

STATE'S ATTORNEY: CC: Phone/Util \$31.89; Quality Inn \$110; DMCV Carson City \$11; Walmart Photos \$23.04; USPO \$7.30; AP: Golden West Telecom \$141.79;

COURT-APPOINTED ATTORNEY: Southern Hills Law PLLC \$8,690.68

MAINTENANCE: CC: Phone/Util \$31.89; Sam's \$588.26; Amazon \$391.71; Home Depot \$329; Menards \$193.04; AP: Lynn's \$5.04; BHEC \$673.43; Custer Ace Hdwe \$68.95; Golden West Telecom \$22.94; Kieffer Sanitation \$229;

DIRECTOR OF EQUALIZATION: AP: Golden West Telecom \$210.61; Splish Splash Car Wash \$16;

REGISTER OF DEEDS: AP: Golden West Telecom \$91.76;

VETERANS SERVICES: AP: Golden West Telecom \$22.94;

HUMAN RESOURCES: CC: Abure Software \$74.34; Quill \$45.67; Phone/Util \$31.89; AP: \$22.94;

INFO TECHNOLOGY: Golden West Technologies \$8,967.05; Golden West Telecom \$725.88; Quill \$260.20;

SHERIFF: CC: Phone/Util \$468.85; Amazon \$2060.01; HP Monitor \$184.79. AP: A&B Pure Water \$54.98; Battle Mt. Humane Society \$1,083; BHEC \$57.07; DARE-Creative Product Sourcing \$560.74; Barn 605 \$60; AP: Golden West Telecom \$312.93; LexisNexis \$209.50; Pheasantland Industries \$90; Summit Fire Protection \$683.25;

SEARCH & RESCUE: CC: Masters Custom Caps \$332.86; Sam's \$453.25; Active 911 \$11.72; Petzl \$147.49; Starlink \$50; Amazon \$174.15. AP: Active 911 \$319.20; Custer Ace Hdwe \$6.99; AP: Golden West Telecom \$99.95;

PRISONER CARE: AP: Correct RX \$177.60; Pennington County Jail \$15,950; Pennington County Sheriff's Office \$226; Rapid City Regional Hospital \$403.25; Scram Systems \$10.95;

MENTAL HEALTH: AP: Audra Hill Consulting \$311.30; Dan Fox \$207.50; Mark Katterhagen \$24; Val Larson \$24; Yankton Co. Sheriff \$50;

AIRPORT: AP: BHEC \$558.57; Golden West Telecom \$115.17; Kieffer Sanitation \$43.75; Quill \$151.19;

LIBRARY: CC: Amazon \$1,204; AP: Kieffer Sanitation \$125.83; McGas \$501.50; Summit Fire Protection \$143.75;

EXTENSION/4-H: CC: Quill \$130.91; AP: Golden West Telecom \$91.84; Summit Fire Protection \$91.25;

NURSE: AP: Golden West Telecom \$61.67

WEED & PEST: CC: Amazon \$20.88; Other Exp \$70; AP: BHEC \$130.99; Culligan \$6.95; Golden West Telecom \$22.94;

PLANNING: AP: Golden West Telecom \$114.70;

COUNTY ROAD & BRIDGE: CC: Amazon \$77.92; Keiffer Sanitation \$162.69; Mt. Rushmore Telephone \$179.92; BHEC \$1,748.14; AP: Golden West Telecom \$210.12;

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT: CC: Phone/Util \$31.89; Bintel \$6,486.60; BHEC \$51.43; AP: Golden West Telecom \$46.22;

COUNTY BUILDINGS: CC: Amazon \$41.74; Lowe's \$915.86; Nat'l Trade Filters \$617.76; Custer Ace Hdwe \$31.20; French Creek Supply \$26.98; Harvey's Lock Shop \$205.87; Summit Fire Protection \$644.30;

EMERGENCY LINE: AP: A&B Pure Water \$54.97; Golden West Telecom \$236.62; Trittech Software Systems \$1,170;

CUSTER SENIOR CENTER: 2026 Funding Disbursement \$8,000.

1881 COURTHOUSE MUSEUM: Thyssenkrupp Elevator Corp \$901.39

SD DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE: \$352.17;

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

D. Conflict of Interest Declarations – none.

E. Highway

1. Highway Superintendent, Jesse Doyle, presented ROW Occupancy Application

from BHEC for underground electric services on Downen Road for approval. He noted this parcel (009741) does not currently have an address. Motion to approve made by Hartman; seconded by Busskohl; vote taken, all aye; motion carried.

2. Doyle also requested approval for ROW Occupancy Application from Golden West

Telecommunications for fiber optic service to a residence on Pleasant Valley Road, parcels 011882 and 011884. Motion to approve made by Linde; seconded by Hindle; vote taken, all aye; motion carried.

3. Doyle requested approval for advertising and hiring process for two open positions. Motion to table request until after Item "K" Human Resources, #1 in today's meeting made by Busskohl; seconded by Hindle; vote taken, all aye; motion carried.

F. Sheriff

1. Lt. Derrick Reifenrath made request to surplus at the Bradeen Auction for the Highway Department 2018 Dodge Charger VIN: 2C3CDXKT6JH330244. He stated the Sheriff's office is looking to add more vehicles and will check vendor pricing. Motion to approve surplus made by Hindle; seconded by Busskohl; vote taken, all aye; motion carried.

2. Reifenrath requested Commission approval of certified rate of pay (\$28.03/hour) for Jim Lyon, bringing him up to the same wage as 2 other newly certified deputies. Motion to approve certified rate of pay of \$28.03 per hour made by Busskohl; seconded by Hindle; vote taken, all aye; motion carried.

G. Pringle Town Board

1. Pat Ziemet appeared before the Commission to present an update on the road & water projects in Pringle. He stated that the asphalt strip (formerly part of the highway) now known as Northern Street has been in ownership limbo and the asphalt is failing. Bids are being sought for asphalt replacement and Ziemet approximates the cost at \$100K. The Town of Pringle is asking if Custer County could possibly share in the cost for approximately 1/10 mile (\$15K-\$17K). The Commission will discuss this request in the future. Ziemet noted completed DANR wastewater study and said that many septic systems in Pringle are aging and grandfathered in. He also spoke about the potable water injection/load-out system and stated this is currently operating on the honor system, with the majority of those hauling water in rural areas, not just residents within the Town of Pringle. Ziemet stated the town will have a large financial commitment with the water project (well to ditch) and said the town would appreciate any county funding that may be available. Pringle is also working with the DGR and Black Hills Council of Local Governments. Ziemet went on to discuss an abandoned trailer house in Pringle that is located on the Dolly Evans estate property. The town wants this cleaned up and the question of ownership was discussed. State's Attorney Kelley stated that Custer County did not take the trailer for back taxes, as some believe. The county could sell a distress warrant on the trailer, otherwise the ownership goes to the prior owner. The current property owner could also apply for an abandoned title.

H. Equalization

1. Scott Storms, DOE Director, noted the Commission needs to meet on Tuesday, April 7th to set schedule for appeals. This date is set by the State of South Dakota. The Commission will meet at 3:30 PM.

2. Storms presented Application for Abatement of Property Taxes for William & Kristin Huffman, Lot #1203, Current Total Valuation \$436,798. The Huffmans were present at today's meeting. Storms stated the Huffmans recently became aware that their property was not classified as ag for the past 3 years, when they became owners of the property. The property was transferred family land and in 2023, the DOE sent out paperwork regarding the transfer, as well as an Ag Status Application form, which was never completed or returned to retain ag status. As a result, the property's ag status was removed. The Huffmans stated that payments were paid though escrow, so they did not notice the tax status until now. They also stated they didn't realize that filling out the application was part of the process and must have fallen under the radar. Storms stated that many counties require an ag application when property changes hands and noted a Pennington County case such as this where abatements were denied, and full taxes were due. Huffmans are asking for a reduction in taxes and value on Parcels 001203 and 015775. Discussion was held regarding the Certificate of Real Estate Value, showing that this transfer was filled out properly, noting it was sold to a family member. Motion to approve abatement for 1 year in the amount of \$6,356.08 for both parcels based upon correct CRV statement made by Busskohl; seconded by Hindle; vote taken, all aye; motion carried. It was also noted that the parcels in question have obtained approach and septic permits, however, a building that has been on the property since 2023 did not have a building permit.

3. ****See Above****Application for Abatement of Property Taxes for William & Kristin Huffman, Lot #15775, Current Total Valuation \$118,852.

4. Storms presented Application for Abatement of Property Taxes for Denys Warren & Nicole Bruce, Lot #1164, Current Total Valuation \$436,798; as well as parcels listed in items 5,6,7&8 below. Denys Warren and Lesley Warren appeared before the Commission to request abatement for 5 parcels that were removed from ag status. The property ownership changed hands and based on information received on the Certificate of Real Estate Value, together with no ag application filled out and returned to the DOE office, ag status was removed. Mr. Warren claims the property was gifted to him by family, but is otherwise indicated on the CRV, triggering removal from ag status. They referenced the contract for deed from Rushmore View Ranch, Inc. stating it stayed within the family. The Warrens stated they were unaware of the CRV being improperly filled out and did not know who filled out the form. After a short discussion and after reviewing the CRV, Mr. Denys acknowledged he was the one who filled out and signed the CRV at the time of the sale. Storms stated he had no way of knowing that Rushmore View Ranch, Inc. was family, as this was not stated. After claiming no ag status forms were ever received to fill out and return, Lesley Warren said she was appalled at how this transpired and said she wants certified mail for these forms moving forward. She also stated they receive approximately

40 tax statements for their properties. Storms stated he is required to follow the current policy when determining property classification, and the decision was based on information provided by the Warrens. Chairman Lintz stated that in the future, Custer County could have a policy that when a certain acreage threshold is removed from ag status, a certified letter could be sent to the owner for clarification. Commissioner Linde stated this was a costly mistake for the Warrens, however, this is not Custer County's or Storm's mistake. Commissioner Busskohl stated Custer County was provided with incorrect information. Discussion was held regarding the requested abatement, and it was noted the school district has already received funds, as well as other entities noted on the tax statements, and it would not be possible to recoup all the funds distributed based on the taxed amount. Also noted was the approved abatement for the Huffman property, as this was a different scenario and the CRV was properly filled out. Motion to abate half (\$17,791.63) of the tax amount due made by Busskohl; seconded by Hartman; vote taken, all aye; motion carried.

5. Application for Abatement of Property Taxes for Denys Warren & Nicole Bruce, Lot #1167, Current Total Valuation \$673,438. See above.
6. Application for Abatement of Property Taxes for Denys Warren & Nicole Bruce, Lot #1183, Current Total Valuation \$1,146,718. See above.
7. Application for Abatement of Property Taxes for Denys Warren & Nicole Bruce, Lot #1184, Current Total Valuation \$436,798. See above.
8. Application for Abatement of Property Taxes for Denys Warren & Nicole Bruce, Lot #1187, Current Total Valuation \$673,438. See above.

I. Emergency Management

1. EMS Director, Steve Esser, presented Qury Fire Status Update and stated containment is at 70% as of today's meeting, with a total size of 9,168 acres. He said roads are being reopened and signage will be taken down next week. He praised cooperation efforts between agencies.

2. Esser noted the Community Wildfire Protection Plan and stated the public comment period has been completed. The plan needs some revisions but has gone very well and he expects to present the plan at the next Commission meeting for signature.

J. Public Comment

1. Lea Anne McWhorter stated she has spoken with Custer City Mayor Brown regarding a law enforcement contract; Brown indicated he would like a more formal mediator when meeting with Custer County and no date has been set. The question arose of who selects the mediator, as this would not be the county's responsibility.

2. Steve Esser informed those in attendance about the "Watch Duty" app, which provides up-to-date information regarding fires in our area.

K. Human Resources

1. HR Director, Amber Maidens, held discussion and possible action regarding

the implementation of a temporary hiring freeze for all departments. Any hiring requests during this time will be reviewed and considered by the Commission on a case-by-case basis. Commissioner Busskohl agreed this should be implemented on a case-by-case basis and asked if a policy should be developed; it was determined the minutes would suffice. State's Attorney Kelley stated that if currently budgeted and approved positions within each office become vacant, the department head should have the discretion to fill them; the Commission only approves the wages at the end of the hiring process. She stated there could be a reduction in work force policy, if desired. Current loss of revenues is cited as one factor in implementation of this temporary hiring freeze request (grants not received; outstanding taxes, etc.). Commissioner Hartman noted the Highway Department is down 2 employees presently. Hartman also asked if this affects essential employees; Hindle stated this is countywide but would not affect essential employees. Reifenrath asked if this affects REMS team members, search & rescue or volunteers. Motion to approve the hiring freeze on a case-by-case basis made by Busskohl; seconded by Hindle; vote taken, Busskohl, Hindle and Linde aye; Hartman nay; motion carried.

2. Maidens requested authorization, with guidance from Troy Schmidt, to develop and advertise the County IT coordinator position. Discussion was held regarding lack of onsite IT and the necessity of it. Schmidt is the current GIS Director, and eventually, GIS will move to the Planning Department. Golden West provides one day per week of onsite IT, and it may be possible to contract additional onsite support. GIS will remain a standalone department from IT. Commissioner Busskohl stated the need to gather details and develop a plan before implementing. Busskohl recommended working with Schmidt to create a job description and baseline. No motion needed.

3. Request for approval to HR for signage creation to be used as circumstances warrant was made. State's Attorney Kelley asked who would oversee physically posting signage. Motion for Chairman to have final decision based upon staff recommendation made by Busskohl; seconded by Hindle; vote taken, all aye; motion carried.

L. Untable Highway Department

1. Motion to untable Item 3; "E" Highway made by Busskohl; seconded by Linde; vote taken, all aye; motion carried. Doyle stated he has done a good job staying within the approve budget, and the vacant positions are in the budget. Busskohl reiterated the need for budget cuts; Hindle stated he is not in favor of firings, but as positions are vacated, not necessarily filling them right away. Hartman noted that budget time is when these decisions should be made, and Maidens suggested a countywide manpower study. Motion to approve filling one vacancy and revisiting the second vacancy at a later date made by Linde; seconded by Hartman; vote taken, Linde, Hartman and Hindle aye; Busskohl nay; motion carried. Doyle asked the Commission to respectfully look at all budgets again and asked how he can run a \$3 million-dollar budgeted department with cuts. Teri Morgan stated all offices then need to look for cuts; Jesse Sorenson commented the first thing that should be cut is Commission health care;

Travis Hartshorn encouraged them to not fall behind in maintenance, as that is a number one concern; Hindle stated the number one concern is law enforcement.

M. Elections

1. Combined Election Agreement between the Town of Buffalo Gap and Custer County to be signed by Custer County's Finance Officer and CCC Chairman was presented. Motion to approve made by Hartman; seconded by Hindle; vote taken, all aye; motion carried.

N. Commission Legal Counsel

1. Commission Legal Counsel, Aaron Davis, provided an update on East Custer County Ambulance District and stated the process is going smoothly. Resolutions have been received from the towns of Fairburn and Hermosa to be included within the proposed district. Davis stated Resolution 2026-08 will be read and presented for Commission approval at the 4-8-26 meeting to fall within the 60-day timeline to be added as a ballot question for the June 2nd Primary election. State's Attorney Kelley will draft the ballot question, which has an April 1st deadline. Chairman Lintz stated if this formation passes in the primary, Custer County District Board will need to be created first, then the county will team up with Pennington & Meade Counties. Mike Bielmaier said he disagreed, saying he thought they were partners, and he has been excluded from meetings.

2. Davis provided an update on the Opt Out for Fire Protection. He has spoken with Buffalo Gap and Pringle to add to Petition for this opt out. The Resolution will be read and presented for Commission approval at the 4-8-26 meeting to be placed on the ballot and the voters will decide on the opt-out at the June 2nd Primary Election. Mark Sullivan asked for explanation re: "opt-out" as the term is causing confusion. States Attorney Kelley explained that by agreeing with an "opt-out", taxpayers are agreeing to a tax increase above the amount allowable by law. Jason Ferguson, Custer Chronicle, stated it is incumbent upon the voters to educate themselves on what the ballot issues are. Chairman Lintz stated that after the past 2 weeks, it is very evident that Volunteer Fire Departments are in need of help and equipment.

O. Commission

1. Mail call – Surface Water Discharge Permit Public Notice by SD DANR re: Sylvan Lake Ponds.
2. Meeting Schedule – 5-8-26 BH Ass'n meeting will be held in Custer, location TBD.
3. Meeting Reports – Hindle attended BH Ass'n in Sturgis, Governor's Bill signing at Custer School, DOE meeting via TEAMS; Linde attended YMCA, Conservation District, DOE meeting via TEAMS; Lintz attended Fair Board, where Quonset building removal was discussed; Busskohl attended Custer City Council; Governor's Bill signing at Custer School, DOE meeting via TEAMS and fire meetings.

P. Executive Session

1. Executive Session as per SDCL 1-25-2(3) Legal.

Motion to enter and exit Executive Session as per SDCL 1-25-2(3) Legal made by Busskohl; seconded by Linde; vote taken, all aye; motion carried. Executive Session entered at 9:31 AM and concluded at 10:40 AM.

Q. Actions Taken by Commission Outside of Executive Session

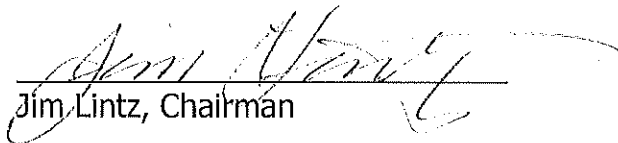
1. None

R. General

1. Discussion was held regarding grazing determinations for ag status, specifically horses. Under federal law, horses count as an ag certification, while that does not currently apply in Custer County.

S. Adjourn

Motion by Hartman and seconded by Busskohl to adjourn the meeting at 10:47 AM. The next meeting will be at 8:00 AM, April 8, 20 in the Commissioner's Room in the Custer County Courthouse.


Jim Lintz, Chairman



Attest: 

Barbara Cox, Custer County Deputy Auditor

Published once at the total approximate cost of _____.