

CHEYENNE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
CHEYENNE COUNTY BOARD OF EQUALIZATION
June 24, 2026

The Cheyenne County Board of Commissioners held an open and public special meeting on Wednesday, June 24, 2026, in the Commissioners Meeting Room, Cheyenne County Courthouse, 1000 10th Avenue, Sidney, Nebraska. A notice of this meeting was published in the Cheyenne County Courthouse on June 19, 2026, aired on News Channel Nebraska Radio, posted on the bulletin board in the County Courthouse and on the Cheyenne County website. Copies of the agenda were posted on the Courthouse bulletin board, transmitted to each Commissioner and kept current and available to the public at the Office of the County Clerk. Chairman Philip Sanders called the meeting to order at 8:00 A.M., with the following present:

Randal D. Miller	Commissioner of the First District
	Commissioner of the Second District
Philip E. Sanders	Commissioner of the Third District
Jordan Hajek	Cheyenne County Clerk
Amber Horn	Cheyenne County Attorney

Everyone present recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairman Sanders announced a copy of the current Open Meetings Act is posted on the wall in the Commissioners Meeting Room.

The current agenda has been reviewed. A motion was made by Miller, seconded by Sanders to approve the current agenda as presented. Roll Call: Sanders, Miller. Nay: None.

Chairman Sanders addressed the public regarding the purpose of this meeting is to discuss a potential ban or a time reduction for countywide fireworks.

Jordan Hajek, Clerk, read emails received from members of the public regarding the proposed fireworks restrictions. Jordan reported receiving seven emails in support of a countywide fireworks ban and one email supporting limiting the use of fireworks to July 4 only.

Robert Balfour addressed the Board, stating that Cheyenne County has been under drought conditions since 2000 and that 2016 was the worst drought year, yet no fireworks ban was implemented. He commented that most fires are caused by acts of God and encouraged the use of common sense when using fireworks. He stated that allowing fireworks within the city is the better approach.

Public Comments:

Mark and Michelle Onstott addressed the Board. Mark stated that while the county has experienced a 100-year flood in the past, it is currently experiencing what he described as a 100-year drought. He noted that the county is currently 15 to 18 inches below normal precipitation levels.

Michelle Onstott stated that she agreed with Mark's comments and added that fireworks are not used year-round. She said that this should be considered when evaluating the situation and determining whether fireworks should be factored into the overall fire risk.

Brett Rushman, Dalton Fire Chief, addressed the Board in support of a countywide fireworks ban. He stated that the Village of Dalton had previously voted to ban fireworks. Mr. Rushman also expressed his agreement with the comments made by Mark Onstott regarding the current drought conditions and fire risk.

Don Paxton addressed the Board, stating that he is a former Scoutmaster and that his son-in-law serves as the Fire Chief in Dix. He expressed concern that the combination of dry fuel, oxygen, and high winds creates dangerous conditions for fires started by fireworks. He suggested considering an alternative time for fireworks when weather conditions are more favorable. Mr. Paxton stated that he supports a countywide fireworks ban and/or suggested limiting fireworks use during Red Flag Warning conditions.

Mrs. Paxton also addressed the Board, referencing the Sandhills Fire and the significant losses it caused. She expressed concern for local farmers and residents and stated that she does not believe fireworks should be discharged in either rural areas or within town. She added that fireworks are not necessary to celebrate the nation's 250th anniversary.

Commissioner Miller stated that he believes fireworks should not be discharged in rural areas, as they are easier to contain within city limits. He also stated that fireworks should not be discharged in pastures or wheat fields. He expressed support for a countywide fireworks ban, with exceptions for the city limits of Potter, Dalton, Gurley, and Sidney. Commissioner Miller stated that he had spoken with the Lodgepole Fire Chief, who is not in favor of a fireworks ban. According to Commissioner Miller, the Fire Chief believes the department can handle any incidents that may arise.

Chairman Sanders stated he agrees with Randy for a countywide ban except for the villages. Agricultural here is important.

Attorney Amber Horn stated that there will be a fine for the first offense which is a fine of \$250. The second offense is a fine of \$500. The third and subsequent offense is a fine of \$1,000. There is no jail sentence for the discharge of fireworks during the ban under this resolution.

Sheriff Adam Frerichs addressed the Board, stating that he supports a countywide fireworks ban while allowing each village to make its own decision regarding the use of fireworks.

Chairman Sanders asked that everyone in the county be responsible.

A motion was made by Miller, seconded by Sanders to adopt Resolution 2026-13 to establish a countywide ban on discharging fireworks through the 4th of July holiday for 2026 except for the land residing within the city limits of Sidney, Potter, Dalton and Gurley. Roll Call: Aye: Miller, Sanders. Nay: None.

Comments from the public.

Robert Balfour addressed the Board, stating that it may take some time for the Sidney Police Department to respond to fireworks-related calls. He encouraged the community to be respectful and understanding of the department's response times.

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 8:30 A.M.

Dated the 24th day of June 2026.

Philip E. Sanders, Chairman

Randal D. Miller, Vice-Chairman

, Member

ATTEST:

Jordan Hajek, Cheyenne County Clerk