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The Groton Independent

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Groton School Board discusses next steps for multi-million dollar middle/high school construction project

By Elizabeth Varin

The Groton Area School Board continued discussions Monday night on a proposed middle/high school building project and potential bond election, with the district working toward putting a proposal before voters in November.

The board, which was missing three members, held a relatively brief meeting but continued its discussion of the district's long-range facilities plans and the steps needed to potentially move forward with a bond election.

Superintendent Joe Schwan reviewed a timeline of possible public meetings and election deadlines leading up to the November ballot. The next step for taking the issue before voters will take place at a special meeting, scheduled for 6 p.m. Aug. 18.

The board will receive more information about the project and potential financing. A representative from Colliers Securities is expected to provide an update on the bond market and payment information, while a representative from construction manager Hausmann Construction will provide more detailed cost estimates.

The district has been working on a long-range facilities master plan since fall 2025, although concerns about the condition and needs of the middle/high school have been discussed for years. Some sections of the building are nearly 100 years old and have continued to deteriorate.

The overall master plan presented to the board in April consists of three phases and carries an estimated total cost of \$27 million.

Phase 1 would include construction of a two-story addition east of the middle/high school office to provide additional core academic classrooms. A portion of the high school known as the 1934 addition, located on the southern side of the building, would then be demolished.

Phase 2 would involve restructuring the southern parking lot, constructing a commons area and cafeteria east of the old gym and adding a wing on the southern portion of the building for agriculture and family and consumer sciences classrooms.

Phase 3 would include renovations to the old gym, career and technical education shop space, technology and science classrooms, as well as renovations to a science lab and music/choir room. Re-roofing work also is included in the third phase.

The estimated \$27 million cost for the three-phase master plan would be beyond what the district could cover through its capital outlay fund alone.

In addition to the project discussion, the board received an update on staffing heading into the new school year.

Superintendent Joe Schwan told the board about possible changes to the seventh through ninth grade language arts teacher position. If the position only taught at the middle school level, it would be easier to find qualified applicants as the current position requires middle school and high school certification.

There's also been interest from an individual in the agriculture teacher position, though Schwan didn't mention specific names.

The board made some personnel decisions Monday, approving fall sports volunteer coaches and hiring two bus drivers.

Kelsey Roberts and Quintin Biermann have been volunteering for a few years with the boys' soccer and football teams respectively. A new face on the volleyball court will be Josi Stevens, who will work with the volleyball team as a volunteer coach.

The board also approved hiring Jackson Bahr and Brandon Clocksene as bus drivers.



Pictured are Landyn, Tanya, Jackson and Dana Dargatz. (Courtesy photo)

Dargatz makes transition from Aberdeen to Groton

by Dorene Nelson

Tanya Dargatz is the new 7th and 8th grade math teacher in Groton. "I've been teaching sixth grade math at Holgate in Aberdeen for twenty-two years," Dargatz explained, "with a total of twenty-three years with the district."

"In addition to teaching 6th grade math, I have also coached eighth grade girls' basketball, middle school cross country, and varsity and middle school track," she listed. "I've also been an advisor for Student Senate and MathCounts."

"I grew up on a farm north of Aberdeen, attended the public schools there, and attended NSU for both undergraduate and graduate programs," Dargatz listed.

"Our family now lives closer to Aberdeen where my husband, Dana, along with our two sons, ages 15 and 12, farm and raise black Angus cattle. In addition to farming and raising cattle, my husband is also a crop adjuster, and our sons enjoy spending their time in sports," she said.

Dargatz enjoyed her time working for the Aberdeen District but has decided it was time to make a change, to seek out new growth, and find new opportunities. She felt it was the right time to grasp a new opportunity and become a math teacher here in Groton.

"I appreciate how welcoming everyone has been in the Groton community, and I look forward to this opportunity to serve," she said.

City Hall gets a summer refresh



Nick Groebelinghoff, Donavan Block, Aaron Severson and Gavin Englund are busily removing the rock from the east side of the building.



Aaron Severson, Nick Groebelinghoff (in back), Alex Abeln and Gavin Englund are removing rock from the north side of the building.

Groton City Hall has been getting a fresh look inside and out this summer as several improvement projects have been completed around the building.

One of the larger projects involved a thorough cleaning of the ventilation system inside City Hall. Over the years, dust and debris can accumulate within ventilation ductwork, so the cleaning was undertaken as part of maintaining the building and improving the overall indoor environment for employees and visitors.

Work has also been taking place on the exterior of City Hall. The building received a fresh coat of paint, helping brighten its appearance and protect the exterior from the elements.

Meanwhile, Groton's summer crew has been busy improving the landscaping surrounding the building. The landscaping work is helping give the City Hall grounds a cleaner, more attractive appearance while complementing the freshly painted exterior.

Together, the projects represent a general summer cleanup and upgrade of one of the community's most visible public buildings.

City Hall is often one of the first places residents and visitors associate with the community, and the improvements are helping make sure the building and grounds remain both functional and welcoming.



We’ve finally reached the end of my confidence rankings, and if you’ve been following along, you already know what’s coming this week. The safety position has been looming at the bottom of this list for a while now, and it officially lands at number one. With Harrison Smith retiring and no obvious replacement waiting in the wings, there are more questions here than at any other position on the roster. Let’s take a look at the Vikings’ biggest question mark heading into 2026.

Coming in at number 1: safety
Confidence level: 25%

Current projected starter: Joshua Metellus
Fighting for the other starting spot: Jamal Adams, Theo Jackson, Jakobe Thomas, and Jay Ward
Competing for a roster or practice squad spot: Kahlef Hailassie, Jacob Thomas, and Tavierre Thomas
Why I’m confident: Brian Flores.
One of the best defensive coordinators in the NFL, Flores is able to design schemes to cover any weakness on the defense while putting his players in position to flourish. However, figuring out a game plan for the safety position might be his biggest challenge yet.
Another reason for optimism is Joshua Metellus, the only player in the group who has locked up a starting spot. He’s the epitome of the “Jack of all trades” moniker and has the ability to line up at every position on defense.
Cause for concern: Everything else.
The retirement of Harrison Smith has left a glaring hole in the secondary, and he will be sorely missed. Despite his age, the six-time Pro Bowler still found ways to impact the game last season. His football IQ was off the charts, and he was the vocal leader of the entire defense.
The battle for the other starting spot is between four players (listed in alphabetical order). Jamal Adams has the best credentials out of the four, but he’s not the same player he was when he was in Seattle. He was actually signed to play linebacker here but has since switched to safety. Theo Jackson is entering his fifth season in the NFL and was the primary backup last season, playing nearly 50% of the defensive snaps. Jakobe Thomas is a third-round rookie, so his potential is unknown at this point. Jay Ward is entering his fourth year in the league and played about 23% of the defensive snaps last season.
While it’s possible one of these players steps up and snatches the role, none of the players I just mentioned fill me with optimism.
Potential upgrades: Harrison Smith, Donovan Wilson, and Jabrill Peppers are all free agents

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who could come in and likely start next to Metellus. And yeah, I’m including the Hitman here because I refuse to believe he’s actually retired.

Training camp news and notes
Training camp just started, and all eyes are on the Vikings’ QB competition. So far Kyler Murray has gotten the majority of the first-team snaps, while J.J. McCarthy has

been running with the backups. While head coach Kevin O’Connell hasn’t officially named a starter yet, I think it’s pretty clear Murray is the favorite to win the job.

Second-year wide receiver Tai Felton has received rave reviews and seems to have taken a big step after a rookie season where he was only on the field for 46 snaps. If he can keep this up, the Vikings will have an embarrassment of riches at the WR position.

Rookie Charles Demmings is another player who has been turning heads at training camp. Coming from Stephen F. Austin State, most people (me included) assumed he would need a few years to make an impact on the field. Apparently I was wrong.

Looking ahead
The Vikings’ first preseason game, a noon kickoff against the New York Giants, will be Saturday, August 15, so the next article you read here will be a recap of an actual game. I, for one, can’t wait. Skol!

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King Crossword

ACROSS

1 Sheepish "Hello!"

4 Out of control

8 Regretted

12 U.S. Navy vessel

13 — Crunch (breakfast cereal)

14 Singer Guthrie

15 Mel of baseball

16 Manitoba tribe

17 The same

18 Cold-hardy salad veggie

21 Whatever amount

22 Green shade

23 Kick out

26 Send electronically

27 Extinct bird

30 Sunrise direction

31 Future flower

32 Border on

33 Topsy

34 A Bobbsey twin

35 Dish

36 Cat's coat

37 Three, in Rome

38 Young person, metaphorically

45 Mideast airline

46 Bern's river

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48

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47 Actress Longoria

48 Lighten

49 Wall St. debuts

50 Profit

51 Times Sq. force

52 Salamander

53 Hosp. areas

DOWN

1 Gust

2 Wine region

3 Envelope abbr.

4 Emphasize

5 Tie the knot

6 Autobahn auto

7 Skateboarder's protection

8 Indian yogurt dish

9 Language of Pakistan

10 Power co. supply

11 Stadium top

19 Diplomacy

20 — -Mex cuisine

23 Long, skinny fish

24 — alai

25 Proposal fig.

26 Gaiety

27 CEO's degree, often

28 Chic no more

29 Chowd down

31 Shopper's quest

32 Novelist Waugh

34 Mother Teresa, for one

35 Mass celebrant

36 Mailed a tax return

37 Toss

38 Beheld

39 Stage show

40 Grate

41 Superhero's garment

42 Vegas game

43 Always

44 D.C. baseball team

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THANK YOU!

Thank you to the Groton Fire & Rescue, Groton EMS, ACP, and all the community members who assisted with our fire incident last week.

Your commitment to serving our community was evident from the moment you all came through the doors. We are grateful for the care, compassion, and courage you all showed.

With sincere gratitude,

The residents, staff, and leadership of Avantara Groton



That high utility bill may be telling July’s story

If you opened your latest utility bill and your first reaction was, “Wow, what happened?” you probably aren’t alone. I’ve heard from a number of people who have commented about how high their utility bills are this month. When you first look at the bill, it is easy to wonder whether something is wrong.

But before blaming the meter, the electric rate or wondering if something in the house suddenly started using a lot more electricity, it might be worth looking at what Mother Nature was doing during the billing period. Sometimes we forget that the utility bill we receive today is really a history lesson. It doesn’t necessarily tell us what we are doing right now. It tells us what we were doing during the month that just ended. And July was a hot and humid one.

According to the weather records I keep here in Groton, the average temperature for July was 76.6 degrees. You have to go all the way back to July 2012 to find a July that warm.

The average humidity during July was 74 percent. Compare that with June, when the average temperature was only 69 degrees and the average humidity was 68 percent. In one month, the average temperature jumped 7.6 degrees and the average humidity increased by six percentage points. That combination can make a noticeable difference in how much an air conditioner runs.

We tend to think of an air conditioner as simply cooling the air, but it also removes moisture. When warm, humid air passes over the cold evaporator coil, moisture condenses out of the air and drains away.

So during a hot, humid month, the air conditioner is doing two jobs — lowering the temperature and removing moisture.

That usually means longer run times. And longer run times mean more kilowatt-hours.

The warm nights also play a role. When temperatures stay elevated overnight, homes don’t get as much of a chance to cool naturally. The air conditioner may continue cycling well into the evening and overnight.

Humidity adds another layer to that. A 75-degree day with low humidity can feel comfortable. Put a lot of moisture in the air at that same temperature and it can feel much warmer.

That can lead people to lower the thermostat another degree or two just to feel comfortable, which adds even more air-conditioning use. But the air conditioner isn’t the only weather-related electrical load that has been busy this summer.

There is also the sump pump. With the high water table around the area, many sump pumps have been running much more often than normal.

A sump pump is one of those appliances we generally don’t think much about. It sits in the basement, turns on when the water reaches a certain level and shuts off when the pit has been pumped down.

Under normal conditions, it may run only occasionally.

But when the ground is saturated and groundwater continues flowing into the sump pit, the pump may cycle over and over again, day and night.

Weekly SUDOKU

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Weekly SUDOKU

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Place a number in the empty boxes in such a way that each row across, each column down and each small 9-box square contains all of the numbers from one to nine.

DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ♦♦♦

♦ Moderate ♦♦ Challenging
♦♦♦ HOO BOY!

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Each cycle may not use a tremendous amount of electricity by itself, but repeated cycles over days and weeks begin to add up. And because the sump pump often operates quietly in the basement, it is easy to forget that it is using electricity every time it runs. So this summer we’ve had two weather-related electrical loads working harder than normal. Above ground, the heat and humidity have kept air conditioners busy. Below ground, the high water table has kept sump pumps busy. And both are being recorded by the same electric meter. Of course, there can be plenty of other reasons why one household uses more electricity than another. The size and efficiency of the air conditioner, insulation, windows, thermostat settings, dehumidifiers, water heaters, additional appliances and changes in household activity all make a difference. The same goes for sump pumps. One home may have very little groundwater entering the basement while another may have a pump cycling constantly. So we can’t say that every increase in a utility bill is caused by the weather. But when many people around the community are seeing higher bills at roughly the same time, it makes sense to look at the conditions everyone has been experiencing. July gave us the warmest average temperature we’ve had for that month since 2012, along with high humidity and a high water table. That is a combination that can keep electrical equipment running a lot longer than we realize. Maybe that’s the easiest way to look at this month’s utility bill. It isn’t just a number. It’s a record of what your house had to deal with during July. Heat above us. Humidity around us. Water beneath us. And electrical equipment working to keep all three under control.

Mohs Surgery Available in Aberdeen

Bo Wang, MD PhD, double board-certified dermatologist and Mohs surgeon, offers specialized treatment for common skin cancers including basal cell carcinoma and squamous cell carcinoma. Mohs surgery provides among the highest cure rates available by examining the cancer margins microscopically during the procedure, allowing complete removal while preserving as much healthy tissue as possible. Trust Dr. Wang with expert skin cancer care close to home in Aberdeen.



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Dear EarthTalk: What is the Xerces Society’s “Leave the Leaves” campaign all about and how many sites participate?

–Randy J., Newark, NJ

The Xerces Society’s “Leave the Leaves” campaign asks homeowners, grounds crews, municipalities and campuses to rethink the annual ritual of removing every fallen leaf and dead plant stem. What looks like untidy yard debris can be essential winter habitat for insects and other invertebrates.

Many butterflies, moths and bees overwinter close to where they spent the growing season. Fritillary and woolly bear caterpillars shelter in leaf litter; luna moths and swallowtails disguise cocoons or chrysalises as dead leaves; and mated bumble bee queens burrow only an inch or two into soil, where leaves provide insulation. About 30 percent of native bees nest in tunnels and may use hollow stems, dead wood or brush piles.

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By leaving leaves and organic debris on the ground, we are promoting biodiversity and welcoming backyard wildlife. Credit: Roddy Scheer.

The advice is not to abandon every lawn. Xerces recommends leaving leaves where practical or raking them intact into garden beds, beneath trees or into designated piles. Leaves can suppress weeds, retain moisture and return nutrients as they decompose. The group discourages shredding because mowers can destroy insects, eggs and cocoons inside the leaves, and recommends delaying spring cleanup until overwintering wildlife has emerged.

“It not only needs leaves, it looks like a leaf,” says Xerces pollinator ecologist Ray Moranz of the goatweed leafwing butterfly, whose camouflage depends on leaf litter.

How many sites participate is harder to answer than the slogan suggests. Leave the Leaves is an open public-education effort promoted through social media, yard signs and downloadable materials; Xerces publishes no registration total for every household, park or institution following it. Its Bee City USA and Bee Campus USA network is the campaign’s most identifiable distribution system. The latest completed public tally lists 426 affiliates at the end of 2024—224 cities and 202 campuses—but that figure represents affiliates able to use the campaign kit, not proof that every one ran a Leave the Leaves activity. The 2025 affiliate report is scheduled for September 2026.

Real-world adopters demonstrate the idea’s flexibility. UC Davis encouraged residents to preserve leaf litter through its Bee Campus USA affiliation. Greensboro, North Carolina, launched a pledge program offering Leave the Leaves yard signs to residents and businesses. Raleigh advises residents to rake leaves into beds, create a decomposition pile or leave them where they fall, while keeping heavy layers off turf and storm drains.

Readers can participate by preserving whole leaves in low-traffic garden areas, retaining some hollow stems and brush, keeping streets and drains clear, and explaining the intentionally wildlife-friendly landscape to neighbors.

August 4, 2026
The Groton City Council met on the above date at 7:00pm at 120 N Main Street for their first monthly meeting with the following members present: Bahr, Voss-Severson, Shilhanek, Cutler, and Mayor Hanlon presiding. Also present were Attorney Chad Locken, Douglas Heinrich, Todd Gay, Elizabeth Varin, Ted Dickey, Jarod Fliehs, Darrell Hillestad, and the 14U Legion baseball team (Matt Locke, Chris Ehresmann, Josh Larson, Rylan Blackwood, Hank Hill, Carter Boerger, Bentley Ehresmann, Mason Locke, Gavin Hanten, Knox Mulder, Owen Tewksbury, Trayce Schelle, Tucker Leicht, Kyson Kucker, Keegan Kucker, Graham Rose, Hudson Eichler, Easton Larson, & Asher Zimmerman).

Moved by Shilhanek and seconded by Cutler to approve the agenda with no additions or changes. All members present voted aye.

Public comments were welcomed pursuant to SDCL 1-25-1, but none were received.

Matt Locke provided a recap of the 14U Legion state tournament and thanked the city for covering the costs of lodging and supporting the team.

The 14U Legion baseball team exited the meeting.

Moved by Shilhanek and seconded by Bahr to begin accepting statements of qualifications from qualified architectural or engineering firms for the construction of a tornado safe room at the Groton City park with the request amended to have proposals include lead architect or lead engineer within listing of key personnel. Proposals are due by September 1, 2026, at 3pm. All members present voted aye.

Moved by Voss-Severson and seconded by Cutler to appoint Mayor Hanlon, Councilperson Bahr, and Councilperson Shilhanek to the review committee for the statements of qualifications for the tornado safe room at the Groton City Park. All members present voted aye.

Dickey exited the meeting. Department reports were reviewed and discussed.

Discussion took place regarding the bleachers at the baseball complex. Discussion also took place regarding sidewalks at the complex.

Fliehs exited the meeting. Discussion took place regarding IT management for the city. A formal agreement will be presented to council for review and potential approval at the next meeting.

The minutes from the previous meeting were approved on a motion by Bahr and seconded by Voss-Severson. All members present voted aye.

Moved by Cutler and seconded by Voss-Severson to authorize the following bills for payment. All members present voted aye.

Payroll, \$51,795.26, Employee salaries; Executive, \$693.14, ; Administrative, \$5,397.89, ; Public Safety, \$9,131.43, ; Public Works, \$17,641.45, ; Culture & Recreation, \$18,931.35, ; SD Secretary of State, \$30.00, Notary Public filing fee for April Abeln; Ryan & Carrie Olson, \$150.00, Heartland Energy standard water heater rebate; Anita Lowary, \$1,300.00, Heartland

Energy lifetime warranty and city water heater rebate ; SD Law Enforcement Training, \$40.00, Certification IDs (x4) - Police Dept.; Dacotah Bank, \$3,800.63, Withholding/SS/Medicare; Aflac, \$456.96, Employee insurance; Colonial Life, \$69.40, Employee insurance; Health Pool of SD, \$16,687.14, Employee insurance; Reliance Standard Life Insurance, \$85.60, Employee insurance; Dacotah Bank, \$11,036.17, Withholding/SS/Medicare; Dwight Zerr, \$599.92, Med flex - final for 2026; SD Supplemental Retirement, \$740.00, Supplemental retirement; Dollar General, \$313.70, Cleaning supplies, bottled water, garbage bags, litter, bandages, toilet paper, paper towels, tissues, food and drinks for resale - Multiple Depts.; 3E Electrical Engineering, \$451.35, Annual generator service - PD generator; NW Energy, \$1,698.79, Natural gas service - Swimming Pool & PD Generator; J's Superior Cleaning, \$225.00, Commercial cleaning services - PD/City Hall; Locators & Supplies, Inc., \$142.62, Marking paint - Water/Sewer Dept.; Irby, Inc., \$931.50, LED light, meter seals, strap hoist - Electric Dept.; Galls, LLC, \$551.43, PD uniform purchases; Farmers Union Co-op Assoc., \$560.07, Fuel purchases - Parks/Cemetery; Allied Climate Professionals, LLC, \$23,393.45, HVAC/plumbing for baseball concessions project; Douglas Heinrich, \$299.68, Employee mileage/meal reimbursement - Heartland Energy Summer Conference in Sioux Falls; Cole Papers, Inc., \$111.53, Garbage bags and paper towels - Baseball; Verizon Wireless, \$40.01, Wireless router - Rubble Site; Vermeer High Plains, \$327.26, Parts for vacuum trailer - Electric Dept.; Farm Tire Service, LLC, \$545.61, Tire for dump truck - Street Dept.; Schwan Welding, \$160.00, 80' of steel rods; Aaron Severson, \$1,595.83, 2026 Jr. Legion coach mileage reimbursement; VESTIS, \$70.43, Rug rent - City Hall; Storybook Land Theatre, \$916.00, Pete the Cat performance - paid for by donations; Associated Supply Co, Inc., \$329.90, Cord for Dolphin pool cleaner - Swimming Pool; S&S Lumber Co., \$513.16, Tape, corner irons, plywood, silicone, nuts, redi-rod, anchors, plexiglass, rollers, roller covers, coupler, thinner, basketball nets, keys cut, e-clips, liners, mouse traps, field marker, gloves, trimmer line, sea foam - Multiple Depts.; Greg's Repair, \$866.87, (2) tires and battery - Police Dept.; Northern Electric Coop, \$1,189.29, Service call for storm assistance - Electric Dept.; Ken's Fair Foods, \$2,220.72, Fuel purchases, food for resale - Baseball/Pool Concessions; Coca-Cola Bottling Co., \$47.20, Drinks for resale - Pool Concessions; AutoZone, \$515.13, Cabin air filter, exhaust manifold gasket, thermostat, battery, oil filters, spindle nut, fuel filters - Multiple Depts; Varin exited the meeting.

Moved by Cutler and seconded by Voss-Severson to adjourn into executive session for personnel and legal matters 1-25-2 (1) & (3) at 7:30pm. All members present voted aye. Council reconvened into regular session at 9:06pm.

Moved by Voss-Severson and seconded by Babcock to adjourn the meeting at 9:06pm. All members present voted aye.

Scott Hanlon, Mayor
Douglas Heinrich, Finance Officer

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Anderson named Coach of the Year

From the South Dakota High School Coaches Association Facebook Page

The South Dakota High School Coaches Association is proud to recognize Katie Anderson as the 2026 Boys' Athletic Assistant Coach of the Year!

For 19 years, Katie has been a dedicated coach at Aberdeen Central, helping lead the Golden Eagles in cross country and track & field while making a lasting impact on countless student-athletes.

Throughout her coaching career, Katie has helped guide teams to multiple ESD Championships, state podium finishes, and numerous school, conference, and state records. But what she's most proud of is the culture her teams have built—one rooted in hard work, resilience, teamwork, and supporting one another through every challenge.

Katie believes every athlete deserves the opportunity to grow, whether they're competing for a state title or participating for the first time. Her commitment to developing both successful athletes and outstanding young people has made a lasting difference in the Aberdeen Central program.





Boys' Athletic Assistant Coach

Katie Anderson - Aberdeen Central

4 ♦ Groton Independent ♦ Wed., Aug. 12, 2026



AUGUST 4, 2026 - GENERAL MEETING

Meeting called to order by Chairman Sutton at 8:45 A.M. in the Commission Chambers, Courthouse Annex, Brown County, SD. Present were Commissioners Dennert, Dinger, Gage, Sutton and Wiese. Commissioner Dinger led the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: Moved by Commissioner Wiese, seconded by Dennert to approve the agenda. All members present voting aye. Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None
RICHMOND DAM UPDATE: No update this week.

PUBLIC HEARING – SPECIAL EVENT TEMPORARY ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE LICENSE: Moved by Commissioner Wiese, seconded by Gage to approve the following Special Event Temporary Alcoholic Beverage License for Liquor to Boys & Girls Club of Aberdeen Area, Aberdeen, SD – Brown County Fair Grandstand – SW ¼ of Sec 1-T123N-R64W Brown County, SD; effective August 10-16, 2026. All members present voting aye. Motion carried.

KEITH RAYMOND-MAGIC SHOW BROWN COUNTY FAIR CONTRACT: Moved by Commissioner Wiese, seconded by Dennert to approve the amended 2027 Brown County Fair Contract for Keith Raymond. Magic Show to add one day of Balloon Factory for an additional \$500.00. All members present voting aye. Motion carried.

QUOTES FOR FLOOR SCRUBBER & CARPET CLEANER: Randy Zens, Building Superintendent, presented quotes to the Commission for a new Floor Scrubber, Carpet Cleaner and attachments. For the Floor Scrubber the quotes were \$6,615.66 from Cole Papers and \$7,199.40 from Huron Pro Clean Plus, LLC. For the Carpet Cleaner and attachments, the quotes were \$3,747.85 for 16" Carpet Cleaner and \$4,851.89 for 18" Carpet Cleaner and \$1,189.71 for the attachments from Cole Papers, then \$4,150.40 for 16" Carpet Cleaner and \$5,198.46 for 18" Carpet Cleaner and \$1,300.81 for attachments from Huron Pro Clean Plus, LLC. The third vendor that was contacted didn't submit any quotes. Randy recommended to go with Cole Papers for the Floor Scrubber and the 18" Carpet Cleaner with attachments also from Cole Papers. Moved by Commissioner Wiese, seconded by Dennert to approve purchasing the Floor Scrubber from Cole Papers in the amount of \$6,615.66 and 18" Carpet Cleaner with attachments in the amount of \$6,041.60 also from Cole Papers. All members present voting aye. Motion carried.

MINUTES: Moved by Commissioner Wiese, seconded by Gage to approve the General Meeting Minutes of July 28, 2026. All members present voting aye. Motion carried.

Moved by Commissioner Wiese, seconded by Dinger to approve the Governor Runoff Election Canvass Minutes of July 30, 2026. All members present voting aye. Motion carried.

CLAIMS: Moved by Commissioner Dennert, seconded by Wiese to approve the following claims: Insurance: SD Public Assurance Alliance \$246.09. Professional Fees: Christy Griffin-Serr Law Office \$15,750.00; Dakota Group LLC \$2,500.00; Heartland Association of Fairs, Festivals & Events \$245.00; ISI, LLC \$120.00; Koletzky Law Office, Prof. LLC \$231.80; Kylee Boomsma \$11,141.20; Sanford Health \$189.00; SD Dept of Transportation \$904.22; Sewer Duck, Inc \$300.00; Taliaferro Law Firm, Pc \$876.35; Tyler Technologies, Inc \$63,465.56. Publishing: McQuillen Creative Group, Inc \$508.03; Midstates Group \$7,873.00; The Watertown Current \$460.00. Rentals: Pantorium Cleaners Inc \$259.20. Repairs & Maintenance: Graham Tire Inc \$33.50; Haar Plumbing & Heating \$280.12; HF Jacobs & Son Const. Inc \$3,651.62; K&S Plumbing, Inc \$1,920.20; Kustom Signals, Inc \$302.83; Lawson Products, Inc \$58.16; Mega Construction Inc \$2,430.00; Nelson Sales & Service, LLC \$1,890.85; Pantorium Cleaners Inc \$32.00; Pierson Ford Lincoln, Inc \$289.00; Pomp's Tire Service, Inc \$451.73; Prahm Construction, Inc \$422,112.60; Precision Kiosk Technologies \$3,000.00; Sewer Duck, Inc \$500.00; Sioux Falls Crane & Hoist, Inc \$747.50. Supplies & Materials: ADAPCO LLC \$4,536.00; Amazon Capital Services, Inc \$3,038.76; Auto Value Aberdeen \$32.13; Cartney Bearing \$44.48; Century Business Products \$1,993.00; Cole

Paper Inc \$8,515.32; Dakota Oil \$111.00; Erika Moulsoff \$7.48; Fastenal Company \$76.30; Geff-dog Designs \$1,363.98; GovConnection, Inc \$481.08; Graham Tire Inc \$414.07; Kristie Erickson \$40.54; Lawson Products, Inc \$652.99; Lexie Westphal \$88.50; Lori Schwab \$145.00; Menards \$413.24; Meyers Tractor Salvage, LLC \$250.00; Pauer Sound, LLC \$200.00; Performance Oil \$411.00; PharmChem, Inc \$1,257.34; Pierson Ford Lincoln, Inc \$870.65; Pomp's Tire Service, Inc \$123.75; Runnings \$392.11; Sandy Woytassek \$14.04; Sioux Falls Crane & Hoist, Inc \$685.76. Travel & Conference: Becky Berreth \$68.15; Cyndy Larson \$21.75; Julie Milbrandt \$29.00; Kelly Clark \$29.00; Koletzky Law Office, Prof. LLC \$2.00; Laura Adema \$21.75; Lynn Butler \$14.50; Lynn Heupel \$126.88; Nancy Clark North \$55.83; Neil Bittner \$19.00; Northeast South Dakota Family Violence Prevention Conference \$800.00; Scott Kolb \$19.00; SD Assoc of County Commissioners \$1,750.00; State 4-H Office \$85.00; Tonya Zinter \$43.50. Utilities: AT&T Mobility \$282.71; CenturyLink \$296.42; Northwestern Energy \$16,378.89. Machinery & Equipment: Transource Truck & Equipment, Inc \$172,200.00. All members present voting aye. Motion carried.

HR REPORT: Moved by Commissioner Dinger, seconded by Wiese to approve the following Human Resource Report submitted by Human Resources Director, Allison Tunheim:

- o Resignation of Jerome Akin as Brown County Highway Mechanic, FT; effective August 13, 2026. Request to fill.

- o Hiring of Kramer Lummis as Brown County 911 Communications Officer, FT; starting wage \$23.73/hr. – effective August 17, 2026.

- o Hiring of Lee Isaak as Brown County Sheriff's Office Record Technician, FT; starting wage \$20.46/hr. – effective August 17, 2026.

- o Temporary 2026 Brown County Fair Workers August 10th -16th
 - o Fair Security - \$41.00/hr.
 - o Peter EngAll members present voting aye. Motion carried.

TRAVEL REQUESTS: Moved by Commissioner Dennert, seconded by Wiese to approve the following Travel Requests: Derek Hoefert, Sheriff's Office to attend NRA Law Enforcement Handgun with PMO Instructor Development School. All members present voting aye. Motion carried.

APPLICATION FOR OCCUPANCY: Moved by Commissioner Dinger, seconded by Wiese to approve the following application submitted by Basin Construction for occupancy of Brown County 14, Section 33-T123-R63, Brown County, SD to install drain tile and bores under the road. All members present voting aye. Motion carried.

QUOTES FOR MOUNTED WEED SPRAYER: Chris Hemen, Weed & Pest Supervisor presented 3 quotes to the Commission for a Weed Sprayer to be mounted on the new truck. They were as follows: Benco at \$22,367.65; C & R Supply at \$23,747.18 and Warne at \$33,049.90. Chris recommended accepting the quote from Benco after visiting with the vendors and making sure it covered everything they needed. Moved by Commissioner Wiese, seconded by Gage to approve purchasing the Weed Sprayer to mount on the new truck from Benco in the amount of \$22,367.65. All members present voting aye. Motion carried.

DISCUSS ROAD USE AGREEMENT: Dirk Rogers, Highway Superintendent, informed the Commission that he was contacted by a Brown County Resident to discuss a possible Road Use Agreement due to increased amount of truck traffic where this individual lives and to possibly dedicate a route for trucks to take. Chairman Sutton suggested to see what the D.O.T. process is. Commissioner Gage mentioned that if a farmer was to expand their CAFO they need to go through Planning and Zoning then the Township Supervisors attend the meeting to give their input. He doesn't feel you can tell the trucks which way to go. No decisions were made just to make Commission aware and have a discussion at this point.

2027 BRIDGE IMPROVEMENT GRANT (BIG): Dirk Rogers, Highway Superintendent, asked for approval and authorize Chairman Sutton to sign the 2027 BIG Grant/ Local Federal Application for BR #145 & BR #266. Moved by Commissioner Dennert, seconded by Dinger to approve and authorize Chairman Sutton to sign the 2027 BIG Grant application for BR #145 & BR #266. All members present voting aye. Motion carried.

DEPARTMENT UPATE – HIGHWAY: Dirk Rogers, Highway

Superintendent, gave the following Department Update. They finished up at the Fairgrounds yesterday, will need to haul sand in for the Rodeo yet. Plan to finish up County Rd 9 west of Westport today and that will be the last paving job for this year. They will continue doing chip sealing and crack sealing. Will be working on County Hwy 14, will be milled up and then paved a month later, towards the end of August. After the Fair, Jensen's will chip seal north part of Dakota Street so can be used. Cold In-Place Project is not scheduled at this time. Also, later in August work on 27 around Jobee Acres up to Highway 12.

OTHER BUSINESS: None

EXECUTIVE SESSION: Moved by Commissioner Wiese, seconded by Dennert to go into Executive Session per SDCL 1-25-2 for Personnel, Contracts and Legal. All member present voting aye. Motion carried.

Chairman Sutton declared the Executive Session closed with No Action taken.

RELEASE OF LIEN: Commissioner Dinger offered the following Resolution:

Resolution #2026-33

WHEREAS, Brown County has filed an Indigent Counsel Lien in the total amount of \$364.06 against G.B., and

WHEREAS, Brown County has determined it to be in the best interest of the taxpayers to release the lien against G.B., and

WHEREAS, Brown County will write off the County Appointed Attorney lien in the amount of \$364.06 against G.B.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Indigent Counsel Lien filed in favor of Brown County against G.B. will hereby be released from the effect and force of said lien.

Dated this 4th day of August 2026.

Seconded by Commissioner Gage.

Roll call vote: Commissioners Dennert-aye; Dinger-aye; Gage-aye; Sutton-aye; and Wiese-aye. Resolution adopted.

ADJOURNMENT: Moved by Commissioner Dennert, seconded by Wiese to adjourn the Brown County Commission at 10:32 A.M. All members present voting aye. Motion carried.

Lynn Heupel, Brown County Auditor

Published August 12, 2026 at the total approximate cost of \$103.01 and may be viewed free of charge at www.sdpublicnotices.com. 27085



AUGUST 6, 2026 – POST ELECTION AUDIT OF JULY 28, 2026 GOVERNOR RUNOFF ELECTION

On August 6, 2026 a Post-Election Audit was conducted on the Best Western Ramkota Vote Center from the Governor Runoff Election that was held on July 28, 2026.

The results of the Post Election Audit are as follows:

Vote Center: Best Western Ramkota
Statewide Race: Governor
Official Canvass Totals
Toby Doeden260
Larry Rhoden414
Post Election Audit Totals
Toby Doeden260
Larry Rhoden414
Lynn Heupel, Brown County Auditor

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CITY OF GROTON REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS – SAFE ROOM ARCHITECT/ENGINEERING SERVICES

The City of Groton, South Dakota, will accept statements of qualifications (SOQ) from qualified architectural or engineering firms for proposed construction of a Tornado Safe Room at the Groton City Park. SOQ's will be accepted up to and opened on Tuesday, September 1st at 3:00pm at Groton City Hall. The SOQ submissions are to be mailed to or dropped off at: City of Groton, 120 N. Main Street, Groton, South Dakota 57445. Please clearly mark Safe Room Architect/Engineering Services on the outside of the envelope.

The safe room must be designed to withstand speeds up to 200 mph and must have the capacity to shelter at least 207

people. The structure will be approximately 46 ft by 36 ft in dimensions, with a concrete foundation and precast concrete walls, and will have electrical and plumbing connections. The project is funded by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), through the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP). The safe room must be designed and built to current FEMA P-361 and ICC 500 storm shelter standards, as well as all local, state, and federal regulations regarding electrical, plumbing and HVAC. Construction is proposed to be completed by December 31, 2028.

Proposals must include the following elements:

- A list of key project personnel (consisting of a lead architect or lead engineer), including their credentials and roles in accomplishing the project.

- A list of other clients for which the firm has completed similar projects.

- A work plan that includes timeframes to complete the following:

- o Finalize design for peer review
- o Advertise, open and award bid
- o Project construction oversite
- o Project compliance inspection
- o Project closeout and documentation

All proposals received by the submission date will be evaluated by the Groton City Council. Evaluation of the proposals will be based upon the following criteria:

- Project work plan (20%).
- Consultant's experience with similar projects (40%).
- Qualifications and credentials of key project personnel (40%).

Dated this 10th day of August 2026, Scott Hanlon, Mayor

Published August 12 and 19, 2026 at the total approximate cost of \$48.08 and may be viewed free of charge at www.sdpublicnotices.com.



This notice is hereby given that the persons or entities listed below have uncashed capital credit checks issued in 2019. In accordance with the bylaws (Article VIII Section 8.2), the amounts of these uncashed checks will be forfeited to James Valley Cooperative Telephone Company six months after the date of publication of this notice unless money is claimed and proper evidence of ownership is submitted to James Valley Cooperative Telephone Company within the six month period. Any persons knowing the current address of the persons listed below, please contact James Valley Cooperative Telephone Company, PO Box 260, Groton, SD 57445 or call 800-556-6525.

Aaberg, Allison; Gardner, Janice; Proulx, Jeannie; Ag Services Inc; Gill, Dustan & Cassie; Rasmussen, Donna; Akin, Cameron; Gould, Rosemary; Richards, Matthew; Allbee, Barry & Darcy; Grandpre, Steve; Richards, Robert; Alley, Jacob; Grant, Annette; Rock, Mathieu & Marisue; Anderson, Amy; Granum, Todd; Rose, Dawn M.; Aslesen, Betty; Groft, Jake; Rossow, Harold & Faye; Backous, Tom & Kelly; Gydesen, Trisa; Roth, Karla; Barrie, Brian; Hearnen, Betty; Rude, Duane; Bell, Emily; Heer, Dawn; Schaeffer, Ryan & James Brown Schaeffer; Bowar, Vic & Casilda; Herman, Janice; Schaible, Mandy; Brewster, Alan; Hiepler, Ann; Siemer, Larry; Brown, Tom; Hofer Jr, Paul; Simmons, William & Judith; Brunes, A Swenson & K; Hofer, Jason; Stoller, Ruth; Burgess Country Cafe; Hoggarth, Eric; Stone, Shane; Burgess, Wendell & Jeanie; Kinser, Dennis & Jaymee; Synoground, David; Callies, Steve & Lindsey; Knapp, Tim; Taylor, Caryl; Campbell, Christopher; Kqkd; Thelen Jaukovic, Becky; Campbell, Fred; Krause, David & Anita; Tom's Greenhouse Inc; Christenson, Mark; Kriech, Douglas; Tracy, Jeff; Clemensen, Arlo & Betty; Lechner, Jamie; Trautman, Judy; Clifford, Archie & Kay; Lechner, Kevin L & Jamie; Tunheim, Nathan & Allison; Collman, Richard F & Katherine; Lerew, Mike; Uilenberg, Beth; Crown-Knouse, Desiree; Likness, Linea; Veith, Jay & Mindy; Dayton, Kara; Locke, Mikki & Josh Bolstad; Vetter, Roger O & Tonya; Demars, Chad & Stacy; Loof, Christopher; Vold, Leland Sr & Evelyn J; Dement, Susan; Luffman, Bonnie; Waldner, Brant; Dillon, Larry & Pam; Lynch, Rachel; Wedemann, Brandon; Dobbins, Linda; May, Shania & Kiesha Channpraseut; Wehausen, Brian; Dunlavy, David; McKnight, Glenna B & Ste

ven B; Wells Fargo Bank East - Mn; Edmunds, Kimberly; Musil Sr, Henry; Wertman, Jerusha; Ellison, Payton; Nelson, Paul; Whitson, Ken C Charger & Erin; Erku, Emre; Olson, Howard & Dorothymae; Willhite, Robbie & Dan Morris; Estrada, Miguel; Olson, Joan; Wilson, James A & Heather R; Fdic-Sr 59447; Paul, Herb; Wood, Ervin & Shirley; Figueroa, Jose Ricardo & Jessica; Pederson, Travis; Wooldedge, Mark; Fischbach, Austin; Phillips, Keith; Woolery, Dennis J; Frohling, Ryan; Pigors, Jeanette M; Zeack, Derrick; Fuller, Ruby; Powell, Roger & Becky.

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Town of Westport General Meeting

The Town of Westport met on August 3, 2026 at 7:00 p.m., with Mitch Wilson, Shane Storm, Troy Tschappat, Gary Huettl, Jeff Stein and Deb Schlosser present.

The following bills were presented:

City General: NW Energy-utilities (\$336.97), Groton Independent-July meeting minutes (\$21.17), Menards-playground equipment (\$4299.00), Brown County Treasurer-mosquito spraying (\$501.12), USPS-stamps (\$82.00)

Sewer: NW Energy-Lift Station utilities (\$51.35)

Water: Public Health Laboratory-June testing (\$20.00), WEB-water (\$2340.16), Core & Main-Annual Maintenance Fee (\$3764.71), Dacotah Bank-resident NSF (\$189.00), Dacotah Bank-service fee due to resident NSF (\$5.00)

Troy Tschappat motioned, second by Shane Storm to pay all bills.

The following deposits were presented:

City General: State of SD (\$8038.45), Brown County Collections (\$265.99), Interest (\$49.95)

Sewer: Resident Payments (\$2886.66)

Water: Resident Payments (\$4329.99)

Public Concerns: Gary Huettl and Jeff Stein from the Westport Catholic Church addressed the Board regarding moved or damaged headstones in the Westport Cemetery in both the church side and the city side. The damage will be looked at and possibly have the mowing person attend the next town meeting. Anyone with concerns about damage should contact a Board member.

Old Business: Motion by Shane Storm, second by Troy Tschappat to put WEB Water rate increase back on table. After much discussion, Shane Storm motioned, second by Troy Tschappat to increase the base rate from \$49 to \$51, increase coverage rate from \$15 to \$17 and leave the per 1,000 gallon rate the same at \$9.40.

New Business: the proposed 2027 budget was reviewed and approved. The Westport Town zoning regulations are outdated and will be reviewed a few Articles at each meeting until reaching the end of the regulations. Due to the Labor Day Holiday, the September meeting will be moved to Tuesday, September 8.

Meeting dismissed at 8:01 p.m.

Deb Schlosser, Finance Officer
Published August 12, 2026 at the total approximate cost of \$23.18 and may be viewed free of charge at www.sdpublicnotices.com. 27089

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City of Columbia Council Meeting – August 5, 2026

CALL MEETING TO ORDER – 7:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL – Cara Dennert, Dana Mohr, Jeremy Dosch, Sam Hoppock, Scott Meints

Community:

Mayor Mohr called the meeting to order. Dana called for a motion to approve the agenda. Scott Meints made a motion to approve the agenda. Sam Hoppock seconded the motion. All in favor – motion carried. Dana called for any conflict of interest on agenda items. There were no conflicts. Minutes were handed out from the June 28th meeting. Sam Hoppock made a motion to approve the minutes. Jeremy Dosch seconded the motion. All were in favor – motion carried.

Warrant Vouchers North-western Energy – electricity – 1205.27; Web – fire prevention – 55.63; NVC – fire prevention – 218.39; SDPAA -city insurance – 11408.89; Jeremy Dosch– July wages -870.26, Cara Dennert – July wages– 1317.60; Beck Law Office – council business – 413.08; Dacotah Bank – Sewer project mailing/nuisance letters – 100.79;Parkview Nursery – storm damage/tree repair – 679.33; Brown County Weed & Pest – mosquito control – 1345.30; Runnings – shop supplies – 31.35; Menards – shop supplies – 79.32; Schmidt Construction – hauling stumps – 660.00; TruGreen – park spraying – 2060.00; Hansen excavating – rubble site work – 1862.25; Brian Ermer – July new park mowing – 5833.33; electronic payment - EFTPS/US Treasury – July 941 taxes – 1169.69

Scott Meints made a motion to approve the vouchers. Sam Hoppock seconded the motion. All in favor - motion carried.

COMMUNITY COMMENTS / CORRESPONDENCE: - many e-mails about sewer project, e-mail from South Dakota State Department of Transportation about signage/delineation project in 2028. Scott Meints made a motion for Mayor Mohr and Finance Officer Cara Dennert to sign agreement on behalf of the City of Columbia in regards to the 2028 Signing and Delineation Project. Sam Hoppock seconded the motion. All were in favor – motion carried.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS-wastewater project – wastewater project update – Next week is the closing date for land purchases for the sewer project. Sam Hoppock made a motion to authorize the purchases of land for the new lagoons. Scott Meints seconded the motion. All were in favor – motion carried.

Nuisances – no report from Trevor.

Streets – We will be adding gravel in some low spots.

Parks – Look nice.

Lagoon/Sewer- nothing further

Rubble Site – In the fall, we will need to pile again – lots of tree branches.

NEW BUSINESS – electronic filing for 941 by August 15th, 1st drawdown for sewer project received

FINANCIAL REPORT

July 31, 2026 balances: SF - \$ 143,347.49; SF Money Market –\$ 154,107.00;

GF - \$ 840,931.12; GF Money Market - \$ 51,709.04; CD Money Market - \$ 41,992.92

FIT - \$ 16,493.81; Cash on hand - \$0

Sam Hoppock made a motion to accept the financial report as given. Scott Meints seconded the motion. All were in favor - motion carried.

Mayor Mohr adjourned the meeting.

Next City Council Meeting - Wednesday, Sept 2, 2026 - 7:00 p.m.

Submitted by Cara Dennert, Finance Officer

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Groton Independent ♦ Wed., Aug. 12, 2026 ♦ 5

Groton began its comeback when Carter Simon walked, Gavin En-

Schwan finished 2-for-4 with a double, home run and two RBIs. Schuster pitched four innings in relief, allowing two runs, one earned, while striking out four.

Dr. Durón provides allergy and asthma care for patients of all ages in Sioux Falls at Dakota Allergy & Asthma. She is board-certified by the American Board of Allergy and Immunology and completed her fellowship at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center in Dallas, Texas. She is a new mother to twins. Follow The Prairie Doc® at www.prairiedoc.org, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Tik Tok. Prairie Doc Programming includes On Call with the Prairie Doc®, a medical Q&A show (most Thursdays at 7pm on SDBP, YouTube and streaming on Facebook), 2 podcasts, and a Radio program (on SDBP, Sundays at 6am and 1pm).

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