

WATONWAN COUNTY BOARD  
March 17, 2026  
9:00 A.M.

The Watonwan County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on March 17, 2026, at 9:00 AM in the Commissioners' Meeting Room of the Courthouse, City of St. James. The following Board Members were present: Jim Branstad, Dillon Melheim, Bill Miller, and Jim Pettersen. Not Present: Scott Westman. The meeting was opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Branstad moved, Pettersen seconded, and the motion passed unanimously, to approve the agenda as amended.

Melheim moved, Branstad seconded, and the motion passed unanimously, to approve the minutes of the March 3<sup>rd</sup> regular meeting.

Branstad moved, Pettersen seconded, and the motion passed unanimously, to approve the payment of bills as audited and filed in the County Auditor/Treasurer's Office as follows by fund: Commissioners Bills: General Fund - \$53,121.97; Ditch Fund - \$5,517.50; Road and Bridge Commissioner Bills: Road and Bridge Fund - \$37,302.97 and to approve the February Disbursements listing as presented and February Per Diems.

Celia Viesselman and Pat Branstad of Climate Smart St. James presented preliminary results of an organic waste feasibility study in Watonwan County, identifying a dumpster system as the most viable option. A state grant may support the project, with partners including county solid waste and Region Nine. Concerns about staffing, contamination, and funding remain. The board took no action and will revisit later.

David Haler, Director of Land Management, presented a conditional use application on behalf of Jesse Friedrich requesting approval for a second dwelling. Concerns were raised regarding the septic system; Haler stated there were no issues, that it could support two dwellings, and that there is sufficient space to install a second system if needed.

Melheim moved, Pettersen seconded, and the motion passed unanimously, to approve the conditional use application for Jesse Friedrich.

County Assessor Meggie Musterman updated the Board with the 2026, assessment, reporting ratios remained strong, indicating properties are valued, while overall countywide sales were lower compared to the previous year.

Pettersen moved, Melheim seconded, and the motion passed unanimously to pass the following:

**RESOLUTION APPROVING THE LIST OF TAX-FORFEITED LAND, BASIC SALE PRICE  
AND  
AUTHORIZATRION FOR PUBLIC SALE  
26-4**

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that the listing of all parcels of tax-forfeited land on the List of Tax Forfeited Land for Public Sale that follows have been classified as nonconservation land; that the basic sale price of each parcel, be approved and authorization for a public sale of this land be granted.

**LIST OF TAX-FORFEITED LAND**

<b><u>PARCEL ID NUMBER/ADDRESS</u></b>	<b>BASIC SALE PRICE</b>	<b>ASSESSMENTS BEFORE FORFEITURE</b>
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**CITY OF BUTTERFIELD**

<b><u>13.151.4320</u></b> (255 FIFTH ST N)	\$500.00	\$2,137.25
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The West 210 feet of the N1/2 of Block 34, Armstrong's Addition to Butterfield, in Watonwan County, Minnesota, EXCEPTING THEREFROM, however, the following described tract of land, to-wit: Commencing at the Southwest corner of the N1/2 of Block 34, Armstrong's Addition to Butterfield, thence North 15 feet along the West line of Block 34; thence East 165 feet parallel to the South line of Block 34; thence South 15 feet parallel to the West line of Block 34; thence West 165 feet parallel to the South line of Block 34 to the point of commencement.

**CITY OF DARFUR**

<b><u>14.100.0650</u></b> (90 FIRST AVE)	\$100.00	\$2,815.01
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Lot Four (4), except the North Forty-Five (45) feet thereof, and all of Lot Five (5), Block Five (5), City of Darfur, Watonwan County, Minnesota

**CITY OF ST JAMES**

<b><u>20.151.0480</u></b> (717 SIXTH ST N)	\$100.00	\$731.28
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South 40 feet of Lot Two (2) and North 13 feet of Lot Three (3) of Block Six (6) of Armstrong's Park Addition to the City of St. James, Watonwan County, Minnesota.

<b><u>202760910</u></b> (405 SIXTH ST N)	\$100.00	\$0.00
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East 70 feet of South 24 1/2 feet of Lot Four (4), and East 70 feet of Lots Five (5) and Six (6), all in Block Sixty-four (64) of First Addition to the City of St. James, Watonwan County, Minnesota.

<b><u>202760700</u></b> (411 FOURTH ST N)	\$100.00	\$3,133.50
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Lot 4 and the North Half (W 1/2) of Lot 5, Block 62, First Addition to the City of St. James, Minnesota and East 70 feet of South Half (S 1/2) of Lot Five (5) and East 70 feet of Lot Six (6), Block Sixty-two (62), First Addition of the City of St. James, Watonwan County, Minnesota.

<b><u>202760720</u></b> (315 FOURTH AVE N)	\$100.00	\$0.00
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W70 feet of S 1/2 of Lot 5; W70 feet of Lot 6, Block 62, First Addition, City of St. James.

Branstad moved, Miller seconded, and the motion passed unanimously to pass the following:

**RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING SALE OF NONCONSERVATION TAX-FORFEITED LANDS AT A  
REDUCED PRICE TO  
THE CITY OF ST. JAMES TO CORRECT BLIGHTED CONDITIONS**

**26-5**

WHEREAS, the following properties are tax forfeited properties in the City of St. James; and  
• 201510480

Property Address - 717 SIXTH ST N  
 ARMSTRONG'S PARK ADDITION BLOCK-006 S 40' OF LOT 2; N 13' OF LOT 3

• 202760910

Property Address - 405 SIXTH ST N  
 FIRST ADDITION BLOCK-064 E1/2 OF LOTS 5, 6; E1/2 OF S 24.5' OF LOT 4

• 202760700

Property Address - 411 FOURTH ST N  
 FIRST ADDITION LOT-004 BLOCK-062 & N1/2 OF LOT 5; E70' OF S1/2 OF LOT 5; E70' OF LOT 6

• 202760720

Property Address - 315 FOURTH AVE N  
 FIRST ADDITION BLOCK-062 W70' OF S1/2 OF LOT 5; W70' OF LOT6

WHEREAS, the county received a written request from the City of St. James for the above parcels to be conveyed to the city at a reduced price to correct blight pursuant to M.S. 282.01, Subd. 1a(d); and

WHEREAS, the city wishes to raze the parcels.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Watonwan County Board of Commissioners determined that a sale at a reduced price is in the public interest because a reduced price is necessary to provide an incentive to correct blighted conditions by razing the parcels.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the reduced basic sale price for the above parcels is set at \$1.00 each.

Quotes for seal coat rock and oil were presented to the board from Martin Marietta and L&S Construction. The quotes are detailed below:

Company Name	Material	Product ID	Plant/Source	Quantity	UOM	Price	Total	Price Per Unit
Martin Marietta	1/4 W CHIP - QZ	3128	New Ulm Quarry	1	TN	\$27.00	\$27.00	\$27.00
Martin Marietta	1/4 W CHIP - QZ	3128	Sioux Rock Quarry	4,000	TN	\$22.15	\$88,600.00	\$22.15
L&S Construction	5/16" Sealcoat - Chips		Red Rock Quarry	2,000	TN	\$20.15	\$40,300.00	\$20.15
L&S Construction	5/16" Sealcoat - Chips		Red Rock Quarry	4,000	TN	\$20.15	\$80,600.00	\$20.15

Melheim moved, Miller second, and the motion passed unanimously, to approve the quote from L&S Construction.

Branstad shared an update on meeting with MRC and AMC, regarding funding for Health and Human Services (HSS) technology improvements.

The commissioners discussed shotgun ordinances in other counties, focusing on how different areas regulate their use and what policies might be considered locally.

Branstad moved, Melheim seconded, and the motion passed unanimously, to adjourn at 9:50 AM.

Bill Miller, Co-Chairman  
Watsonwan County Board

Susan Montemayor, Deputy Clerk  
Watsonwan County Board

ATTEST: Kelly Pauling  
Watsonwan County Auditor/Treasurer