

VERNON COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
MINUTES
March 19, 2026

The meeting of the Vernon County Board of Supervisors was called to order at 9:32am by Chair Lorn Goede in the Vernon County Boardroom of the Courthouse Annex. This meeting was also available virtually.

The invocation was given by Chris Sutton a volunteer chaplain at the Sheriff's Department.

Those in attendance stood and recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Clerk Pedretti affirmed the proper public notice of the meeting and announced the meeting was being recorded.

Clerk Pedretti called the roll with 19 members present in person or virtually.

Item 6. Minutes: Motion by Supv Pedretti, seconded by Supv Strudthoff, "approve the minutes of the February 19th meeting as written", on a voice vote, all voting in favor, the motion carried.

Item 7. Announcements:

Chair Goede announces there will be a parade of tractors going by the window today.

Community Development Director Amy Olver presented on the County's new branding efforts. Materials were handed out to show how the new identity is being translated into practice tools and materials. The Mission, Vision, Values, and Virtues were briefly reviewed. The new tagline, "*A Great Place to Grow*" was introduced. Exterior signage and interior wayfinding signage will be replaced as part of the branding project.

Item 8. Audience to Visitors:

96th Assembly Representative Tara Johnson gave a brief legislative update. She has co-sponsored a resolution (LRB6527) to add clarity to ss 1.12(6) on how transmission lines are sited in Wisconsin.

Questions were also asked about the bills in the legislature on data centers.

Rep. Johnson recommends you reach out to all the representatives that are representing areas affected by the proposed routes.

Rob Danielson from the Town of Stark spoke in favor of the resolutions on the agenda today. He is also opposed to the proposed project to build a 765Kv transmission line through Vernon County.

Barbara Richards of rural Viroqua has many concerns about the environmental impacts caused by society.

Mary Bradford of rural Viroqua (Newton Township?) spoke opposed to the recently adopted *Comprehensive Plan* and opposed to the transmission line project and *data centers*.

Tim Woodhouse of Genoa spoke opposed to the proposed 765Kv transmission project.

Krista Brown of Viroqua has been advocating on the issues of data centers for months. Encourages the Board to look at the interconnected challenges with transmission lines, transportation, geology, water, and dams, and to stand true to our values.

Sean Lentz of Ehlers Public Financial Advisors presented a powerpoint on the 2026 capital projects finance plan, which is related to the first resolution of the day. Reviewed the capital budget, existing levy, estimated debt service, estimated property tax impact, and the County's borrowing capacity. Also reviewed the debt issuance timeline.

Supv Muller is concerned about where the County will be 20 years from now and is opposed to borrowing money to operate.

Supv Goede asked for clarification on the proposed payment amounts.

Lentz explained that the current proposal would require approximately a \$501,000 annual payment. If there is a continued need to borrow for capital projects, it brings on difficult decision(s) on weighing the need to find a way to continue to provide the capital assets the County is responsible for on one hand but trying to deal with the impact of financing for these projects. Under current levy limit rules, unless you cut things from your budget it is very difficult to find funds to make capital asset purchases.

Item 9. Resolutions:

(The actual resolutions are at the end of the minutes)

RESOLUTION #2026-15

AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE OF NOT TO EXCEED \$4,910,000.00

GENERAL OBLIGATION PROMISSORY NOTES, SERIES 2026A

Motion by Supv Eggen, seconded by Supv Lawler, to "adopt Resolution 2026-15".

Supv Henry asked since a large part of this debt is for roads and wanted to know how many years, we will need to do this.

Supv Pedretti explained the plan is to fix those roads that can be fixed because if we let them go it will cost two or three times as much to replace. Spending this money now will save significant money in the future.

Supv Muller said every year the Federal and State governments are putting more money into roads every year. He doesn't agree with the idea that this will ever get better.

Supv Eggen commented that the levy limits were put in place, then the State reneged on school aid, road funding, and forced everyone to have referendums and to borrow money.

Debated the payment schedule. Supv Strudthoff wanted to change the interest schedule so we could pay more principal and less interest in the early years.

The question being called. A roll call vote will be required as it will need a 3/4 vote to pass.

With 15 in favor, 2 opposed, and 2 abstaining, the resolution passes. *(Muller and Easterday opposed; Stanek and Wilson are marked abstain as they attended remotely and communication was lost)*

RESOLUTION #2026-16

DISCONTINUE SMRT BUS PROGRAM SUPPORT

Motion by Supv Taylor, seconded by Supv Slack, to "adopt Resolution 2026-16".

Administrative Coordinator Hanan presented the resolution. Last year we were contacted by LaCrosse County that they were planning to discontinue the program last year, so we also cut the funds from our budget. Lacrosse reversed course and asked for us to continue. Vernon County reallocated funds to help continue the program in 2026. There was a meeting to discuss moving forward. One county did not attend and did not help fund this in 2026.

There is misinformation that someone did not timely file for a grant and that is not true. This service is managed by LaCrosse County, and they did not fail to apply for any grants. This discussion was being held early in the year so that alternative services could be arranged.

Our previous contribution was \$16,000. The projected 2027 contribution will be \$113,977. The Vernon County routes average 11 riders per day. There are many alternative transportation options for the public.

Emplify Health is withdrawing its financial support. Mayo Health is withdrawing its financial support. Monroe County is nonresponsive. Crawford County is not in favor of an increased contribution.

Acknowledging that the County is working on alternatives, Chair Goede called the question on the resolution. On a voice vote, all those present voting in favor, the resolution is adopted.

RESOLUTION #2026-17

INFORMATION REQUEST REGARDING POTENTIAL 765KV TRANSMISSION LINE DEVELOPMENT

Motion by Supv Slack, seconded by Supv Lawler, to “adopt Resolution 2026-17”.

Motion by Lawler, second by Slack “to amend the resolution at item #11 where specific utilities are listed this should be changed to a more generic language to state, any and all utilities that serve residents of Vernon County”. On a voice vote, all voting in favor, the motion carried.

Supv Lawler also wants to call attention to item #14 which is an alternative way to provide power without huge overhead lines.

Chair Goede called the question on the resolution as amended. On a voice vote, all those present voting in favor, the resolution is adopted as amended.

RESOLUTION #2026-18

INFORMATION REQUEST REGARDING POTENTIAL 765KV TRANSMISSION LINE DEVELOPMENT

Motion by Supv Eggen, seconded by Supv Kilmer, to “adopt Resolution 2026-18”.

Motion by Lawler, second by Sullivan “to amend the resolution at item #11 where specific utilities are listed this should be changed to a more generic language to state, any and all utilities that serve residents of Vernon County”. On a voice vote, all voting in favor, the motion carried.

Chair Goede called the question on the resolution as amended. On a voice vote, all those present voting in favor, the resolution as amended is adopted.

RESOLUTION #2026-19

OPPOSING THE PROPOSED 765KV HIGH VOLTAGE TRANSMISSION LINE PROJECT

Motion by Supv Eggen, seconded by Supv Sullivan, to “adopt Resolution 2026-19”.

Supv Henry stated this is not a good thing for Vernon County. It will have a negative impact on economic, agriculture, and tourism value of our area.

Supv Strudthoff asked if this resolution could just be ignored and the project move forward anyway.

Corp Counsel stated that is correct. This doesn't mean it isn't worthwhile to do, but it is accurate to say they could just ignore this.

Supv Lawler agreed these are meaningful but do not have legal teeth. There are options the County will continue to explore.

Supv Taylor said this is just the first step that the County is looking into. A collaborative approach could have an impact.

Chair Goede called the question on the resolution. On a voice vote, all those present voting in favor, the resolution is adopted.

RESOLUTION #2026-20

BUDGET AMENDMENT – 2025 CAPITAL BALANCE CARRYOVER REQUEST – HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

Motion by Supv Jacobson, seconded by Supv Eggen, to “adopt Resolution 2026-20”.

Highway Commissioner Hewitt explained how three pieces of equipment were ordered last year, as part of budgeted expenses for 2025, but the equipment has not arrived yet. This resolution allows a carryover of \$55,730.00 to this year.

Chair Goede called the question on the resolution. On a voice vote, all those present voting in favor, the resolution is adopted.

RESOLUTION #2026-21

ESTABLISH THE ELECTED OFFICIAL'S COMPENSATION FOR THE 2027-2030 TERM

Motion by Supv Lawler, seconded by Supv Taylor, to "adopt Resolution 2026-21".

Administrative Coordinator Hanan presented the resolution. It is a requirement to establish compensation prior to the circulation of nomination papers (*April 15th*). This year the Sheriff, the Coroner, and the Clerk of Courts are up for election.

Comparable Counties were looked at, and a meeting was held with the incumbent officials. These salaries have been untouched for four years and were not increased recently with the rest of the staff with the wage study implementation.

Chair Goede called the question on the resolution. On a voice vote, all those present voting in favor, the resolution is adopted.

RESOLUTION #2026-22

**SUPPORT THE STATE OF WISCONSIN ESTABLISH A MEMBERSHIP WITH THE
MULTI-STATE INFORMATION SHARING AND ANALYSIS CENTER (MS-ISAC)**

Motion by Supv Kilmer, seconded by Supv Lawler, to "adopt Resolution 2026-22".

IT Director Simon presented the resolution. The resolution is to support the State managing an ISAC membership to support all the SLTT communities to benefit from these services.

We have experienced a funding severance from CISA to the entity that manages these ISACs. It has had an adverse effect on our budget. This is similar to what other States have done. These services are invaluable to our cyber security.

Chair Goede called the question on the resolution. On a voice vote, all those present voting in favor, the resolution is adopted.

Item 10. Administrative Coordinator's Report.

- There is an appointed committee assignment interest letter for Board members to complete
- Please follow up with IT. At least 5 Board members have been locked out of their accounts due to not doing their annual security training
- Gave an update on the landfill
- The new generator was successfully installed at the Erlandson building
- Thank you to the highway department for your work during the last snowstorm
- GenGov has selected a firm for a comprehensive energy study and capital improvement plan for county facilities
- The search for a replacement Administrative Coordinator has been posted. The GenGov committee will review applications after the deadline passes. GenGov will facilitate a succession plan at the April 1st GenGov meeting.

Supv Eggen asked for an explanation the DNR approving the feasibility study.

Hanan explained the process of which our engineer will make the submittal and then the DNR will decide if they have enough information to make a determination or if the information is incomplete.

Sup Slack asked for information about the recent airspace study. The county went from having no space to where we now have two years of space.

Sup Goede explained there were miscalculations. Once it was reviewed and areas that can be uncovered were measured it was determined there is 15,000 cubic yards of space.

Supv Henry wanted to clarify the differences between the old city dump and the county landfill. These were not designed the same way.

Item 11 Petitions.

Item 12 Ordinances.

Item 13 Memorials and Remonstrances.

Item 14. Report of Standing or Special Committees.

Supv Kilmer gave an update on the Western Wisconsin Workforce Development Board (WWWDB) Things are moving faster than previously thought. Discussions are being held on how we might be able to approach the State with a more favorable settlement with the State.

Supv Eggen gave an update on services offered at the ADRC Dept and from the Coroner's Office.

Supv Lawler wanted to encourage the Board members to review the Board rules prior to the next meeting to facilitate the committee election process.

Item 15. Unfinished business.

Item 16. Next Meeting date

The next meeting will be on Tuesday April 21st at 9:30 am.

Item 17. Agenda Items for the next meeting

Item 18. Adjourn

Motion by Supv Sullivan, seconded by Supv Schweiger, to "adjourn". On a voice vote, all present voting in favor, the motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 12:21 pm.

CERTIFICATION

State of Wisconsin)

) ss.

County of Vernon)

Office of the Vernon County Clerk

I, J Pedretti, County Clerk of Vernon County, Wisconsin, DO HEREBY CERTIFY that the statements above are a correct report of all actions and decisions of the Vernon County Board of Supervisors at the meeting of March 19th, 2026, as indicated in transcription taken personally by me.

/s/ J Pedretti
Vernon County Clerk



RESOLUTION NO. 2026-15
INITIAL RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE OF
NOT TO EXCEED \$4,910,000 GENERAL OBLIGATION PROMISSORY NOTES, SERIES 2026A FOR CAPITAL
IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

WHEREAS, Vernon County, Wisconsin (the "County") is in need of an amount not to exceed \$4,910,000 for public purposes, including paying the cost of projects included in the County's capital improvement plan, such as constructing highway and facility improvements and acquiring equipment and vehicles (collectively, the "Project"); and

WHEREAS, it is desirable to authorize the issuance of general obligation promissory notes for such purposes pursuant to Chapter 67, Wis. Stats.; and

WHEREAS, the County may issue general obligation promissory notes only if one or more of the conditions specified in Section 67.045, Wis. Stats., apply; and

WHEREAS, general obligation promissory notes may be issued under Section 67.045, Wis. Stats., if the County Board of Supervisors adopts a resolution to issue the debt by a vote of at least three-fourths of its members-elect.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the County Board of Supervisors of Vernon County, Wisconsin, that:

1. There shall be issued, pursuant to Chapter 67 of the Wisconsin Statutes, general obligation promissory notes (the "Notes") in an amount not to exceed \$4,910,000 for the public purpose of financing the Project.

2. There be and there hereby is levied on all the taxable property in the County a direct, annual tax in such years and in such amounts as are sufficient to pay when due the principal and interest on the Notes.

Adopted, approved and recorded March 19, 2026.

Lorn Goede
Chairperson

RESOLUTION #2026-16
DISCONTINUE SMRT BUS PROGRAM SUPPORT

WHEREAS, Vernon County was notified in August of 2025 that La Crosse County planned to end service after 2025 due to a projected funding shortfall of nearly \$127,000; and

WHEREAS, Vernon County removed its \$15,000 contribution from its 2026 budget proposal; and

WHEREAS, after notification from La Crosse County that it had reversed course for 2026 and would support the program for an additional year, the Vernon County Board of Supervisors also voted to continue to support the program for 2026; and

WHEREAS, ridership on the SMRT Bus has continued to decrease (average of 13 riders a day for 2024 and 11 riders a day for 2025 on the Vernon County route); and

WHEREAS, projected program contributions for Vernon County for 2027 are \$113, 977 (an increase of \$98,977); and

WHEREAS, strict levy limits do not allow for the levy capacity to increase property taxes to cover these costs; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Vernon County Board of Supervisors hereby discontinues support for the SMRT Bus program, effective January 1, 2027; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Vernon County Clerk shall provide a copy of this Resolution to La Crosse County and public information shall be provided on alternative transportation options on the Vernon County website.

Submitted to the County Board for consideration this 5th day of March 2026

Aye 6 Nay 1 Absent 2 Abstain 0

John Pedretti, Chair, Economic Development Committee

Resolution 2026-17

VERNON COUNTY INFORMATION REQUEST RESOLUTION REGARDING POTENTIAL 765 kV TRANSMISSION LINE DEVELOPMENT

WHEREAS, Vernon County adopted an Information Request Resolution on August 16, 2011 in regard to the proposed 345 kV Badger-Coulee transmission line (PSC REF# 171353);

WHEREAS, Representatives of Vernon County met with WI County Association lawyers and American Transmission Company in 2011 when it was determined that Information Request Resolutions are appropriate to use during the public information phase;

WHEREAS, the Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO) has announced that Dairyland Power Cooperative (DPC) and NextEraTransmission (NET) have been granted the right to plan and propose a 765 kV transmission line, "Maribell" designated to pass, in part, through Vernon County Wisconsin;

WHEREAS, Wis Stat. §112(6) specifies that existing utility corridors are the number one priority in studying and proposing routes for new transmission lines;

WHEREAS, high voltage Transmission Line Filing Requirements of the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin require that alternative routes be investigated and provided in the application materials;

WHEREAS, our County has at least one, eligible existing transmission line in its jurisdiction;

WHEREAS, there are a number of properties in our jurisdiction that stand to be significantly affected by easement expansions and other impacts;

WHEREAS, some of these potentially impacted properties have dwellings located in close-proximity to the existing transmission line;

WHEREAS, Dairyland Power Cooperative (DPC) and NextEraTransmission (NET) are members of MISO and stakeholder-participants in MISO LRTP Tranche 2.1 planning;

WHEREAS, a transmission line of this size and characteristics has never been considered or constructed in Wisconsin, to date;

WHEREAS, the cost of the 765 kV facility would be borne by ratepayers.

WHEREAS, within MISO's most recent FAQ, the regional utility interests' estimate of costs and benefits from the Tranche 2.1 expansion lines (including a potential 765 kV project through our area) would lead to an expense of about \$13.50 per month for an electric customer using 1,000 kWh per month;

WHEREAS, Dr. David Patton, the *Independent Monitor* of the MISO wholesale electricity market has found that MISO's Tranche 2.1 planning:

- Assumes a view of the future that is, "extremely unlikely;"
- Projects "overstated" or "invalid" benefits for customers in five of eight key categories;
- Would undermine customer-side investments in "resources, [battery] storage and other alternatives to transmission;"
- Transmission projects including 765 kV lines could be "postponed" until previously planned 345 kV transmission projects are built and their impacts on the electricity market are known.

WHEREAS, citing similar findings of *Potomac Economics*, the Public Utility Commissions of North Dakota, Montana, Arkansas, Mississippi and Louisiana filed a complaint before the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (EL25-109) requesting, "that FERC (i) find that MISO and the Board violated the Tariff and (ii) direct the [MISO] Board to declassify Tranche 2.1 projects as MVPs, and (iii) order MISO to revise its Tariff to require a filing of the business case supporting future LRTP MVP projects to be reviewed and approved by FERC;"

WHEREAS, An Environmental Impact Statement jointly authored by the Wisconsin Public Service Commission and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources found that smaller, 345 kV transmission lines, "may result in negative affects to property values, tax credits and heritage tourism" and mentions studies showing devaluations from 10 to 45% depending on proximity, visibility, size of parcel and whether sited in an industrial or natural setting;

WHEREAS, 765 kV transmission facilities are known to create audible noise and visible corona discharge effects, especially under high humidity and damp conditions;

WHEREAS, MISO assumes that electrical energy use will substantially increase and that Wis Stat. §1.12(2) Wisconsin Energy Policy stipulates that a state agency or local governmental unit shall investigate and consider the maximum of energy resources as an important factor when making any major decision that would significantly affect energy usage;"

WHEREAS, Wisconsin does not yet have legal statute regulating the use of 765 kV transmission lines and proposals for said regulation may be taken up by state lawmakers;

WHEREAS, now is the most opportune time for municipal governments to gain knowledge about 765 kV transmission in order to make recommendations to state lawmakers towards the realization of suitable regulations.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that

Vernon County requests Dairyland Power Cooperative (DPC) and NextEraTransmission (NET) to provide the following information either in written, electronic format or through an in-person presentation to our Board before March 31, 2026:

1. A map of eligible, existing transmission line routes for the considered 765 kV transmission line project through Vernon, Crawford, Sauk, Richland and Columbia Counties.
2. Explanation of the land owner notification process that will be utilized by Dairyland Power Cooperative (DPC) and NextEraTransmission (NET) including the specified distance from the center line of the proposed 765 kV transmission line that land owners will be notified during both the pre-application and post application phases of their proposal.
3. Images of all possible tower designs for use with the 765 kV transmission line in Vernon County if sited alone and in combination or with another transmission line.
4. For each possible tower design, above, please include the minimum and maximum height, in feet, that the towers could be;
5. To-scale documentation portraying the minimum and maximum widths, in feet, of required corridors for all possible tower designs and configurations of the 765 kV facility including guy wires and all other potential protuberances.
6. Documentation portraying the maximum width of a non-public, construction access road that Dairyland Power Cooperative (DPC) and NextEraTransmission (NET) or their subcontractors have made when constructing a 765 kV line.
7. The name(s) of the entity or entities that would be the owner(s) of the 765 kV transmission facility.
8. Estimated date that Dairyland Power Cooperative (DPC) and NextEraTransmission (NET)'s application for the 765 kV transmission line is expected to be submitted to the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin.
9. Estimated total cost assumed by ratepayers at large for the "Maribell" 765 kV project over 40 years.
10. Estimated total cost of regional generation additions in the Electric Generation Expansion Analysis System (EGEAS) for MISO's Long Range Transmission Planning (LRTP) Tranche 2.1.
11. Estimated, 40 year total cost of the "Maribell" project that would be assumed by member -owners of **any and all utilities that serve residents of Vernon County** based on an average use of 1000 kWh per month.
12. A list, including name, location and cost information, for all existing transmission lines and substations where pending rebuilding and/or other improvements would be avoided or delayed if "Maribell" were to be constructed.
13. A list, including name, location and cost information, of all other reliability related issues that "Marbell" would avoid, delay or eliminate.
14. Documentation accounting for MISO consideration and decision-making concerning the alternative use of HVDC transmission such as the *SOO Green HVDC Link* instead of above ground 765 kV transmission including the *HVDC* routes considered.
15. A list of the types with estimated monetary values of the "significant economic development benefits," that the Project would deliver to local economies in Vernon County.
16. Documentation explaining MISO's calculation of a net monetary benefit for Wisconsin residential electric customers if the estimated cost of Tranche 2.1 transmission and power plant additions, per ratepayer, is around \$27.50 per month while, potentially, returning only \$10 to \$18, per ratepayer, in value per month.
17. Documentation from MISO Tranche 2.1 planning estimating the percentage of electrical power assumed to be provided from distributed solar and distributed battery storage resources in years 1, 10 and 20 under all planning futures.

18. A list with names and locations of 765 kV transmission projects that Dairyland Power Cooperative (DPC) and NextEraTransmission (NET) have previously constructed outside of Wisconsin.
19. A list with names and locations of 765 kV transmission projects that Dairyland Power Cooperative (DPC) and NextEraTransmission (NET) are currently proposing or constructing outside of Wisconsin.
20. Upon completion and energizing of "Maribel" and "BECL," an estimate of the percentage of the electric power on an annual basis that would be consumed through the connection created at the Columbia substation for all futures in Tranche 2.1.
21. Vegetation management documentation and sample contracts describing practices that have been utilized by Dairyland Power Cooperative (DPC) and NextEraTransmission (NET) for previous 765 kV lines including techniques used to prevent soil erosion on steep grades.
22. If not specified in above documentation, documentation describing no-spray and other easement vegetation management accommodations that would be offered for organic farming and other conservation activities such as prairie and forest restoration.
23. Documentation describing practices that have been utilized by Dairyland Power Cooperative (DPC) and NextEraTransmission (NET) for previously constructed 765 kV lines to address the presence of karst topology.
24. Documentation describing construction practices that Dairyland Power Cooperative (DPC) and NextEraTransmission (NET) or their subcontractors have used in prior 765 kV projects to minimize damage to wetland habitats.
25. Documentation of siting and other accommodations that Dairyland Power Cooperative (DPC) and NextEraTransmission (NET) have made in prior constructions to minimize noise and light pollution associated with corona discharge from a 765 kV transmission line under high humidity and high transmission load conditions;
26. Measurement documentation from an existing 765 kV transmission line that Dairyland Power Cooperative (DPC) and NextEraTransmission (NET) or their assigned subcontractors have constructed accounting for average Sound Pressure Levels [Leq, dB(A)] at specified distances from the center line (feet), under specified humidity/precipitation conditions (relative humidity %) and at specified transmission loads (megawatts);
27. Documentation from a proposed or existing 765 kV transmission line that Dairyland Power Cooperative (DPC) and NextEraTransmission (NET) or their assigned subcontractors have made accounting for magnetic field strength readings (in mG) at specified distances from the center line (in feet) and at specified transmission loads (megawatts).
28. Documentation of all siting and other accommodations that Dairyland Power Cooperative (DPC) and NextEraTransmission (NET) or their assigned subcontractors have made to reduce waterfowl, raptor, grassland bird and songbird collisions with a 765 kV transmission line.
29. Documentation of all siting and other accommodations that Dairyland Power Cooperative (DPC) and NextEraTransmission (NET) or their assigned subcontractors have made to reduce risk of electric arcing from a 765 kV transmission line igniting fires in grasslands and forests.

Submitted to the County Board for consideration this 4th day of March 2026

_____ Aye 4 Nay 0 Absent 1 Abstain 0 .

Alycann Taylor, General Government Committee Chair

Resolution 2026-18

VERNON COUNTY INFORMATION REQUEST RESOLUTION REGARDING POTENTIAL 765 kV TRANSMISSION LINE DEVELOPMENT

WHEREAS, Vernon County adopted an Information Request Resolution on August 16, 2011 in regard to the proposed 345 kV Badger-Coulee transmission line (PSC REF# 171353);

WHEREAS, Representatives of Vernon County met with WI County Association lawyers and American Transmission Company in 2011 when it was determined that Information Request Resolutions are appropriate to use during the public information phase;

WHEREAS, the Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO) has announced that **Transource Energy** (TE) has been granted the right to plan and propose a 765 kV transmission line, "BECI" designated to pass, in part, through Vernon County Wisconsin;

WHEREAS, Wis Stat. §112(6) specifies that existing utility corridors are the number one priority in studying and proposing routes for new transmission lines;

WHEREAS, high voltage Transmission Line Filing Requirements of the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin require that alternative routes be investigated and provided in the application materials;

WHEREAS, our County has at least one, eligible existing transmission line in its jurisdiction;

WHEREAS, there are a number of properties in our jurisdiction that stand to be significantly affected by easement expansions and other impacts;

WHEREAS, some of these potentially impacted properties have dwellings located in close-proximity to the existing transmission line;

WHEREAS, Transource Energy (TE) is a member of MISO and a stakeholder-participant in MISO LRTP Tranche 2.1 planning;

WHEREAS, a transmission line of this size and characteristics has never been considered or constructed in Wisconsin, to date;

WHEREAS, the cost of the 765 kV facility would be borne by ratepayers.

WHEREAS, within MISO's most recent FAQ, the regional utility interests' estimate of costs and benefits from the Tranche 2.1 expansion lines (including a potential 765 kV project through our area) would lead to an expense of about \$13.50 per month for an electric customer using 1,000 kWh per month;

WHEREAS, Dr. David Patton, the *Independent Monitor* of the MISO wholesale electricity market has found that MISO's Tranche 2.1 planning:

- Assumes a view of the future that is, "extremely unlikely;"
- Projects "overstated" or "invalid" benefits for customers in five of eight key categories;
- Would undermine customer-side investments in "resources, [battery] storage and other alternatives to transmission;"
- Transmission projects including 765 kV lines could be "postponed" until previously planned 345 kV transmission projects are built and their impacts on the electricity market are known.

WHEREAS, citing similar findings of *Potomac Economics*, the Public Utility Commissions of North Dakota, Montana, Arkansas, Mississippi and Louisiana filed a complaint before the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (EL25-109) requesting, "that FERC (i) find that MISO and the Board violated the Tariff and (ii) direct the [MISO] Board to declassify Tranche 2.1 projects as MVPs, and (iii) order MISO to revise its Tariff to require a filing of the business case supporting future LRTP MVP projects to be reviewed and approved by FERC;"

WHEREAS, An Environmental Impact Statement jointly authored by the Wisconsin Public Service Commission and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources found that smaller, 345 kV transmission lines, "may result in negative affects to property values, tax credits and heritage tourism" and mentions studies showing devaluations from 10 to 45% depending on proximity, visibility, size of parcel and whether sited in an industrial or natural setting;

WHEREAS, 765 kV transmission facilities are known to create audible noise and visible corona discharge effects, especially under high humidity and damp conditions;

WHEREAS, MISO assumes that electrical energy use will substantially increase and that Wis Stat. §1.12(2) Wisconsin Energy Policy stipulates that a state agency or local governmental unit shall investigate and consider the maximum of energy resources as an important factor when making any major decision that would significantly affect energy usage;"

WHEREAS, Wisconsin does not yet have legal statute regulating the use of 765 kV transmission lines and proposals for said regulation may be taken up by state lawmakers;

WHEREAS, now is the most opportune time for municipal governments to gain knowledge about 765 kV transmission in order to make recommendations to state lawmakers towards the realization of suitable regulations.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that

Vernon County requests Transource Energy (TE) to provide the following information either in written, electronic format or through an in-person presentation to our Board before March 31, 2026:

1. A map of eligible, existing transmission line routes for the considered 765 kV transmission line project through Vernon, Crawford, Sauk, Richland and Columbia Counties.
2. Explanation of the land owner notification process that will be utilized by Transource Energy including the specified distance from the center line of the proposed 765 kV transmission line that land owners will be notified during both the pre-application and post-application phases of their proposal.
3. Images of all possible tower designs for use with the 765 kV transmission line in Vernon County if sited alone and in combination or with another transmission line.
4. For each possible tower design, above, please include the minimum and maximum height, in feet, that the towers could be;
5. To-scale documentation portraying the minimum and maximum widths, in feet, of required corridors for all possible tower designs and configurations of the 765 kV facility including guy wires and all other potential protuberances.
6. Documentation portraying the maximum width of a non-public, construction access road that Transource Energy (TE) or their subcontractors have made when constructing a 765 kV line.
7. The name(s) of the entity or entities that would be the owner(s) of the 765 kV transmission facility.
8. Estimated date that Transource Energy's application for the 765 kV transmission line is expected to be submitted to the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin.
9. Estimated total cost assumed by ratepayers at large for the "BECI" 765 kV project over 40 years.
10. Estimated total cost of regional generation additions in the Electric Generation Expansion Analysis System (EGEAS) for MISO's Long Range Transmission Planning (LRTP) Tranche 2.1.
11. Estimated, 40 year total cost of the "BECI" project that would be assumed by member -owners of **any and all utilities that serve residents of Vernon County** based on an average use of 1000 kWh per month.
12. A list, including name, location and cost information, for all existing transmission lines and substations where pending rebuilding and/or other improvements would be avoided or delayed if "BECI" were to be constructed.
13. A list, including name, location and cost information, of all other reliability related issues that "BECI" would avoid, delay or eliminate.
14. Documentation accounting for MISO consideration and decision-making concerning the alternative use of HVDC transmission such as the *SOO Green HVDC Link* instead of above ground 765 kV transmission including the *HVDC* routes considered.
15. A list of the types with estimated monetary values of the "significant economic development benefits," that the Project would deliver to local economies in Vernon County.
16. Documentation explaining MISO's calculation of a net monetary benefit for Wisconsin residential electric customers if the estimated cost of Tranche 2.1 transmission and power plant additions, per ratepayer, is around \$27.50 per month while, potentially, returning only \$10 to \$18, per ratepayer, in value per month.
17. Documentation from MISO Tranche 2.1 planning estimating the percentage of electrical power assumed to be provided from distributed solar and distributed battery storage resources in years 1, 10 and 20 under all planning futures.
18. A list with names and locations of 765 kV transmission projects that Transource Energy has previously constructed outside of Wisconsin.
19. A list with names and locations of 765 kV transmission projects that Transource Energy is currently proposing or constructing outside of Wisconsin.
20. Upon completion and energizing of "BECI," an estimate of the percentage of the electric power on an annual basis that would be consumed through the connection created at the Columbia substation for all futures in Tranche 2.1.

21. Vegetation management documentation and sample contracts describing practices that have been utilized by Transource Energy for previous 765 kV lines including techniques used to prevent soil erosion on steep grades.
22. If not specified in above documentation, documentation describing no-spray and other easement vegetation management accommodations that would be offered for organic farming and other conservation activities such as prairie and forest restoration.
23. Documentation describing practices that have been utilized by Transource Energy for previously constructed 765 kV lines to address the presence of karst topology.
24. Documentation describing construction practices that Transource or its subcontractors have used in prior 765 kV projects to minimize damage to wetland habitats.
25. Documentation of siting and other accommodations that Transource Energy has made in prior constructions to minimize noise and light pollution associated with corona discharge from a 765 kV transmission line under high humidity and high transmission load conditions;
26. Measurement documentation from an existing 765 kV transmission line that Transource Energy or assigned subcontractors have constructed accounting for average Sound Pressure Levels [Leq, dB(A)] at specified distances from the center line (feet), under specified humidity/precipitation conditions (relative humidity %) and at specified transmission loads (megawatts);
27. Documentation from a proposed or existing 765 kV transmission line that Transource Energy or assigned subcontractors have made accounting for magnetic field strength readings (in mG) at specified distances from the center line (in feet) and at specified transmission loads (megawatts).
28. Documentation of all siting and other accommodations that Transource Energy or assigned subcontractors have made to reduce waterfowl, raptor, grassland bird and songbird collisions with a 765 kV transmission line.
29. Documentation of all siting and other accommodations that Transource Energy or assigned subcontractors have made to reduce risk of arching from a 765 kV transmission line igniting fires in grasslands and forests.

Submitted to the County Board for consideration this 4th day of March 2026

_____ Aye 4 Nay 0 Absent 1 Abstain 0 .
Alycann Taylor, General Government Committee Chair

RESOLUTION 2026-19
RESOLUTION OPPOSING THE PROPOSED 765KV HIGH-VOLTAGE TRANSMISSION LINE
THROUGH VERNON COUNTY AND THE DRIFTLESS AREA

WHEREAS, Vernon County lies within the nationally recognized Driftless Area, a uniquely fragile landscape defined by steep ridges, cold-water trout streams, karst geology, and highly erodible soils that are particularly vulnerable to large-scale infrastructure disturbance; and

WHEREAS, The proposed high-voltage transmission line would require extensive clearing, construction corridors, blasting, and long-term maintenance that would fragment wildlife habitat, disrupt agricultural lands, and permanently alter the natural character of the region; and

WHEREAS, Vernon County's agricultural economy depends on productive farmland, livestock operations, and regenerative farming systems that could be adversely affected by land fragmentation, easement restrictions, soil disruption, and concerns regarding electromagnetic field (EMF) exposure to livestock; and

WHEREAS, Vernon County is home to one of the largest Amish communities in Wisconsin, whose farms and homesteads lie within the proposed corridor and whose religious practices do not utilize electricity, and the placement of a high-voltage transmission line across their properties would impose infrastructure from which they receive no benefit while restricting land use and disrupting traditional agricultural operations; and

WHEREAS, Property owners face potential declines in land value and long-term uncertainty, and Vernon County's tourism economy—driven by its scenic beauty, trout streams, outdoor recreation, and rural character—would be negatively affected; and

WHEREAS, Vernon County is currently engaged in watershed and dam decommissioning efforts within the Coon Creek and West Fork watersheds, and the cumulative impact of additional large-scale infrastructure development must be carefully considered.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED,

That the Vernon County Board of Supervisors formally and unequivocally opposes the proposed high-voltage transmission line within Vernon County and the Driftless Area, finding that this region is not suitable for such development and that the project poses substantial risks to public health, safety, and welfare, as well as to environmental integrity, agricultural viability, economic stability, and cultural resources.

(Brought forward by Supervisor Mary Henry)

Submitted to the County Board for consideration this 4th day of March 2026

_____ Aye 6 Nay 0 Absent 0 Abstain 0 .

Will Bietlich, Conservation and Education Committee Chair

RESOLUTION #2026-20

2026 BUDGET AMENDMENT

2025 CAPITAL BALANCE CARRYOVER REQUEST – HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

WHEREAS, certain capital equipment has been ordered but not received yet, and the highway department requests that these 2025 capital budget funds carry-over to the 2026 budget; now therefore be it,

RESOLVED upon recommendation of the *Finance Committee*, the Vernon County Board of Supervisors approves amending the 2026 Budget to carry over \$55,730.00 from the 2025 highway department capital expenditure budget.

Submitted to the County Board for consideration this 17th day of March 2026

_____ Aye 5 Nay 0 Absent 0 Abstain 0 .

Kay Stanek, Finance Committee Committee Chair

RESOLUTION #2026-21

ESTABLISH THE ELECTED OFFICIAL'S COMPENSATION FOR THE 2027-2030 TERM

BEGINNING IN JANUARY OF 2027

WHEREAS, Wis Stats. Sec. 59.22 requires that the compensation to be paid an elected official shall be established prior to the earliest time for filing nomination papers for any elective office to be voted on in the County; and

WHEREAS, as to office(s) elected in November of 2026, the date is April 15, 2026; and

WHEREAS, the General Government Committee has reviewed the current salaries of the County Sheriff, Clerk of Courts, and County Coroner, and has compared neighboring County's salary data, and Counties of similar size and population, and has compared these salaries to other department heads in Vernon County; and

WHEREAS, the General Government Committee is recommending the 2027 salary for County Sheriff be set at \$102,000.00, and the 2027 salary for Clerk of Courts be set at \$76,385.00, and the 2027 salary for County Coroner be set at \$24,900.00; with a 3% increase each year for years 2028, and a 2% increase for each year for years 2029 and 2030; now therefore be it,

	2027	2028	2029	2030
County Sheriff	102,000	105,060	107,161	109,304
County Coroner	24,900	25,647	26,160	26,683
Clerk of Courts	76,385	78,676	80,249	81,854

RESOLVED the Vernon County Board of Supervisors approves salaries for the County Sheriff, County Coroner, and Clerk of Courts, as set forth above, and be it

RESOLVED FURTHER the County Sheriff, County Coroner, and Clerk of Courts, shall be included and subject to the same provisions of the fringe benefit programs as are all Vernon County Employees, except as otherwise required by State Law. Submitted to the County Board for consideration on this 4th day of March, 2026.

_____ Aye 4 Nay 0 Absent 1 Abstain 0 .

Alycann Taylor, General Government Committee Chair

RESOLUTION #2026-22

SUPPORT THE STATE OF WISCONSIN ESTABLISHING A MEMBERSHIP WITH THE MULTI-STATE INFORMATION SHARING AND ANALYSIS CENTER (MS-ISAC)

WHEREAS, the Multi-State Information Sharing and Analysis Center (MS-ISAC) provides vital cybersecurity services, including 24/7 threat monitoring and incident response, to more than 18,000 state, local, tribal, and territorial (SLTT) government organizations supporting our nation's critical infrastructure including public hospitals, public utilities, K-12 school, and law enforcement; and

WHEREAS, Vernon County operates with limited financial and staffing resources, and while the County recognizes the critical importance of cybersecurity protections, it cannot sustainably maintain the full cost of these services long-term without assistance, making statewide participation in MS-ISAC an essential and cost-effective solution to ensure continued protection of county systems and services; and

WHEREAS, without MS-ISAC services, government organizations are increasingly vulnerable to cyber-attacks by foreign adversaries; and

WHEREAS, cybersecurity threats are increasingly targeting local governments across the nation, placing counties, municipalities, schools, and critical public services at risk of ransomware attacks, data breaches, and service disruptions; and

WHEREAS, recent federal funding cuts to MS-ISAC, have significantly weakened the nation's defense against cyber threats; and

WHEREAS, Vernon County joined MS-ISAC under the Single Organization Membership option on September 1, 2025, when funding ended, to continue the services Vernon County needed to protect its infrastructure and data; and

WHEREAS, MS-ISAC has said the fees paid by Vernon County will be refunded or applied to other add-on services should Wisconsin obtain membership with MS-ISAC in the future.

NOW, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Vernon County Board of Supervisors hereby requests that the State of Wisconsin enter into a statewide membership, covering all agencies and municipalities, allowing all to benefit from this service,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Vernon County Clerk is hereby authorized to send a copy of this Resolution to the Governor of the State of Wisconsin, members of the State Senate, members of the State Assembly, all Wisconsin Counties, and the Wisconsin Counties Association, for their consideration.

_____ Aye 4 Nay 0 Absent 1 Abstain 0 .

Alycann Taylor, Chair, General Government Committee

===== END OF THE MINUTES =====