

Minutes of the Custer County Commission Meeting, Wednesday, August 12, 2026.

Members present:

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

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

B. Adopting of the agenda

1. Amend to add 8:05 AM Public Hearing (re: Butte Bar, Courtney Phillips and Andrea Kelly; new on-sale liquor license) after Item "C".
2. Amend Item "J" DOE to add "approval to hire" verbiage.
3. Amend to add #3 to Item "I" EMS; Travis Hartshorn special cookout events. Motion to approve as amended made by Linde; seconded by Hindle; vote taken, all aye; motion carried.

C. Consent Agenda

1. Approve Minutes of the July 8, 2026 Commission meeting.
2. Travel requests approved as follows: Todd Fish, VSO, to attend VA Annual Conference and Certification Testing 9-14 through 19, 2026 at SF SD Heritage Center at a cost of \$747.44; Amber Maidens, HR, to attend SDEMA Salamander Credentialing Training 9-15-26 in Spearfish, SD.
3. Vouchers approved as follows:

PAYROLL: 8-10-26: Safety Wages \$134.30; Commissioners \$5,720.24; Election \$1,786.94; Auditor \$12,204.83; Treasurer \$14,827.98; Info Systems & Technology \$3,537.01; State's Attorney \$15,757.14; Courthouse Building \$10,957.82; Equalization \$12,923.54; Register of Deeds \$6,155.87; Veteran's Service \$2,772.06; Human Resources \$3,261.95; Sheriff \$51,895.52; Coroner \$1,068.84; Nurse \$597.56; Library \$13,236.94; Conservation \$825.87; Weed & Pest \$5,465.32; Planning \$6,222.25; County Road & Bridge \$40,439.20; Emergency Management \$3,081.77; Emergency Line F \$17,528.32

COMMISSIONERS: Golden West Telecom \$96; Southern Hills Publishing \$1,239.24; Valhalla Legal, PLLC \$4,400.

COURT APPOINTED ATTORNEY: Colbath & Sperlich \$7,767.79; Luci Youngberg \$231.80; Waeckerle Law, Prof. LLC \$667.60

AUDITOR: A&B Business \$385.15; Golden West Telecom \$168.63; Southern Hills Publishing \$67.11; Tyler Technologies \$362.50;

ELECTIONS: Arlene Kallis \$290.80; Betty Schmaltz \$299.80; Carol Deatherage \$341.80; Catherine Brickey \$54; Cindy Iversen \$348; Connie Adams \$281.80; Vivian Couch \$408.20; Craig Lafollette \$280.50; Dave Swanson \$393.10; David Linville \$304.60; David Olson \$97.40; Cozette Dorton \$297.70; Julie Drussell \$76.20; ES&S \$1,509.74; Gerald Kallis \$290.80; Gerard Mlinar \$291; Ginger Baumann \$313.20; James Brickey \$84.80; Jay Hamar \$18; John Zolnowsky \$340.60; Julie Fullmer \$256.76; Kenneth Reifenrath \$280.40; Lana Huber \$47.60; Laura Burden \$66.60; Laurie Hamar \$29.20; Lavonne Lafollette \$335; Lilah Pengra \$107.20; Linda Claycomb \$353.60; Lori Balciunas \$250; Mary Wheaton \$79.22; Montana Hunter \$147; Mt. Rushmore Telephone Co. \$16.12; Nancy Baker \$427.40; Nina Nielsen \$76.20; Patricia Conway \$299.20; Patti Best \$293.60; Randy Chavez \$335; Rhonda Woods \$322.10; Ruth Ann Olson \$54; Sally Nordstrom \$461; Southern Hills Publishing \$600.58; Stacy Button \$323.10; Gwen Stombaugh \$406.80; Sue Chavez \$353;

TREASURER: A&B Business \$329.84; Golden West Telecom \$150.86;

STATE'S ATTORNEY: A&B Business \$202.16; Culligan \$39.80; Golden West Telecom \$143.39; Rapid City Police Dept. \$100; RELX, Inc \$491;

MAINTENANCE: A&B Business \$173.87; Black Hills Chemical \$307.98; BH Energy Carport \$60.11; BH Energy \$3,946.93 Courthouse Bldg; City of Custer \$173.79; Custer Ace Hdwe \$68.90; Golden West Telecom \$22.94;

DIRECTOR OF EQUALIZATION: A&B Business \$211.69; ABRA \$2,150.39; Golden West Telecom \$215.66;

REGISTER OF DEEDS: A&B Business \$225.15; Golden West Telecom \$95.21;

VETERANS SERVICES: A&B Business \$74.25; Golden West Telecom \$22.94;

NURSE: Golden West Telecom \$61.67

HUMAN RESOURCES: A&B Business \$144.09; Golden West Telecom \$22.94; Southern Hills Publishing \$223.60.

INFO TECHNOLOGY: Golden West Technologies \$8,962.23; Golden West Telecom \$728.18;

SHERIFF: A&B Business \$199.73; Artistic Costume Badges \$341.80; FBI Leeda \$795; Golden West Telecom \$286.78; LaMonte's Auto Center \$5,817.91; LexisNexis \$211; Motorola Solutions \$33; Pheasantland Industries \$150; Sherry Weber \$15; Southern Hills Publishing \$42.68;

PRISONER CARE: City of Rapid City Finance \$350; Jacquelyn Nelson \$100; Kevin Kirschenmann \$100; Mike Bielmaier \$75; Monument Health Rapid City \$251.83; Pennington County Jail \$20,460; Rapid City Emergency Services \$321.40; Sharon Bielmaier \$75;

MENTAL HEALTH: New Trails Ministry \$325; Rising Hope Counseling, Inc. \$325;

24/7 SOBRIETY: SD Attorney General \$3,641.45

AIRPORT: Brenden Hendrickson \$4,592.08; Custer Ace Hdwe \$35.97; Golden West Telecom \$115.17; JAM Heating & Cooling \$2,015; Mead & Hunt \$16,787.10; Rapid Equipment \$5,174.75;

LIBRARY: Black Hills Chemical \$184.99; City of Custer \$1,261.31; Golden West Telecom \$22.94;

EXTENSION: Golden West Telecom \$91.84;

WEED & PEST: A&B Business \$173.95; Adrian Ranch LLC \$484.85; Ann Cunningham \$57.77; Brad Sorensen \$200; Culligan \$13.90; Custer State Park Resorts \$351.60; Denise Schwartz \$37.50; Doug Vognild \$157.15; Fred Hlava \$96.73; French Creek Supply \$65.67; Golden West Telecom \$22.94; Karen Papcke \$71.36; Mike Linde \$555.46; Nancy Gausman \$171.96; Peter Shattuck \$85.87; Randy Chavez \$8.50; Shirley Kopka \$60; Stan Willmschen \$80.33; Stephen Humphreys \$192.49; Tom Halbur \$59.50;

PLANNING: A&B Business \$184.91; Golden West Telecom \$119.40; IWORQ Systems \$3,934;

COUNTY ROAD & BRIDGE: A&B Business \$199.46; Black Hills Chemical \$122.99; Golden West Telecom \$210.12;

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT: A&B Business \$63.69; Golden West Telecom \$46.22;

SEARCH & RESCUE: BH Energy \$265.04; City of Custer \$96.11; Golden West Telecom \$99.95; Kieffer Sanitation \$22.80; L&A Welding \$165.61; Leo's Auto Repair \$314;

COUNTY BUILDINGS: Capitol Builders, LLC \$192,552.89 Fairgrounds Bldg; Custer Ace Hdwe \$98.41; Custer Heating & AC \$1,014.80; Thyssenkrupp Elevator Corp. \$422.06;

EMERGENCY LINE: A&B Business \$203.25; BH Energy \$30.82; Golden West Telecom \$415.61; Range \$26.64;

BATTLE CREEK FIRE DISTRICT: \$23,430.10

ARGYLE VFD: \$10,044.67

BUFFALO GAP FIRE DEPT: \$2,993.87

CUSTER VFD: \$46,871.96

DEWEY FIRE DEPT: \$412.87

FAIRBURN FIRE DEPT: \$6,627.20

FOLSOM FIRE DEPT: \$1,572.46

HIGHLANDS FIRE DEPT: \$5,255.42

HOT SPRINGS FIRE DEPT: \$2,094.95

PRINGLE FIRE DEPT: \$5,895.13

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

D. 8:05 AM Public Hearing

1. 8:05 AM Public Hearing for approval of new Retail On-Sale Liquor License re: Courtney Phillips and Andrea Kelly dba Butte Bar, 14193 E. French Creek Road, Fairburn, SD 57738. (\$15K). Motion to postpone until legal counsel can review SDCL re: distance from municipality regulations made by Hartman; seconded by Busskohl; vote taken, all aye; motion carried. Discussion was held regarding review of new policy additions, property access, etc.

E. Conflict of Interest Declarations – None.

F. Public Comment

1. Travis Hartshorn complimented the Highway Department on a great job getting the roads back in order after the recent major rain event..

2. Randy Miller, Highlands VFD, discussed growth in the Highlands area and stated the current fire hall has been outgrown and will need a new building. Miller stated he will be asking for financial help from the Commission and has \$80K to put toward a new building. He encouraged Commissioners to visit the area for a first-hand look.

3. Commissioners referenced the Argyle fire department and noted fundraisers, new building and monies received from the fire fund.

G. Highway

1. Highway Superintendent, Jesse Doyle, requested approval for ROW request from Golden West Telecom for utility installation at Elliott Road (FDR292) S4 & S33, T3S and T2S, R3E. Motion to approve made by Linde; seconded by Busskohl; vote taken, all aye; motion carried.

2. Doyle presented ROW request from Golden West Telecom for utility installation at Farmer Road, S10, T6S, R3E for approval. Motion to approve made by Hartman; seconded by Busskohl; vote taken, all aye; motion carried.

3. ROW request from Golden West Telecom for utility installation at Knight Road, S4, T4S, R3E was presented for approval. Motion to approve made by Busskohl; seconded by Hindle; vote taken, all aye; motion carried.

4. Doyle presented ROW request from Golden West Telecom for utility installation at Little Italy Rd, S22, T3S, R4E. Motion to approve made by Hartman; seconded by Linde; vote taken, all aye; motion carried.

5. Doyle also presented ROW request from Golden West Telecom for utility installation at Medicine Mountain Rd, S31, T2S, R4E. Motion to approve made by Busskohl; seconded by Linde; vote taken, all aye; motion carried.

6. ROW request from Golden West Telecom for utility installation at Wild Turkey Drive, S12, T3S, R3E was presented for approval. Motion to approve made by Hindle; seconded by Busskohl; vote taken, all aye; motion carried. All of the above requests are for mainline extensions and involved boring/road crossings.

7. Doyle, together with Legal Counsel, Aaron Davis discussed response from USFS regarding Schedule A letter drafted by Davis. Davis stated that, based on meetings with USFS the decision was made not to move forward with the Schedule A Agreement, which expired in April of 2026. No funds were given or committed, but Custer County will be happy to work with the USFS when funds become available, although the USFS cannot guarantee any funds would be paid. Davis stated he has received inconsistent information as to whether a Schedule A Agreement needs to be in place to receive funding but can revisit at a later date if funds are available. Jason Ferguson inquired as to how many miles in Custer County are Schedule A roads; Doyle stated there are 168 miles. Doyle stated the County still has an obligation to maintain the roads they currently do; however, no new maintenance obligations will be taken on. He also stated that cattle guard replacement funds are not available at this time.

8. Approval for Resolution 2005-14 modifications was requested, as the 20-year-old verbiage includes USFS Schedule A Agreements and also needs updating regarding cattle guards. Motion to send to legal to update modifications made by Busskohl; seconded by Hindle; vote taken, all aye; motion carried.

9. Doyle requested authorization to hire 2 vacant positions, which are currently in the budget. Motion to authorize made by Hartman; motion dies for lack of second. Discussion was held regarding looking into hiring one position now and waiting on the

second position during the budget process. Motion to authorize hiring one position made by Busskohl; seconded by Hindle; vote taken, all aye; motion carried.

H. Maintenance

1. Joseph Panza, Maintenance Supervisor, requested purchase of OWL 5 Pro for the Commission room. Panza stated this was discussed at the last department head meeting and has an approximate cost of \$3K. It was noted this is the same system the City of Custer uses. Panza received approval to go ahead with the purchase, which has a better streaming quality than the current system.

2. Panza requested approval to hire labor to install siding on the Library/Annex building to match the addition. Panza has already purchased the materials with an insurance claim made in 2025. He has received 2 quotes of \$16K and \$18K for labor, which could be supplemented to his budget. Motion to approve hiring labor to install siding made by Busskohl; seconded by Hartman; vote taken, all aye; motion carried.

I. Sheriff

1. Sheriff Reifenrath requested Commission approval of the SD GFP Service Contracts for both dispatch and general services in the amount of \$9,562.63 each and noted these amounts are little compensation for work provided, but recommended approval. These do not require the Chairman's signature, only the Sheriff's. Motion to approve made by Hartman; seconded by Busskohl; vote taken, all aye; motion carried. Reifenrath noted the Search & Rescue contract will be presented at the next meeting.

2. Reifenrath requested acknowledgement and approval to hire Carson Phillips as certified full-time deputy at a starting wage of \$27.59/hour with full benefits; starting date 8-13-2026. Derrick stated Phillips received certification in Watertown but is inexperienced and will still need FTO supervision. Motion to approve made by Busskohl; seconded by Linde; vote taken, all aye; motion carried.

3. Reifenrath requested acknowledgement and approval of new hire Brandon Dailey as uncertified full-time deputy at a starting wage of \$26.32 with full benefits; starting date 8-13-2026. He noted Dailey is a local Custer resident. Motion to approve made by Busskohl; seconded by Hindle; vote taken, all aye; motion carried.

4. Reifenrath and Panza discussed the Search & Rescue building regarding maintenance. Reifenrath stated that S&R is operating under the Sheriff's budget, which does not contain maintenance. Search & Rescue personnel currently perform cleaning, etc. and determination regarding who performs snow removal and lawn mowing duties will need to be made. Panza noted if maintenance takes on duties for the S&R building, he will need full-time staff and stated he may not be able have a currently shared position with Weed & Pest, but rather he would need to have that position full-time under Maintenance. They are seeking Commission guidance as where to keep staffing and noted the Sheriff's department could budget this for the next year.

J. Emergency Management

1. Steve Esser, EMS Director, requested approval of 2026 LEMPG FEMA

Subrecipient Certification of Compliance and Chairman's signature. This is necessary to ensure the EMS Director is eligible to work for Custer County, is not a foreign national and has proper documentation, including an I-9 form. Motion to approve made by Hartman; seconded by Linde; vote taken, all aye; motion carried.

2. Esser discussed Countywide Burn Ban and special events. He stated there was a special event exemption for the Custer County Fair. He has spoken with the USFS and is not expecting a rescission of the ban in the near future.

3. Travis Hartshorn requested an exemption for special cookout events he had previously scheduled. He stated that with the burn ban in effect, his wood grill is now considered illegal and is asking for a variance for the following: 8-29-26 Custer's Gulch; 9-20-2026 Fairburn Fire Dept. cookout; 9-12 through 9-13-26 Coop charity ride. Hartshorn noted that Custer's Gulch has a fire truck reserved with 2 staff onsite for the event. He also discussed homecoming and will check with the city, as well, since it is within city limits. Hartshorn requested blanket approval for these events. Esser stated he is not opposed to special event exemption as long as fire suppression is supplied. Motion to approve the 8-29-26 event today with fire truck/suppression and notification to EMS Director Esser made by Hartman; seconded by Hindle; vote taken, all aye; motion carried.

K. Equalization

1. DOE Director, Scott Storms, presented updated Office Manager position job description and requested approval to hire for the position in the future. The current manager will be retiring within the next year, and the position is budgeted for. Starting wage was discussed and Storms stated this is not a \$19/hour job due to job requirements. He would recommend the position have a starting wage of \$24/hour. Storms stated the office manager will be certified moving forward, as it is not practical at this time to have that requirement for the current manager. Commissioner Hindle would like to have a more definite retirement date. It was noted that this position will require training in many areas. Motion to approve updated job description made by Hindle; seconded by Linde; vote taken, Hindle, Linde, Hartman aye; Busskohl nay; motion carried.

L. 1881 Courthouse Museum

1. Deborah Hanagan appeared before the Commission and presented open container request for approval. Paul Horsted will be releasing his 4th book on 9-1-26 at the museum lawn. This event will utilize both the museum and Outdoor Shop space, and Hanagan is working with the City of Custer, as well. Motion to approve made by Hartman; seconded by Hindle; vote taken, all aye; motion carried.

2. Hanagan presented an updated 2026 volunteer roster. The Commission so acknowledged.

M. Airport

1. Airport Manager, Brenden Hendrickson, requested approval of Hangar #7 lease

transfer from Tim Moode to Ethan Blount. He stated the bill of sale and lease has been reviewed and approved by Aaron Davis. Motion to approve made by Linde; seconded by Busskohl; vote taken, all aye; motion carried. Hendrickson and Commissioner Hindle met with FAA regarding future airport projects. Hendrickson expressed his appreciation for Jesse Doyle reshaping the parking lot; maintenance for repainting and weed & pest for spraying the weeds. He also thanked the Auditor's Office staff for their hard work and assistance.

N. SD Department of Health

1. Approval of the 2027 contract between Custer County and SD DOH for Provision of Community Health Service and Chairman's signature was requested. Motion to approve made by Busskohl; seconded by Hindle; vote taken, all aye; motion carried.

O. Commission

1. HVAC—Panza stated he is still awaiting numbers and otherwise has no news to report; Hartman spoke with an engineer re: plans and will report findings to Panza regarding an outside structure.
2. City Law Enforcement Contract—motion to table until after Executive Session made by Hartman; seconded by Busskohl; vote taken, all aye; motion carried.
3. Golden West Contract—Aaron Davis stated the last contract that was in effect is from 2024 and other options should be discussed. Teri Morgan asked the Commission to look deep and make sure Custer County is covered for fraud. Sheriff Reifenrath stated that Golden West is very expensive to get things on back-up and he is looking into options and will let the Commission know his findings. He basically has no additional issues other than new items being very expensive, as product cost. He stated installation nearly doubles the cost. Reifenrath stated the need to negotiate for lower fees and prices. Hindle stated the need to look at cybersecurity, lockouts, etc.
4. Mail call – DANR Notice of Hearing for Reissuance of General Water Pollution Control Permits for Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations; NeighborWorks Dakota Home Resources notice of project.
5. Meeting Schedule – 9-15 through 9-16 SDACC Fall Convention in Sioux Falls, SD.
6. Meeting Reports – Hindle attended interviews, Planning and special Commission meetings; Linde attended Pringle City Council; Lintz stated the fair board is very pleased with the new building on the fairgrounds and said everyone went above and beyond. He stated this fair was one of the best and over 700 people were served meals; Busskohl attended Custer City Council and planning.

P. Executive Sessions

1. Executive Session as per SDCL 1-25-2(3) Legal
2. Executive Session as per SDCL 1-25-2(4) Contract
3. Executive Session as per SDCL 1-25-21(1) Personnel
4. Executive Session as per SDCL 28-13-42 Indigent

Motion to enter and exit Executive Sessions as per SDCL 1-25-2(3) Legal; SDCL 1-25-2(4) Contract; SDCL 1-25-21(1) Personnel; SDCL 28-13-42 Indigent made by Linde; seconded by Busskohl; vote taken, all aye; motion carried. Executive Sessions entered at 9:20 AM and concluded at 11:13 AM.

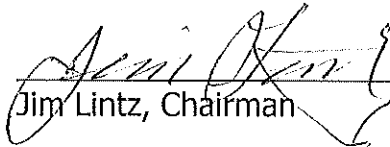
Q. Actions Taken by Commission Outside of Executive Session

1. Motion to direct Legal Counsel Davis to draft response to City of Custer with revised contract made by Busskohl; seconded by Linde; vote taken, all aye; motion carried.

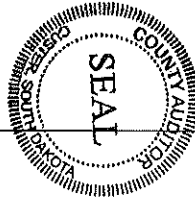
2. Motion to approve both indigent cremation requests made by Hartman; seconded by Hindle; vote taken, all aye; motion carried.

R. Adjourn

Motion by Busskohl and seconded by Linde to adjourn the meeting at 11:16 AM. The next meeting will be at 8:00 AM, August 26, 2026 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 _____.