

The Deuel County Commissioners met in special session on January 6th, 2026, at 9:00 AM in the Commission Room of the Courthouse with Chairman Jay Grabow presiding. Those present were Commissioners Jay Grabow, Steve Rhody, Scott Fieber, Harry Mewherter and Judith Homan. Also present was Auditor Courtney Parker and a few members of the public. The meeting began with prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance. 1) Fieber moved, seconded by Rhody to approve the agenda with an addition of corrections to fund transfers for period 13 of 2025. All voted yes and the motion carried.

Elect Chair and Vice Chair of Commission Board

Parker asked for nominations for Chairman of the 2026 Board of Commission. 2) Mewherter nominated Grabow for Chairman and Homan seconded. Fieber ceased nominations. Roll call vote: Homan-aye, Mewherter-aye, Fieber-aye, Rhody-aye, Grabow-aye and the Chairman was seated.

Parker asked for nominations for Vice Chairman of the 2026 Board of Commission. 3) Homan nominated Fieber for Vice Chairman and Grabow seconded the nomination. All voted yes and the Vice Chairman was seated. New Commission for 2026 were seated and Chairman presided the rest of the meeting.

Beginning of New Year Business

4) Mewherter moved, seconded by Fieber to approve the Committee Assignments for 2025. All voted yes and the motion carried.

2026 Committee Assignments

Jay Grabow : Courthouse and Grounds, Director of Equalization Office, Highway Department, Zoning Board Representative

Steve Rhody : Weed Board, ICAP, Register of Deeds Office, Planning & Zoning Board Alternate, Salary Committee, Treasurer's Office, Fair Board/Extension

Scott Fieber : Planning & Zoning Alternate, Highway Department, Director of Equalization Office, Auditor's Office, Emergency Management, Soil Conservation Representative

Harry Mewherter : First District Association, Local Government, Glacial Lakes Tourism, Human Services, Salary Committee, CLAD, Sheriff's Office

Judith Homan : Sheriff's Department, Auditor's Office, Register of Deeds Office, Health Insurance, Health Nurse Office, Treasurer's Office

5) Rhody moved, seconded by Mewherter to nominate Grabow as Zoning Board member. Fieber and Rhody were nominated as alternates to Zoning Board. All voted yes and the motion carried.

6) Fieber moved, seconded by Rhody to declare the DNB National Bank and First Bank and Trust Toronto Branch as the official depositories for the county and the Clear Lake Courier as the official newspaper for Deuel County and any area paper of greater circulation as needed. All voted yes and the motion carried.

7) Homan moved, seconded by Rhody to reappoint Mike Lammers and Kevin DeBoer to the Planning and Zoning Board for another three-year term. All voted yes and the motion carried.

Appointments

Item #1 Highway Superintendent Jamie Broksieck

Broksieck presented a Banner Associates report on Lake Cochrane map for right of way. The board will review and put on agenda for next meeting.

Item #2 9:30 Joint Meeting with Zoning Board on Amendment to Ordinance

The Planning and Zoning Commission, Mike Dahl, Mike Lammers, Kevin DeBoer, and Jay Grabow, along with the Commissioners, held a public hearing on the adoption of #B2022-01-10, An Ordinance Establishing Zoning Regulations For Deuel County, South Dakota, And Providing For The Administration, Enforcement, And Amendment Thereof, In Accordance With The Provisions Of Chapters 11-2, 1967 SDCL, And Amendments Thereof, And For The Repeal Of All Resolutions And Ordinances In Conflict Herewith.

BE IT ORDAINED by the Board of County Commissioners of Deuel County, South Dakota: that Article XII, "General Requirements," Section 1215 Wind Energy System (WES) Requirements, Section 1215.03 General Provision, adopted by Ordinance B2022-01, as amended, of the Zoning Ordinance of Deuel County be amended by adding language in bold and underline and removing strikeout language:

14. Permit Expiration. The permit shall become void if no ~~substantial actual~~ construction has been ~~completed~~ **commenced** within three (3) years of issuance.

BE IT ORDAINED by the Board of County Commissioners of Deuel County, South Dakota: that Article XII, "General Requirements," Section 1241 Solar Energy System (SES), Section 1241.05 General Provision for Solar Energy System, adopted by Ordinance B2022-01, as amended, of the Zoning Ordinance of Deuel County be amended by adding language in bold and underline and removing strikeout language:

14. Permit Expiration. The permit shall become void if no ~~substantial actual~~ construction has been ~~completed~~ **commenced** within three (3) years of issuance.

BE IT ORDAINED by the Board of County Commissioners of Deuel County, South Dakota: that Article II, "Definitions" adopted by Ordinance B2022-01, as amended, of the Zoning Ordinance of Deuel County be amended by adding language in bold and underline:

Actual Construction: Construction materials are being permanently placed and the construction work is proceeding.

This ordinance shall become effective upon the date of publication of this notice in the official newspaper, thereby repealing all ordinances or parts thereof in conflict herewith unless a referendum in timely involved prior thereto. Discussion was had on the ordinance.

The Zoning and Planning Board recommend approval to the Board of County Commissioners. The Board of Commission held the first reading of Ordinance B2022-01-10. 8) Mewherter moved, seconded by Fieber to set the second reading for Ordinance B2022-01-10 on January 20th, 2026 at 9:30 AM. All voted yes and the motion carried.

Item #3 Jacob Beutler

Beutler asked the commission to waive a \$900 appeal fee for a conditional use permit that was granted last year. Lammers says no fee should be waived. Grabow explained if the reason Beutler is appealing is due to our procedure is one thing, but if he's appealing Theisen's decision is another. 9) Fieber moved, seconded by Grabow to waive the \$900 appeal fee. Roll call vote was cast: Homan-nay, Mewherter-nay, Fieber-nay, Rhody-nay, Grabow-nay. Motion dies at roll call vote. Beutler stated he will pay the fee and appeal anyways.

Item #4 CLAD Director Deb Adkins

Adkins gave the 4th quarter report and asked for quarterly funding. Fundraising has given CLAD the opportunity to give a quarterly grant to any Deuel County business for new signage. The Clear Lake Firemen's Dance is where the funding for the grant has come from. The new company, Branded Prairie Company, received the grant for the last quarter in 2025. Adkins explained they continued with paid membership with Dakota Resources as it gives guidance and ideas. The organization continues to grow and support all economic developers across the state. Adkins explained she will attend conference in Pierre soon and hopes to learn just as much as last year. Adkins is working on a USDA grant for Deuel County. It will grade our county for future businesses and manufacturers. The Biofuel Development Opportunity Zone Initiative (BDO) grades the area for a shovel-ready specific region for project development. The project is based on whether the grant is awarded. 10) Homan moved, Mewherter seconded to approve first quarter funding for CLAD in the amount of \$5000. All voted yes and the motion carried.

Item #5 Dennis Evenson

Evenson was recognized by Deuel County and the South Dakota Department of Veteran Affairs for his 40 years of service as the Deuel County Veterans Service Officer. Evenson gave a speech discussing his time as the VSO and how he thoroughly enjoyed working with everyone he came into contact with. He explained some of the simplest discussions over coffee could lead to claims being paid out to veterans in need. Deuel County thanks Evenson for his service for the past 40 years.

Old Business

The board discussed the questions brought up about the data center at the December 31st meeting. Those questions and/or concerns are:

1. Will our Sheriff's department handle the construction phase?
2. Will our ambulance service handle the workload?
3. Will our fire department handle the workload?
4. How do they handle rain on a 1.8 million square foot roof?
5. What will they do to asphalt and gravel roads?
6. Where will the transmission lines run?
7. Will they deplete our gravel supply?
8. Will they need more power plants?
9. Land is Ag, will this raise the price of land so only outside investors can afford it?
10. Will the lights prohibit seeing the stars, light pollution?
11. What assurances do we have that this will not cause black outs?
12. What health concerns are there?
13. Why hasn't there been a better system to notify residents?
14. The 765kV line will cut through our county and why not leave it in Minnesota?
15. What is going to be done to control drugs from construction workers?
16. What are we going to do to keep the EMS staff from being overloaded?
17. Why are our taxes the same as Florida?
18. Are the commissioners out of touch?
19. Are the commissioners listening to other elected officials?
20. Is AI really good for our community?
21. Why aren't the meetings live streamed?
22. Why aren't the meetings at night?
23. What can we do about the red flashing lights around Toronto?

24. Have you checked out Loudoun County VA?
25. Is the county ready for the issues with the workforce that is coming (Drugs)?
26. How do we keep from losing our natural world, Keep life simple?
27. How much water is going to be used?
28. What options do we have if they use more?
29. We need to preserve Ag Land.
30. What effect has data centers had on other areas?
31. Will AI cause government corruption?
32. Why do we want to lose the lifestyle we have today?
33. Our way of life is a resource. How can you negotiate for that?
34. Will our electric rates go up?
35. Why do we want to do this only a handful of people want it other than the elected officials?
36. AI advertising is everywhere, can we reinforce citizens values?
37. Can we hire a consultant to advise us on this project?
38. Will HD be supplying power for this at anytime?
39. Can the company file bankruptcy and get out of commitments?
40. Who is responsible for the building if the AI thing goes away?
41. Can it be moved to Sioux Falls instead of here?
42. Is there a conflict of interest for two of the commissioners?
43. How can the assisted living center be staffed if the Good Samaritan couldn't staff theirs?

The commission discussed they will start working on getting answers to the questions and concerns. Grabow stated we need to learn from previous projects and try and do right this time around.

Steve January talked about the transmission lines that will go through his property which he is concerned about. January suggested a 2000 foot set back from the lines if they allow them because of health concerns. There was acknowledgement that the PUC can override his decision but they do take local ordinances into consideration.

Mary Nosbush stated once the powerline puts in their application, zoning ordinances freeze. Nosbush suggested since we have no ordinance currently, that the zoning board needs to work on this urgently. Discussion on the powerline set backs will be on January 13th at 6:30 PM at the zoning board meeting.

Borg talked about public safety aspect of the data centers. He was contacted by an elected official to talk about his concerns for public safety. Borg encouraged commissioners to be at the meeting for the ambulance, fire chiefs, law enforcement and this elected official to work on a plan.

11) Rhody moved, seconded by Mewherter to transfer funds to the Highway fund for \$1,000,000 and \$14,000 for the Civil Defense fund for 2025 in year end work period 13. All voted yes and the motion carried.

New Business

12) Rhody moved, seconded by Homan to reimburse Sheriff Deputies, Sheriff Admin Assistant, Director of Equalization, Auditor, and Janitor \$50 for cell phone. All voted yes and motion carried.

13) Mewherter moved, seconded by Fieber to pay Zoning Board members \$150 per meeting plus mileage. All voted yes and the motion carried.

14) Rhody moved, seconded by Fieber to allow auditor's office to pay claims early, license or tax payment overage, if necessary, before a commission meeting, in order to avoid late payment fees. All voted yes and the motion carried.

15) Homan moved, seconded by Fieber to approve the Salary Resolution 26-01. All voted yes and the motion carried.

#26-01

SALARY RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, the Deuel County Commission must establish and publish salaries of all officials and employees of the county in January following the statutes set forth under SDCL 6-1-10. (Monthly or hourly where applicable)

Scott Fieber \$2,023.44; Harry Mewherter \$2,023.44; Jay Grabow \$2,023.44; Steve Rhody \$2,087.97; Judith Homan \$2,040.69; Courtney Parker \$5,286.27; Brooke Pederson \$23.06/hr.; Gail Krause \$20.41/hr.; Jennifer Mewherter \$5,092.53; Theresa Martinmaas \$22.63/hr.; Craig Evenson \$5,689.97; Rita Schiefelbein \$25.09/hr.; Jacky Kloos \$21.94/hr.; Jamie Hintz \$22.81/hr.; Deborah Meguire \$5,998.26; Tyler Holm \$27.79/hr.; Matthew Stormo \$27.79/hr.; Casey Severson \$5,245.07; Renae Engelkes \$23.06/hr.; Lynna Speier \$1,434.55; Cory Borg \$6,933.90; Tyrel Wik \$5,678.40; Dillon Krosch \$5,059.60; Matt Nutter \$5,210.40; Kason Hinton \$4,680.00; Mindi Dailey \$26.91/hr.; Laurie Smith \$33.30/hr.; Jamie Broksieck \$5,590.00; Lisa Jorvig \$23.23/hr.; Richard Eidet \$27.26/hr.; Marty Brown \$30.47/hr.; Kirk Berge \$28.51/ hr.; Dana Nelson \$26.98/hr.; Naethan Lovre \$22.89/hr.; Jeff Swanz \$26.55/hr. highway department & \$29.55/hr. spraying.; Jaime Araiza \$25.35/hr.; Ryan Severson \$24.63/hr.; Jacob Salanoa \$24.45/hr.; Chris Sturm \$24.18/hr.; Wyatt Gauger \$24.00/hr.; Kenneth Martinmaas \$23.16/hr.; Dawn Fritz \$28.52/hr.; Lisa Brandt \$15.00/hr.; Keith Goens \$25.60/hr.; Charles Engelstad \$21.90\hr.; Jodi Theisen \$5,189.60 (\$150.00 per zoning meeting);

Longevity pay as given in the past is now included in the hourly or salary rate of each employee according to their continued years of service. The county pays the single health insurance premium benefit for full time employees (and an additional 25% of two party, employee plus children and family policy) and life insurance benefits through a 125-cafeteria plan.

TRAVEL EXPENSE

Mileage 72.5 cents per mile
(plus lodging and registration)

MEALS AT STATE RATE

Breakfast	\$6.00
Lunch	\$14.00
Dinner	\$20.00

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Deuel County Commission of Deuel County does hereby adopt the Salary Resolution 26-01 for the year 2026.

Dated this 6th day of January, 2026.

Courtney Parker, Auditor

Deuel County Chairperson

16) Fieber moved, seconded by Rhody to approve Johnson Controls Annual Contract in the amount of \$13,034.58. All voted yes and the motion carried.

17) Mewherter moved, seconded by Fieber to approve the Johnson Controls Quote for boiler work in the amount of \$10,700.00. All voted yes.

Approval of Warrants:

18) Fieber moved, seconded by Mewherter to pay warrants as presented. All voted yes and motion carried.

Paid Early: No warrants were paid early

Warrants: ASSN OF SD COUNTY WEED & PEST 700.00 2026 CONFERENCE & DUES, AT&T MOBILITY 295.78 UTILITIES, AUSTIN LAW OFFICE 1704.00 CAA FEES, BJERKE SANITATION 320.00 GARBAGE, BRATLAND LAW 816.00 CAA FEES, CITY OF CLEAR LAKE 253.34 UTILITIES, CLEAR LAKE COURIER 1557.06 PUBLICATIONS/SUPPLIES, DAKOTA DATA SHRED 73.07 PROF. SERVICE, DCN INSURANCE 3749.92 WORK COMP/AMB RENEWAL PREM., FIRST BANK & TRUST 3754.79 CC STATEMENT, FLEETPRIDE 112.95 SUPPLIES, HUMAN SERVICE AGENCY 3756.25 1ST QTR FUNDS, ISTATE TRUCK CENTER, INC. 1332.88 SUPPLIES, ITC 1380.02 UTILITIES, MAYNARDS 2325.77 DC BUCKS & SUPPLIES, BYRON NOGELMEIER 420.00 NOV & DEC ALLOCATION, NORTHWESTERN ENERGY 1684.55 UTILITIES, OFFICE PEEPS INC 830.76 SUPPLIES, OTTERTAIL POWER CO 27.63 UTILITIES, QUADIENT LEASING USA INC 786.60 JAN TO APR '26 LEASE PMT, RC TECHNOLOGIES 150.00 911 UTILITIES, RICHARDSON, WYLY, WISE, 368.50 PROF. SERVICE, SOUTH DAKOTA DEPT OF REVENUE 101166.85 EOM FEES, SDACC 2145.00 2026 ANNUAL DUES, SDACO 180.00 M&P FEES, SDML WORKER'S COMP FUND 62954.00 ANNUAL WORK COMP/LIAB INS., SD PUBLIC ASSURANCE ALLIANCE 432.52 BACKHOE INS., SD SHERIFFS' ASSOCIATION 628.85 2026 ANNUAL DUES, SIGN SOLUTIONS USA, LLC 588.63 SUPPLIES, TEESDALE LAW OFFICE, PLLC 4116.20 CAA FEES, TRANSOURCE TRUCK & EQUIP INC 913.67 SUPPLIES, ULTRA BRIGHT LIGHTZ LLC 1795.80 MINOR EQUIP,

Public Comment

Kim Harringa asked why the building permits were not in the Clear Lake Courier anymore? Evenson stated it may be because it is not requested by the paper anymore. Further discussion will be had on this topic at the next zoning board meeting.

Adjournment:

There being no further business 19) Mewherter moved, seconded by Homan to adjourn. All voted yes and the motion carried.

ATTEST:

Courtney Parker, Auditor

Jay Grabow, Chairman

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