

**Minutes of the Custer County Special Commission Meeting, Thursday,  
December 18, 2025.**

**Members present:**

Commissioners Jim Lintz, Mark Hartman, Mike Linde, Michael Busskohl, Craig Hindle and Commission Legal Counsel Aaron Davis and Dawn McLaughlin, Finance Officer.

**A. Commission Meeting was called to order at 1:00 PM followed by the  
Pledge of Allegiance.**

**B. Adopting of the agenda**

1. Finance Officer McLaughlin requested amendment to agenda as follows: Item "E" to correct new hire pay rate from \$22.86 to \$22.84. Motion to approve as amended made by Hartman; seconded by Busskohl; vote taken, all aye; motion carried.

**C. Consent Agenda**

1. Approve vouchers as follows:

**COMMISSIONERS:** CC A&B pure water \$75.39,

**AUDITOR:** CC Verizon \$40.01, CC Printer \$289.56,

**TREASURER:** CC Printer \$399.89,

**STATE'S ATTORNEY:** CC Verizon \$39.73, CC Printer \$230.33, CC Quill \$37.15, CC Quill \$99.74, CC Family Dollar \$13.81,

**MAINTENANCE:** CC Verizon \$39.73, CC Printer \$182.55, CC Credit Memo \$-129.99, CC Amazon/Sams Club \$1,201.56,

**DIRECTOR OF EQUALIZATION:** CC Printer \$254.88, CC IAAO Books \$1,242.34,

**REGISTER OF DEEDS:** CC Printer \$216.05,

**VETERANS SERVICES:** CC Printer \$67.06,

**HUMAN RESOURCES:** CC Verizon \$39.73, CC Printer \$

**SHERIFF:** CC Verizon \$526.51, CC Printer \$232.93, CC Credit Voucher \$-161.32, CC Amazon \$397.63, CC Comfort INN/Galls \$828.97,

**LIBRARY:** CC CREDIT VOUCHER \$-12.10 CC, CC AMAZON/YESWAY \$1,778.95,

**EXTENSION:** CC Verizon \$40.01,

**WEED & PEST:** CC Printer \$177.38, CC Runnings/Big Box Stores \$798.10,

**PLANNING:** CC Printer \$221.26, CC Amazon \$161.52,

**COUNTY ROAD & BRIDGE:** CC Printer \$201.03, CC Amazon \$39.99,

**EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT:** CC Verizon \$39.73, CC Printer \$54.36, CC Adobe/Amazon \$1,486.61, CC Safety Conference \$75.00,

**COUNTY BUILDINGS:** CC Amazon/Staples \$291.52,

**EMERGENCY LINE:** CC Printer \$245.64, CC Amazon \$191.91,

**ELECTION:** CC USPS \$122.00, CC Coffee Cup \$34.81,

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

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

**E. Highway**

1. Highway Superintendent, Jesse Doyle, presented an update on last night's windstorm. He stated that Hazelrodt Cutoff, Lower French Creek Road and North Playhouse Road remain closed at this time. He is awaiting notification from both BHE and BHEC before reopening. Highway crews were pulled off sections of roadways due to numerous downed power lines. He will coordinate with the power companies' repair crews and clear while they are onsite. Once assessments are completed, the power companies will contact Jesse to help reopen the roadways. He stated the cleanup will take weeks, possibly months. Damage to CSP is extensive and his crews cannot even get into the park at this point. Doyle stated he has heard estimates that approximately 400 trees are down on the North Playhouse Road area.

**F. Sheriff's Office/Communications**

1. Approve new hire Patricia Huber with a start date of 12-21-25 at an uncertified rate of \$22.84. This is a full-time, fully benefitted position. Motion by Busskohl to approve new hire; seconded by Hindle; vote taken; all aye motion carried.

**G. Human Resources**

1. HR Director, Amber Maidens requested approval of 2025 stipend in the amount

of \$5,000 for Maintenance Supervisor, Joseph Panza. Motion to approve made by Hindle; seconded by Busskohl; vote taken, all aye; motion carried. The Commission thanked Panza for his hard work.

#### **H. Finance Officer**

1. Finance Officer, Dawn McLaughlin, requested Commission acknowledgment of resignation of Deputy Treasurer Karen Hicks as of 12-17-25. The Commission so acknowledged.

2. Approval of consolidation of Accounts Payable duties within the Auditor's office was requested. McLaughlin stated the Highway Department will begin their own AP entries, with the Auditor's staff conducting the audit; thus, rendering the full-time AP position in the Auditor's office to part-time. The current Auditor's staff will absorb the AP duties. Motion to approve made by Hindle; seconded Busskohl; vote taken, all aye; motion carried.

3. McLaughlin requested approval to move Deputy Auditor Natasha Ufen from Auditor's office to Treasurer's office to fill vacated position. Motion to approve made by Linde; seconded by Hindle; vote taken, all aye; motion carried.

4. Acknowledgement of elimination of Float Position in Auditor's office as of 1-1-2026 was requested. The Commission so acknowledged.

#### **I. Sheriff's Department**

1. Law Enforcement Contract. Motion by Busskohl to authorize State's Attorney, Tracy Kelley, to send a response letter to the City of Custer regarding the Law Enforcement Contract. We, as the County Commission, greatly appreciate the years the County and City of Custer have worked together with a Law Enforcement Contract. Nevertheless, with the current inability to reach an agreement on a future contract, the current contract will conclude on 12/31/25. We wish the City of Custer the best with their future coverage plans. At this time, all offers of a continued Law Enforcement Contract are rescinded; seconded by Hindle; vote taken, all aye; motion carried.

#### **J. Commission**

1. Authorize Legal Counsel to reach out to SD Board re: geographical names for ruling re: Squaw Creek. Motion to authorize legal counsel to reach out to SD Board of Geographical Names for a ruling on Squaw Creek Road with recommendations by Busskohl; seconded by Linde; vote taken, all aye; motion carried. Legal Counsel, Aaron Davis, will monitor and be involved in the process.

2. Discuss East Custer Ambulance District. McLaughlin stated Pennington County is drafting the contract and will reach out with the proposal for 2026.

3. Scott Storms asked how the lack of a Law Enforcement Contract will affect those residents in the City of Custer. Commissioner Hindle stated they will have a County Sheriff, but not a municipal police force. State Laws will be enforced. The number of deputies will be reduced, so response times may be affected. Discussion regarding the City of Custer's public safety funds used for the West Dam projected was held; Peg

Ryan stated the City of Custer still has public safety issues that are taken care of by the city. Commissioner Hartman stated that city residents will notice and be affected if events, such as last night's windstorm occur. He also mentioned hearing that city residents live in and are part of the county, too. He stated if that is the case, then certain city offices and departments should be run by the county.

**K. Executive Session**

1. Executive Session as per SDCL 1-25-2(3) Contract/Legal. No Executive Session took place.

**L. Sheriff's Office Update re: Windstorm**

1. Sgt. Reifenrath provided an update regarding last night's windstorm. He stated the Communications Center received 99 calls for service as of midnight; since then, over 200 calls were received. Chairman Lintz stated he will have EMS Director, Esser, contact the State of SD and predicted the State will declare an emergency in the area, including Custer State Park.

**M. Adjourn**

Motion by Linde and seconded by Busskohl to adjourn the meeting at 1:16 PM. The next meeting will be at 8:00 AM, December 30, 2025 in the Commissioner's Room in the Custer County Courthouse.

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Jim Lintz, Chairman

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

Barbara Cox, Custer County Deputy Auditor

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