

# **AURORA COUNTY COMMISSIONER PROCEEDINGS**

**November 20, 2025**

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 AM by Chairman Clyde Dethlefsen with John Paul Studeny, Randy Niles, Roger Hanten, and Travis Clark present.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

There was no public input.

The agenda was amended by adding senior citizen meals report and weed chemical bid letting date. A motion was made by Clark, seconded by Studeny to approve the agenda as amended. Motion carried all voting aye.

Auditor Urban noted corrections that needed to be made to the November 6<sup>th</sup> commission meeting minutes. She noted that the motion to hire Rick Pryor as part-time help should have included that he was hired as a temporary/seasonal worker with no benefits. Urban also stated that the minutes should have stated that White Lake City Maintenance Operator asked that some gravel be dumped on 2<sup>nd</sup> Street from Ellis Street to Old Hwy 16 and not West 1<sup>st</sup> Street. A motion was made by Studeny, seconded by Clark to approve the minutes as amended for the November 6<sup>th</sup> meeting. Motion carried all voting aye.

Commissioner Niles reported on the last ROCS meeting that he attended in Mitchell. He said he questioned the group about the meal costs that were given on a spreadsheet that was handed out to the Aurora County Commission and asked why there was such a discrepancy. The costs per meal between all three communities were anywhere from \$3.00 up to \$40.00. Niles said no one at the meeting could give him an answer. Chairman Dethlefsen said he does not feel the county should pay anything toward the senior meals until we get our questions answered. It was asked if Plankinton had anyone to serve senior meals yet. Commissioner Studeny said there are a few that go down to Stickney to pick up their meals and the Plank Inn offers meals at a reduced rate, but it is not through the ROCS meal program. It was suggested to contact the person in charge of the entire ROCS program and see if he has any answers as to why there is such a cost difference.

Highway Superintendent Doug Vissia and Secretary Nancy Beckman were present for the highway report.

Bristol Township Board member, Rod Faulhaber asked the county to consider a road swap between the township and the county. He stated that there are 3 miles of township road that he would like to swap in exchange for 3 miles of county road. Faulhaber said the three miles the township would give up will run straight and consecutive with the county road. Chairman Dethlefsen said he wanted to make sure the township roads are in similar condition to what the county roads are. If they are in the same condition, I have no problem swapping them, said Dethlefsen. We want to make sure everything is compared apples to apples, said Faulhaber. If the county feels the township needs to put a few loads of gravel on before the swap, we can do that, stated Faulhaber. It was noted the same would be for the county roads. Rod said he wanted to talk to the county first to make sure the Commissioners were good with it before he brought it to his entire board. Chairman Dethlefsen suggested to have Hwy Superintendent Vissia and Commissioner Niles, who represents Bristol Township, along with a couple township board members look at the roads that would be involved in the swap to make sure this is something both entities are comfortable with.

A motion was made by Studeny, seconded by Niles to submit an application for the Bridge Improvement Grant Program for Structure # 02-029-270 (Ries Bridge) and approve the following resolution. Roll Call Vote: Clark, aye; Studeny, aye; Hanten, aye; Niles, aye; Dethlefsen, aye. Motion carried.

2026 BRIDGE IMPROVEMENT GRANT PROGRAM  
RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING SUBMISSION OF APPLICATION

WHEREAS, Aurora County wishes to submit an application for consideration of award for the Bridge Improvement Grant Program:

STRUCTURE NUMBER AND LOCATION:

Str. No. 02-029-270 – Aurora County  
13.0 miles south and 1.1 miles west of White Lake, SD  
On 265<sup>th</sup> Street over Platte Creek

and WHEREAS, Aurora County certifies that the project is listed in the county's Five-Year County Highway and Bridge Improvement Plan;

and WHEREAS, Aurora County agrees to pay the 20% match on the Bridge Improvement Grant funds and 100% of ineligible expenses;

and WHEREAS, Aurora County hereby authorizes the Bridge Improvement Grant application and any required funding commitments.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

That the South Dakota Department of Transportation be and hereby is requested to accept the attached Bridge Improvement Grant application.

Vote of Commissioners: Yes 5 No 0

Dated at Plankinton, SD, this 20<sup>th</sup> day of November, 2025.

ATTEST: Susan Urban, County Auditor

s/s Clyde Dethlefsen, Chairman

Discussion was held on possibly splitting the cost of a Mastic Machine with Brule County. Superintendent Vissia said Brule County is renting one right now and are thinking about purchasing one for approximately \$60,000. It was noted that this is something Aurora County would be interested in the future as it would benefit the County.

4-H Program Assistant, Brandi Shroyer informed the Commission that she will be hosting a woodworking workshop on Sunday, November 23<sup>rd</sup> at the fairgrounds and is requesting 2-3 extra hours for the week. A motion was made by Clark, seconded by Studeny to allow the extra hours for Brandi for the workshop on the 23<sup>rd</sup>. Motion carried all voting aye.

Commissioner Studeny reported that Joe Larsen is still working on getting the magnets to hang the acoustic panels at the Community/4-H Building. He stated that Joe purchased a couple of magnets to try out and wants a stronger magnet to make sure it will hold the panels. He said the county will need to purchase 162 magnets and has checked with the local lumberyard and they cannot get the quantity we need. Once the magnets are here, the Commission will set a workday to get them installed.

A motion was made by Studeny, seconded by Clark to authorize Brandi to close her office on the afternoon of December 4<sup>th</sup> for personal reasons. Motion carried all voting aye.

Shroyer informed the Commission that Hilary Kroupa, State Program Manager for Regional Youth Educators, has officially started working in the office here in Aurora County.

The Commission reviewed the renewal rates for the county's health insurance plan through Wellmark. It was noted there was an 8.19% increase for 2026. A motion was made by Hanten, seconded by Clark to renew the county's current health plan through Wellmark BlueCross/BlueShield offering the same coverage and deductibles. Motion carried all voting aye.

Emergency Manager Skyler Kehn informed the Board that he is partnering with Red Cross to turn the Community/4-H Building into a shelter in case I-90 is closed at Plankinton. Since the closure gates have been put in place on exit 310, we will need a place for those motorists to stay if they are stranded due to bad weather conditions. Kehn reported that the Red Cross will have \$1,000,000 in liability coverage to cover any damages that may occur. A motion was made by Studeny, seconded by Niles to authorize the Chairman to sign the agreement to use the building as a Red Cross Emergency Shelter. Motion carried all voting aye.

The Commission set the date for weed chemical bids to be opened on December 18<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 AM.

States Attorney Rachel Mairose met with the Commission to talk about leave payouts and how to handle situations if an employee is in the negative on their leave time, mainly for an employee who is salaried. It was recommended that if an employee is paid hourly, they will take the leave without pay and if an employee is salaried, the amount will be calculated and deducted from their salary for the month that the leave was taken. Rachel will make changes to the handbook to address this.

A motion was made by Studeny, seconded by Hanten to accept the resignation of Jessica Durrin as the Director of Equalization effective November 30<sup>th</sup>. Motion carried all voting aye. The Commission thanked Jessica for her time with the County and wished her the best.

The Commission offered the Director of Equalization/Zoning Administrator position to Deputy Director Sam Simkins and she accepted the offer. A motion was made by Clark, seconded by Studeny to appoint Sam Simkins as Director of Equalization/Zoning Administrator effective December 1, 2025 at the 2025 base salary of \$47,611.20 (\$22.89/hr.). Motion carried all voting aye.

The Commission directed the Auditor to advertise for a Deputy Director of Equalization. The position will be 80% to full-time and will include benefits. The 2025 base pay for this position is \$18.55 per hour.

States Attorney Rachel Mairose reviewed the effects of HB 1130. Auditor Urban noted how many different ballot styles would need to be created if there would happen to be school and city elections combined on the county ballot. Mairose said it is not clear as to what combining elections on the bill really means. Does it mean the schools and cities have to be on the county ballot if they have an election during county primary or general elections, or does it mean they can combine with the county but have their own separate ballot, stated Mairose. If an entity chooses not to

combine in any way with the county for their election, the Auditor should get a letter in writing stating they want to handle their own election. Auditor Urban told the Commission that the White Lake School District is interested in holding it with the County and the White Lake City & school have always combined if they both have an election. Urban said her concern in White Lake is the small amount of room within the City Hall. If all three entities have an election at the same polling place, it will increase the chance of placing a voted ballot in the wrong ballot box. Auditor Urban said she will check to see if the White Lake Community Center would be available to hold the elections in 2026 and that would take care of the concern about having enough space for three entities to hold their elections in one place.

A motion was made by Clark, seconded by Niles to pay bills as listed below. Motion carried with Dethlefsen, Niles, Hanten, and Clark voting aye. Studeny abstained from the vote.

#### CLAIMS:

COMMISSIONERS		
GOLDEN WEST	PHONE	48.74
S.D. MAIL OFFICE	OCTOBER PUBLISHING	558.91
STANDARD PUBLISHING	SEPTEMBER PUBLISHING	533.77
STANDARD PUBLISHING ARGUS	SEPTEMBER PUBLISHING	533.77
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		1675.19 *
JUDICIAL SYSTEM		
JURORS	JURY DUTY & MILEAGE	1743.00
BLESSING REPEATED	INMATE CLOTHING	25.00
AVERA QUEEN OF PEACE HEALTH	BA - (1)	137.00
SOUTH DAKOTA DEPT OF HEALTH	BA (1)	115.00
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		2020.00 *
AUDITOR		
GOLDEN WEST	PHONE & INTERNET	59.49
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		59.49 *
TREASURER		
GOLDEN WEST	PHONE & INTERNET	77.72
QUICKEN	TRACKING - MISC, CKING & MMDA	82.71
S.D. MAIL OFFICE	OCTOBER PUBLISHING	198.00
		-----
		358.43 *
COURTHOUSE		
CUMMINS SALES AND SERVICES	MAINT ON COURTHOUSE GENERATOR	1102.86
GOLDEN WEST	PHONE	43.80

OLSON'S PEST TECHNICIANS	PEST CONTROL	90.00
US BANK	ADMIN FEES 2024-2025	2250.00
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		3486.66 *
DIR. OF EQUALIZATION		
GOLDEN WEST	PHONE & INTERNET	76.80
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		76.80 *
REGISTER OF DEEDS		
GOLDEN WEST	PHONE & INTERNET	65.94
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		65.94 *
VA OFFICE		
GOLDEN WEST	PHONE & INTERNET	62.55
S.D. MAIL OFFICE	OCTOBER PUBLISHING	58.50
STANDARD PUBLISHING	SEPTEMBER PUBLISHING	52.50
STANDARD PUBLISHING ARGUS	SEPTEMBER PUBLISHING	52.50
TWOTREES TECHNOLOGIES	USB EXTERNAL DVD DRIVE	39.00
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		265.05 *
SHERIFF		
GOLDEN WEST	PHONE & INTERNET	117.18
GOLDEN WEST	PHONE	52.75
V I S A	TONER & 2026 PLANNER	610.30
		-----
		780.23 *
JAIL		
ROMAN BRIGGS	PRISONER MEAL	7.95
		-----
		7.95 *
R.O.C.S.		
RURAL OFFICE OF COMM SERVICE	ROCS - BUS	7000.00
		-----
		7000.00 *
MENTALLY HANDICAPPED		
LINCOLN COUNTY AUDITOR	MENTAL ILLNESS	635.17
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		635.17 *
AG BUILDING		
GOLDEN WEST	PHONE & INTERNET	105.25
OLSON'S PEST TECHNICIANS	PEST CONTROL	70.00
		-----
		175.25 *
COUNTY EXTENSION		
GOLDEN WEST	PHONE & INTERNET	62.63

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		62.63	*
WEED			
CENTRAL ELECTRIC COOP, INC	LANDFILL ELECTRICITY	65.00	
GOLDEN WEST	INTERNET	4.94	
ROADSIDE C - STORE	FUEL FOR WEED TRUCK	48.30	
SKYLER KEHN	CELL PHONE STIPEND	20.00	
		-----	
		138.24	*
PLANNING & ZONING			
S.D. MAIL OFFICE	OCTOBER PUBLISHING	57.00	
		-----	
		57.00	*
R&B CONSTRUCTION			
BROSZ ENGINEERING INC	CORE WHITE LAKE OIL	16302.50	
BROSZ ENGINEERING INC	BRIDGE REPLACEMENT	16542.50	
DOUG VISSIA	CELL PHONE STIPHEND	50.00	
GOLDEN WEST	PHONE & INTERNET	121.62	
GRAHAM TIRE - MITCHELL	TRUCK TIRES	840.00	
HOMETOWN FAMILY HEALTH	DRUG TESTING	57.00	
MID-DAKOTA RURAL WATER SYSTEM	WATER BILL - STORLA	33.00	
PHEASANTLAND INDUSTRIES	CLOTHING ALLOW - RICH & DEREK	157.29	
RICH PETERS	SAFETY COAT & BOOTS - RICH	361.02	
ROADSIDE C - STORE	FUEL FOR THE SIDE BY SIDE	27.65	
STANDARD PUBLISHING	SEPTEMBER PUBLISHING	100.00	
STANDARD PUBLISHING ARGUS	SEPTEMBER PUBLISHING	100.00	
VESTIS	SERVICES - RAGS & MATS	17.01	
		-----	
		34709.59	*
EM&D			
CUMMINS SALES AND SERVICES	REPLACE COOLANT HEATER AT AG B	396.99	
CUMMINS SALES AND SERVICES	MAINT ON AG BLDG GENERATOR	971.98	
GOLDEN WEST	PHONE & INTERNET	55.86	
SKYLER KEHN	CELL PHONE STIPEND	30.00	
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		1454.83	*

Total Checks: 53,028.45 \*

Meeting adjourned subject to call.

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Clyde Dethlefsen, Chairman  
Aurora County Commission

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_  
Susan Urban, Auditor

Published once at the total approximate cost \_\_\_\_\_.