

## **Minutes of the Custer County Commission Meeting, Wednesday, September 17, 2025**

### **Members present:**

Commission Vice-Chair Mark Hartman, Commissioners Mike Linde, Michael Busskohl, Craig Hindle; Commission Legal Counsel Aaron Davis and Dawn McLaughlin, Finance Officer. Chairman Jim Lintz was not present. Today's meeting was held at the 1881 Courthouse Museum.

### **A. Commission Meeting was called to order at 8:00 AM followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.**

### **B. Adopting of the agenda**

1. Motion to approve Agenda made by Linde; seconded by Busskohl; vote taken, all aye; motion carried.

### **C. Consent Agenda**

1. Approve Minutes of the 9-3-2025 Commission meeting.
2. Approve Travel Requests—Michael Baldwin, W&P, to attend SDACD Convention in Huron Sept 21-23, 2025 at a cost of \$512 (to be paid by the Conservation District).
3. Vouchers approved as follows:

**PAYROLL:** Safety \$134.33; Commissioners \$5,697.72; Auditor \$12,638.43; Treasurer \$13,690.51; Info System & Tech \$3,426.87; States Attorney \$15,282.52; Courthouse Building \$10,340.39; Director of Equalization \$12,287.62; Register of Deeds \$5,777.90; Veterans service \$2,107.89; Human Resources \$2,372.94; Sheriff \$65,137.78; Coroner \$879.62; Nurse \$191.56; Library \$12,496.69; Conservation \$768.27; Weed & Pest \$3,270.61; County road & Bridges \$40,633.07; Emergency Management \$2,880.26; 24/7 Sobriety \$261.93; Emergency Line \$21,411.51;

**COMMISSIONERS:** AmericInn \$1,032.00; Golden West Telecommunications \$273.69; Murray Auto \$106.07; Splish Splash car Wash \$13.00;

**COURT:** Manlove Brain and Body Health \$3,750.00;

**AUDITOR:** AmericInn \$668.00; Golden West Telecommunications \$160.58; SD Department of Revenue \$99.12; Tyler Technologies \$12,070.00;

**TREASURER:** AmericInn \$334.00; Golden West Telecommunications \$143.96;

**STATE'S ATTORNEY:** Culligan water \$32.85; Golden West Telecommunications \$137.64; LexisNexis \$491.00; South Dakota Public Health \$115.00;

**MAINTENANCE:** Black Hills Chemical \$187.43; Black hills Energy \$3,905.96; Custer Ace Hardware \$49.97; Golden West Telecommunications 422.94; Kieffer Sanitation \$22.80;

**DIRECTOR OF EQUALIZATION:** Golden West Telecommunications \$206.46; Splish Splash car Wash \$29.00; Verizon \$31.90;

**REGISTER OF DEEDS:** Golden West Telecommunications \$91.76;

**VETERANS SERVICES:** Golden West Telecommunications \$22.94;

**HUMAN RESOURCES:** Golden West Telecommunications \$22.94;

**INFO TECHNOLOGY:** Golden West Technologies \$8,458.43; Golden West Telecommunications \$680.00;

**SHERIFF:** A&B pure water \$54.98; Axon enterprise INC \$1,620.00; Bintel INC \$3,243.30; Custer Ace Hardware \$13.18; French Creek Supply \$ 59.46; Golden West Telecommunications \$289.37; Legal and Liability Risk Management \$450.00; LexisNexis \$216.00; Motorola solutions \$391.28; Murray Auto \$1,622.83; Pheasantland Industries \$626.91; Rushmore Communication \$41.83; S&B Motor Parts \$21.00; Sherry Weber \$60.00; Uline \$190.41;

**PRISONER CARE:** Hapsie Nutley \$75.00; Jacquelyn Nelson PBT \$150.00; Kevin Kirschenmann \$100.00; Linda Nohr \$75.00; Pennington County Jail \$22,050.00; Pennington County Sheriff Office \$105.00; Pennington County Sheriff's Office \$226.00; Precision Eyecare \$93.26; Ruth Airheart \$75.00; Satellite Tracking of People \$32.50; South Dakota Public Health \$535.00;

**AIRPORT:** Golden West Telecommunications \$115.17;

**LIBRARY:** Bywater Solutions \$515.00; Golden West Telecommunications \$22.94;

**EXTENSION:** Golden West Telecommunications \$91.84; Keri Cochran \$405.90;

**WEED & PEST:** Bob Baird \$156.33; Connie Zeimet \$59.50; Culligan Water \$13.90; Derek Lisec \$49.08; Golden West Telecommunications \$22.94; Gordon Cleveland \$44.58; Jessie Gartner \$53.91; Lesa McDermott \$208.93; Mahrt Colleen \$670.00; Paul Johnson \$68.25; Robert Jorgensen \$184.12; Shana Hindman \$494.66; Sidney Trail Road \$80.00, Trump Steven \$119.99; Verizon \$15.95;

**PLANNING:** Golden West Telecommunications \$114.70; Splish Splash car Wash \$16.00; Verizon \$31.90;

**COUNTY ROAD & BRIDGE:** A&B Welding supply \$209.44; A&I Distributors \$57.06; Black Hills Gravel \$9,500.00; Brosz Engineering \$5,100.00; Culligan Water \$6.95; Dakota Fluid Power \$18,134.85; Diesel Machinery \$201.26; Evans Repair \$271.00; Forward distributing \$11.40; French Creek Supply \$849.04; Godfrey Brake \$621.84; Golden West Telecommunications \$249.56; Great Western Tire \$3,991.80; Kieffer Sanitation \$346.92; Mt Rushmore Telephone \$181.77; ; Rushmore Communication \$1,813.50; Servall Towel & Linen \$97.58; Town of Buffalo \$73.00;

**EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT:** Golden West Telecommunications \$46.22;

**COUNTY BUILDINGS:** Jam Heating and Cooling \$12,750.00; North Central Supply \$385.00; Thyssenkrupp Elevator Corporation/TK Elevator \$838.50;

**EMERGENCY LINE:** A&B pure water \$54.97; Golden West Telecommunications \$417.36; ; Rushmore Communication \$351.00;

**IST:** Golden West Telecommunications \$45.88;

**SEARCH & RESCUE:** Golden West Telecommunications \$99.95;

**NURSE:** Golden West Telecommunications \$61.67;

**CAA:** Suzanne Starr \$21.41;

Motion to approve Consent Agenda made by Hindle; seconded by Busskohl; vote taken, all aye; motion carried.

**D. Conflict of Interest Declarations – None.**

**E. Highway**

1. Highway Superintendent, Jesse Doyle, requested Commission approval of ROW Occupancy Permit from Mt. Rushmore Telephone Company re: Hwy 36 area non-SDDOT roadways. Doyle noted that some county roads are included in this project area and recommended approval. Motion to approve made by Busskohl; seconded by Hindle; vote taken, all aye; motion carried.

2. Doyle also requested approval of ROW Occupancy Permit from Golden West re: Rimfire Road. Motion to approve made by Linde; seconded by Hindle; vote taken, all aye; motion carried.

3. Doyle requested authorization of expenditure from RAIF funds for culvert project on America Center/French Creek crossing. Doyle noted the balance of RAIF funds in the amount of \$33,828 will be used toward the purchase of culverts but will not cover the cost entirely. The remaining balance needed is available in the budget. Doyle reiterated this will be a nighttime project. Motion to approve RAIF expenditure made by Busskohl; seconded by Linde; vote taken, all aye; motion carried. Doyle gave a short update on the SD DOT CSP detour, and said the original projected start date has been delayed until 10-6-25. Also mentioned was a box culvert replacement project on Playhouse Road with no start date given.

**F. Planning**

1. Planning Director, Terri Kester, presented Cell Tower Modification request for approval re: Crazy Horse Memorial Foundation Parcel #000060. This request is for 3 new antennas and the Planning Commission recommended approval at its 9-9-25 meeting. Motion to approve made by Busskohl; seconded by Hindle; vote taken, all aye; motion carried.

2. Kester also presented request for approval of Cell Tower Modification re: Chris Voss Parcel #015239. The Planning Commission recommended approval. Motion to approve made by Linde; seconded by Busskohl; vote taken, all aye; motion carried.

3. Request for Commission approval for Variance Request re: Dennis Van Laecken Parcel #015621 was presented. Kester stated the landowner desires to construct a 45' x 26' garage 15' from the boundary line. The Planning Commission recommended approval at its 7-1-25 meeting. Motion to approve variance made by Hindle; seconded by Linde; vote taken, all aye; motion carried. Van Laecken had previously requested approval for a third approach to the property but has decided not to pursue further. Vice-Chairman Hartman asked State's Attorney Kelley and Commission Legal Counsel Davis to investigate additional approaches within road districts, noting further clarification is needed. Kelley also stated the county has limited reach by statute and that road districts should bring concerns to the county. Discussion was also held regarding who is responsible for signage located within road districts.

4. Discussion was held regarding Custer County GIS department. Commissioner Hindle stated he has spoken with the department head, who was willing to roll over the GIS duties to the Planning Department at some future point. Hindle noted the GIS department is not being dissolved and Troy Schmidt, current GIS department head, will train and is willing to be on call to assist. The Sheriff's Department, EMS and DOE are concerned about changes ahead. Karen Whitney, DOE Office Manager, addressed the Commission and shared her concerns as GIS is an important tool in her office and the staff depends on the Beacon program to be accurate. She is concerned without Schmidt behind the program, it will be a disaster. Whitney stated the DOE office works closely with GIS on plats and mapping and said Schmidt does a phenomenal job behind the scenes to ensure things run smoothly. She stated it is the best interest of Custer County to retain Schmidt. Register of Deeds, Teri Morgan, stated the Commission is not on the same page as when she spoke with Schmidt. She said the Commission did not discuss this with anyone and that the Commission has no idea what GIS does.

## **G. Maintenance**

1. Maintenance Supervisor, Joseph Panza requested Commission approval of new hire, Keith Jatton as Maintenance II Tech. with a start date of 9-8-25 at a rate of \$22/hour. This is a full-time, fully benefitted position. Motion to approve made by Busskohl; seconded by Linde ; vote taken, all aye; motion carried.

## **H. Airport**

1. Airport Manager, Brenden Hendrickson, requested approval & signature of Mead & Hunt Contract for Runway 8/26 Project and Environmental assessment. This is for the environmental assessment of the runway project. Legal has reviewed and funding is approved. The total fee is \$406K; Custer County's portion is 2.5% (\$10,150). Motion to approve made by Hindle; seconded by Busskohl; vote taken, all aye; motion carried.

## **I. 8:30 AM Public Hearing**

1. Highway Superintendent, Jesse Doyle, presented the 5-year plan and Annual Bridge Report. Dan Cichosz from Brosz Engineering was present. Bridges are the driving force behind the 5-year plan. It was noted that nothing much has changed except the Buffalo Gap project will start very soon. The Improvement Grant application for the Cheyenne River Bridge project will be submitted in January, 2026. Cichosz stated that most Custer County bridges are in good shape; ahead of other counties. There were no comments from the public. Motion to approve 5-Year Plan and sign Certification made by Hindle; seconded by Busskohl; vote taken, all aye; motion carried.

## **J. Human Resources**

1. Finance Officer, Dawn McLaughlin requested Commission approval for Mike Baldwin, Weed & Pest Supervisor, to move from hourly to salaried position at a rate of \$57,428.80 annually. (\$27.61/hour). Baldwin had previously held a salaried position, but at one point worked reduced hours and dropped to an hourly rate. His hours have now increased, and he is requesting to move back to salary. The hourly rate of pay remains the same. Motion to approve made by Hindle; seconded by Busskohl; vote taken, Hindle and Busskohl aye; Linde nay; motion carried.

2. McLaughlin requested approval of completion of 1-year probationary period for the following Department Heads and new wages effective 10-6-25: Scott Storms, DOE, salary of \$67,000 annually; Amber Maidens, HR, hourly rate of \$25. Motion to approve made by Busskohl; seconded by Linde; vote taken, all aye; motion carried.

3. Commission approval of full health benefits to employees who work 28-hours or more a week was requested. State's Attorney Kelley stated she understands how this came about as some employees wish to retire; this would enable those employees to stay and train new employees until retirement. This allows for retention of knowledgeable employees for a time, but the way in which the request was presented is problematic. Other wording is necessary to not be discriminatory. Kelley has received feedback on this issue and noted the present Employee Handbook needs clarification and an amendment pertaining to this matter. Kelley is supportive of keeping those employees on staff. No action taken and this matter is postponed.

4. McLaughlin requested approval for advertising for full-time, fully benefitted Deputy Auditor II position at a starting wage of \$17.77/hour. This will eventually become a combined position. Motion to approve advertising made by Busskohl; seconded by Hindle; vote taken, all aye; motion carried.

4. Approval to advertise for part-time Nurse Secretary position at a starting wage of \$17.00/hour was requested. This position is for 16 hours per week with no benefits. Motion to approve advertising made by Hindle; seconded by Linde; vote taken, all aye; motion carried.

## **K. Public Comment –**

1. Lea Anne McWhorter said there was a legislative tax task force meeting 9-22-25 in Pierre. She stated that the DOR was present and public comment was allowed. There will be a meeting in Rapid City regarding a push to abolish property tax, having a receipt tax on purchases of \$15 or more instead of property tax. This is proposed by Julie Frye-Mueller and Matt Smith. She urged those in attendance to take a careful look at it. She also noted the Custer County Republicans would like a monthly update from Custer County.

2. Tracy Kelley stated the Opioid funds proposal moving forward may not distribute funds to counties, but rather use the funds for mental health facilities. She said there is a desperate need for mental health services and will keep the Commission apprised of the situation.

3. Juliann Gramkow stated Custer County has a need for substance abuse and mental health funding, as there have been many cuts for these services. She also praised the staff in the Planning office.

## **L. Search & Rescue**

1. Sam Smolnisky, S&R, requested approval 2025-2026 General Services Contract with Custer State Park in the amount of \$9,172.90. This Contract is between CCS&R and CSP and does not require the Commission Chairman's signature, although CCS&R utilizes Custer County's

W-9, FEIN and Certificate of Insurance Coverage. Motion to approve contract and Sam's signature made by Linde; seconded by Hindle; vote taken, all aye; motion carried.

2. Smolinsky asked for approval to surplus of 2 2016 Yamaha Kodiak 700 ATVs for public auction. He stated S&R does not utilize these ATVs often. Smolinsky noted these units were not purchased with grant funding. Vice-Chairman Hartman requested that rather than surplussing these units, perhaps some volunteer fire departments could put them to use. Motion to give the ATVs to Volunteer fire departments or EMS made by Busskohl; seconded by Linde; vote taken, all aye; motion carried.

#### **M. Commission**

1. IT Contract—Aaron Davis presented, and discussion was held regarding current Golden West services utilized by Custer County. An initial comparison for services and costs was done by A&B IT Solutions. Commissioner Hindle stated Golden West services are on a month-to-month basis and not under contract at this time. Concerns regarding a possible change in IT providers were raised, including sonic wall security, courthouse cameras, on-site tech and 24/7 365 tech support (both on-site and remote). It was recommended that A&B IT Solutions attend a future Commission meeting for a presentation.
2. Mail call- a) letter from SD DOT re: Landowner Meeting for Input re: Project NH-CR 0016(64)26 Custer County PCN 4794 re: widen 5<sup>th</sup> St. into Custer City. b) letter from DANR re: Surface Water Discharge Permit SD GFP CSP Game Lodge.
3. Meeting Schedule – 9-24-25 Final Budget Hearing at 8:30 AM.
4. Meeting Reports – Busskohl attended 2025 Annual SDACC conference in Pierre, Planning; Fire Advisory Board and Custer City Council; Linde attended Solid Waste Board, conference in Pierre, Museum Board, Custer City Council; Hartman attended conference in Pierre and Planning.
5. Travis Hartshorn discussed the possible ambulance district creation and stated there is community support and plans are progressing. Creation of a district first and then merging with an existing district was discussed. Land was donated for a facility by Hermosa Connects but may have been revoked at this time.
6. Motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:59 AM to reconvene at the Custer County Courthouse for Executive Session made by Hindle; seconded by Busskohl; vote taken, all aye; motion carried.

#### **N. Executive Session**

1. Motion to reconvene and enter Executive Session as per SDCL 1-25-2(3) Contract/Legal and SDCL; Executive Session as per SDCL 28-13.42 Indigent requests made by Hindle; seconded by Busskohl; vote taken, all aye; motion carried. Executive Sessions entered at 9:29 AM and concluded at 12:16 PM.

#### **O. Actions Taken by Commission Outside of Executive Session**

1. Motion to approve Indigent request for cremation expenses in the amount of \$2,250. made by Linde; seconded by Hindle; vote taken, all aye; motion carried.
2. Motion to approve Indigent request for cremation expenses in the amount of \$2,250. made by Busskohl; seconded by Hindle; vote taken, all aye; motion carried.


**P. Adjourn**

Motion by Linde and seconded by Busskohl to adjourn the meeting at 12:19 PM. The next meeting will be 10-8-2025 at 8:00 AM in the Commissioner's Room in the Custer County Courthouse.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Mark Hartman, Vice-Chairman



Attest: \_\_\_\_\_



Barbara Cox, Custer County Deputy Auditor

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