

**OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS
OF THE BOARD OF
COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
BENSON COUNTY
NORTH DAKOTA
October 14, 2026**

The Benson County commissioners met in special session on Wednesday, Oct. 14, 2026 at 10 a.m. in the Walking Eagle Room of the Spirit Lake Casino, 7889 Highway 57, St. Michael, ND. Commissioners present: Tammy Kuk, Dick Horner and David Davidson. Ron Stadum and Doris Griffin were absent. The meeting was called to order by Chair Davidson. The purpose of the special meeting was to discuss various issues, including, but not limited to, data processing centers, zoning issues and road and law enforcement. Other people present were: Sheriff Laura Wanzek; Scott Todahl, highway superintendent; Kelly Glover, BC Farmers Press; Lonna Street, SLT chair; Darcie Lohnes, SLT secretary/treasurer; Darren Walking Eagle, SLT Crow Hill District rep and tribal vice chair; Kooper Longie, SLT Wood Lake District rep; Kevin Dauphinais, Fort Totten District rep; Cora Whiteman; Laura Winson, BC Transportation; and State's Attorney James P. Wang. Davidson called the meeting to order. Walking Eagle gave an opening prayer. Discussion was held on the Benson County moratorium on data processing centers and the pros and cons of possibly having these types of centers. Street stated the SLT recently passed its own zoning ordinance. She asked that the tribe be informed of any zoning applications that affect tribal land in the future.

Discussion was held on the proposed Pierce County CAFO.

Street asked that Benson County join the SLT in standing in opposition to the Pierce County CAFO. The

board opted to discuss this at the next meeting on Oct. 20, 2026.

The group discussed the movement of county boundaries in the past.

Walking Eagle asked that Benson County SO employees take training on treaty rights. Dauphinais asked that any police entering or working on the reservation have knowledge of tribal laws. Wanzek stated the only agreement for policing on the reservation is for SLEC. She said the SLEC card only gives authority to assist tribal law enforcement. Wanzek stated the SLEC card program can take six to eight months to complete. She also stated local in-person training for SLEC would be a good option.

Dauphinais discussed what can be done with non-enrolled members who are excluded from the reservation boundaries and then enter back onto the reservation.

SA Wang came to the meeting at 11:03 a.m.

Street said the only MOU in effect with Benson County is for the SLEC card. Discussion was held on the short staffing of BIA.

Longie suggested meeting with Benson County on a quarterly or bi-annual basis.

Discussion was held on Benson County Transportation serving people on the reservation. Winson questioned if BCT would be able to serve members of the SLT living within the SLT boundaries. She stated she visited with the state agency that oversees BCT and the state recommended Winson speak with the SLT prior to entering the SLT boundaries and giving rides. Winson asked that IHS be informed that BCT is willing to assist with giving rides. Street questioned liability issues and recommended Winson get in contact with the SLT transportation program.

Longie left the meeting at 11:33 a.m.

Discussion was held on the biking/hiking bath from Fort Totten to Devils Lake and which agency would be responsible for maintenance and patrolling. The board informed the group that Benson County would not be responsible for any maintenance and would assist in patrolling only if called upon. Todahl stated he was contacted regarding a haul road agreement for the biking/hiking path.

Additional discussion was held on the hog farm being built in Pierce County.

Wang left the meeting at 12:20 p.m.

Discussion was held on what construction, if any, has been done by Paul Zink.

Discussion was held on alcohol permitting in Benson County.

Walking Eagle discussed utility companies servicing people on the reservation and the differences in fees charged.

Discussion was held on taxes levied for the fire departments in BC.

Discussion was also held on the percentage of people on the reservation that use SNAP, Medicare and Medicaid programs.

Walking Eagle questioned how election redistricting takes place.

Dauphinais stated the county should look at repercussions for employees who are not law-abiding. Erickson informed the group that hiring/firing is the responsibility of the elected official; however, budgeting of a department is controlled by the commission. Discussion was held on the hardship of hiring qualified deputies in the sheriff's department.

A motion to adjourn was made at 1:29 p.m.

Bonnie Erickson
Benson County Auditor
David Davidson
Chair