

The following are "unofficial minutes" subject to change at the next meeting.

BOARD OF PEMBINA COUNTY COMMISSIONER'S PROCEEDINGS

www.pembinacountynd.gov

October 21, 2025

9:00 AM

Board of Pembina County Commissioners met in the Commissioners Meeting Room of the Courthouse.

Chairperson Otto called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM. Roll call: Patrick Hardy, Scot Becker, Blaine Papenfuss, Darin Otto, Andrew Cull. A quorum was declared.

Also, in attendance were: Zelda Hartje, Samantha Diemert, Emergency Manager; Marcus Ramsay, Chief Deputy; Rachel Ramsay, Public Health Director; Missy Morden, Clerk/Recorder; Devin Johnson, Highway Superintendent; Jeff Daley, KLJ Engineering; Garret Fontaine, States Attorney.

Motion made by Scot Becker and seconded by Blaine Papenfuss to approve the agenda. All voting in favor; motion carried.

The public comment portion was started at 9:01 AM.

The public comment portion was closed at 9:17 AM.

Motion made by Blaine Papenfuss and seconded by Patrick Hardy to approve the October 7th, 2025 meeting minutes. All voting in favor, motion carried.

Auditor Gapp stated a company reached out regarding processing our tax payments when people pay with credit cards online stating they could possibly give us a better rate. Discussion followed regarding the information presented. The company didn't provide a specific rate they could give us in the information provided. Auditor Gapp asked the commission if they wanted her office to look into this any further. Motion by Blaine Papenfuss and seconded by Scot Becker to leave it as it is. All voting in favor, motion carried.

Clyde Reilly sent a letter to the commission requesting it be read at the commission meeting. Chairman Otto read the letter aloud at the meeting. The letter follows here:

I Clyde Reilly hereby request that our Pembina County Commissioners study, consider and hopefully support the concept of a Nuclear Power Plant here in Pembina

County. I request that this be read at the October 7, 2025 Pembina County Commission Meeting and that a motion be made at the October 25, 2025 meeting to vote on support for Nuclear Power in Pembina County along with a letter to Nucleon Energy expressing your support for this project.

*Nucleon Energy
730 8 Ave SW
Calgary, Alberta
Canada, T2P 1C9*

"In May, President Trump initiated a "nuclear energy renaissance," directing the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to streamline the approval process for new reactors, including setting a new 18-month deadline for licensing decisions".

"North Dakota is looking at advanced forms of nuclear energy to meet an exponential rise in energy demand. A committee (Advanced Nuclear Energy Committee) of state lawmakers, utility regulators, agency leaders and electricity producers met at the state Capitol on Sept. 3, and heard from experts about benefits and challenges of nuclear energy." They passed Senate Bill #2159 that provides \$300,000.00 to the Energy and Environmental Research Center to study nuclear energy.

Our Advanced Nuclear Energy Committee selected Nucleon Energy, Alberta CA to spend 12 months studying the possibility of attracting the resurgent nuclear power industry to the state. Key elements of the study are potential locations, gauging public support, etc. Will Bridge is the chief technology officer for Nucleon Energy. Ryan Tourigny chief development officer says its fundamental to put small modular reactors where the grid either now or in the future allows. Public support is crucial.

Pembina County is the best location for a nuclear power plant: there is water for cooling from the Red River and the Pembina River, geologically it is very safe as there are no fault lines anywhere near, there is a major power line corridor just across the Red River to the East and there is also a major power line corridor on the West side of the Red River, it would be near a major (I-29) highway and the MISO power grid that we are a part of is maxed out and needs the power.

I have conducted a survey over the past few weeks and the response is 98% percent in favor of a nuclear power plant and the primary reason is high paying jobs that will attract college educated youth back to our county. None of us who grew up here with nuclear tipped Minuteman Missiles in our backyard and B 52's flying over with nuclear bombs on board are intimidated by a nuclear power plant in our backyard, the safest method for producing electricity and the most environmentally friendly. One of my survey respondents was old enough to remember when there was no electricity and the joy when Nodak ran lines to their farmhouse.

10/05/2025

Motion by Scot Becker and seconded by Blaine Papenfuss to take a neutral stance on this issue. Discussion followed. Chairman Otto stated there is nothing stating he is against it but he has received a lot of calls in opposition to it as it's been in the paper. He stated this is probably the most calls he has received on an issue. He stated again he is not opposed to it, but there are a lot of factors to be considered. Commissioner Becker stated there are a lot of unanswered questions. He stated to speak to some of Clyde's points, regarding pulling water from the red river. He stated there are some years there's barely enough water for the beet plants. He doesn't feel that is a valid point. He stated as far as geological stability over by the river, you're sitting on 200 feet of river bottom you'd have to drive pilings down the bedrock to put a safe base on a nuclear power plant and the few, small power line grid lines that are over there, can they handle that or would we have to build out and that's additional cost for that. He also referenced back in the 1980's when the Mandan line was supposed to come through Pembina County from Kansas to Manitoba Hydro. He said people did not want that and fought that and that's what you're going to need for whatever size reactor to be built here. He stated its prime agricultural land over there and wanting to cover that with cement and build a nuclear plant. Commissioner Papenfuss said he also is not opposed to it. Chairman Otto said there are a lot of factors in it and until a company comes in and thinks it's a worthwhile thing to do. Commissioner Becker stated MISO being on the edge they're okay right now with their capabilities with their portion of the grid up here. He stated MISO helped with the ice storms in Texas when the southwest power grid was down. He stated he doesn't know where they are today, but if AI data centers came in, we could protest all we want, but our opinion doesn't carry much weight. Commissioner Otto stated Nekoma is listed as a planned site for a data center. He also stated how electricity bills have gone up approximately 19 percent. Roll call: Patrick Hardy, yes; Scot Becker, yes; Blaine Papenfuss, yes; Darin Otto, yes; Andrew Cull, yes. Motion carried.

Rachel Ramsay stated the Security Committee had met and approached her in regards to putting an AED in the court and the almost outdated AED machine currently on the first floor of the courthouse and the need to replace it so the Cavalier Ambulance can continue to service it and order the correct pads for the device. She stated the current pads are only good through January of 2026. She stated it is over eleven years old. The cost per device is approximately \$2,100.00. She stated she contacted the Cavalier Hook and Ladder Society to see if they would be willing to donate funds towards the purchase. She spoke with a member of the committee and they thought one device would probably be approved for purchase but was unsure if two would be approved. Their next meeting is on the 29th of October. She is asking the commission if she should apply for funding for one or two devices. Discussion followed. Commissioner Cull stated he feels there should be one on every floor since we are a public building. He also discussed having one where the VSO office is. Discussion followed on how to fund each one. Motion by Blaine Papenfuss and seconded by Scot Becker to apply for two and to purchase a total of four, including the two we apply for, and work the funding out for

the remaining devices after the Cavalier Hook and Ladder meets. Roll call: Patrick Hardy, yes; Scot Becker, yes; Blaine Papenfuss, yes; Darin Otto, yes; Andrew Cull, yes. Motion carried.

Rachel Ramsay left the meeting.

Devin presented a utility permit from Nodak Electric Cooperative to bore between sections 2 and 11 located along County Road 1. Motion by Andrew Cull and seconded by Patrick Hardy to approve the utility permit request. All voting in favor, motion carried.

Jeff Daley stated the Beaulieu/Akra structure is mostly complete. They are just doing final paperwork required. He stated the seventeen-structure project is ongoing by Key Contracting. He stated there are five mostly completed at this time. Piling repair remains on a couple of those. He said two of these five were closed previously. He stated they will be contacting the NDDOT and give them the load rating analysis showing how the bridges have been modified so they can schedule an inspection so they can be reopened. Devin stated he has another three to four that will also need inspections. He discussed site 10 in the southwest part of the county that has been closed. He said the south abutment is leaning towards the channel. He said this is a tall abutment. It is 13 to 14 feet tall. They are concerned that when they remove the beams for repair, the abutment may go towards the channel. They may need to put in a dead-man anchor. He stated there may be an existing dead-man anchor. He stated the quote for this would range from \$165,000.00 to \$185,000.00. The NDDOT said there would be federal aid funds for this project change order. He stated even with the new dead-man, there could still be potential problems with this site. The DOT asked what it would cost for a new abutment. He said that would be approximately \$250,000.00 to \$300,000.00. He also discussed the option of replacing it with a box culvert costing approximately \$750,000.00. He is waiting to hear from the DOT to see if there is federal funding available for these other options.

Missy Morden and Samantha Diemert left the meeting.

Further discussion was held regarding this bridge. Jeff stated rip rap would have to be installed on the south abutment. He stated the dead man anchor could be installed and the planned rehab work done and it could possibly be inspected and reopened at a lower limit rating. Discussion on putting a box culvert in instead was discussed. He stated it would have to be a triple or big double box because the river is deep there. Devin stated he would have to find the original plans to see what was installed when it was built. Mr. Daley said he would be following up with the state this week and get back to the commission regarding funding availability. The commission can have a special meeting if Mr. Daley gets the information from the NDDOT before the next regular meeting.

Devin presented a solicitation letter from North Dakota Rail to fix rail crossings. He stated there is only one left to do on number 9. He stated it is a 90/10 split. Our cost would be the 10 percent. Motion by Blaine Papenfuss and seconded by Scot Becker to apply for the funding. All voting in favor, motion carried.

Discussion on cleaning out under bridge on County 12. He stated they planned on doing that in the late fall early winter time frame.

Beaver dams discussed on the Beaulieu/Akra structure. Commissioner Becker was wondering what the long term affects they would have on it. Commissioner Otto asked Commissioner Becker to meet with the water board and see if they have any ideas.

Motion made by Andrew Cull and seconded by Patrick Hardy to adjourn the open session and go into executive session for attorney consultation per NDCC 44-04-19.1(5). Roll call vote: Patrick Hardy – yes; Scot Becker – yes; Blaine Papenfuss – yes; Darin Otto – yes; Andrew Cull – yes. Motion carried. The executive session began at 10:22 AM and was attended by Garret Fontaine, States Attorney, Patrick Hardy, Scot Becker, Blaine Papenfuss, Darin Otto, Andrew Cull, and Melissa Gapp. Motion made by Blaine Papenfuss and seconded by Patrick Hardy to adjourn the executive session at 10:50 AM and return to open session. All voting in favor; motion carried.

Commission reviewed the September financial report and claims. Motion made by Blaine Papenfuss and seconded by Scot Becker to approve the consent agenda as presented. All voting in favor; motion carried.

Motion made by Blaine Papenfuss to adjourn the meeting. All voting in favor; motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 10:51 AM.