

**RICHLAND COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
MAY 19, 2026**

The Richland County Board of Commissioners met at 8:00 A.M. On May 19, 2026 at the Richland County Courthouse with Commissioners Terry Goerger, Nathan Berseth, Rollie Ehlert, Tim Campbell, and Perry Miller. Others included Administrative Personnel Fossum and South, State's Attorney Kummer, Jesse Sedler, Sheriff Ruhl, Brett Lambrecht, Lynn Flieth, Mary Vetter, Kayla Carlson, John Anderson, Ronda Gripentrog, Tracey Olson, George King, Jonathan Quast, Kelli Kuska, Janet Mae King, and Daily News Reporter Manisha Reddy.

Commissioner Goerger called the meeting to order at 8:00 A.M.

A motion was made by Berseth and seconded by Ehlert to approve the agenda. Vote was unanimous (5-0).

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no requests submitted for public comment.

DEPARTMENT HEADS TO DISCUSS OLD U.S BANK BUILDING

Commissioner Berseth addressed the Department Heads at the meeting to let them know that the JPA purchased the U.S Bank Building just west of the Courthouse with the intent of the purchase being for public use. Commissioner Berseth opened the floor to discussion regarding the space and departmental needs for accessibility and visibility. A lengthy discussion ensued and included:

-Mary Vetter thought the space would work well for VSO as there are ample parking spaces and no stairs. Vetter said a conference room would be nice in the new space as some of the current meeting locations for Veterans Services do not have windows, which can be an issue.

-John Anderson said that he would prefer to get election equipment and historical records out of the basement at the Law Enforcement Center.

-Lynn Flieth did not think the space would work well for the Human Service Zone as cubicles would not provide the privacy required for clients. Flieth said there is another office opening up in August, which should help with space for the department.

-Kayla Carlson thought the space would be nice for the Health Department; many of Angie's clients would benefit from the accessibility and new moms would not have to carry car seats and children up to the second floor.

-Anderson to draw up rough sketch of current layout and work with Fossum, Vetter, Commissioner Berseth and Commissioner Miller on prep work.

-Department heads with questions or concerns moving forward should get on the Commission Meeting agenda to discuss.

A motion was made by Berseth and seconded by Miller to relocate VSO Offices to U.S. Bank Building contingent upon zero-dollar lease; Amy Clark to draw up and State's Attorney Kummer to review. On a roll call vote, vote was unanimous (5-0).

HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

Sedler gave the following updates regarding Highway activity:

-Road restrictions to be lifted Monday, May 25th at 7:00 A.M.

-Some gravel roads are still fairly wet; in need of sunshine

-Crews are spot graveling in some areas before May chloride

-Helendale bridge rail should be going up next week with completion estimated mid-June

-Traffic Study for Guardian Energy Expansion Project should be back next week, DOT meeting is scheduled June 10th in Bismarck.

A motion was made by Ehlert and seconded by Berseth to advertise for LP bids and open at June 16th Commission Meeting. Vote was unanimous (5-0).

A motion was made by Campbell and seconded by Ehlert to approve \$179,523 purchase of base stabilizer for the Highway Department. Vote was unanimous (5-0).

GUARDIAN ENERGY – LETTER OF SUPPORT

Tracey Olson addressed the Commission on behalf of the City of Hankinson to request a letter of support for their grant application with the Economic Development Association for water well infrastructure improvements. A motion was made by Berseth and seconded by Miller to approve a letter of support for the City of Hankinson for their grant application relating to the Guardian Energy expansion project. Vote was unanimous (5-0).

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT CITIZEN REQUEST

George King, Jonathan Quast, Kelli Kuska, and Janet Mae King were present to address the Board of Commissioners regarding prescribed fires. King told the Commission that the

current burn ban declaration that is in place for Richland County has been affecting the operations of their PBA (Prescribed Burn Association). King said they do months of planning for the prescribed burns on their family farm and that they only have a small window to burn in the spring. King said he feels that when conditions are not as severe, such as evenings, prescribed burns should be allowed if the proper procedures are in place to ensure public safety. King explained in detail the procedures that his group follows when planning a prescribed burn.

MISC/CORRESPONDENCE

Lambrecht distributed a list of fires and locations that were called in to Dispatch on Saturday, May 16 to the Board of Commissioners. Sheriff Ruhl reported that 9 or 10 citations were issued over the weekend during the burn ban.

The current burn ban declaration for Richland County was discussed. The burn ban was lifted on Sunday, but the declaration is still in place according to the state map. Sheriff Ruhl said the messaging is confusing to the public; Lambrecht and Berseth agreed. It was the consensus of the Board of Commissioners that when a burn ban is put in place in the future it will remain in place daily until an adequate amount of moisture has been received before rescinding it.

Correspondence from Minnesota Power – Request for Agency Review - regarding a proposed 33 structure upgrade on an existing transmission line with 3 of those structures being in Richland County.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

June

- 2 Commission Meeting
- 2 County Equalization
- 9 Primary Election
- 16 Commission Meeting

July

- 7 Commission Meeting
- 21 Commission Meeting

Reports filed: Tax & Property Revenue Voucher for April 2026.

Motion to adjourn by Berseth.
Meeting adjourned at 9:56 A.M.

ATTEST: _____
Sandy Fossum
Auditor/Administrator

_____CHAIRPERSON
Terry Goerger
Board of Richland County Commissioners