

Vermillion County Board of Commissioners

Meeting Minutes

Date: May 4th, 2026

Commissioner's Courtroom, 2nd Floor, Courthouse

- I. Call to order
- II. Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag
- III. Roll Call- All present
- IV. Approval of Minutes from March 31, 2026 Special Meeting

Peebles Motion

Dunavan Seconds

All in Favor, motion carried. Hess Obtain

- V. Approval of Minutes from April 6th, 2026

Hess Motion

Peebles Second

All in Favor, Motion Carried.

- VI. Approval of Claims dated April 3rd, 10th, 17th, 24th and May 1st 2026.

Peebles Motion

Hess Second

All in Favor, Motion carried.

- VII. Approval of Payroll dated April 10th and 24th, 2026.

Hess Motion

Peebles Seconds

All in Favor, Motion carried.

- VIII. Public Comment:

Mike Kelley – Kelley addressed the Commissioners regarding economic development and proposed data center activity within the county. Emphasized the importance of transparency and recommended the County avoid entering into non-disclosure agreements with companies. He encouraged the Board to require utility disclosures, independent expert review of proposals, community involvement, and protections for county interests in future agreements. Kelley also expressed opposition to tax abatements for for-profit companies.

Doug Martin, Universal Town Board President- Martin addressed the Board regarding concerns over potential data center development near Universal. Martin stated opposition to locating data centers near the community and expressed concerns regarding noise, electrical demand, water usage, aquifer depletion, and limited job creation associated with crypto mining operations.

- Potential impacts of future AI/data center expansion on local infrastructure and water resources

Inee Mahan, St. Bernice Resident / American Legion Post 108 Commander

A resident of St. Bernice addressed the Commissioners regarding emergency preparedness related to solar panel farm fires following a recent incident in Sullivan County. Mahan requested the County work with Apex and local fire departments to ensure adequate training, equipment, and funding are available for emergency response personnel.

IX. **Open Issues**

- a. **Levi Gossip Property Purchase Offer-** The Board considered an offer from Gossip to purchase county property near Blanford for \$250. After discussion and confirmation that no additional interest had been received, action was taken.

Peebles Motion
Hess Second
All in Favor, Motion Carried

- b. **CenterPoint Easement Payment-** The Board discussed placement of approximately \$26,000–\$27,000 received from CenterPoint related to temporary easements through county farm property. Discussion included the possible establishment of a rainy-day fund through County Council action.

X. **New Business**

- a. **County Road 1800 South / Peabody Mine Area Roadway Issues-** Ron Mack and surveyor Jim Swift addressed the Board regarding historical roadway and right-of-way issues in the Peabody mine area west of Universal, particularly involving County Road 1800 South.

Presentation topics included:

- Historical GIS imagery showing relocation and destruction of roads during mining operations
- Survey discrepancies involving section lines and present roadway locations
- Questions regarding legal right-of-way ownership and prior reclamation agreements
- Potential access concerns affecting adjoining properties

County Attorney Jon Spurr discussed prior litigation, historical commissioner actions, reclamation approvals, and legal complications associated with the roadway system.

Discussion concluded with consensus to:

- Prioritize review of County Road 1800 South
- Coordinate with the County Attorney, Highway Department, and survey professionals
- Continue researching legal and surveying requirements before road improvements proceed

No formal action taken.

- b. **Petition to Vacate Alleyway** Residents appeared before the Board requesting vacation of a public alleyway in the St. Bernice area due to ongoing trespassing and unauthorized traffic issues. Adjacent property owners agreed with the request.

Motion: Approve County Ordinance 2026-03 vacating the identified public alleyway.
Hess Motion
Peebles Second
All in Favor, Motion Carried

- c. **Prohibiting Sex Offenders from Parks and Recreational Areas County Ordinance 2026-04** - County Attorney Jon Spurr presented County Ordinance 2026-4 prohibiting registered sex offenders from county-owned parks and recreational areas.

The ordinance:

- Applies to county parks, trails, boat ramps, recreational facilities, and related areas
- Establishes penalties up to \$2,500 for violations
- Aligns with similar ordinances being considered by local municipalities

The ordinance was read into the record.

Peebles Motion Approve County Ordinance 2026-04.

Hess Second

All in Favor, Motion Carried

- d. **Paige Kilgore, Amendment to Reassessment Contract** – The Commissioners reviewed an addendum to the reassessment contract submitted by Paige Kilgore, who was unable to attend the meeting.

Peebles Motion to approve the contract addendum

Hess Seconded

All in Favor, Motion Carried

- e. **Local Coordinating Council (LCC) Coordinator Contract-** The Commissioners reviewed the annual LCC Coordinator compensation agreement. Compensation set at \$4,000 annually, paid through the County Auditor's Office for tax purposes.

Hess Motion to approve the contract position and description

Peebles Second

All in Favor, Motion Carried

- f. **Ordinance 2026-05 – Prohibiting Signs on County Property and Rights-of-Way-** The Commissioners discussed a proposed ordinance regarding placement of signs on county property and rights-of-way. Replacing references to "political signs" with "any signs."

- Clarifying that county employees may remove prohibited signs.
- Establishing a \$500 fine for any person placing signs on county property or rights-of-way.

Commissioners noted:

- Political candidates have generally complied with placement expectations.
- The ordinance primarily addresses safety concerns and protection of county mowing equipment.

Hess Motion to approve first reading of Ordinance 2026-05 with attorney revisions

Peebles Seconded

All in Favor, Motion Carried.

- g. **Credit Card Processing Proposal-** Information was presented regarding consolidating county offices under a single credit card processing provider through First Financial Bank and Elavon.

Discussion included:

- No cost to the county for equipment.
- Participation by multiple county offices.
- Further meetings planned with office holders before any action is taken.

No action taken.

- h. **Public Hunting at The Rise-** A proposal was presented for consideration regarding a potential public hunting area or land lease program associated with RISE property, similar to the existing mushroom hunting area. The presenter requested that the commissioners review the proposal and provide feedback before it is taken to the RISE Board.

Junior County Commissioners Program- The commissioners recognized participants in the Junior County Commissioners program and presented Sofia Rackow with a plaque for completing the program's first year. Lane Thomann and Corbin Bush were also acknowledged for their participation.

It was noted that the Junior Commissioners assisted with ideas for possible courthouse exterior and landscaping improvements, including updates to brick pavers, bushes, and overall design concepts. The commissioners thanked the students for their contributions and participation.

- i. **Veterans Services Grant Proposal and Ernie Pyle Community Center Discussion-** The County Veterans Service Officer, Inee Mahan presented a strategic development plan focused on expanding Veterans services in Vermillion County.

- Pursuit of two VA-related grants, including a suicide prevention grant of up to \$750,000.
- Potential future application for a four-year Veterans court grant totaling approximately \$960,000.
- Rising concerns regarding homeless Veterans and Veteran suicide prevention.
- Formation of a Vermillion County Veterans Council with participation from local American Legion posts.
- Possible future use of portions of the Ernie Pyle School building for Veteran outreach and community services.

Commissioners discussed:

- Need for coordination with Redevelopment regarding use of the building.
- Safety considerations involving current daycare operations.
- Alternative use of the Economic Development building if necessary.
- Need for additional cost details from RJL Solutions regarding grant writing services.

Commissioner Misty was designated as the primary contact to coordinate discussions moving forward.

No formal action taken.

- j. **Professional Consulting Services Agreement – Auditor's Office-** The Commissioners reviewed an agreement with Dossett Consulting for preparation of the Title IV allocation plan.

Annual consulting fee options:

- \$5,000 annually, or
- \$4,500 annually under a three-year agreement.
- Services are fully funded through grant funds.

Peebles Motion to approve the three-year agreement at \$4,500 annually

Hess Second

All in Favor, Motion Carried

- k. **Resolution 2026-06 – Thrive Transportation Federal Transit Grant-** The Commissioners reviewed a resolution related to the federal transit grant supporting Thrive transportation services.

Hess Motion to approve Resolution 2026-06

Peebles Second

All in Favor, Motion Carried.

Public Announcements

Household Chemical Waste Collection

- **Date:** Saturday, June 6, 2026
- **Time:** 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
- **Location:** Vermillion Rise North Entrance

Accepted items include:

- Household chemicals
- Oil-based paint
- Fertilizers
- Batteries
- Fluorescent and LED bulbs
- Automotive chemicals

Tire Recycling Event

- **Date:** May 16, 2026
- **Time:** 8:00 a.m. – Noon
- **Location:** Preferred Tire Recycling, Vermillion Rise Mega Park

Fees:

- First 8 passenger tires free
- Additional passenger tires: \$1 each
- Truck and tractor tire pricing announced accordingly

Election Day Reminder

County offices will be closed for Election Day. Residents were encouraged to vote.

XI. **Ajourn**
 Peebles Motion
 Hess Seconds
 All in Favor, Motion carried.

AYE:

RJ Dunavan

RJ Dunavan

Misty Hess

Misty Hess

William Peebles

ATTEST:

Ron Dunavan

Ron Dunavan, Auditor

NYE:
