

Board of County Commissioners of Lincoln County
Agenda for November 25, 2025

- 9:00 Call to order and Pledge of Allegiance
- 9:00 Andrew Lorensen, Director of Human Services, to present the Department of Human Services monthly report
- 9:30 Jeremiah Higgins and Renita Thelen with the Lincoln County Assessor's Office to discuss the Lincoln County assessed valuation
- 10:00 Kevin Stansbury, Lincoln Community Hospital CEO, to provide an LCH report

-To be completed as time permits-

1. Approve the minutes from the November 19, 2025 meeting
2. Review and act upon a proposed agreement with Benefit Resources Inc. for administrative services regarding the Lincoln County Pension Plan
3. County Commissioner reports
4. County Attorney's report
5. County Administrator's report
6. Old Business
7. New Business
8. Approve Payroll

The Board of Lincoln County Commissioners met at 9:00 a.m. on November 25, 2025. Chairman Wayne Ewing, commissioners Robert Safranek and Terry Jaques, county administrator Jacob Piper, and acting clerk of the Board Mindy Dutro attended. Department of Human Services Director Andrew Lorensen and Harvest on the Prairie Director Tami Williams were present when the meeting began. Clerk of the Board Corinne Lengel was absent and excused.

Chairman Ewing called the meeting then asked Mr. Safranek to lead the Pledge of Allegiance. Next, chairman Ewing asked Mr. Jaques to say a prayer.

The Board approved payroll then Mr. Ewing recessed the Board of County Commissioners' meeting and opened the Lincoln County Board of Human Services meeting. DHS Director Andrew Lorensen asked Mrs. Williams to go first so she didn't have to wait. Mrs. Williams thanked the Board for their support during the government shutdown and delay in SNAP funds. She stated that with the funds that were given to Harvest on the Prairie she was able to use \$7,157.80 to expand the pantry with more shelves and food. Families were able to pick their food so they receive food that they will eat and not waste food by being given food they will just throw away.

Mrs. Williams asked the Board if she should return the remaining \$2,832.20 that they did not use or if she could use it towards the Christmas basket program since they did not get as many funds as they have in the past. Mr. Jaques asked Mr. Lorensen what his recommendation was, to which Mr. Lorensen responded that the funds that they gave Harvest on the Prairie were unallocated in DHS's budget, so he recommended that Mrs. Williams keep it to use for the Christmas basket program. The Board agreed and Mrs. Williams thanked them again for their support and trust in her to help the county residents, she left the meeting at 9:15 a.m.

Mr. Lorensen reported that the November SNAP benefits were distributed to those on the program. He briefed the Board on the State's decision for a new direction of assistance programs, including shared services and districting of Medicaid, SNAP, Adult Financial and TANF. Mr. Lorensen said that he believes there will be pushbacks from the counties but also thinks that the State's goal is to save money and to pull work from the income technicians so that they have more time to work on other things. Mr. Jaques asked Mr. Lorensen how the state plans to make sure the funding is equal for the districts, and Mr. Lorensen responded he didn't think they would be able to. Mr. Jaques told him to keep the Board updated and Mr. Ewing told him to let them know if there was anything they could do.

County Treasurer Ashley Erwin, County Assessor Jeremiah Higgins, Chief Deputy Assessor Renita Thelen, and Lincoln Health CEO Kevin Stansbury joined the meeting at 9:23 a.m.

Before he left, Mr. Lorensen stated that he is concerned that half of his salary and all the account clerk's salary come from the county admin funds currently but would need to be reallocated to another account if the state moves the four programs to the district level. Also, if the employees who currently work on those four programs are now state employees, he would not feel comfortable housing them in his department. Last, he told the Board that the

custodian is doing a good job for his office and that they didn't have any issues with her. Mr. Ewing asked if Mr. Lorensen was ready to replace the carpet in his department, and he stated that it was a huge inconvenience last time because they had to temporarily work out of the jury assembly room for a few weeks. He would like to replace the carpet in the breakroom with some kind of laminate-type flooring and maybe look at replacing the carpet in 2027.

Mr. Lorensen left, and at 9:40 a.m., Mr. Ewing adjourned the Board of Human Services meeting and reconvened the Board of County Commissioners' meeting.

Mrs. Thelen informed the Board that the Assessor's office is looking at a four million dollar decrease in overall valuation without oil & gas for the county for the upcoming year, which would be a decrease of \$250,000 in county revenue. Mr. Higgins stated that this is a very preliminary estimate, and they won't know for sure what the State is going to do, since there is still a whole year for the State to change legislation. If the Board gets questions, they should direct them to the Assessor's office. The Board briefly discussed excise tax on solar farms and charging stations, and Mr. Higgins said that charging stations are exempted until after 2026, and after that, they didn't know what would happen. Mrs. Erwin, Mr. Higgins, and Mrs. Thelen left the meeting at 9:55 a.m.

Mr. Stansbury reported to the Board that the hospital had only a \$60,000 loss in the month of October, which was an improvement from the \$140,000 loss the month before. Operating expenses were under budget for the month and under what they had spent in October 2024. The hospital currently has thirty-four days of cash on hand and is expecting three large supplemental payments: \$230,000 from UCHHealth, \$1,200,000 from Chase, and \$1,000,000 from ERC. Next month, the hospital will be announcing an interim CFO with the plans of hiring a permanent CFO at the end of the interim's one year.

Next, Mr. Stansbury said that he is one of six people who make up a Rural Futures group, and they are setting priorities for the 2026 general assembly to hopefully lay the groundwork for the 2027 and 2028 years. Mr. Stansbury thanked the Board for their continued support and interest in the hospital. Mr. Jaques asked if there was any improvement to the hospital billing, Mr. Stansbury reported that there were a few bumps, but it appears to be improving.

Chairman Ewing mentioned that he had a relative who went to the hospital and needed insulin and had nothing but good things to say about the level of service from the nursing staff. However, they couldn't get the insulin they needed until they got the orders from the hospitalist, who did not seem to think it was a priority. Mr. Stansbury said he would investigate the issue and get back to him. Mr. Jaques said he was pleased that the last time he called to get on the schedule was much quicker than it had been in the past. Mr. Stansbury left the meeting at 10:07 a.m.

Mr. Safranek moved to approve the amended meeting minutes for November 7, 2025. Mr. Jaques seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

The Board reviewed the proposed agreement with Benefit Resources, Inc. for administrative services for the Lincoln County Employees' Pension Plan. Mr. Piper said there would be a one-time fee to switch companies, and with other fees, it would cost the county approximately \$9,000 a year to hire Benefit Resources, Inc. Mr. Piper mentioned that the company had already done a lot of leg work for the county for free and had administered several retirement payments as well. Kevin Meza previously administered the county's pension plan and would continue to do so for Benefit Resources, Inc., if the county approved the agreement. Mr. Jaques made a motion to approve the proposed agreement with Benefit Resources, Inc. to administer the Lincoln County Employees' Pension Plan. Mr. Safranek seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

When Mr. Ewing called for the commissioners' reports, Mr. Jaques said he'd attended the November 19 Economic Development meeting. Troy McCue reported on the Downtown Limon Christmas events scheduled for December 6 and that the Limon town board hopes to revamp their board with their four vacancies. The Economic Development Housing Committee is looking at a couple of manufactured homes for two different sites as well as options for mobile home parks. Genoa's Wonder View Tower is making progress on renovations and has a Denver fundraiser scheduled for February 10. Golden Taipei is also making process with a new contractor, and the neighboring former Dairy Queen is reportedly going to be a new Mexican food restaurant. In Hugo, the former Heritage Care Center is being transitioned to short-term medical housing, and in Arriba, Big Ben's RV Park is full as well as other local RV parks due to energy construction projects. Mr. McCue had spoken with Bruce Rahmani, who is refurbishing the former First Inn Gold property. Discussion included the Opportunity Zone Program renewal, with the possible addition of Arriba and Hugo. Stockmen's Bank has signed a purchase contract for the commercial property on Main Street in Hugo next to the Rose Petal, and Lincoln Health is continuing their grant application with EDA for their infrastructure west of the Genoa-Hugo High School.

On November 20, Mr. Jaques discussed the use of the Crane Service property northeast of the Genoa wastewater treatment plant with Land Use Administrator Ty Stogsdill and Scott Elliot. Mr. Elliot wants to bring large quantities of fuel for contracts with COSCO and Circle K stores, Mr. Jaques directed him to work with Mr. Stogsdill for the county permitting process.

Mr. Jaques reported receiving an additional call from Mr. Elliot on November 21, who told him that the property owner, Ken Sustrich, had previously gone through land use approval for the site but did not take any further action. Mr. Elliot stated that he is in a time crunch to get the site approved as he has contract responsibilities to fulfill, Mr. Jaques told him again that he needed to comply with county regulations and to work with Mr. Stogsdill to do so. Bart O'Dwyer called Mr. Jaques and discussed Mr. Elliot's plans for the Genoa site, and he stated that he is contracting with him to prepare a storage tank pad with a weed barrier, crushed concrete and to work to repair the site's office building. Mr. Jaques informed Mr. O'Dwyer of the status of the site approval and told him that the county would be entertaining bids on the roundhouse floor once the architect puts together the bid packet. Mr. Jaques also spoke with Mr. Stogsdill about his conversations with Mr. Elliot and Mr. O'Dwyer.

Mr. Ewing reported that on November 20 he went to the landfill to help and spoke with Troy Kelty, who did dirt work for the county, regarding a railroad spur at Genoa and gave him some numbers to access water. He spoke with District One Road Foreman Chris Monks about mowing and gates that had been put across County Rd 27 and not being able to do road work because of them. On November 21, Mr. Ewing went to the landfill again where they had closed for the day due to rain.

Mr. Ewing spoke with Mr. Monks several times on November 24 regarding the Big Sandy Bridge and winter conference and with Travis Miller regarding the Arikaree Bridge. Mr. Ewing and Mr. Jaques discussed the Genoa railroad spur as well on November 24.

On November 19, Mr. Safranek attended the Board of County Commissioners' meeting. Then on November 20, Mr. Safranek met Taylor Henderson about the Big Sandy Solar Project. Mr. Safranek checked roads in the southwest corner of the county on November 21 and checked on mowing in his district, which was almost complete for the season. That evening he attended a land use forum at the Karval Community Building, where nine community members, three land use board members, District Three Road Foreman Judd Kravig, and Mr. Stogsdill attended. It was meant to be an informative meeting to explain how the process works for an energy project to get county permitted. Mr. Safranek said that members from the Tri-County Fire District were also there and were perturbed about not knowing that a laydown yard was going in in their district. They also informed Mr. Safranek that Tri-County Fire District would be conducting an impact fee study and would need to have an agreement with the county's land use committee. Mr. Safranek spoke with Mr. Kravig about the plans for the road crew for the next week.

As for his report, Mr. Piper updated the Board on the ECCOG vehicle; the van would have seven regular seats and two ADA seats. The Board agreed that they preferred the van over another bus, Mr. Piper said he would let Sean Vanous apply for a grant for the van.

Next, Mr. Piper asked the Board if they would like to add an additional full-time employee for maintenance. Mr. Ewing said he was in favor, Mr. Jaques and Mr. Safranek agreed. Mr. Piper asked if it would be alright for John Mohan to call the person they had in mind and offer it to him starting December 1 so that they would not lose him to another job offer, the Board agreed.

Then Mr. Piper asked the Board if they wanted to leave the property tax credit for 2026 at six mills or lower it to three and a half mills. After some discussion of what it would look like in the budget, the Board agreed to lower it to three and a half.

Lastly Mr. Piper informed the Board that he hadn't heard back from CDOT regarding approving RockSol to take over reseeding the bridge project and 404 reporting for the county, he hoped to get an answer soon.

County Attorney Kelly Lowery joined the meeting virtually at 11:00 a.m. and told the Board that she was working with Mr. Stogsdill to write a cease-and-desist letter and will send it out when

Mr. Stogsdill returned from vacation. Mr. Piper asked Miss Lowery to investigate the Tri-County Fire District impact fee study and see what the county's responsibility would be, she said she would and get back to the Board. With nothing else to report, Miss Lowery left the meeting at 11:05 a.m.

Under old business, Chairman Ewing reported that all his Board appointments for the hospital, fair, and tourism boards agreed to another term on their respective boards.

With no other business to come before the Board, Mr. Ewing adjourned the meeting at 11:10 a.m. The next meeting will be at 9:00 a.m. on December 9, 2025.

Mindy Dutro, Acting Clerk of the Board

Wayne E. Ewing, Chairman