

**WESTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
OFFICIAL MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 15, 2026**

The Board meeting of the Weston County Board of Commissioners was called to order by Chairman Nathan Todd at 9:00 a.m. at the Weston County Courthouse. Vice Chairman Ed Wagoner, Commissioners Garrett Borton, Vera Huber, and Marty Ertman, and Clerk Amber Green were present. Commissioner Borton opened the meeting with a prayer, and Angela Phillips led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Commissioner Ertman moved to approve the agenda; seconded by Commissioner Borton. Motion carried.

INSURANCE

Commissioner Borton moved to approve the 18-month Solberg Insurance premium plan with a total of \$41,351.40, transferring \$41,351.40 from account 100.00.13.0026000.0000, Courthouse Post/Freight, to account 100.00.20.0074000.0000, General Miscellaneous Insurance; seconded by Commissioner Ertman. During discussion, the Chairman's signature was approved. Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Board member Nick Trandahl of the 21 Wellness Prevention Coalition thanked Chairman Todd for attending their last meeting. He said it was important for the County to hear about the work 21 Wellness is doing in the community and that having a government perspective was a welcome addition to the discussion.

MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 1, 2026

Commissioner Huber moved to approve the minutes of September 1, 2026, as amended; seconded by Commissioner Borton. Motion carried.

MONTHLY COLLECTIONS

Commissioner Borton moved to approve the following collections:

- County Clerk in the amount of **\$12,304.57**
- County District Court Clerk in the amount of **\$1,479.00**
- County Sheriff in the amount of **\$305.00**

Seconded by Commissioner Ertman. Motion carried.

Commissioner Ertman moved to approve the following collections:

- Mondell Airport in the amount of **\$275.00** for August
- Mondell Airport in the amount of **\$275.00** for September

Seconded by Vice Chairman Wagoner. During discussion, Commissioner Borton recused himself from the vote. Motion carried.

TREASURERS' REPORTS

Commissioner Ertman moved to approve the Treasurer's Cash and Revenue Reports; seconded by Commissioner Borton. Motion carried.

AP VOUCHER REPORTS

Commissioner Ertman moved to approve the July and August AP Voucher Reports, with the understanding that the August tapes also need to be signed; seconded by Commissioner Huber. Motion carried.

RESOLUTION 2026-25 PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS TRAVEL

Public Health Nurse Manager Angela Phillips reported a new reimbursable account from the State for emergency preparedness travel. Vice Chairman Wagoner moved to approve Resolution 2026-25 an

Amendment to the 2026-2027 Budget allocating \$1,000.00 to a new account titled PPHR Travel Expense; seconded by Commissioner Borton. Motion carried.

MOU WITH UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING/ EXTENSION COMPENSATION AGREEMENT

Daniel Peck, University of Wyoming Associate Director of Extension, and Erin Persche, 4-H Youth Development Educator, joined the meeting to present a new Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The Commissioners asked whether the word “employment” could be removed so the language would state that the County is funding the salaries and associated benefits for the professional and clerical support positions. Director Peck suggested that the County work with the County Attorney to develop the desired wording using the current document and provide a red-lined version to the University of Wyoming’s General Counsel for review. No action was taken.

IT SUPPORT

The Board discussed with Golden West IT Specialist Charles Wuestewald proposed dash cameras, body cameras, ALPR, and related bandwidth, storage, and recurring subscription costs. The Board requested that available options and specifications be researched, with an emphasis on minimizing recurring costs and selecting a solution appropriate for the County’s needs.

The Board discussed the Sheriff’s Office network connection and the wireless link between the Courthouse and Law Enforcement Center. Specialist Wuestewald recommended replacing the switch and firewall at the Sheriff’s Office to improve connectivity and reduce latency for camera, phone, and other network traffic. The Board discussed a small server for the Sheriff’s Office as a backup if the Courthouse loses power but noted that the Courthouse generator and UPS could address the issue.

The Board also discussed whether County-owned equipment located at the Police Department could be used to support the Sheriff’s Office, subject to available capacity and coordination with the City and their IT department.

Specialist Wuestewald stated that the primary concern with the current camera system is bandwidth rather than storage and advised that reports could be provided showing current bandwidth usage. The Board requested a report to identify bandwidth consumption by various systems.

The Board expressed concern about recurring costs associated with grant-funded technology, including subscriptions, software, and data usage. The Board emphasized the need for economical, expandable solutions that meet the County’s needs without unnecessary ongoing expenses.

The Board also discussed the underpowered computer in the meeting room and was advised that a small desktop computer could be installed to improve performance. Potential upgrades to the County phone system were discussed, with Specialist Wuestewald stating that a hosted phone system could be supported by prioritizing voice traffic on the network.

Specialist Wuestewald also noted that the current firewall at the Courthouse was originally specified approximately five years ago and may no longer meet the County’s current needs.

Commissioner Ertman moved to approve the outright purchase from Golden West of a firewall and switch (not hardware as a service) for the Sheriff’s Department, not to exceed \$8,000.00; seconded by Commissioner Huber. Motion carried.

RANGE PHONES

Commissioner Ertman moved to buy the new Range phone systems not to exceed \$30,000 to be combined with Public Health; seconded by Commissioner Huber. Motion carried.

RARE ELEMENT RESOURCES

Representatives from Rare Element Resources (RER), including Paul Bonifa, Director of Business Development; Roger Connett Community Representative for Crook and Weston Counties; and Mike Pollard Director of Plant Operations provided an update on the demonstration plant and the proposed Bear Lodge project. Discussion included increased traffic on County roads and the potential for an MOU addressing road impacts if the larger processing facility moves forward.

Mr. Bonifa reported progress at the demonstration plant and discussed anticipated workforce growth and the need for additional housing in the area. The proposed Bear Lodge mine would transport approximately 44 loads per day to the Upton processing facility, with an estimated 4,000 tons of final product produced annually. He also stated that dust-control measures would be required and that tailings and radioactive byproducts would be managed in accordance with WDEQ requirements.

CHAIRMAN'S SIGNATURE ON CLERK'S ABSTRACT

Commissioner Huber moved to approve the Chairman's signature on the Weston County Clerk's Abstract for the fiscal year 2026; seconded by Commissioner Borton. Motion carried.

COPIER QUOTES FROM TOP OFFICE

The Board discussed quotes for five printers for the County Clerk, County Attorney, District Court, Sheriff, and Extension Office. The Board requested clarification on whether the District Court requires a color copier or if the main copier would meet its needs. They also questioned the quoted models and speeds for the Extension and Attorney's Offices before proceeding.

FAIRGROUNDS ROOF

The Commissioners discussed ongoing roof leaks at the Event Center with Fair Board member Francie Hamilton. Mrs. Hamilton suggested the leak needs to be pinpointed, and a scissor lift may be needed to access the ceiling and attic area while someone examines the roof. Previous caulking repairs were unsuccessful, and additional water stains and leaks have been observed throughout the building. Commissioners discussed the possibility that movement of the building structure may have contributed to the roof issues and noted that reroofing may ultimately be necessary.

HOMELAND SECURITY GRANTS

1. **Fairgrounds Events Center Generator/Pre-Evacuation Site** – \$78,000. The Board requested the bid and project specifications before approval.
2. **Weston County Courthouse Generator** – \$83,500.
3. **Bendix King Radios** for Weston County Fire Protection District, Newcastle Volunteer Fire Department, and Upton Volunteer Fire Department – \$6,500. The Board requested the bid and specifications.
4. **Rave Panic Buttons** – \$6,500 for annual service contracts for the Courthouse and Annex. The Board requested specifications regarding the services covered.
5. **Motorola APX Next Radios for the Sheriff's Office** – \$171,635.73. The Board requested specifications and clarification regarding the recurring subscription costs after the initial three-year grant period.
6. **Motorola APX Next Radios for Emergency Management and the Coroner** – \$24,617.35. The Board requested specifications and clarification regarding subscription costs after the three-year grant period.
7. **Axon Fleet 3 Dash Cameras with LPR Software** – \$139,806 for 18 cameras, two per vehicle. The Board requested information on the subscription costs beginning after the initial five-year period. The LPR software would identify license plates entered into the system.

DINOSAUR EXPANSION

Pam Gualtieri updated the Commissioners on efforts to establish a dinosaur museum in Weston County, with the preferred location being an expansion of the Anna Miller Museum. The group is awaiting input from the Museum Board and may pursue a separate 501(c)(3) and alternate property if necessary. A T-Rex cast has been donated, and several individuals, universities, and organizations have expressed interest in assisting with the project. Potential partnerships, grants, tourism opportunities, and STEM education programs are being explored. It was suggested to research what would happen to the museum

building if the Museum District were to dissolve, including what the governing documents state regarding the building's ownership.

TAX INITIATIVE

Newcastle Mayor Ty Owens stated that the six-penny tax initiative was not submitted to the County Clerk in time for placement on the 2026 General Election ballot. Mayor Owens requested the Commissioners' support for holding a special election in May rather than waiting until the next general election.

The Commissioners discussed the costs and potential turnout associated with a special election. Mayor Owens stated his research indicated the initiative would need to be submitted to the County Clerk by February 3, 2027, for a May election. The Commissioners also discussed when the tax would begin being collected and noted the County and businesses would need adequate time to make the necessary changes.

COUNTY ROAD 43 DISCREPANCY

Cody and Rebeca Flayler addressed the Commissioners regarding the legal status of County Road 43, which was established in 1935 and reportedly abandoned by the Commissioners in 1977. Mrs. Flayler stated that the statutory abandonment process required newspaper publication and direct notice to affected landowners, and she found no county records showing that direct notice was provided.

The Commissioners discussed the 1977 resolution stating the road was abandoned "as advertised in the official county newspaper according to law." Mrs. Flayler expressed concern that the resolution did not reference direct notice to affected landowners, which she stated could have rendered the abandonment process null and void.

Mrs. Flayler stated the road continues to be used by several landowners and requested that the County review the matter and clarify the road's legal status. The County Attorney stated he would review the applicable statutes and case law, including whether the passage of time affects the matter. The Commissioners agreed further research was needed before taking any action.

EXECUTIVE SESSION-16-4-405 (a)(ii) – PERSONNEL

Commissioner Ertman moved to enter into executive session pursuant to W.S. 16-4-405 (a)(ii) for personnel; seconded by Commissioner Huber. Motion carried.

HOMELAND SECURITY

Commissioner Ertman moved to place the Office of Homeland Security position under the Board of County Commissioners; seconded by Vice Chairman Wagoner. During discussion, it was noted that previous efforts to increase face-to-face interaction on various matters had not been successful. The Board agreed the arrangement could be revisited if it does not work out. Motion carried.

HIRE MAINTENANCE

Commissioner Ertman moved to offer the maintenance position to Adam Halverson at \$3,570 per month; seconded by Commissioner Borton. Motion carried.

CHARGE ACCOUNT AT DUMP

The Board requested that the charge account be established for the Maintenance position, with only the Maintenance employee authorized to charge under the County's account for materials and services related to his duties. Other County entities would need to establish their own charge accounts for garbage disposal.

RESOLUTION 2026-26 AMENDING PREVENTION MANAGEMENT BUDGET

This resolution is a follow-up to a previous discussion with Prevention Management regarding its full award not being included in the new fiscal year budget.

Vice Chairman Wagoner moved to approve Resolution 2026-26, Amending the Prevention Management Budget; seconded by Commissioner Ertman. Motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS

SHERIFF GUTTERS

The Board was presented with a bid from Spearfish Seamless Gutters for \$7,282.50 for gutters on the Sheriff's Department building. The Commissioners were reminded that in-state bids are allowed a 5% preference when compared to out-of-state bids. The previous bid was from Superior Seamless Gutters of Gillette for \$8,000.00. The Board expressed support for keeping the funds within the state.

Vice Chairman Wagoner moved to proceed with Superior Seamless Gutters for the installation of gutter on the entire Law Enforcement Center building; seconded by Commissioner Borton. During discussion, the Board decided to use funds from the ARPA Local Assist & Tribal account 150.00.32.0159000.0000. Motion carried.

MOU WITH UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING/ EXTENSION COMPENSATION AGREEMENT

4-H Youth Development Educator Erin Persche returned to the meeting with a revised MOU. The requested changes were made, and it was looked at by Associate Director Dannele Peck and County Attorney Stulken.

Commissioner Ertman moved to approve the MOU between the University of Wyoming and Commissioners of Weston County; seconded by Commissioner Huber. During discussion, the Board clarified that the employment language under Section E3 would apply to an additional educator if one was added. Motion carried.

Commissioner Ertman moved to approve the Annual Compensation Agreement for the 4-H Youth Educator for \$43,215.60, with the County paying four installments of \$5,833.50 in October 2026, January, March, and June of 2027 totaling \$23,334.00; seconded by Commissioner Borton. Motion carried.

Vice Chairman Wagoner moved to approve the Annual Compensation Agreement for an Extension professional to provide clerical and secretarial support in the amount of \$52,144.00, with the County paying four installments of \$13,036.00 in October 2026, January, March, and June of 2027; seconded by Commissioner Ertman. Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

COMMISSIONER COMMENT

Chairman Todd expressed hope that the transition with Homeland Security would be positive but stated that if the arrangement does not work, he would support returning to the previous structure.

Commissioner Borton estimated the insurance savings would be approximately \$8,500 per month.

Commissioner Huber reported attending a city meeting and suggested having the Sheriff provide a brief five-minute report to the Board regarding arrests and department activities to help inform the public. She also suggested that the County Attorney provide a similar report regarding the office's activities.

Commissioner Ertman requested an update on the bridge railings for the stops at the Event Center. She also reminded the Board that new employees need to submit conflict-of-interest forms and that evaluations need to be scheduled for the employees supervised by the Board. Department heads should also be reminded to complete employee evaluations.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:45 p.m.

Nathan Todd

Chairman

Attest: Amber Green
Weston County Clerk