

PROCEEDINGS OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
MELLETTE COUNTY, SOUTH DAKOTA
January 6, 2026

The meeting of the Mellette County Board of Commissioners was called to order by Auditor Galbraith in the Court Room in the Mellette County Courthouse at White River, SD on January 6, 2026 at 9:05 am. Commission members present were Vernon Brown, Wesley Schmidt, and Jr. Brandis; also present was Auditor Jenny Galbraith.

The pledge of allegiance was recited

All motions are to be considered unanimous unless otherwise stated.

Oaths of Office and Election of Officers Oaths of office were signed by all County Commissioners. Auditor Galbraith called for nominations for Commission Chairman: Schmidt nominated Brown as Chairman, Brandis seconded. No other nominations were received. Vote was held with all members voting aye. Brown called for nominations for Commission Vice Chairman. Brandis nominated Schmidt as Vice-Chairman, brown seconded. No other nominations were received. Vote was held with all members voting aye.

A motion was made to approve the agenda with the addition of personnel manual and open meeting laws under Auditor by Schmidt, seconded by Brandis.

Open Visitors – Public Comment: None present

Road & Bridge – Highway Superintendent Tre Iyotte joined the meeting and discussed his wages and budget for 2026.

Executive Session in accordance with SDCL 1-25-2(1) re. personnel: Brown requested executive session to discuss personnel matters. Motion by Schmidt to enter executive session at 9:35 am, second by Schmidt. At 9:53 am Chairman Brown declared executive session over.

Motion by Schmidt to increase Iyotte's wages to \$25.50 for 2026, second by Brandis. Commission discussed sending highway workers to MSHA training in Winner. Motion by Brandis to send them to training on February 11, 2026 in Winner, second by Schmidt

Auditor – Jenny Galbraith discussed with the Commission that she has hired Michele Piper to work as a deputy auditor part time 2 to 3 days per week. Galbraith requested that her starting pay be \$17.00 per hour as the 2026 budget was approved with an increase of salaries at 10%. Motion by Schmidt to pay deputy auditor \$17.00 per hour, second by Brandis. Galbraith discussed with the Commission that the PDM plan update is underway, the grant was approved and there will be a planning meeting to be held on Wednesday, January 21st and that she would pass along more information as soon as it is received from CSDED. States Attorney Kirby Krogman joined the meeting to discuss the updated employee personnel manual; first discussed was the solicitation policy update section 207 on page 12, motion by Schmidt to remove the new and replace with the old verbiage as it was sufficient, second by Brandis; next discussed was elected official information on page VII, motion by Brandis to remove the second paragraph, second by Schmidt; third discussed was other options for the new section that was added for not allowing children in the workplace. This will be discussed further at the February meeting after it is discussed with all department heads. Galbraith discussed open meeting laws with Commission and provided them information from the Attorney General's office.

Sheriff – Lafe Gildemaster joined the meeting and discussed with the Commission increases in deputy wages that he budget for in 2026. Gildemaster requested Deputy Keller receive an increase of 7% and Deputy Gilbertson receive a 3% increase since he has not been here a year yet and is not certified. Gildemaster requested no increase for Zook since he just started in December.

Register of Deeds – Stanley Krogman Sr. joined the meeting to discuss wages for his deputy.

Treasurer – Hilary Nesheim joined the meeting and discussed 2026 wages and that a 10% increase is what was budgeted in her 2026 budget. Nesheim discussed that her deputy Rose Moran has been employed for a year and a half and has not received a pay increase. Motion by Brown to increase Moran's wages to \$17.10 per hour, second by Schmidt.

Visitors – Shayna Dillon joined the meeting and discussed the advertising of the open elected positions in the courthouse that are currently up for election along with the salaries. This is a legal publication set by administrative rule and cannot be altered.

Director of Equalization – Haley Gallant joined the meeting and discussed her wages for 2026. Gallant informed the Commission that she has been employed for two and a half years and reviewed the county wage study and her wages are lower than almost all counties. Gallant requested her wage be increased to \$25.00 per hour.

2026 Business Motions:

BASEMENT POLICY: Motion by Schmidt, second by Brandis to leave the basement meeting room policy as set forth in Resolution 97-01 on file in the Auditor's office. Fees to be charged as follows: \$30.00 daily fee; 10-15 meetings \$60.00 per year; 15-30 meetings \$125.00 per year; 30-52 meetings \$200.00 per year.

OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER: Motion by Schmidt, second by Brandis to designate the Mellette County News as the official newspaper for the county whereby county publications are to be published.

OFFICIAL BULLETIN BOARD: Motion by Schmidt, second by Brandis to designate the bulletin board on the West wall of the Mellette County Courthouse hallway as the bulletin board where legal matters of the county are to be posted.

OFFICIAL DEPOSITORY: Motion by Schmidt, second by Brandis to leave First Fidelity Bank, White River, South Dakota, as the official depository for county funds.

COMMISSION MEETINGS: Motion by Schmidt, second by Brandis that the regular meetings of the County Commissioners are held on the first Tuesday of each month beginning at 9:00 a.m.; a second meeting will be held when necessary. Date & time may change to accommodate scheduling conflicts.

RATES FOR HIRE OF COUNTY EQUIPMENT: Motion by Schmidt, second by Brandis to set the rates for the hire of County Equipment for 2026 as follows:

Mowing \$150.00 per hour for triple mower with tractor.

Backhoe work \$150.00 per hour.

Gravel hauled with county trucks \$150 per hour for hauling five miles & under and \$4.00 per mile for hauling over 5 miles, \$.75 per ton for loading gravel.

Work with front-end loader \$200.00 per hour.

Blading and snow removal with motor grader \$250.00 per hour.

Gravel royalties to be determined by quality and accessibility of gravel.

The equipment is only allowed with the county patrol operator operating the equipment for said work.

MILEAGE RATE AND PER DIEM RATES: Motion by Schmidt, second by Brandis to set the mileage and per diem rate at State rate.

RATES FOR MELLETTE COUNTY AMBULANCE AND EMT'S AND EVOC'S: Motion by Schmidt, second by Brandis to add this to the next agenda when Karen O'Brien can attend the meeting.

COUNTY BURIALS: Motion by Schmidt, second by Brandis to leave the county burial rate at a maximum of \$1000.00 for a total cost of all burial expenses for an adult and \$500.00 for an infant under one year of age.

COUNTY HEALTH AND DENTAL INSURANCE: Motion by Schmidt, second by Brandis that all employees who qualify for insurance benefits as specified in the Mellette County Policy Handbook may apply for health and dental insurance, 80% coverage to be paid by the County, 20% to be paid by employee. Employee vision and life insurance of \$20,000 will be paid 100% by the County. There will be no compensation paid to an employee in lieu of insurance coverage. Employees over the age of 65 and eligible for Medicare may voucher, with proper documentation, 80% paid by county, 20% paid by employee, reimbursement of Medigap Supplement, as per Internal Revenue Service counsel, to be reimbursed with monthly paycheck.

BLOOD ALCOHOL RATES: Motion by Schmidt, second by Brandis that rate for taking blood alcohols is set at \$55.00 each.

PAY PERIOD: Motion by Schmidt, second by Brandis that pay day will be paid bi-weekly every other Friday with the work week being Sunday through Saturday.

PATROL OPERATOR HOURS: Motion by Schmidt, second by Brandis to set a maximum of 60 hours per week, from May through October, and 40 hours per week for all other months, unless an emergency arises such as snow removal, additional hours can be granted with prior approval of commissioners.

DESIGNATED PLACES WHERE CHATTELS ARE TO BE SOLD: Motion by Schmidt, second by Brandis that according to law, the Board of County Commissioners shall designate places where chattels are to be sold under foreclosure proceedings. Designated the places as follows: Mellette County Courthouse located at 321 E 4th Street, American Legion Rodeo Grounds located in the NE 1/4 of the NW 1/4 of Section 2, Township 41, Range 29, White River, South Dakota. Lots 15, 16, 17 of Block 2, First Addition, Town of Wood, South Dakota. Lot 2 & 3 of Block 1, Norris, South Dakota.

ELECTION OFFICIALS: Motion by Schmidt, second by Brandis that election officials shall receive \$275.00 per day plus actual miles traveled, with the exception of the Superintendent who shall receive \$285.00 per day plus mileage. Election officials working as resolution and counting board and post election audit shall receive \$75 per day plus mileage. Officials attending the Election Work Shop shall receive \$40 per day plus actual miles traveled.

POLLING PLACES: Motion by Schmidt, second by Brandis that the number of polling places for all county elections shall remain three as follows:

West Precinct 6.....Norris Township Hall, Norris, SD

East Precinct 3.....Wood Community Hall, Wood, SD

White River Precinct 5.....ES Building, White River, SD

Central Precinct 2.....ES Building, White River, SD

SALARIES: Motion by Schmidt to set the following wages and salaries as follows, second by Brandis. Office Deputy Starting Wage \$15.52/hour; increase to \$17.00/hour.

Janitor James Bertain \$17.12/hour; increase to \$19.00/hour.

Deputy Sheriff starting wage shall remain at \$23.31/hour with increase to \$25.31/hour after 6 months' probation period or law enforcement certification, whichever comes later.

Deputy Sheriff part time \$21.09; increase starting wage \$23.31/hour; with increase to \$25.31 after 6 months.

Deputy Auditor Michele Piper \$17.00/hour.

Deputy Treasurer Rose Moran \$15.52; increase to \$17.10/hour.

Deputy Register of Deeds Darci Cox \$15.52/hour 20 hours per week; increase to \$17.00/hour.

Jailers \$12.24/hour; increase to \$13.00/hour.

Highway Maintenance worker Ray Dreisbaugh – no increase.

Highway Maintenance worker starting wage be increased from \$17.50/hour to \$18.00/hour depending on experience.

Seasonal or Part-time Highway help starting wage be increased from \$17.25/hour depending on experience.

Highway Bookkeeper Jenny Galbraith \$972.05/month; increase to \$1000.00/month.

VA Officer \$446.25 per month; no increase.

Emergency Management Director \$393.75/month; no increase.

Employees who are issued a county issued cell phone: Highway Department Superintendent; Sheriff's Office personnel; Auditor.

ELECTED OFFICIALS & APPOINTED SUPERVISORS:

County Auditor Jenny Galbraith, \$48,200; increase 4% to \$50,128.

County Treasurer Hilary Nesheim, \$48,200; increase 4% to 50,128.

County Register of Deeds Stanley Krogman Sr. \$48,200; increase 4% to \$50,128.

County Director of Equalization Haley Gallant \$21.00/hour; increase to \$22.50/hour

Website Maintenance, Haley Gallant \$300 per month; no increase.

States Attorney Kirby Krogman \$58,195.44; increase to \$59,000.

County Sheriff Lafe Gildemaster \$65,000.00; increase 4% to \$67,600.

County Coroner Karen O'Brien from \$105.00 per call; increase to \$110.00 per call.

County Commissioners, Vernon Brown, Wesley Schmidt, Jr. Brandis \$600 per month; no increase.

No mileage will be paid for attending meetings.

PURCHASE LIMITS: Motion by Schmidt, second by Brandis to set all General Fund and Road & Bridge Fund purchases to \$1500.00 without prior approval by the commissioners.

BILLS: Motion by Schmidt, second by Brandis to allow the Auditor pay bills when they are due to avoid late charges if there is no meeting scheduled in time.

Commission reviewed the proceedings from December 29, 2026; motion by Schmidt, seconded by Brandis to approve the proceedings.

Reports: Auditor's Account w/ Treasurer as of December 31, 2025 is as follows: Actual cash \$605.67; Checks \$1990.95. First Fidelity Checking \$1,466,593.90; First Fidelity CD's \$350,000.00; ROD Account \$250.00 Total: \$1,819,440.52. Register of Deeds collected \$8928.00 for the month of December 2025. Clerk of Courts collected \$3209.58 for the month of October 2025 and \$2825.23 for the month of November 2025.

At 2:29 pm Chairman Brown declared the meeting adjourned. Next meeting scheduled to be held on Tuesday, February 3, 2026 at 9:00 am.

Approved this 3rd day of February 2026.

Vernon Brown, Chairman, Mellette County Commissioners

ATTEST

Jenny Galbraith, County Auditor