

Bridgeport, Nebraska
Tuesday, March 24, 2026

The Morrill County Board of Commissioners met in an open and public regular meeting at 7:30 A.M., Tuesday, March 24, 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 March 19, 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 March 18, 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 with the addition of Visitors Committee March Meeting minutes and the minutes of the March 10, 2026 meeting. Yeas: Batterman, Schmidt and Metz. Nays: None. Motion carried.

Correspondence was received and read.

The Commissioners reviewed the following claims:

GENERAL FUND

American Family Life Insurance, Insurance, \$1,726.55; Ameritas Life Insurance Corp, Retirement, \$9,003.73; AT&T Mobility, Service, \$781.54; Bob Benton, Repairs, \$32.50; Black Hills Energy, Service, \$1,079.91; Bomgaars Supply Inc, Repairs & Supplies, \$20.97; Cenex Fleet Fueling, Fuel, \$2,433.96; Century Business Products, Supplies, \$184.70; Century Link, Service, \$80.75; Charter Communications, Service, \$169.99; City of Bridgeport, Service, \$571.30; Clerk of District Court, Court Cost, \$144.00; Colonial Life, Insurance, \$209.37; Corporate Payment Systems, U S Bank, Data Processing Equip, Meals, Fuel, Dues, Uniforms, Board of Prisoners, Law Enforcement Costs, Supplies & Misc, \$5,185.66; Crites, Shaffer, Connealy, Etc., Attorney's Fees, \$1500.00; CVSOAN, Registration, 60.00; D C Concrete & Tile, LLC, Snow Removal, \$250.00; Dept of Revenue, State Tax, \$3,937.83; Eakes Office Solutions, Supplies, \$365.92; Kirk Fellhoelter, Reimbursement, \$48.50; Garrett Tires & Treads, Car Repairs, \$1,136.92; Holly Hjelmstad, Phone, \$40.00; Hometown Leasing, Lease, \$56.20; Susan Kelly, Phone, \$40.00; M.C. Shaff & Associates, Inc., Survey Corners, \$1500.00; Tim Marquez, Cell Phone, \$40.00; Medical Air Services Assn, Insurance, \$476.00; Meritain, Insurance, \$36,640.41; Morrill County Fair Board, Event Entertainment, \$6,900.00; Morrill County Health Plan, Emp Share, \$2,430.46; Morrill County Health Plan, Insurance, \$34,661.16; Morrill County Health Plan, Vision, \$504.40; Nein Pharmacy, Inmate Medical, \$233.81; NE Child Support, Child Support, \$274.16; \$236.31; Nossaman Pettitt Law Firm, PC LLO, Court Appointed Council, \$791.98; Platte Valley Bank, HSA Accts, \$647.91; Platte Valley Bank, Federal Withholding, Social Security & Medicare, \$14,781.41; Principal Life, Life Insurance, \$270.31; Pye-Barker Fire Safety, Fire Extinguisher Inspection \$40.00; Quadiant Leasing USA, Postage Lease, \$1905.00; State of NE-Dept of Admin, Data Processing Costs & Equip, \$288.00; Story County Sheriff's Office, Service of Process, \$58.00; Telecom West Inc, Internet Service, \$55.00; Xesi Document Solutions, Equip Lease, \$311.54; General Employees, Salaries, \$52325.52.

ROAD/BRIDGE FUND

American Family Life Insurance, Insurance, \$713.32; Ameritas Life Insurance Corp, Retirement, \$3,994.54; Big State Industrial Supply, Supplies, \$305.88; Bomgaars Supply Inc, Supplies, Repairs & Tools, \$363.06; Dana Cadwallader, Phone, \$40.00; Dan Carnine, Asphalt, \$50,000.00; Century Link, Service, \$136.01; Charter Communications, Service, \$119.99; Chimney Rock Public Power District, Line Repair, \$163.10; Colonial Life Insurance, Insurance, \$22.16; Dept of Rev, State Tax, \$2,018.64; Ronald G. Franklin, Phone, \$40.00; Bryan Hoerler, Phone, \$40.00; Lawson Products, Supplies, \$199.01; Medical Air Service Assoc, Insurance, \$266.00; Meritain Health, Insurance, \$18,022.47; Justin Mitchell, Phone, \$40.00; Morrill County Health Plan, Emp Share, \$1,177.29; Morrill County Health Plan, Health Insurance, \$18,157.34; Morrill County Health Plan, Vision, \$291.00; NPPD, Service, \$75.96; Platte Valley Bank, HSA Accts, \$700.00; Platte Valley Bank, Federal Withholding, Social Security & Medicare, \$7,430.46; Principal Life, Life Insurance, \$139.18; PT Hose & Bearings, Parts, \$209.96; Simon, Asphaltic Materials, \$2232.45; Steve's Truck & Equipment, Parts, \$140.00; WPCI, Drug Testing, \$266.00; David Zwirn, Phone, \$40.00; Road Employees, Salaries, \$25,622.43.

911 FUND

Century Link, Service, \$101.58; State of NE- Dept of Admin Services, Service, \$213.00.

W911 FUND

Geocomm Inc., GIS Maintenance, \$5,148.50.

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.

Board of Equalization

See separate minutes for Board of Equalization.

The following 2026 monthly reports were received, reviewed and placed on file: February – I Cardenas, Co Sheriff, C Panas, Co Clerk, L McCoy, Co Treasurer and S Kelly, Clerk of District Court.

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

The March minutes of the Morrill County Planning and Zoning Board meeting were received, reviewed and placed on file.

The March minutes of the Visitor’s Committee meeting were received, reviewed and placed on file.

The board advertised for a Construction Manager for the Fair Exhibit Hall construction project and received three sealed bids, which were publicly opened. The first bid was from Houchin Construction, with Phase 1 at \$545,792 plus a \$50,000 contingency and Phase 2 at \$611,000 for a total of \$1,206,792. The second bid was from TKC Construction, with Phase 1 at \$501,000 and Phase 2 at \$675,000, totaling \$1,173,000. The final bid was from Peltz Companies, Inc., which submitted a Phase 1 bid of \$840,000 but did not provide a bid for Phase 2. Following discussion of the bids and project details with Architect Rod Laucomer, the board determined to award the construction bid to TKC Construction. Motion was made by Batterman, seconded by Schmidt to accept TKC Construction bid at \$1,176,000. Yeas: Batterman, Schmidt and Metz. Nays: None. Motion carried.

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

RESOLUTION #2026-08
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 Funds.

PASSED AND APPROVED this 24th day of March, 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: Batterman, Schmidt and Metz. Nays: None. Motion carried.

Robin Stuart, Hospital Administrator, presented the February financials for the hospital, reported that revenue was up 7% for the month while expenses were 6% below budget. Days of cash on hand were at 47, largely due to the receipt of state-directed payment funds, with one additional assessment payment expected in June. She noted that the contract pharmacy generates approximately \$30,000 per month and highlighted ambulance services, which showed a monthly profit of \$97,000. Metz expressed satisfaction with the ambulance service's strong financial performance this month but also raised concerns regarding a recent incident in which Flight for Life was called due to ambulance staff reporting poor road conditions to transport the patient. He stated the roads were not in poor condition and noting he had personally traveled them multiple times while assisting with the fires. Robin stated she will investigate the incident to determine what occurred.

Bryan Hoerler, County Highway/Weed Superintendent, presented the 2025 Weed Control Compliance Report. The report uses scoring systems to evaluate if a county is meeting the requirements of the Nebraska Noxious Weed Control Act. The report reflected point deductions due to an incorrect number of 15-day notices, which should have been two, and in the reported years of service on the board roster. A motion was made by Schmidt, seconded by Batterman to accept and sign report. Yeas: Schmidt, Batterman and Metz. Nays: None. Motion carried.

Jessica Kupser, from FirstNet Solutions, presented an overview of FirstNet and all it can provide for the County. FirstNet Solutions offers more reliable connectivity than traditional two-way radios, especially in rural or low-signal areas. It includes improved communication through push-to-talk functionality, allowing crews to communicate instantly. Bryan Hoerler, Highway superintendent, reported the ongoing communication challenges with crews working in the Broadwater and Redington areas. He has tested three devices which proved to work effectively in those locations. The devices are available for a one-time cost of \$0.99 each, with a total monthly service fee of \$579.80. A device credit of \$75 per unit is available, totaling approximately \$1500, which can be applied toward bills or accessories. The board agreed the system would be a valuable tool for maintaining communication with employees, particularly in remote areas, and noted it could also be beneficial for local fire departments.

Billie Mitchell, Visitor Committee Board Member, presented recommendations on applications for the Visitors Fund Grant and noted that there was a vacancy on the Visitor's Committee Board, and recommendations for appointment are welcomed, particularly candidates from the Bayard area. The committee received six applications and provided the following recommendations: The Committee recommended awarding \$1000 to Susana Batterman for the 4th of July hamburger feed and \$1000 to Celine Hall for the "City Sounds" music in the park event. Additional recommendations included \$2000 to the Spirits of Broadwater Foundation for gateway signage, \$1000 to the Broadwater Days Committee for music and children's play equipment and The Bridgeport Chamber of Commerce requested \$5000 for Camp Clarke Days; however, they recommended reducing the award to \$500. The final request was from the Mayor of Bridgeport requested \$2500 for a tourism website, they recommended denial, citing that existing city and county websites already provide tourism promotion.

Metz questioned the recommendation to reduce funding for the Bridgeport Chamber of Commerce, asking for clarification. Billie Mitchell stated the committee recommended the reduced amount because the Chamber already receives considerable funding for the event. Metz recommended increasing the allocation to \$2000. A motion was made by Schmidt, seconded by Batterman who abstained from voting on her own recommended allocation of funds, to approve the Visitor's Fund Grant recommendation as presented, except for increasing the Bridgeport Chamber of Commerce award to \$2000. Yeas: Schmidt, Batterman and Metz. Nays: None. Motion carried.

Val Jansante, Community Liaison, for Adrian Smith, provided an update on the congressman's recent activities. He reported that Smith recently visited areas impacted by recent fires and met with local officials, first responders and residents directly affected to assess damage and needs. He also highlighted Smith's recognition of the \$100 million investment for the Fort Laramie Tunnel rehabilitation project, supported through federal funding measures. Additionally, he noted Smith's announcement regarding the 2026 Congressional Art Competition for high school students, where the first-place artwork will be displayed at the United States Capitol alongside other winning entries from across the country. Lastly, he touched on information about the Youth Advisory Council initiative for high school students, aimed at increasing civic engagement and participation among young people.

The Board reported on meetings they had attended. Josh reported attending the Safety Committee meeting, the Aging office of Western Nebraska meeting and the Hospital Board meeting. He also provided meal service numbers, with Bayard serving approximately 143 congregate meals and 154 home-delivered meals, and Bridgeport serving 144 congregate meals and 194 home-delivered meals. Susanna reported attending the Panhandle Public Health meeting, Region 1 Behavioral Health meeting and Human Development meeting. She has been asked to serve on the Nebraska Sandhills Rancher Fire Relief Fund committee, a five-member group responsible for distributing donated funds. She encouraged those

affected by recent fires to apply or contact her for assistance, noting relief efforts are focused on Morrill, Garden, Keith, Grant and Arthur counties. Jeff reported he has been in contact with the fire district regarding increasing the mill levy. A ballot measure will be placed before voters to increase the district's budgeted restricted funds by 256.48%. The funds would be used for maintenance and upgrades to fire district equipment. He noted that, for context, a property valued at \$1 million would see an estimated increase of about \$600 annually if approved.

During public comment, Zeth Patterson, Custodian, stated that the roof repairs will be taking place over the new few days, as only one side of the roof was totaled by insurance. Sue Wiggins suggested exploring the possibility of installing a steel roof in the future. Tim Marquez announced a pancake feed scheduled for April 7th from 5:30 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. at the American Legion. Candace Panas requested to move the Commissioners' meeting on Tuesday, May 12, 2026, to Monday, May 11, 2026, since that is election day.

There being no further discussion, Chairman Metz adjourned the meeting at 10:05 A.M. Next meeting will be on Tuesday, April 14, 2026.

/s/Jeff Metz, Chairman

ATTEST

/s/Candace D. Panas, County Clerk

Tuesday, March 24, 2026

The Morrill County Board of Equalization met in an open and public regular meeting at 7:41 A.M., Tuesday, March 24, 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 March 19, 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 March 18, 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 Schmidt, seconded by Batterman, to enter into Board of Equalization, according to Ne Statute #77-1233-04(6) at 7:41 A.M. Yeas: Schmidt, Batterman and Metz. Nays: None. Motion carried.

John Erickson, County Assessor, presented Tax List Correction from Terc hearings #2026-02 – #2026-28. Motion was made by Batterman, seconded by Schmidt to approve Tax List Correction #2026-02 - 2026-28. Yeas: Batterman and Schmidt. Nays: Metz. Motion carried. He also presented Tax List Correction #2026-29 – 2026-44 to correct towers being taxed from 2015 to current. Motion was made by Schmidt, seconded by Batterman to approve Tax List Correction #2026-29 – 2026-44. Yeas: Schmidt, Batterman and Metz. Motion carried.

Motion was made by Batterman, seconded by Schmidt, to return to regular session at 7:47 A.M. Yeas: Batterman, Schmidt and Metz. Nays: None. Motion carried.

/s/Jeff Metz, Chairman

ATTEST:

/s/Candace D. Panas, County Clerk