

EMERGENCY COMMISSION MEETING

Thursday, February 26, 2026 – 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol – Governor’s Conference Room
600 East Boulevard Avenue Bismarck ND 58505

Minutes

Governor Armstrong called a meeting of the Emergency Commission to order at 2:00 p.m. on February 26, 2026.

Members present were: Governor Kelly Armstrong, Secretary Michael Howe, Senator Jerry Klein, Representative Don Vigesaa, Senator Brad Bekkedahl, and Representative Mike Lefor. A quorum existed throughout the meeting.

Also in attendance for the meeting were: Joe Morrissette, Director, OMB; Jamie Mertz, Chief Financial Officer, Dept of Public Instructions; Chris Joseph, General Counsel, Governor’s Office; Becky Ulberg, Fiscal Management Analyst, OMB; Allen H. Knudson, Legislative Council; Sandy McMerty, Deputy Secretary of State; Ann Ellefson, Director, DPI; Jamie Metz, Chief Financial Officer, DPI; Colby Braun, Director Corrections and Rehab, DOCR; Donna Aukland, Chief Financial Officer, DHHS; Pat Traynor, Interim Commissioner, DHHS; Michele Gee , EA Director DHHS.

Mr. Morrissette provided a summary of Commission authority for the 2025-2027 biennium, prior to consideration of current requests, and OMB approval recommendations.

Note: According to the provisions of N.D.C.C., Chapter 54-16, approved requests marked with an asterisk will be forwarded to the Legislative Budget Section committee for its meeting on March 18, 2026.

1. North Dakota Department of Public Instruction* (Request #2160)

The North Dakota Department of Public Instruction (NDDPI) is seeking an increase in spending authority of \$216,952 in the salary expenses line item and an increase in spending authority of \$5,047,966 in operating expenses from federal funds. NDDPI received federal funds from an Education Innovation and Research (EIR) grant. The 2026-2031 EIR grant will total \$10 million over the course of five years, but NDDPI is only asking for authority of the first two years of these funds and then will use the legislative budget process for the remainder of the funding authority.

Upon motion duly made by Senator Bekkedahl and seconded by Senator Klein, ND Department of Public Instructions Request #2160 was approved, and the motion carried. Voting yes were Klein, Lefor, Bekkedahl, Vigesaa, Howe, and Armstrong.

2. North Dakota Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation* (Request #2161)

The North Dakota Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (DOCR) is seeking an increase in line-item spending authority of \$105,000 in the Adult Services line. This request seeks to enhance existing, statutorily authorized transitional and work release programs through GPS monitoring. Due to continued inmate population growth and the additional funding required to place inmates on GPS while at a transitional facility, DOCR is requesting emergency financial support to expand this enhancement of technology for all DOCR residents in a transitional facility.

Upon motion duly made by Representative Lefor and seconded by Senator Bekkedahl, ND Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation Request # 2161 was approved, and the motion carried. Voting yes were Klein, Lefor, Bekkedahl, Vigesaa, Howe, and Armstrong.

3. North Dakota Department of Health & Human Services* (Request #2162)

The North Dakota Department of Health & Human Services (HHS) is seeking approval to accept and expend federal funds on a new Medicaid Government Efficiency Grant of \$1,960,784 out of their Operating line. This request will allow HHS to accurately track work requirements and determine eligibility per new federal legislation, for those on Medicaid Expansion.

Upon motion duly made by Representative Lefor and seconded by Senator Bekkedahl, ND Department of Health & Human Services Request # 2162 was approved, and the motion carried. Voting yes were Klein, Lefor, Bekkedahl, Vigesaa, Howe, and Armstrong.

4. North Dakota Department of Health & Human Services* Request #2163)

The North Dakota Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is seeking approval to accept and expend federal funds on a new SNAP Process and Technology Improvement Grant of \$1,189,769 out of their Operating line. This request will allow HHS to update technology to reduce manual errors in data entry of eligibility data.

Upon motion duly made by Senator Bekkedahl and seconded by Senator Klein, ND Department of Health & Human Services Request # 2163 was approved, and the motion carried. Voting yes were Klein, Lefor, Bekkedahl, Vigesaa, Howe, and Armstrong.

This meeting was adjourned at 2:21 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Michael Howe, Secretary of State
Secretary, Emergency Commission