

**STANLEY COUNTY COMMISSION
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
AUGUST 5, 2026**

The special meeting of the Stanley County Commission was called to order at 5:00 p.m. (CT) by Chairman Iversen, with Commissioners Mike Kenzy, Sonny Harrowa, and Gary Grittner present. Also present was State's Attorney Tom P. Maher, Emergency Manager Dustin Baxter, Casey Tibbs Rodeo Center Board Members Bryan Hanson, Kalyn Bergeson, Rapid City Pierre & Eastern Railroad Tyler Van Asperen, Mike Kelley, A.G.E. Andy Johnson, Core Engineering & Consulting Inc. Patrick Engels, Dakota Mill & Grain Jeremy Hand, Aaron Scheibe, Mayor Greg Kenzy, City Council Members Kristen Gabriel, John Duffy, Mike Jacobson, Kevin Tiger, Doty Garrity, Jaci Keller, Liz Duffy, Mattie Duffy, Kelly Tibbs, Dayle Angel, Larry Cronin, Terry Schroer, Brett Fergen, and Auditor Philena Burtch. The meeting commenced with the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.

AGENDA: Motion by Sonny Harrowa, second by Gary Grittner, to approve the Agenda. All voted Aye. Motion Carried.

Hill Slide: Stanley County Emergency Manager Dustin Baxter started out by addressing and thanking the county chairman and commissioners, the city mayor and council members, invited guests, property owners and members of the public for taking the time to attend this meeting.

The purpose of tonight's meeting is straightforward. It is to ensure that both governing bodies receive the same information at the same time from individuals with firsthand knowledge of the Casey Tibbs hillside slide and its potential impacts.

This meeting is intended to provide information, answer questions, and promote open communication. It is **not** intended to determine responsibility or assign liability. Neither is it to commit either the City or the County to any specific actions; they may deliberate and take action on agenda items as authorized and in accordance with SDCL Chapter 1-25; however, that is not the primary intent of this meeting. That distinction is important and reflects the purpose of tonight's meeting as outlined by the County following its July 29 informational session.

How We Got Here. Many of you are familiar with this issue, but I think it's important that everyone in the room begins with the same understanding of how we arrived here tonight.

According to the information gathered to date, the Casey Tibbs Rodeo Center first observed hillside movement around **June 26**.

Emergency Management observed a significant scar on the hillside around **July 18**, and the following day, those observations were shared with Mayor Kenzy and representatives of the railroad.

On **July 21**, Emergency Management requested assistance from the South Dakota Highway Patrol to conduct an aerial drone flight to document the slide area.

The following day, representatives from the South Dakota Department of Transportation, the City of Fort Pierre, Stanley County Emergency Management, the railroad, and the Casey Tibbs Rodeo Center met on site to discuss the situation. During that meeting, discussions included traffic contingency planning for Highway 83, observations from the Department of Transportation's slide expert, and the importance of monitoring the movement of the hillside. As additional information was gathered, concerns continued to grow.

By the time of the County's informational meeting on July 29, it had been reported that approximately three (3) feet of movement had occurred since the first measurements were taken around July 23. The information presented also noted that underground electrical service to the Casey Tibbs facility had to be

extended because the movement had placed tension on existing infrastructure. As of today, there has been approximately seven (7) feet of movement in the slide area.

The County's Informational Meeting. On July 29, the Stanley County Board of Commissioners held an informational special meeting. That meeting was exactly that—informational. No motions were made. No mitigation plan was adopted. The only County resources were committed to the Emergency Manager and the Generator.

Instead, the Commissioners heard from individuals with firsthand knowledge of the slide, including representatives of the Casey Tibbs Rodeo Center, engineering consultants, and the railroad. The discussion focused on observed movement, engineering perspectives, public safety concerns, and potential impacts to adjacent properties and infrastructure.

At the conclusion of that meeting, the Commissioners agreed that before any future discussions occurred, it was important that the City of Fort Pierre receive the same information from the same people. That decision is what brings us together tonight.

Why This Matters. Although the hillside movement is occurring primarily on privately owned property, the discussion extends beyond individual property owners. The slide area is immediately adjacent to City-owned property, former public rights-of-way, private businesses, railroad infrastructure, and other properties that contribute to the economic vitality of our community.

If the movement continues, there is the potential for broader public impacts, including effects on nearby infrastructure, future public expenditures, business operations, property values, and ultimately local tax revenues that support both City and County services.

Again, recognizing those potential impacts does not determine what actions, if any, should be taken. It simply explains why both governing bodies have an interest in understanding the situation.

What We Hope to Accomplish Tonight. The objective tonight is for everyone to leave with the same understanding of the facts. We want both the City Council and the County Commission to hear directly from the affected property owners, the engineering professionals, the railroad representatives, and others with firsthand knowledge of the site. We also want members of the public to hear the same information so that discussion is based on facts presented openly and transparently. Questions are encouraged. Different viewpoints are expected. That is part of the public process.

Funding and Future Opportunities. Since these concerns first came to my attention, I have been working to identify potential funding opportunities through federal and state agencies and other sources. At this time, no dedicated funding has been identified, but those efforts continue. Should opportunities become available in the future, keeping all parties informed and engaged will better position our community to evaluate them together.

Dustin Baxter thanked everyone who has taken the time to participate in this meeting. Dustin especially wanted to thank the affected property owners, technical experts, the railroad representatives, City staff, County staff and everyone who has contributed information as we have worked to better understand this situation. The goal of this meeting is not to reach conclusions. The goal is to build a common understanding of the facts.

Casey Tibbs Rodeo Center: Bryan Hanson, board member, stated that this Center is an establishment built on donations. There is a lot of history in the building. The Center is a non-profit, so they are hoping for some direction, any great ideas. The building is sound and stable to continue with day-to-day operations, so far. Kayln Bergeson has been working closely with Emergency Manager Baxter and the City. The Center lost power and is now running off the generator, Kayln is very thankful for everyone's assistance.

Dakota Mill & Grain: Jeremy Hand stated that the hill slide is not affecting them, the railroad is the biggest concern as it is harvesting season.

Rapid City Pierre & Eastern Railroad: Mike Kelley stated that they will do whatever they can to keep the railroad passable.

John Duffy stated that at this point, the hill slide is not affecting their house, yet. He has no answers but is open for suggestions.

Patrick Engels roll is to advise to stabilize the Center. Patrick is seeing typical bowl shale fail. The building is founded with solid pillars, but that doesn't mean the hill slide won't affect the building, it will affect the railroad tracks first.

This is a re-grading project to slow the slide. They are waiting for the survey to be completed to tell how much dirt needs to be moved and where.

Andy Johnson stated that AGE set up the instrumentation to monitor the slide, 5 ½ feet vertical movement and 7 ½ feet horizontal movement since the monitoring began.

When Andy and Patrick get the survey data, they will be able to figure out the best analysis/plan. The survey should be done by early next week. The sensible strategy is to lay both sides of the hill to a 5 to 1 slope, toward the railroad and toward Verendrye Drive, while making sure Casey Tibbs Rodeo Center remains stable. Right now, stabilizing the hill and slow the slide is the main plan. If restrained by space to do the slope, they will look at a retaining structure. The survey will show elevation and lateral measurements.

Why is the hill shifting now? Patrick Engels explained that time and deterioration. After 120 years of strain that has been hanging, the strain finally gave way. The balance within the shale structure has shifted. There are areas in the layers of shale that water finds a pathway. Movement has been accelerating since monitoring began.

At this point, the Casey Tibbs parking lot along US Highway 83 below the hill is the only area that shows possible area affecting the public. It would be beneficial as a discretionary decision if the city would consider closing the parking lot from the north entrance south to the public restrooms.

Everyone agrees that time is of the essence. The railroad will be affected first. Each time it rains it speeds up the process. Our State Representatives need to be involved and informed for Federal assistance. We are all looking at ways to help the community. If anyone has any thoughts or other contacts, please reach out to Bryan and Kalyn as they will reach out to whoever, they are open for any assistance.

Dustin Baxter will continue to communicate with everyone involved and will set up another meeting when more information is available.

We all know this is going to be a team effort. Hill slides occur all over, this one just happens to be in the middle of our town.

ADJOURN: Motion by Gary Grittner, second by Mike Kenzy, to adjourn at 6:24 P.M. All voted Aye. Motion Carried.

ATTEST:

(SEAL)

Philena Burtch, Auditor

BOARD OF STANLEY COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Dana Iversen, Chairman