

# **SOUTH DAKOTA STATE RAILROAD BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

**Wednesday, November 19, 2025 at 11:00 a.m. CST**

**Becker-Hansen Building/Commission Room – 700 East Broadway Avenue, Pierre, SD**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Jeff Burket, Chairman  
Jack Nelson  
Scott Lockwood  
Greg Carmon

**MEMBER PRESENT  
VIA COFERENCE CALL:** Ralph Schmidt

**DOT STAFF PRESENT:** Karla Engle, Paul Coppock, Kellie Beck, Jack Dokken, Misty Siedschlaw,  
Perry Griffith, Rocky Matson and Kari Kroll

**DOT STAFF PRESENT  
VIA CONFERENCE CALL:** Joel Jundt

**OTHER PRESENT:** Mike Lauritsen– Mitchell Area Development Corporation and Thomas  
Kersting – South Dakota Soybean Processors/High Plains Processing, LLC  
(HP)

**OTHERS PRESENT  
VIA CONFERENCE CALL:** Shellee Currier - Ringneck & Western Railroad, LLC (RWRR); Ross Lane –  
Genessee & Western Railroad Service, Inc. (G&W); Clark Meyer – Ellis &  
Eastern; Kacee Regan – LifeQuest; Brian Loken – LifeQuest; Mikayla  
Sanborn– LifeQuest; Don Petersen – LifeQuest; Dan Bilka – All Aboard;  
and Dick Huff

Chairman Jeff Burket called the meeting of the South Dakota State Railroad Board (the “Board”) to  
order at 11:01 a.m. CT. A roll call was taken, and a quorum was determined.

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Burket opened the floor to the Board members to disclose potential conflicts of interest and to present  
requests for waiver pursuant to the South Dakota Codified Law (SDCL) chapter 3 – 23.

Commissioner Greg Carmon reminded the Board that he has a previously disclosed conflict of interest  
regarding the High Plains Processing, LLC (HPP) loan request and will recuse himself for that item.

No other conflicts of interest were disclosed, and no waivers were requested.

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Burket opened the floor to nominations for the election of officers.

Burket turned the gavel over to Vice-chairman Jack Nelson for the election of the Chair

Greg Carmon nominated Jeff Burket as Chair of the Board. There were no other nominations.

A vote was taken on the election of Burket as Chair. All present voted aye by roll call vote, except Burket who abstained. Burket was elected Chair.

Burket asked for nomination for Vice-chair.

Scott Lockwood nominated Jack Nelson as Vice-chair of the Board. There were no other nominations.

A vote was taken on the election of Nelson as Vice-chair. All present voted aye by roll call vote, except Nelson who abstained. Nelson was elected Vice-chair.

Greg Carmon nominated Scott Lockwood as Secretary/Treasurer. There were no other nominations.

A vote was taken on the election of Lockwood as Secretary/Treasurer. All present voted aye by roll call vote, except Lockwood who abstained. Lockwood was elected Secretary/Treasurer.

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Burket asked for a motion to approve the September 17 ,2025 Board meeting minutes.

Dick Huff asked that Sunflower Railroad be corrected to Sunflour Railroad for Suzan Caylen on page one "OTHERS PRESENT VIA CONFERNCECALL."

A MOTION WAS MADE by Carmon and seconded by Nelson to approve the September 17, 2025 Board meeting minutes with the noted edit. All present voted aye by roll call vote. The motion carried.

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Karla Engle, Office of Legal Counsel, presented for Board consideration a request to amend the legal services agreement with Slover and Loftus, LLP to extend the contract term through December 31, 2026 and increase the maximum amount that may be expended by the Department of Transportation (the "Department") by \$100,000.

A MOTION WAS MADE by Lockwood and seconded by Carmon to authorize the Department Secretary, or his designee, to execute all documents necessary to amend the agreement to extend the contract term through December 31, 2026 and increase the maximum amount that may be expended by the Department by \$100,000. All present voted aye by voice vote. The motion carried.

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Burket opened the floor to public input.

No members of the public addressed the Board or offered input.

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Secretary Jundt presented to the Board the following items in his Secretary's Report:

- **Federal:** A continued resolution was signed for funding until January.
- **State:** the Department continues to work with Governor Rhoden in regard to possible agency bills for the 2026 Legislative Session. He reminded the Board that the governor will give his budget address on Tuesday, December 2, 2026.
- **Napa to Platte Rail Line:** The Department amended the Invitation for Proposals (IFP) to clarify that that a lease proposal may include any segment contiguous to the Napa to Tyndall segment of state-owned line.
- **Passenger Rail Study by Federal Railroad Administration (FRA):** a handout was shared of the Executive Summary of the Amtrak Study. Jundt asked the Board to review the information and let him know if the Board would like a presentation by the FRA in regard to the study.

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Jundt presented for Board approval the proposed 2026 meeting dates. All meeting proposed meeting dates are the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of the month at 11 a.m. CT/ 10 a.m. MT.

A MOTION WAS MADE by Carmon and seconded by Nelson to approve the 2026 meeting dates as proposed. All present voted aye by roll call vote. The motion carried.

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Greg Carmon moved to the gallery at 11:14 a.m. and recused himself from the discussion and vote.

Jack Dokken, Program Manager of the Office of Air, Rail & Transit, presented for Board consideration a request to amend the loan to Davison Regional Railroad Authority that benefits the High Plains Processing, LLC. The amendment would increase the loan amount by \$5,710,700 to cover the remaining eligible rail infrastructure expenses associated with the project. The current remaining loan terms, including 2% annual interest, a 15-year amortization and a balloon payment due after 7 years will be unchanged.

Mike Lauritsen from Mitchel Area Development and Thomas Kersting from High Plains Processing, LLC addressed the Board and answered questions.

A MOTION WAS MADE by Lockwood and seconded by Nelson to amend the loan agreement with Davison Regional Railroad Authority to increase the loan amount an additional \$5,710,700. All present voted aye by roll call vote. The motion carried.

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Dokken presented for Board consideration a request from LifeQuest in Mitchell to purchase a parcel of property owned by the Department that adjoins the company's property. Dokken explained that the

Department was unaware of the ownership of this land and recommended sale to LifeQuest at the fair market value, following a certified property survey and an independent appraisal to be paid for by LifeQuest.

A MOTION WAS MADE by Lockwood and seconded by Schmidt to approve the sale of the parcel to LifeQuest based on the appraised value, with a certified property survey and an independent appraisal to be paid for by LifeQuest. All present voted aye by roll call vote. The motion carried.

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Dokken presented for Board consideration a request to issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) for an updated State Rail Plan with a budget not to exceed \$350,000. He shared that FRA requires states to submit an updated rail plan for approval every four years. Applicants for certain federal rail funding programs must have an approved plan in place to remain eligible.

A MOTION WAS MADE by Lockwood and seconded by Schmidt to authorize the Department Secretary, or his designee, to issue an RFP and execute an agreement with the selected consultant in the amount not to exceed \$350,000 for the development of a comprehensive State Rail Plan. All present voted aye by roll call vote. The motion carried.

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Burket asked for a motion for the Board to enter into executive session.

A MOTION WAS MADE by Carmon and seconded by Nelson to enter into executive session pursuant to SDCL 1-25-2(3) for the purpose of consulting with legal counsel and reviewing communications from legal counsel about proposed or pending litigation or contractual matters. All present voted aye by voice vote. The motion carried.

Executive session began at 11:46 a.m. CT

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Executive session ended at 12:21 p.m. CT

With no further business to come before the Board, Burket declared the meeting adjourned at 12:22 p.m. CT.