



Dakota County

General Government and Policy Committee of the Whole

Agenda

Tuesday, February 17, 2026

9:30 AM

Conference Room 3A, Administration
Center, Hastings

(or following County Board)

If you wish to speak to an agenda item or an item not on the agenda, please notify the Clerk to the Board via email at CountyAdmin@co.dakota.mn.us
Commissioners may participate in the meeting by interactive technology.

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Note: Any action taken by this Committee of the Whole constitutes a recommendation to the County Board.

2. Audience

Anyone in the audience wishing to address the Committee on an item not on the agenda or an item on the consent agenda may come forward at this time. Comments are limited to five minutes.

3. Approval of Agenda (Additions/Corrections/Deletions)

3.1 Approval of Agenda (Additions/Corrections/Deletions)

CONSENT AGENDA

4. County Administration - Approval of Minutes

4.1 Approval of Minutes of Meeting Held on February 3, 2026

REGULAR AGENDA

5. County Board/County Administration

5.1 *Communications and Public Affairs* - Legislative Update

6. Public Safety

6.1 *Sheriff* - Update And Consideration Regarding Potential Deer Hunting Firearm Regulations - Repeal Of Minn. Stat. § 97B.318

7. **County Manager/Deputy/Director's Report**
8. **Future Agenda Items**
9. **Adjournment**
 - 9.1 Adjournment

For more information, call 651-438-4417
Dakota County Board meeting agendas are available online at
<https://www.co.dakota.mn.us/Government/BoardMeetings/Pages/default.aspx>
Public Comment can be sent to CountyAdmin@co.dakota.mn.us



General Government and Policy Committee of the Whole

Request for Board Action

Item Number: DC-5389

Agenda #: 3.1

Meeting Date: 2/17/2026

Approval of Agenda (Additions/Corrections/Deletions)



General Government and Policy Committee of the Whole

Request for Board Action

Item Number: DC-5390

Agenda #: 4.1

Meeting Date: 2/17/2026

Approval of Minutes of Meeting Held on February 3, 2026



Dakota County

General Government and Policy Committee of the Whole

Minutes

Tuesday, February 3, 2026

9:30 AM

Conference Room 3A, Administration
Center, Hastings

(or following County Board)

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

The meeting was called to order by Chair Workman at 10:20 a.m.

Present

- Commissioner Mike Slavik
- Commissioner Joe Atkins
- Commissioner Laurie Halverson
- Commissioner William Droste
- Commissioner Liz Workman
- Commissioner Mary Liz Holberg
- Commissioner Mary Hamann-Roland

Also in attendance were Heidi Welsch, County Manager; Tom Donely, First Assistant County Attorney; and Jeni Reynolds, Sr. Administrative Coordinator to the Board.

The audio recording for this meeting is unavailable due to technical issues.

2. Audience

Chair Workman noted that all public comments can be sent to CountyAdmin@co.dakota.mn.us
No comments were received for this agenda.

3. Approval of Agenda (Additions/Corrections/Deletions)

3.1 Approval of Agenda (Additions/Corrections/Deletions)

Motion: Mary Hamann-Roland

Second: Mike Slavik

Ayes: 7

CONSENT AGENDA

On a motion by Commissioner Hamann-Roland, seconded by Commissioner Droste, the Consent agenda was approved as follows:

4. County Administration - Approval of Minutes

4.1 Approval of Minutes of Meeting Held on January 20, 2026

Motion: Mary Hamann-Roland

Second: William Droste

Ayes: 7

REGULAR AGENDA

5. County Board/County Administration

5.1 Legislative Update

Mary Beth Schubert, Communications and Public Affairs Director briefed this item. Due to technical issues lobbyist were not able to join via interactive technology. They will provide a state legislative update via other means. Parks Director Niki Geisler gave a brief overview of Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR). The Committee supported submitting proposals for the following five projects to the 2027 LCCMR for grants from the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund.

- Veterans Memorial Greenway- Native American Veterans Restoration, Native Plantings, and Enhanced Memorial
- System-wide ADA Improvements
- Spring Lake Park Reserve Interpretive Messaging Plan Implementation
- Spring Lake Park Reserve Restoration Project
- North Creek Greenway Natural Resource Restoration, Pollinator-Themed Interpretation, and Greenway - Neighborhood Access at the Minnesota Zoo

The total of the requested projects is \$3,211,379 and would require a 25% match of the total project cost totaling \$1,070,460. The grant-match requirement would not draw funds from the County General Fund or levy.

This item was on the agenda for informational purposes only.

Information only; no action requested.

5.2 2025 Board Priorities Fourth Quarter Update

Senior Leadership staff presented this item and responded to questions. This item was on the agenda for informational purposes only.

Information only; no action requested.

6. Public Services and Revenue

6.1 Update On Impact Of Library Digital Book Pricing

Library Director Jennifer Reichert Simpson briefed this item and responded to questions. This item was on the agenda for informational purposes only.

Information only; no action requested.

7. County Manager/Deputy/Director's Report

County Manager Heidi Welsch referenced the Director's Report that was handed out.

8. Future Agenda Items

Commissioner Halverson requested that Commissioners receive a weekly update regarding Incident Command. Commissioner Atkins requested future discussion on federal law enforcement and use of County property.

Following committee discussion, County Manager Heidi Welsch will bring an informational update on Operation Metro Storm to County Board on February 17, 2026.

9. Adjournment

9.1 Adjournment

Motion: William Droste

Second: Liz Workman

On a motion by Commissioner Droste, seconded by Commissioner Workman, the meeting was adjourned at 12:29 p.m.

Ayes: 7

Respectfully submitted,
Jeni Reynolds
Sr. Administrative Coordinator to the Board



General Government and Policy Committee of the Whole

Request for Board Action

Item Number: DC-5365

Agenda #: 5.1

Meeting Date: 2/17/2026

DEPARTMENT: Communications and Public Affairs

FILE TYPE: Regular Information

TITLE

Legislative Update

PURPOSE/ACTION REQUESTED

Provide an update on legislative topics.

SUMMARY

Staff will share developments related to the County’s legislative priorities. The update may also include discussion on other State and Federal legislative topics of interest to Dakota County.

RECOMMENDATION

Information only; no action requested.

EXPLANATION OF FISCAL/FTE IMPACTS

- None
- Current budget
- Other
- Amendment Requested
- New FTE(s) requested

RESOLUTION

Information only; no action requested.

PREVIOUS BOARD ACTION

None.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment: Presentation Slides

BOARD GOALS

- A Great Place to Live
- A Healthy Environment
- A Successful Place for Business and Jobs
- Excellence in Public Service

CONTACT

Department Head/Author: Mary Beth Schubert



Legislative Update

Mary Beth Schubert

Feb. 17, 2026

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Legislative Update



- Federal update
- State update
- Proposed change to “beach house” language in legislative priorities
- Modernization demo recaps
- House Ways and Means Committee modernization hearing – *tentative*
- Regional Parks and Trails
- Congressionally Directed Spending

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FY 2027 Congressionally Directed Spending (CDS)



2027 CDS

- Application deadline is Spring 2026
- Funding available ~Fall 2026-Spring 2027
- Recommendation: 3 projects at \$1-5M each

Anticipated Relevant Funding Categories:

- Clean water
- Transportation, Housing and Urban Development (THUD)
 - Highway Infrastructure Program (HIP)
 - Community Development Fund for Economic Development Initiatives (EDI)

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Project Selection Criteria



- In a current or previous CIP - Priority to 2027- 2028 projects
- Supports “unfunded” CIP projects or releases County Funds
- Staff resources available or included in application for implementation
- In approved master/long-range plans
- Staff capacity (grant writer) for application process
- Grant-match available when necessary
- Sustainable funding available for on-going expenses (tails)
- Aligns with CDS Funding Categories

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| Potential County 2027 CDS Projects  | | | | | | |
|--|--|---------------------------------|--|---------------------------------|----------------|--|
| Staff Rank | Project # and Description | CIP Year | Total Project Cost | Potential Request | Match Required | Notes |
| 1 | CSAH 50 at I-35 Interchange (50-033) | 2025-28 | \$66M (Constr.) | Up to \$16.2M Rec: \$5M | N/A | Planned Funding: SUT; Advance Fund Cities; State; Federal (Restricted Funding) Pending: \$8.1M State Bonding Request |
| 2 | CSAH 46: TH 3 to 1,300 feet east of CR 48 (99-013) | 2020-2029 | \$45M (Constr.) | Up to \$31.15M Rec: \$5M | N/A | Planned Funding: SUT; Local; Federal (Restricted Funding) Pending: \$18.65M State Bonding Request |
| 3 | North Creek Greenway – Vermillion River and South Creek – Farmington (2000233-3) | 2024-2027 | \$2M (Tunnel) \$4M (Bridge) | \$400K to \$2.4M Rec: \$2.4M | N/A | Planned Funding: Local; SUT; TAA (Restricted Funding); RRA eligible Farmington: ~\$1.6M Metro/ Active Transportation Funds (secured); LCCMR request |
| 4 | Vermillion Highlands – CSAH 42 Grade Separated Crossing (1000634) | 2020 (Design) 2030 (Constr.) | \$1.1M (Constr.-Tunnel) | \$1.1M Rec: \$1.1M | N/A | Planned Funding: SUT; TAA (Restricted Funding) |
| 5 | Ravine Stabilization and Pollutant Load Reduction for Mississippi /Spring Lake | 2027 | \$750K | \$600K Rec: \$600K | \$150K | Planned Funding: ELF (Restricted Funding) Match from ELF Project still under development |
| 6 | Vermillion Highlands – CSAH 46 Grade Separated Crossing (PG-020; 99-013) | 2027-29 | ~49.5M Parks-\$60K (Tunnel); \$1.5M (Bridge) | Up to \$1.5M Rec: \$1.5M | N/A | Planned Funding: TAA (Restricted Funding) |

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| Potential County 2027 CDS Projects  | | | | | | |
|--|--|-----------|---|------------------------------|----------------|--|
| Staff Rank | Project # and Description | CIP Year | Total Project Cost | Potential Request | Match Required | Notes |
| 7 | Mississippi River Greenway-CSAH 54 (Ravenna Trail) 18th Street to CSAH 6 (PG-011) CSAH 54: 18th St to CSAH 68 (54-011) | 2028-2030 | Parks-Constr.: \$2M Transp.-ROW & Constr.: \$40.4M | Up to \$42.4M Rec: \$2M | N/A | PG-011 Planned Funding: SUT (Restricted Funding) 54-011 Planned Funding: CSAH; Local (Restricted Funding) |
| 8 | Lebanon Hills Greenway- Egan/Inver Grove Heights Yankee Doodle Rd Tunnel W – Yankee Doodle Tunnel (PG-008) at the Egan/Inver Grove Heights border – Pedestrian Underpass (28-073) | 2029 | Parks-Constr.: \$750K Transp.-Constr.: \$4.59M | Up to \$5.29M Rec: \$750K | N/A | PG-008 Planned Funding: SUT; TAA (Restricted Funding) 28-073 Planned Funding: SUT (Restricted Funding) |
| 9 | Lebanon Hills Greenway- Inver Grove Heights TH55 Bridge (PG-009) | 2030 | \$3.5M | \$3.5M Rec: \$3.5M | N/A | Planned Funding: SUT; TAA; Unfunded(Restricted Funding) |
| 10 | North Creek Greenway – Apple Valley CSAH 42 Crossing (1000634) | 2030 | \$1.1M | \$1.1M Rec: \$1.1M | N/A | Planned Funding: SUT; TAA (Restricted Funding) |
| 11 | Thompson County Park Lodge Renovation, Public Accessibility Improvements and Development of Visitor Center (1000631) | 2027 | \$25M (Constr.) | \$25M Rec: \$5M | N/A | Planned Funding: Unfunded Project Issue: \$20M funding gap if received |

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General Government and Policy Committee of the Whole

Request for Board Action

Item Number: DC-5183

Agenda #: 6.1

Meeting Date: 2/17/2026

DEPARTMENT: Sheriff

FILE TYPE: Regular Information

TITLE

Update And Consideration Regarding Potential Deer Hunting Firearm Regulations - Repeal Of Minn. Stat. § 97B.318

PURPOSE/ACTION REQUESTED

Provide information to the committee for consideration regarding potential regulation of firearms used to take deer.

SUMMARY

The repeal of Minn. Stat. § 97B.318, which previously designated Dakota County as a shotgun-only zone for deer hunting, has significant implications for any local ordinance seeking to restrict the types of firearms used to take deer. Effective January 1, 2026, any firearm that is otherwise legal under state law may be used to harvest deer in Dakota County.

Dakota County is part of Deer Hunting Zone 605, which also includes Goodhue, Rice, Le Sueur, and Scott Counties. During the 2024 hunting season, Zone 605 recorded 4,821 firearm hunters and a total harvest of 1,616 deer.

If Dakota County were to adopt an ordinance imposing firearm restrictions for deer hunting, state law requires that a public hearing be held prior to adoption. Additionally, notice of any adopted ordinance must be provided to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) no later than May 5, 2026, for the restriction to be published in the DNR’s annual hunting regulations handbook.

Enforcement of any adopted ordinance would fall jointly to the Dakota County Sheriff’s Office and the DNR.

RECOMMENDATION

The Sheriff’s Office neither supports nor opposes a proposed ordinance restricting firearms for deer hunting.

EXPLANATION OF FISCAL/FTE IMPACTS

The fiscal impact of enforcement is unknown.

- None
- Current budget
- Other
- Amendment Requested
- New FTE(s) requested

RESOLUTION

Information only; no action requested.

PREVIOUS BOARD ACTION

None.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment: Presentation Slides

BOARD GOALS

- Thriving People A Healthy Environment with Quality Natural Resources
- A Successful Place for Business and Jobs Excellence in Public Service

CONTACT

Department Head: Joe Leko

Author: Dan Bianconi



Discussion Regarding Ordinance Limiting Firearms Used to Harvest Deer



MN Stat. 97B.031 Subd. 7

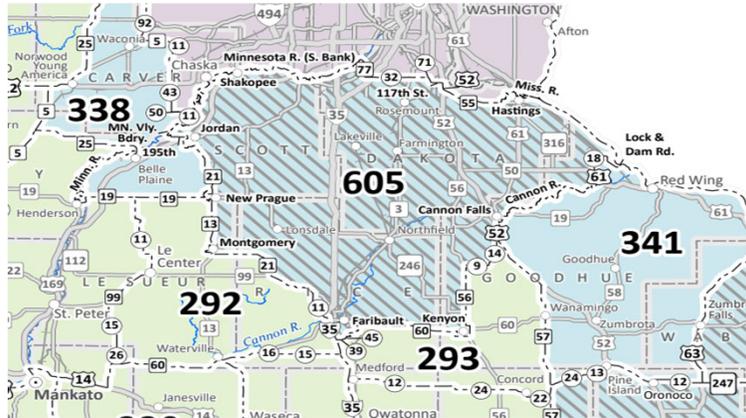


- New law became effective on January 1, 2026, and allows any legal firearm to be used to take deer unless an ordinance is passed pursuant to Minn. Stat 97B.031 Subd. 7 that limits firearms types.
- The county has the authority to limit the type(s) of firearms that may be used to hunt deer within the county pursuant to Minn. Stat. 97B.031, Subd. 7.
- If no action is taken by May 5, 2026, Dakota County will default to the new rifle zone statute.

MN Stat. 97B.031



- Hunting Zone of discussion is classified as Zone 605; it encompasses Dakota County and includes portions of Goodhue, Rice, Le Sueur, and Scott County.



Additional Discussion



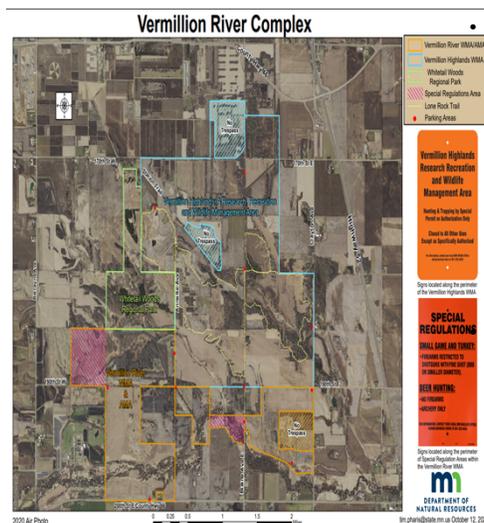
- Neither the Minnesota DNR Enforcement Division or the Dakota County Sheriff's Office is taking a particular stance on this issue.
- If an ordinance is adopted to limit firearms deer hunting in Dakota County to shotguns only, ordinance enforcement becomes the responsibility of both the Sheriff's Office and the Minnesota DNR.
- If a decision is made to establish a new ordinance, the Minnesota DNR must be notified prior to May 5, 2026, in order for the change to be included in the 2026 Minnesota Annual Hunting Regulations Handbook.

Additional Discussion



- There are wildlife management areas, such as Vermillion Highlands adjacent to Whitetail Woods, that are managed by the state and will remain shotgun/muzzleloader-only for deer hunting.
- To date, the Sheriff's Office has received one public comment supporting the new law allowing rifles during the firearms season.
- Most counties are evaluating the recent law change and their response. Todd County, however, communicated their decision to follow the new state law rather than adopt a local ordinance, citing concerns that doing so could create additional unfunded enforcement mandates for the Sheriff's Office.

Vermillion Highlands/River WMA



Vermillion Highlands

- One of the only WMAs in the state that has a board.
- Board will vote on keeping the WMA shotgun/muzzleloader only.
- Special permit only hunts. In 2025, 20 permits for shotguns and 20 permits for muzzleloader were issued for deer hunting.
- Only big game hunting is allowed on the southern 2/3rds of the WMA.

Vermillion River

- Open to all public hunting. No special permits for big game.
- Will follow the county's gun laws.
- The county can petition to have special regulations.





General Government and Policy Committee of the Whole

Request for Board Action

Item Number: DC-5391

Agenda #: 9.1

Meeting Date: 2/17/2026

Adjournment