

Hayes County Commissioners
January 13, 2026

A meeting of the Hayes County Board of Commissioners was scheduled for January 13, 2026, at 1:30 P.M. in the Hayes County Courthouse, 505 Troth Street, Hayes Center, Nebraska. Advanced notice of the meeting, time and place was given to each Commissioner, was published in the *McCook Gazette* on January 8, 2026, and posted in accordance with law. A current copy of the Open Meetings Act was available for review and was posted in the room where the meeting was being held. All proceedings shown hereafter were taken while the convened meeting was open to the attendance of the public.

Chairman Christner called the meeting to order at 1:34 P.M. Those present were board members: Wayne Christner, Barry Richards, and Kevin Fornoff; Susan Messersmith, County Clerk; D. Eugene Garner, County Attorney; Brett Widger, Weed Superintendent, and Leon Kolbet, Zoning Administrator. Visitors were Amy Sauer and Stephanie Miller.

Fornoff moved, second by Richards to approve the agenda. Discussion held. Roll call: Richards, yes; Christner, yes; Fornoff, yes. Motion carried.

Fornoff moved, second by Richards to approve the consent agenda consisting of the financial reports of the Clerk, Clerk of the District Court, Imprest Account and the minutes of December 9 & 30, 2025 meetings. Discussion held. Roll call: Christner, yes; Fornoff, yes; Richards, yes. Motion carried.

The floor was opened for nominations to reorganize the Board for calendar year 2026. Richards moved, second by Christner to retain current office holders, Christner as Chairman and Richards as Vice-Chairman for the 2026 year. Discussion held. Roll call: Fornoff, yes; Richards, yes; Christner, yes. Motion carried.

Fornoff moved, second by Richards to adopt Resolution 2026-1, designation of Pinnacle Bank as Official Hayes County Depository for 2026. Discussion held. Roll call vote: Richards, yes; Christner, yes; Fornoff, yes. Motion carried.

Fornoff moved, second by Richards to adopt Resolution 2026-2, designation of The McCook Gazette as official newspapers of publication for Hayes County for 2026 and to designate the County's website, <http://www.hayescounty.ne.gov> as an additional method of providing notices. Hayes County Courthouse information may also be found on Facebook. Discussion held. Roll call: Christner, yes; Fornoff, yes; Richards, yes. Motion carried.

Richards moved, second by Christner to adopt Resolution 2026-3, authorization for Hayes County Treasurer to invest monies. Discussion held. Roll call: Fornoff, yes; Richards, yes; Christner, yes. Motion carried.

Fornoff moved, second by Richards to adopt Resolution 2026-4, authorization for Hayes County Treasurer to transfer monies. Discussion held. Roll call vote: Richards, yes; Christner, yes; Fornoff, yes. Motion carried.

Fornoff moved, second by Christner to adopt Resolution 2026-5, authorization for Hayes County Treasurer to secured funds. Discussion held. Roll call: Christner, yes; Fornoff, yes; Richards, yes. Motion carried.

Brett Widger joined the meeting to review the Weed Superintendent's annual weed reports. Fornoff moved, second by Richards to approve the five annual weed reports for 2025 and direct Chairman to sign the same. Discussion held. Roll call: Fornoff, yes; Richards, yes; Christner, yes. Motion carried.

Christner moved, second by Richards to designate the second Tuesday and last business day of each month as meeting dates and approve holidays to be observed for 2026. Discussion held. Roll call: Richards, yes; Christner, yes; Fornoff, yes. Motion carried.

Richards moved, second by Fornoff to approve the following appointments for 2026:
Region II Human Service County Representative – Christner
West Central Area of Aging County Representative – Christner
West Central Nebraska Development District Representative – Christner
Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department Representative – Fornoff
Economic Development Board - Richards

NIRMA contact person –Messersmith
Safety Committee Chairman –Richards

The Board reviewed Oak Creek Engineering agreement for professional services. Christner moved, second by Richards to appoint Lance M. Harter, License Number S-1426, Class A License, of Kearney, NE as Hayes County Highway Superintendent for 2026 at \$6000.00 per year with overage at \$115.00/hour and mileage at the IRS rate. Discussion held. Roll call: Fornoff, yes; Richards, yes; Christner, yes. Motion carried.

Amy Sauer and Stephanie Miller with Southwest Community Betterment joined the meeting to update the Board on the status of the new home being built on the south end of Paxton Avenue. The home is a three-bedroom, two-bath home with a full unfinished basement and attached garage. Approximate cost to build the home is \$340,000.00 but SWCBC will market it at \$230,000.00. The house was built using a Nebraska Affordable Housing Trust Fund grant. Anyone interested in viewing the home, or anyone who has questions regarding the sale/purchase process should contact Southwest Community Betterment in Grant, NE.

Christner moved, second by Richards to recess the meeting at 2:25 P.M. for the purpose of touring the new home. The meeting will reconvene at 3:00 P.M. Discussion held. Roll call: Richards, yes; Christner, yes; Fornoff, yes. Motion carried.

Christner reconvened the meeting at 3:02 P.M.

Fornoff moved, second by Richards to retain Cox Lawn for courthouse lawn and grounds care for 2026 at \$3,450.00/Yr. Discussion held. Roll call: Christner, yes; Fornoff, yes; Richards, yes. Motion carried.

Christner moved, second by Richards to retain Rita Erickson as janitor for 2026 at \$550.00 per month. Discussion held. Roll call: Fornoff, yes; Richards, yes; Christner, yes. Motion carried.

Three bids were received for Auditor services covering fiscal years ending June 30, 2026, June of 2027 and June of 2028. (1) Kevin C. Sylvester with Dana F. Cole & Company, with 3-year bid total of \$58,500.00; (2) Gabriel, Burger & Else, CPA, Seward, NE, with 3-year bid total of \$60,000.00; and (3) Lengemann & Associates, Papillion, NE. with 3-year bid total of \$64,545.00.

Richards moved, seconded by Fornoff to retain Kevin C. Sylvester, partner with Dana F. Cole, Scottsbluff, NE for audit services for fiscal years ending June of 2026 for \$19,000.00, 2027 for \$19,500.00 and 2028 for \$20,000.00. Discussion held. Roll call: Richards, yes; Christner, yes; Fornoff, yes. Motion carried.

Richards moved, second by Fornoff to approve the Treasurer's Report. Discussion held. Roll call: Christner, yes; Fornoff, yes; Richards, yes. Motion carried. Board acknowledged receipt of the Treasurer's 6 Month Report.

Christner moved, seconded by Richards to approve the Sheriff's Quarterly Report. Discussion held. Roll call: Fornoff, yes; Richards, yes; Christner, yes. Motion carried.

Christner moved, second by Fornoff to approve claims, excluding claims 2601003, 2601053 and 2601054, for \$40,158.70. Discussion held. Roll call: Richards, yes; Christner, yes; Fornoff, yes. Motion carried.

Christner moved, second by Fornoff to approve claims 2601053 and 2601054 for \$24,589.20. Discussion held. Roll call: Christner, yes; Fornoff, yes; Richards, abstain. Motion carried

Richards moved, second by Fornoff to approve claim 2601003 for \$203.00. Discussion held. Roll call: Fornoff, yes; Richards, yes; Christner, abstain. Motion carried.

Fornoff moved, second by Richards to approve and direct Chairman to sign the Proposal for Professional Services with Oak Creek Engineering, Kearney, NE, to conduct the hydraulic study for structure C004304710 replacement. Discussion held. Roll call: Richards, yes; Christner, yes; Fornoff, yes. Motion carried.

An emergency shoofly by-passing structure C004304710 on Old Highway 17 has been constructed. The County Attorney will prepare a right-of-way easement for the shoofly. Landowner compensation will be determined using a survey that measures acreage use.

Fornoff moved, second by Richards to adopt Resolution 2026-6 establishing commissioner salary for calendar years 2027 and 2028. Discussion held. Roll call: Christner, yes; Fornoff, yes; Richards, yes. Motion carried

Fornoff moved, second by Richards to adopt Resolution 2026-7 establishing salaries for certain county officers for the new term beginning Jan 7th, 2027 and ending January 2nd 2031. Discussion held. Roll call: Fornoff, yes; Richards, yes; Christner, yes. Motion carried.

Fornoff moved, second by Richards to adopt Resolution 2026-8, Cash in-Lieu of group medical insurance. Discussion held. Roll call: Richards, yes; Christner, yes; Fornoff, yes. Motion carried.

Christner moved, second by Fornoff to adjourn the meeting. There being no further discussion. Roll call: Christner, yes; Fornoff, yes; Richards, yes. Motion carried

Chairman Christner adjourned the meeting at 4:39 P.M.

The next meeting will be on January 30, 2026, at 8:30 AM.

Hayes County Clerk

Board Chairman