; Ameritas Life Ins. Corp, Retirement, \$9153.90; Brennan Andrew, Phone & Reimbursement, \$61.44; Black Hills Energy, Service, \$304.14; Bridgeport News-Blade, Publishing, \$285.91; Capital Business Systems Inc, Equip Lease, \$137.25; Ismael Cardenas, Phone & Fuel, \$84.85; Cenex Fleet Fueling, Fuel, \$2693.12; Century Business Products, Supplies, \$29.61; City of Bridgeport, Service, \$124.74; Brandon Collins-Flamig, Phone, \$40.00; Colonial Life, Insurance, \$217.89; Timothy Conrad, Phone, \$40.00; Culligan of Scottsbluff, Service, \$148.00; Dept of Rev-Property Assmt Div, Contract Labor, \$3774.97; Eakes Office Solutions, Supplies & Lease, \$63.26; Fairfield By Marriott, Lodging, \$499.80; Shauna Faessler, Phone, \$40.00; Daniel Flores, Phone, \$40.00; Grand Slam Solutions LLC, Contract Labor, \$1,500.00; Hampton Inn, Lodging, \$374.85; Holiday Inn, Lodging, \$374.85; Hometown Leasing, Equip Lease, \$86.68; Ideal Linen, Jail Laundry, \$231.26; Kaiser Tire, Repairs, \$108.99; Susan Kelly, Supplies & Mileage, \$721.60; Andrew Lawson, Phone, \$40.00; Legacy Cooperative, Repairs, \$173.01; Audrey M. Long, Public Defender, \$4,727.44; Tim Marquez, Phone, \$40.00; Loretta McCoy Co-Treasurer, Taxes, \$28.86; Seth McLaughlin, Phone, \$40.00; Meritain Health, Insurance, \$35,304.49; Jeff Metz, Phone, \$40.00; Microfilm Imaging Systems, Equip Rental, \$75.00; MIPS Inc, Data Processing Costs, \$3188.86; Morrill County Health Plan, Emp Share, \$2377.79; Mobius Communication, Service, \$58.50; Morrill County Community Hospital, Board of Prisoners & Medical-Prisoners, \$2,645.00; Morrill County Court, Court Costs, \$289.00; Morrill County Highway Dept, supplies, \$83.88; National Sheriff's Asso., Dues, \$129.00; NE Association of County Treasurers, Dues, \$75.00; NE District Court Clerks Asso., Dues, \$50.00; NE Child Support, Child Support, \$274.16; NE Total Office, Supplies, \$187.22; NE Weed Control Assoc., Registration, \$175.00; Nein Pharmacy, Meds, \$19.99; Candace Panas, Phone, \$40.00; Zeth Patterson, Phone, \$40.00; Patty Wax General Service, Mngr, \$1,000.00; PEAC Solutions, Equip Lease, \$606.43; Jason Perkins, Phone, \$40.00; Platte Valley Bank, HAS Accts, \$797.91; Platte Valley Bank, Federal Withholding, Social Security & Medicare, \$14,818.75; Quadiant Leasing, Service, \$1905.00; Region 21 Emergency, Dues, \$15,616.00; Retchless Technologies LLC, Contract Labor, \$3,000.00; Travis Rodak, Rent, \$675.00; Sonny's Super Foods, supplies, \$58.22; State of NE, Dept of Admin, Service, \$537.60; Story Co. Sheriff, Service, \$14.00; Thomson Reuters – West, Repairs, \$416.00; Tru By Hilton, Lodging, \$1,1324.55; Vision Care Direct, Vision Ins., \$49.68; Wex Bank, Fuel, \$1,337.34; General Employee Salaries, \$52,073.72.

ROAD/BRIDGE FUND

Accerlerated Receivables Solutions, Garnishment, \$116.06; Allo Communications, Service, \$109.54; American Family Life, Insurance, \$670.03; Ameritas Life Ins. Corp, Retirement, \$3810.04; Bayard Automotive LLC, Repairs & Tools, \$684.01; Black Hills Energy, Service, \$3210.22; Bridgeport News-Blade, Publishing, \$22.96; Capital Business Systems, \$233.31; Caterpillar Financial Services Crop, Equip Lease, \$5,153.05; Century Link, Service, \$142.13; City of Bayard, Service, \$547.46; City of Bridgeport, Service, \$454.12; Colonial Life, Insurance, \$22.16; Cranmore Fire Protection, Repairs, \$1,490.00; Trevor Evans, Repairs, \$479.61; Floyd's Truck Center, Repairs, \$2,207.48; Harbor Freight, Tools, \$99.99; Heigel's Field Repair, Repairs, \$2,825.00; Ideal Linen, Supplies, \$263.68; Inland Truck Parts & Service, Repairs, \$347.60; Kaiser Tire, Tires, \$80.00; Koke's Auto, Repairs, \$232.97; Lawson Products, Supplies, \$134.34; Lee's Service Inc., Repairs, \$230.08; Matheson Tri-Gas Inc., Supplies, \$361.58, Meritain Health, Insurance, \$17,410.28; NACO, Morrill County Health Fund, Emp Share, \$1,139.47; NACO, Registration, \$160.00; NE Dept of Revenue/Motor Division, Service, \$791.00; NMC, LLC, Repairs, \$155,721.77; Platte Valley Bank, HSA Accts, \$625.00; Platte Valley Bank, Federal

Withholding, Social Security & Medicare, \$7,045.35; Quill LLC, Supplies & Equip, \$36.78; Rocky Mountain Air Solutions, Supplies, \$341.50; Sapp Bros. Inc, Fuel, \$15,947.59; Steve's Truck & Equip., Supplies, \$70.00; Tru By Hilton, Lodging, \$374.85; Village of Broadwater, Service, \$139.70; Vision Care Direct, Vision Ins., \$41.40; 21st Century Equip LLC, Repairs, \$0.56; Road Employee Salaries, \$24,387.58.

BRIDGE BUYBACK FUND

Gary Wagoner, Road Project, \$7,545.00.

W911 FUND

Century Link, Service, \$488.28; Frontier, Service, \$34.19.

Motion was made by Batterman, seconded by Schmidt who abstained from claim for Lee's Service, that the above claims 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.

Board of Equalization

No Agenda items for Board of Equalization.

REORGANIZATIONAL MEETING JANUARY 13, 2026

January-reorganizational meeting-2nd Tuesday (Sec. 23-153, R.S. Nebr. 1943)
(The Veteran's Service Officer does not have to be re-appointed by this board. His board does that.)

Bridgeport, Nebraska
Tuesday, January 13, 2026

Met: January 13, 2026
Published: January 8, 2026
E-Mailed: January 8, 2026

Approve Agenda

The Board proceeded to organize according to Section 23-153, 1943 Revised Statutes of Nebraska.

Motion was made by Batterman, seconded by Schmidt, to nominate Jeff Metz to serve as Chairperson of said Board for the year 2026. Yeas: Batterman, Schmidt & Metz. Nays: None. Motion carried.

Motion was made by Schmidt, seconded by Metz, that Susanna Batterman serve as First Vice Chairperson of said Board for the year 2026. Yeas: Schmidt, Metz & Batterman. Nays: None. Motion carried.

Motion was made by Batterman, seconded by Metz, that Josh Schmidt serve as Second Vice Chairperson of said Board for the year 2026. Yeas: Batterman, Metz & Schmidt. Nays: None. Motion carried.

Motion was made by Batterman, seconded by Schmidt, that the following Commissioners serve as representatives from Morrill County on the following Boards for the year 2026:

Schmidt, Aging Office of Western NE, Safety Committee, Veteran's Board and Morrill County Community Hospital Liaison.

Metz, CAPWN, Morrill County Fair Board and Morrill County Extension Board.

Batterman, Region 21 Emergency Management, Panhandle Public Health Board, Region I Behavioral Health Board, Region I Office of Human Development, Visitor's Committee Representative and County Sick Leave Bank Committee.

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

Motion was made by Schmidt, seconded by Batterman, that the vote of the Morrill County Commissioner representative, to any of the boards outlined above, is made with full power and authority as if made by the County Board as a unit. Yeas: Schmidt, Batterman & Metz. Nays: None. Motion carried.

Motion was made by Batterman, seconded by Schmidt, to re-appoint Gary Oltmann as principal and Judy Oltmann as alternate Morrill County Representatives to the Aging Office of Western Nebraska Advisory Council for the year 2026. Yeas: Batterman, Schmidt & Metz. Nays: None. Motion carried.

Motion was made by Schmidt, seconded by Batterman, that Bryan Hoerler, who holds a Class A License, Number S-1361, be re-appointed as County Highway Superintendent for the year 2026. Yeas: Schmidt, Batterman & Metz. Nays: None. Motion carried.

Motion was made by Batterman, seconded by Schmidt, that Travis Rodak be re-appointed as Public Transit Director for the year 2026. Yeas: Batterman, Schmidt & Metz Nays: None. Motion carried.

Motion was made by Schmidt, seconded by Batterman that Bryan Hoerler be re-appointed as the Weed Superintendent for Morrill County for the year 2026. Yeas: Schmidt, Batterman & Metz Nays: None. Motion carried.

Motion was made by Batterman, seconded by Schmidt, that Bill Dean be appointed as Zoning Administrator for Morrill County for the year 2026. Yeas: Batterman, Schmidt & Metz. Nays: None. Motion carried.

Motion was made by Batterman, seconded by Schmidt to appoint, the following to serve as members of the Morrill County Safety Committee for the year 2026: Milo Cardenas, Bryan Hoerler, Susan Kelly, Loretta McCoy, Tim Marquez, Zeth Patterson, Mary Ann Randall, Jared Reynolds & Josh Schmidt. Yeas: Batterman, Schmidt & Metz. Nays: None. Motion carried.

Motion was made by Schmidt, seconded by Batterman, to adopt the following holidays for the year 2026:

New Year's Day – January 1, 2026, (Thursday)
Martin Luther King, Jr. Day - January 19, 2026 (3rd Monday)
President's Day - February 16, 2026 (3rd Monday)
Arbor Day - April 24, 2026 (Last Friday)
Memorial Day - May 25, 2026 (Last Monday)
Independence Day - July 4, 2026 (Saturday)
Labor Day – September 7, 2026 (1st Monday)
Columbus Day/Indigenous People Day – October 12, 2026 (2nd Monday)
Veterans' Day - November 11, 2026 (Wednesday)
Thanksgiving Day - November 26, 2026 (Thursday)
Day after Thanksgiving - November 27, 2026 (Friday)
Christmas Eve – December 24, 2026, close @ 12:00 p.m. (Thursday)
Christmas Day – December 25, 2026 (Friday)

IF SUCH HOLIDAY FALLS ON A SUNDAY, THE FOLLOWING MONDAY SHALL BE A HOLIDAY. IF SUCH HOLIDAY FALLS ON A SATURDAY, THE PRECEDING FRIDAY SHALL BE A HOLIDAY. THE OBSERVED HOLIDAY FOR THE COUNTY MAY BE AMENDED BY RESOLUTION OF THE COUNTY BOARD, OR BY DECLARATION OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE COUNT BOARD TO BE RATIFIED BY RESOLUTION OF THE COUNTY BOARD AT A LATER DATE. Yeas: Schmidt, Batterman & Metz. Nays: None. Motion carried.

Motion was made by Batterman, seconded by Schmidt to approve the banks in Morrill County and NPAIT as depositories and to adopt the following resolution:

RESOLUTION FOR BANKING #2026-01

WHEREAS, there are four banks in Morrill County, Nebraska, to wit:
BMO, Nebraska Bank, Platte Valley Bank and Wells Fargo Bank Nebraska, NA, all in Bridgeport, and
NPAIT in Lincoln, Nebraska and:

WHEREAS, it is necessary that the County Treasurer deposit in each bank a sum in excess of the capital stock and surplus in each of said banks,

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNTY BOARD of Morrill County, Nebraska, that the County Treasurer of Morrill County, Nebraska, be and hereby is authorized to deposit in BMO, Nebraska Bank, Platte Valley Bank and Wells Fargo Bank Nebraska, NA, all in Bridgeport, and NPAIT in Lincoln, Nebraska or each of said banks a sum in excess of the capital stock and surplus of each bank provided each of said banks secures the deposit by pledge of the assets of the Bank as provides in Section 77-2318.01 R.R.S., 1943. The County Treasurer shall be allowed to invest on the County's behalf during the year. The Morrill County Treasurer shall receive a timely report as required by statute as to the market values and positions of each security that is pledged.

Said Resolution was passed and adopted this 13th day of January, 2026.

MORRILL COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

/s/Jeff Metz
Chairperson

(S E A L)

/s/Susanna Batterman
Board Member

/s/Josh Schmidt
Board Member

ATTEST:

/s/Candace Panas
Morrill County Clerk

Motion was made by Schmidt, seconded by Batterman, designating the Bridgeport News-Blade and the Bayard Transcript as the official newspapers for Morrill County for the year 2026 and they are to publish the official proceedings and the statutory rate for such publication shall be in accordance with statutes of Nebraska and said rate shall be divided between the official newspapers as follows: the Bridgeport News-Blade, a ½ share and the Bayard Transcript a ½ share. In addition, the County’s Website shall be designated for the minutes in their entirety and for meetings notices . Yeas: Schmidt, Batterman & Metz. Nays: None. Motion carried.

Motion was made by Schmidt, seconded by Batterman, to set the per diem limit for meals at \$50.00 and receipts must accompany the claim. If the meal allowance is for a day meeting, and not an overnight trip, the employee’s/official’s W-2 form will reflect these meals as a benefit. Yeas: Schmidt, Batterman & Metz. Nays: None. Motion carried.

Mileage rates will be the same as the IRS rates. If you are using a county-owned vehicle, you will be able to charge fuel. If you are taking your personal vehicle to a county meeting, you may charge mileage.

The December minutes of the Safety Committee were received, reviewed and placed on file.

Loretta McCoy, County Treasurer, presented the Semi-Annual Statement from July 1, 2025 through December 31, 2025. Motion was made by Batterman, seconded by Schmidt, to accept the Semi-Annual report. Yeas: Batterman, Schmidt & Metz. Motion carried. A Resolution to transfer funds into the Road Fund for \$100,000.00. Motion was made by Schmidt, seconded by Batterman, to approve the transfer and to adopt the following resolution:

RESOLUTION #2026-02
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 \$100,000.00 into the Road Funds.

PASSED AND APPROVED this 13th day of January, 2026.

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

/s/Jeff Metz
Chairman

/s/Susanna Batterman
Board Member

(S E A L)

/s/Josh Schmidt
Board Member

ATTEST:

/s/Candace D. Panas
County Clerk

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

The Board had an Expense Reimbursement Agreement Extension made between the Morrill County Board and the Nebraska Department of Revenue, Property Assessment Division. The Board and the Division mutually agree to extend the term of the original agreement from January 13, 2026, to January 30, 2026. Motion was made by Batterman, seconded by Schmidt, to approve the contract extension. Yeas: Batterman, Schmidt & Metz. Nays: None. Motion carried.

Chairman Metz raised the issue of revising the county employee handbook, noting that it has not been updated since 2020. He recommended forming a committee to review and update the handbook. He proposed that the committee consist of himself, Lisa Peters, Candace Panas, Milo Cardenas, Bryan Hoerler and Kirk Fellhoelter. The committee will find time in the next coming months to meet and start working on the changes.

Sarah Paisley and Ashley Fenning, Extension Board Educators, met to approve the Extension Board Constitution, which will separate the Morrill County and Scotts Bluff County Extension Boards. It was noted that when the boards were combined, quorum issues and travel challenges occurred, making participation difficult. Operating separately will improve attendance and allow Morrill County to meet quarterly in person, as most bills are submitted to the Clerk's Office. Ashley also discussed upcoming ServSafe training dates and flyers that will be distributed to various locations to promote food safety education and food handler training. Motion was made by Schmidt, seconded by Batterman, to approve and sign the Extension Board Constitution. Yeas: Schmidt, Batterman & Metz. Nays: None. Motion carried.

Chairman Metz reported that a Northport resident raised concern regarding Road 94D encroaching onto his property. Metz received maps from 2013 and 2024 from indicating the property line appears to run through the center of the roadway. It was noted that the maps are not survey-accurate, and that a formal survey would be required at the resident's expense to determine the exact property line and whether the road would need to be relocated. Metz also discussed a concern regarding a road currently maintained by Box Butte County and whether it is a county road. He requested that Bryan Hoerler attend the Box Butte meeting on the 21st of January to determine their decision.

Bryan Hoerler, County Highway Superintendent, reported that the transmission in the county's 140H motor grader has failed. The estimated cost to replace the transmission is approximately \$38,000. The grader was purchased in 2009 for \$85,000 and has over 18,000 hours of use. Tom Thompson from NMC presented lease agreement options from Caterpillar Financial Services for a new 140-13 AWD Motor Grader. Lease options of 48 months and 60 months were presented, both including a 7-year/7,000-hour warranty. A trade-in value of \$25,000 was offered for the current grader, with delivery of the new grader and removal of the old grader occurring simultaneously. Motion was made by Schmidt, seconded by Batterman, to approve the 60-month lease for 2025 Caterpillar 140-13 AWD motor grader, serial number N9500819, with a monthly payment of \$5,995.81 and a stipulated payment of \$1.00. Yeas: Schmidt, Batterman & Metz. Nays: None. Motion carried.

The Board discussed the raises for the elected officials for the 2027-2030 term. A Resolution for salaries was presented. Motion was made by Batterman, seconded by Schmidt, to approve the salaries and adopt the following resolution:

RESOLUTION #2026 - 03

WHEREAS, it is necessary for the Morrill County Board of Commissioners to set salaries for elected county officials of Morrill County for the ensuing term commencing in 2027;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Morrill County Board of Commissioners that salaries for elected officials of Morrill County for the ensuing term commencing in 2027 be set as follows:

The annual salary for the office of **COUNTY COMMISSIONER** be established at \$16,500.00 for the calendar years 2027, 2028, 2029 and 2030. provided that upon organization each year the chairperson of the Board received in addition to the said annual salary the annual sum of \$1,000.00.

The annual salary for the office of **COUNTY CLERK, COUNTY TREASURER AND COUNTY ASSESSOR** be established at \$59,339.08 for the calendar year 2027. That for each year thereafter a 3% increase be added to the previous year's salary, so that the amount paid for the calendar year 2028 be \$61,119.25 for the calendar year

2029 be \$62,952.83 and the calendar year 2030 be \$64,841.41. In addition to the salary, the **County Clerk** will receive an additional \$2,500.00 per year for managing the insurance fund.

The annual salary for the office of **COUNTY SHERIFF** be established at \$70,667.92 for the calendar year 2027. That for each year thereafter a 3% increase be added to the previous year’s salary, so that the amount paid for the calendar year 2028 be \$72,787.96 for the calendar year 2029 be \$74,971.60, and the calendar year 2030 be \$77,220.75. In addition to the **County Sheriff’s** salary an additional \$18,000 per year will be paid contingent upon Bridgeport Law Enforcement contract with the County.

The annual salary for the office of **COUNTY ATTORNEY** be established at \$53,852.44 for the calendar years 2027. That for each year thereafter a 3% increase be added to the previous year’s salary, so that the amount paid for the calendar year 2028 be \$55,468.01 for the calendar year 2029 be \$57,132.05 and for the calendar year 2030 be \$58,846.01.

The annual salary for the office of **COUNTY SURVEYOR** be established at \$1,000.00 for the calendar years 2027, 2028, 2029 & 2030.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that in addition to the above stated salary all elected officials shall receive the benefits of the County Retirement Plan.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, barring any mandates from Federal or State governments, which would change contributions of employer or employee for health coverage, that in addition to the above stated salary, each of the before state elected officials shall receive whatever health plan that is in place for each of the employees and adopted by the Board of Commissioners, and that such alteration in deductible or change in the portion paid by the individual shall not constitute an increase or decrease in the herein adopted salary.

PASSED AND APPROVED in regular session this 13th day of January, 2026.

MORRILL COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

/s/Jeff Metz
Jeff Metz, Chairperson

/s/Susanna Batterman
Susanna Batterman, Board Member

/s/Josh Schmidt
Josh Schmidt, Board Member

ATTEST:

/s/Candace D. Panas, County Clerk

The Board reported on meetings they had attended. Schmidt had no meetings to report on. Batterman reported on the Region I Behavioral Health and Office of Human Development meetings, noting discussion of the crisis stabilization project in Kimball County. A contract is expected to be signed soon with the State. Metz reported that he attended the Fair Board meeting. The Fair Board has selected a new architect for the fairgrounds and plans to bring a resolution next month to formally hire him. The Board is hopeful that an exhibition hall can be constructed by July.

Susanna Batterman, County Commissioner, suggested hosting a hamburger feed during the Fourth of July in celebration of the Bicentennial. It was noted that the Veteran’s Board currently hosts hamburger feed in August and could consider moving the event to July. Further discussion will be held to organize the event.

There being no further discussion, Chairman Metz adjourned the meeting at 9:38 A.M. Next meeting will be Tuesday, January 27, 2026.

/s/Jeff Metz,Chairman

/s/Candace D. Panas, County Clerk