

PATRIOT OFFICE
763-275-0275
14054 Bank Street,
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The Patriot is the official newspaper for Clear Lake, Clearwater, Orrick, Palmer & Santiago Townships, City of Becker, Becker Township and Becker School District #726, City of Big Lake and Big Lake School District #727. The Patriot is also the legal newspaper for the Sherburne County financials.

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The Patriot welcomes letters to the editor. Call 763-275-0275 or email Bill at reporter.bill@patriotnewsmn.com. Addresses and phone numbers are required for verification purposes.
The deadline for all letters is 11 am Wednesday. Limit letters to 200 words or less. Letters will be printed at the discretion of the Editor and are subject to editing for grammar, libel and brevity. Two letters per writer per subject each year.

OBITUARIES:
Obituaries are \$75 prepaid. The Editor reserves the right to edit lengthy obituaries.

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\$50 for six months,
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CLEARWATER FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY MEMBERS Joanne Lisson and Cyrene Bastian with their Valentine's Day themed book sale display. (Submitted Photo).

Clearwater Library's Used Bookstore Being Revitalized

By Penny Leuthard, Contributing Writer

The Clearwater Library's used bookstore is getting a face lift this winter.

With February being 'Love Your Library' month, members of the Clearwater Friends of the Library (FOL) decided it was the perfect time to begin.

"We're in the process of revitalizing Chapter 2, the library's used book-

store," said Sue Valek. "A new committee has been formed and is excited to be working on it."

Although the library hadn't been accepting donations of used books for a while, that has changed, and FOL is asking everyone to bring in books they're done with that are in good condition.

"I'm happy to be back and involved in a new

CW LIBRARY
to page 4

Few turn out for Becker School Board meeting

By Don Bellach, Contributing Writer

A recent, controversial social media post has proven to be divisive.

Social media has been awash with opinions, a situation Supt. Jeremy Schmidt addressed in a January 27 Facebook post. In a letter addressed to Becker staff, students, families and community, Schmidt tried to lower the temperature while acknowledging that emotions were running high. He called on everyone to resist "stereotyping, generalizing, or turning one moment into a blanket judgement." He called for unity, "We can demand accountability without abandoning decency. We can insist on high standards without tearing each other apart." Above all, he wanted to remind everyone of the school's mission, "...help us lower the temperature and pro-



EMILY JENKINS addressed the school board during the public forum segment of Monday's meeting. (Patriot Photo by Don Bellach)

tect what matters the most: OUR CHILDREN, THEIR LEARNING, and THEIR SAFETY."

Public Forum

Given the controversy, it was surprising that only one concerned resident spoke during the February 2, 2026, meeting. Emily Jenkins, who later identified herself as a concerned mother of twin first-graders, read from prepared remarks in support of teachers with targeted criticism of students.

"We are witnessing

teens trade the sanctity of the classroom for the cheap currency of a viral moment," she said. "We hear loud voices from those with no business teaching our children about ethics, yet who feel entitled to destroy an educator's career. It is time we stand firm in the default position of supporting our teachers."

Later, Jenkins spoke about the need for mutual respect in the classroom.

"Mutual respect requires a willingness to be uncomfortable, to approach

diversity of thought with curiosity, not combat," she concluded.

Sarah Colford, president of the American Indian Parent Advisory Committee, a former student, and parent of children in the district, was surprised by the low turnout and remained hopeful that constructive discussions would be held soon. Though she did not speak at the meeting, she did send a statement to this reporter that acknowledged that the video between a teacher and her students, "is multifaceted and we would be remiss if we didn't acknowledge all of the parts of it."

"It's hard to know the intentions of this video and the reason it was posted to social media before being sent to the school, but I'm not going to assume anything and I'm asking you to do the same."

Acknowledging different perspectives, Colford

used a story from her Native American background about a wise woman who used a drum to unite Native peoples divided by settlers. The Dakota woman gave the drum to the Ojibwe people and said, "When we fight against each other, we all lose."

Multi-Unit Contract Signed

A tentative agreement with Becker's Multi-Unit team was reached in October 2025 and formally ratified when the board approved the consent agenda.

When asked to comment on the agreement, Schmidt wrote, "We appreciate the collaborative work that went into reaching this agreement in a timely manner and the School Board's approval. Our multi-unit team is important to the daily success of our schools, and we are

BECKER SCHOOLS
to page 2

BL Teachers show up to support labor negotiations

By Don Bellach, Contributing Writer

More than 50 people attended the January 28, 2026 meeting of the Big Lake School Board. When asked, many identified themselves as teachers. A few were students. One gentleman, when asked why he was there, said, "Solidarity."

The board had scheduled a closed session for negotiation strategy to immediately follow the regular meeting. Big Lake Education Minnesota Representative Chris Olson, who was present in the hallway after the meeting, declined to comment on ongoing negotiations.

Information found on the Big Lake Schools webpage under the heading, "Contract Negotiations", states the following: "Since May, the District and Big Lake Education Association have met nine times to negotiate a new collective bargaining agreement. These meetings have included discussions on compensation, working conditions, and long-term sustainability for both our staff and the District. While progress has been made, the process has taken longer than we had hoped, and the teachers' union



TEACHERS AND STUDENTS were present for the regular school board meeting. (Patriot Photo by Don Bellach)

has requested to move the discussions to mediation, which is a standard step in public sector bargaining when agreements are not yet reached."

Budget Shortfalls

Amber Sixberry, reported that the Finance Committee had a goal to cut \$1.5 million from the budget before it is finalized in March of this year. Earlier, the board unanimously passed a resolution that directed the Superintendent to "consider the discontinuance of programs or positions to effectuate economics in the school district and reduce expenditures and make recommendations to the Board of Education."

When addressing the Board, Superintendent Tim Truebenbach said it was a standard resolution given the current budget situation.

The board also adjusted class size guidelines. It replaced the term variable with a specific range of 26-30 students for non-core programs in Middle and High School classrooms.

Manuel Retiring in 9

Director of Business Services Angie Manuel announced that she is hoping to retire in July 2027. She expressed a desire to give the board enough time for succession planning. She mentioned that the district has a strong internal candidate to replace her, but that would leave other staffing gaps in the department to be considered.

Enrollment

The district continued to gain enrollment for

BL SCHOOLS
to page 4

County to improve communication system

By Ken Francis, Contributing Writer

The Sherburne County Board Tuesday approved an agreement with Marco to provide additional safety-related countywide phone and communication services.

The current countywide VoIP phone system, which enables calling over the internet, was implemented 2024. Since the system went live, the current cloud-based service provider has struggled to deliver the level of reliability required for mission-critical communications.

For a 24/7 law enforcement, corrections and emergency services agency, dependable phone service is essential to maintaining operational readiness and ensuring public safety. But over the past year, Sheriff Dept. staff have consistently reported a wide range of telephone issues, including phones continuing to ring after being answered, calls failing to connect,

incorrect caller ID information, dropped calls and an inability to place calls outside the county or reach certain internal extensions. In some cases, users have encountered a complete lack of a dial tone.

The ongoing problems significantly disrupt daily operations and hinder the agency's ability to communicate effectively.

Staff has recommended contracting with Marco to implement necessary system improvements and add additional countywide intercommunication capabilities.

The total project cost is \$183,382.

One half of the expenses are contained within IT's budgeted departmental professional services and previously approved ARPA project funds (\$90,000 total). The additional costs will be covered by the Sheriff's Office's Commissary funds (\$93,400).

Labor Law Agreement

COUNTY
to page 2



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Eagles lose to Bluejackets in OT

By Maria Moore,
Contributing Writer

The Becker/Big Lake Eagles hockey team hosted rival Cambridge-Isanti Bluejackets January 27 at the Princeton Ice Arena and came away disappointed.

The first goal of the game was scored by the Bluejackets after they put pressure on the Eagles in the first period.

The Eagles then went further in the hole in the second period with the Bluejackets scoring another goal to make it 2-0. However, things improved for the home team late in the second period with senior forward Tate Spilde scoring an even strength goal to make it 2-1.

The Bluejackets came out of the break with a vengeance and scored immediately in the third period which brought their lead back up by two.

The Eagles didn't back down and added the pressure when senior Tanner



THE BECKER/BIG LAKE EAGLES huddle up before the game against Cambridge-Isanti Bluejackets.. (Submitted Photo).

Felton scored to make it 3-2 with assists from senior Hayden Kipka and sophomore Owen Zahler. Soon after, Spilde tied the game at three with another goal and assists from senior Ethan Grafnitz and Zahler.

The contest ended in the tie, with the game going into overtime. Unfortunately, the Bluejackets snuck a goal past junior goaltender Elliot Grafnitz to capture the win.

The Eagles' conference

record is 4-5 and overall they are 8-11.

Recaps

Other game recaps include an Eagles trouncing over Princeton Tigers, 8-0 followed by a loss to Sauk Rapids/Rice 1-3. Another loss for the Eagles occurred against Bagley/Fosston by a score of 2-6.

At 107, Lucas Hemmesch won by forfeit. At 133, Jaylen Rand won

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Busy Week for BL Wrestlers

By Ken Francis,
Contributing Writer

The Big Lake boys wrestlers won four matches in a 54-16 loss to Zimmerman in a dual meet last Thursday.

At 121 pounds, Grant Volk beat Grayson Kiesling, 6-3. At 133 pounds Jaylen Rand pinned Tristan Stoner at 3:21. At 189 pounds, Iain Cooper beat Ryan Bishop by major decision, 8-0. At 215 pounds, 215 Austin Frederickson beat Nathaniel Belair, 7-1.

The Hornets lost by forfeit in four other matches.

The Big Lake girls won all three matches against the Zimmerman girls.

At 124 pounds, Cora Rand pinned Olivia Gardas at 4:45. At 130, Alexa Guy pinned Macy Roberts at 2:53. At 136, Graycen Mayer pinned Isabella Kroll at 3:03.

At the 2026 MNGWL Individual State Tournament last Friday, Cora Rand finished third at 124 pounds. After falling to Micaiah Lenway of Albert Lea Area, the seventh-grader pinned Rosalie Johnson of Prior Lake at 0:54. She followed with a 19-0 tech fall over Peyton Walberg of Annandale/Maple Lake, then pinned Trinity Kurzenberger of United North Central at 0:19 in her final match.

Monday, the Hornets lost in a triangular meet to Albany (42-36) and to Pierz (65-3).

Big Lake won six weight classes against Albany.

At 107, Lucas Hemmesch won by forfeit. At 133, Jaylen Rand won

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by forfeit. At 139, Donovan Donner pinned Nathan Pronk at 1:48. At 145, Aven McLearn, pinned Blair Iverson at 4:33. At 215, Austin Frederickson won by forfeit. Frederickson had the only win for Big Lake against Pierz, a 3-2 decision over Brad Tanner.

The Hornets wrestled at Princeton Thursday and ROCORI Friday, results next week.



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PUBLIC NOTICES

Office of the Minnesota Secretary of State Certificate of Assumed Name Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 333

The filing of an assumed name does not provide a user with exclusive rights to that name. The filing is required for consumer protection in order to enable customers to be able to identify the true owner of a business.

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Name: **TH Cattle Company, LLC**
Address: **12925 PROSPERITY AVE BECKER MN 55308 USA**

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By typing my name, I, the undersigned, certify that I am signing this document as the person whose signature is required, or as agent of the person(s) whose signature would be required who has authorized me to sign this document on his/her behalf, or in both capacities. I further certify that I have completed all required fields, and that the information in this document is true and correct and in compliance with the applicable chapter of Minnesota Statutes. I understand that by signing this document I am subject to the penalties of perjury as set forth in Section 609.48 as if I had signed this document under oath.

SIGNED BY: **David J. Zubke**
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Secretary of State
(Published in the *Patriot*: 01/31/26, 02/07/26.)

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/s/ Steve Simon
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(Published in the *Patriot*: 02/07/26, 02/14/26.)

Sherburne County Board of Commissioners
January 2026 County Board Workshop Minutes
The Board Chair opened the County Board Workshop Meeting.
Continue Discussion of County Policy Governing Board of Commissioners' Operating Rules.
Discussed the County policy governing Board of Commissioners' operating rules.
Discussion Regarding U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement activities in Sherburne County.
Discussed U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement activities in Sherburne County.
The Board Chair adjourned the County Board Workshop Meeting.
/s/ Raeanne Danielowski,
Board Chairperson
/s/ Bruce Messelt,
County Administrator
(Published in the *Patriot* 02/07/26.)

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Keefe Supply Company	7,914.66
Sherburne Soil and Water Conservation	37,569.50
US Bank Voyager Fleet Systems	7,030.77
25 Payments less than 2000	20,391.54
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Vendor Name	Amount
Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC)	44,366.00
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Ciresi Conlin LLP	47,375.60
Damon Farber Associates	11,917.70
East Central Regional Juvenile Center	11,398.00
El-Jay Plumbing & Heating, Inc.	9,508.00
Elk River Municipal Utilities	17,246.78
Emma & MacDonald Yanquai & CenterPoint	5,454.00
Greater St Cloud Development Corp	7,500.00
Group Health Non-Patient A-R	29,613.35
Joe Mendyka, LLC	20,000.00
Lexipol LLC	30,000.00
Mansfield Oil Co of Gainsville Inc	43,408.23
Nagell Appraisal & Consulting	7,200.00
Nintex USA Inc	26,377.00
Snap-on Industrial	3,517.13
Trees & Me LLC	3,650.00
Waite/Jason W	9,551.10
WSB LLC	57,877.75
47 Payments less than 2000	18,777.74
Final Total:	\$
(Published in the <i>Patriot</i> 02/07/26)	

Sherburne County WARRANTS FOR PUBLICATION	
Warrants Approved For Payment 1/10/26	
Vendor Name	Amount
State Of Minnesota	3,139.50
State Of Minnesota	3,386.50
State Of Minnesota	2,243.00
State Of Minnesota	4,022.00
State Of Minnesota	3,260.50
Final Total:	\$
(Published in the <i>Patriot</i> 02/07/26)	

Sherburne County WARRANTS FOR PUBLICATION	
Warrants Approved For Payment 2/2/26	
Vendor Name	Amount
State Of Minnesota	2,765.50
State Of Minnesota	3,260.00
1 Payments less than 2000	1,966.50
Final Total:	\$
(Published in the <i>Patriot</i> 02/07/26)	

Sherburne County WARRANTS FOR PUBLICATION	
Warrants Approved For Payment 1/10/26	
Vendor Name	Amount
State Of Minnesota	2,300.50
Final Total:	\$
(Published in the <i>Patriot</i> 02/07/26)	

SHERBURNE COUNTY NOTICE OF TAX-FORFEITED LAND INITIAL PUBLIC SALE

NOTICE IS HERBY GIVEN the parcels of land described herein shall be sold to the highest bidder at a public sale in accordance with M.S. Chapter 282 for no less than the estimated market value, as determined by the most recent assessment. Any properties that do not sell will be offered on a subsequent public sale. The minimum bid price for the subsequent sale will be the sum of all delinquent taxes, special assessments, penalties, interest, and costs assigned to the parcel. The Subsequent Action Minimum bid is subject to change due to ongoing interest, penalties and costs.

The County Auditor shall conduct the initial sale via online auction through Public Surplus starting on February 11, 2026, and closing on March 12, 2026, at 10:00am. The property listings will be available to preview on the Public Surplus website. The subsequent sale for unsold properties will start March 16th, 2026, and close March 31, 2026, at 10am.

PARCEL IDENTIFICATION NUMBER	CITY/TOWNSHIP	Estimated MARKET VALUE	SUBSEQUENT ACTION MINIMUM BID
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30-00403-0464	LIVONIA TOWNSHIP	\$7,200.00	\$712.83
35-004070135	ORROCK TOWNSHIP	\$4,200.00	\$456.48
60-00404-1120	CITY OF BECKER	\$1,600.00	\$155.08
75-00869-0030	CITY OF ELK RIVER	\$5,400.00	\$971.47

All property is sold "as is" and may not conform to local building and zoning ordinances. Sherburne County makes no warranty that the land is "buildable".

ALL SALES ARE FINAL. NO REFUNDS OR EXCHANGES ARE PERMITTED.

Contact the Sherburne County Property Tax office located at 13880 Business Center Dr. NW, Elk River, MN 55330 for a complete list of terms and conditions. Information can also be obtained on our website www.co.sherburne.mn.us, on the Public Surplus property listing or by calling 763-765-4361.

January 10, 2026
/s/ Loraine Rupp
Sherburne County, Auditor- Treasurer
(Published in the *Patriot*: 01/17/26, 01/24/26, 01/31/26, 02/07/26.)

CITY OF BIG LAKE NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a public hearing will be held before the Big Lake City Council on Wednesday, February 18, 2026, at approximately 6:30 p.m. in the Big Lake City Council Chambers. The purpose of this public hearing is to consider street and utility improvements identified as the 2026 Street and Utility Improvement Project No. ST2026-1. Improvements include grading, drainage, storm sewer, watermain, sanitary sewer, curbing, turn lanes, sidewalk, trail, lighting system, reclaiming, shouldering, bituminous pavement, pavement markings and miscellaneous work. The improvements are located on:

172nd Street-U S 10 to Prairie Drive;
Minnesota Avenue – 300 feet west of County Road 43 to County Road 43;
Minnesota Avenue – County Road 43 to 180th Street; and
Minnesota Avenue -1761 h Street to 177th Street.

The area to be assessed for such improvements consists of all abutting properties. The estimated total cost of this improvement is \$,960,000. A reasonable estimate of the impacts of the assessment will be available at the hearing. All those interested are encouraged to attend and comment.

/s/ Gina Wolbeck, City Clerk
City of Big Lake
(Published in the *Patriot*: 01/31/26, 02/07/26.)

Sherburne County WARRANTS FOR PUBLICATION	
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Adolfson & Peterson Construction	3,100.00
Amanda B Powers Psy D LP PLLC	2,000.00
Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC)	5,774.00
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Minnesota Department Of Corrections	9,300.00
Minnesota Inter-County Association (MICA)	26,274.00
Mn Public Employees Assoc (MNPEA)	7,824.00
Minnesota Sheriffs' Association	9,461.12
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RTVision, Inc	3,200.00
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Teamsters Local 320	7,926.22
TimeClock Plus, LLC	2,066.59
Trinity Services Group Inc	136,398.60
Tyler Investigative Services	2,623.84
Washington County Accounting & Finance	48,978.00
Windstream	4,354.84
50 Payments less than 2000	17,498.08
Final Total:	\$
(Published in the <i>Patriot</i> 02/07/26)	

CW LIBRARY from page 1

way," said FOL and committee member Cyrene Bastian.

Bastian was the Clearwater Library's first librarian, serving in that role for 19 years before retiring.

"Chapter 2 Bookstore is a great place to get books that are in good shape."

To get things kicked off and help with the bookstore's renewal, the FOL will be holding a used book sale February 11 – 14 during the library's open hours. FOL members will be available to talk about the bookstore and the Clearwater Friends of the Library group, which is always looking for new members.

Sales from Chapter 2 Bookstore benefit the local community. Through them, the FOL is able to provide support for things such as the children's summer reading program and the winter reading program, which is being held currently.

Revitalization on Chapter 2 Bookstore has just begun. Work on it, and more book sales, will be held throughout the year.

BL SCHOOLS from page 1

the school year, adding another three students to online classes; however, a shortfall of five remains for the year. Manuel was optimistic, stating that she anticipates enrollment will continue to rise. As of January 5, the seated Average Daily Membership, the metric for enrollment, was at 3,039.

Cost Overruns

The Indoor Air Quality Project has exceeded its projected cost estimate by a little over \$1 million. Director of Buildings & Grounds TJ Zerwas explained that several factors contributed to the overage: replacement of lights, piping, and more expensive parts and materials that will be more durable and longer lasting.

Donations

Big Lake Spud Fest continues to be a strong supporter of Big Lake Schools, having donated \$3,000 for field trip expenditures and another \$3,000 in NWTAA Scholarships.

AMENDMENT TO THE SHERBURNE COUNTY ZONING ORDINANCE ORD NO -9

The Sherburne County Board of Commissioners adopted ORD NO 291 by amending the Sherburne County Zoning Ordinance as it relates to Solar Farm Prohibition including amendments to:

Section 16.2 (Interim Use Permits), Subd 5.22 (Conditions-Solar Farm) A (A Solar Farm shall be prohibited in the following areas) to remove, Baldwin Township: areas within ½ mile of TH 169 and add Big Lake Township...except for those parcels that have an existing Solar Farm constructed prior to October 1, 2025 or share a boundary line with a parcel that has an existing Solar Farm constructed prior to October 1, 2025.

This provision was passed by the Sherburne County Board of Commissioners on the 20th day of

January, 2026. A complete copy of this Zoning Ordinance Amendment is available for viewing at the Sherburne County Planning and Zoning Office, 13880 Business Center Drive, Elk River, Mn, and is duly filed with the Sherburne County Auditor upon the publication of its enactment.

/s/ Raeanne Danielowski, County Board Chairperson
ATTEST:
/s/ Bruce Messelt, County Administrator
(Published in the *Patriot*: 02/07/26.)

AMENDMENT TO THE SHERBURNE COUNTY ZONING ORDINANCE ORD NO 8

The Sherburne County Board of Commissioners adopted ORD NO 288 By amending the Sherburne County Zoning Ordinance as it relates to Wrecker & Towing Service including amendments to:

Section 5 (Definitions and Rules of Language Construction) Subd 2 (Definitions) to add a definition of Wrecker and Towing Service.

Section 11 (Industrial District) Subd 4 (Interim Uses) to add Wrecker and Towing Services.

Section 16.2 (Interim Use Permits) Subd 4 (List of Interim Uses) Sub5 (Conditions) to add Wrecker and Towing Services.

This provision was passed by the Sherburne County Board of Commissioners on the 20th day of

January, 2026. A complete copy of this Zoning Ordinance Amendment is available for viewing at the Sherburne County Planning and Zoning Office, 13880 Business Center Drive, Elk River, Mn, and is duly filed with the Sherburne County Auditor upon the publication of its enactment.

/s/ Raeanne Danielowski, County Board Chairperson
ATTEST:
/s/ Bruce Messelt, County Administrator
(Published in the *Patriot*: 02/07/26.)

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

The Sherburne County PLANNING ADVISORY COMMISSION will meet at **6 00 P.M. February 9 2026** at the Sherburne County Government Center, 13880 Business Center Drive, Elk River, Minnesota to hold a public hearing for all unincorporated areas of Sherburne County in which the County has zoning and land use authority, to consider the following application(s) and other planning and zoning related topics.

Chris Gray (Property Owner Ramond & Dianna Mortenson): Request Residential Preliminary and Final Simple Plat of "WAGON TRAIL WOODS" consisting of (3) lots. PID # 40-00012-1000. Legal Desc: NE 1-4 Ex N 210 ft (full legal on file). Sec 12, Twp 35, Rge 29. Palmer Township. 159.43 acres in the Agricultural District and within the Unclassified Shoreland District of Unnamed Lake 71-117W.

Dr. Ashley Anderson Nokk: Requesting to Amend the Sherburne County Zoning Ordinance: Sec 7, Subd 4, Sec 8, Subd 4, Sec 10, Subd 4 and Sec 16.2, Subd 4 to add Veterinary Clinic as an Interim Use.

Luke Gildemeister-US Solar (Property Owner Minnesota Municipal Power Agency): Requesting to Amend the Comprehensive Land-Use Map from Rural Residential to Energy Production-Private Solar Field. PID # 10-00113-1300. Legal Desc: SW ¼ of NE ¼ (full legal on file). Sec 13, Twp 33, Rge 27. Big Lake Township. 38.87 acres in the General Rural District.

Luke Gildemeister-US Solar (Property Owner Minnesota Municipal Power Agency): Requesting an Interim Use Permit for Solar Farm. PID # 10-00113-1300. Legal Desc: SW ¼ of NE ¼ (full legal on file). Sec 13, Twp 33, Rge 27. Big Lake Township. 38.87 acres in the General Rural District.

The applications may be viewed at <https://www.co.sherburne.mn.us/394/Planning-Advisory-Board> or by scanning the QR code shown below. Public Hearing items will be available one week prior to the meeting.



The hearing of these requests is not limited to those receiving copies of this notice, and if you know of any neighbor or affected property owner who for any reason has not received a copy, it would be appreciated if you would inform them of this hearing. Recommendations made by the Sherburne County Planning Advisory Board may be subject to further action by the Township of Livonia or the Township of Big Lake, and the Sherburne County Board of Commissioners.

Recommendations that are forwarded to the County Board from this public hearing are anticipated to be heard at a County Board of Commissioners Meeting on March 17, 2026 at 9:00am, in the County Board Room located at the Sherburne County Government Center.

/s/ Lynn Waytashek, Zoning Administrator
(Published in the *Patriot*: 02/07/26.)

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

The Sherburne County Board of Adjustment will hold a Special Board of Adjustment Meeting at **5 00 P.M. on February 9 2026** at the Sherburne County Government Center, 13880 Business Center Drive, Elk River, Minnesota to consider the following applications. A hearing will not begin before the time set.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS FOR 2026: Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and Secretary.

RUSSELL & MICHELE HABLE: Requesting a 5' variance in setback from the side property line for a septic system upgrade. Required setback from the side property line is 10'. Address: 5228 114th Ave SE, Clear Lake, Mn Legal: Hi-Lo Park S1/2 of Lot 4 & All of Lot 5 Sec 27, Twp 35, Rge 29 .42 Acres Palmer Township Agricultural District and within the Recreational Development Lakeshore District of Rush Lake.

LUKE GILDEMEISTER: (Property Owner: Minnesota Municipal Power Agency) Requesting a variance to Section 16.2, Subdivision 5.22 (Solar Farm) C.9 (Screening) which states "Vegetative screening such as coniferous trees a minimum of 6' in height or an alternative approved by the Zoning Administrator shall be installed around the perimeter of the solar farm at the time the solar farm is installed". US Solar and MPPA are requesting a variance from Sherburne County's requirement for full perimeter tree screening around its proposed solar farm. The variance applies to the proposed northern and southern fence lines of the solar farm. The project parcel already features significant tree growth on the north and south boundaries that provide an effective visual buffer. The variance seeks approval to rely on this existing vegetation, rather than planting redundant screening on those sides. Legal: SW ¼ of NE ¼ . . . (full legal on file) Sec 13, Twp 33, Rge 27 38.87 Acres Big Lake Township General Rural District. Board Member Roger Johnson will be attending the meeting remotely.

Members of the public who would like to attend the meeting remotely can contact the Planning & Zoning Office or by scanning the QR code shown below.	The application may be viewed at https://www.co.sherburne.mn.us/364/Board-of-Adjustment or by scanning the QR code shown below. Public Hearing items will be available one week prior to the meeting.

opposition to or support of the request. The hearing of this request is not limited to those receiving copies of this notice, and if you know of any neighbor or affected property owner who for any reason has not received a copy, it would be appreciated if you would inform them of this hearing.

/s/ Lynn Waytashek, Zoning Administrator
(Published in the *Patriot*: 02/07/26.)

To place your ad, call 763.275.0275 or stop by our office at
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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Becker Area Senior Center (BASC)
Open Mon. - Fri. 5am-5pm.
Becker Community Center:
763-200-4271. Planning meeting
3rd Wed. @ 1pm.

Becker American Legion Auxiliary
Auxiliary meetings from November to February are suspended. We will meet again in March of 2025. Contacts are Paula Hinds 763.691.4405 cell and Nellie Simpson 763.482.0619.

Becker American Legion Post 193
Becker Legion meets the second Tues. of every month at 7pm at Becker Legion (old fire hall.)

Becker AA Meeting
Becker Group of Alcoholics Anonymous meets Thurs., 8pm at Mary of the Visitation, 12100 Sherburne Ave, Becker. (320) 247-4732 or email beckeraagroupmn@gmail.com

Becker Lions Club
Meetings are held the second Mon. each month at 7pm at Becker City Park's Shelter.

Becker Sons of the American Legion Squadron 193
Meets the third Tues. of each month at 7 pm at Becker Legion (old fire hall.). Looking for new members. Andrew Lee (763) 482-9177.

Becker Beyond the Yellow Ribbon Meeting
The monthly meetings are held 6 pm the third Thurs. of the month at Becker City Hall. (320) 980-2752 or see the state website at www.beyondtheyellowribbon.org.

Big Lake Senior Center
The Big Lake Senior Club meets Tues., 1-4pm, Big Lake City Hall, 160 Lake St. North.
For more information, call:
763-309-1010 or 612-219-1614.

Big Lake American Legion Post #147
Meets the first Thurs. of the month @ 7 pm. Tribune Building, 29 Lake St.

Big Lake OPEN AA Meetings
Mon., 7pm at Saron Lutheran Church, Big Lake. Big Book Study, Handicap Accessible. Questions? Contact: Rob, (763) 218-5328.

The Big Lake American Legion Auxiliary
Meets the first Tues. Mar.-Dec. at 6:30pm. Tribune Building, 29 Lake St. (763) 263-6093 for information.

Big Lake Beyond the Yellow Ribbon
The Big Lake Beyond the Yellow Ribbon meets at 6:30 pm on the third Mon., of each month in the Community Room adjacent to the Big Lake Police Dept. & the Big Lake Library.

PATRIOT

NEWSPAPER OF THE NORTH SHORE

Sherburne County Board of Commissioners
January 2026 County Board Meeting Minutes
Call to Order
Moment of Silence and Pledge of Allegiance
Approval of Regular Meeting Proposed Agenda
Hulse/Felber unanimous to approve the proposed agenda. Roll Call Vote: Gray- Aye, Hulse- Aye, Danielowski- Aye, Felber- Aye, Schumacher- Aye.
Open Forum
No one spoke.
Consent Agenda
Huse/Felber unanimous to approve the consent agenda, with the exception of item 12. Roll Call Vote: Hulse- Aye, Danielowski- Aye, Felber- Aye, Schumacher- Aye, Gray- Aye.
Consider Approval of the Official Minutes from the January 6th, 2026, Annual Organizational Meeting of the County Board.
Approved the official minutes from the January 6th, 2026, Annual Organization Meeting of the County Board, as presented.
Consider Approval of the Official Minutes from the January 6th, 2026, County Board Workshop.
Approved the official minutes from the January 6th, 2026, County Board Workshop, as presented.
Consider Approval of a Gambling Premises Permit for Travelers Country Club on the Mississippi (Clear Lake Township).
Approved a Gambling Premises Permit for Travelers Country Club on the Mississippi.
Consider Approval of an Amended Agreement for Janitorial Services with Carefree Cleaning.
Approved Amended Agreement for Janitorial Services with Carefree Cleaning.
Consider Approval of Commissioner & Manual Warrants Dated December 31st, 2025, and January 2nd and 9th, 2026.
Approved Commissioner & Manual Warrants dated December 31st, 2025, and January 2nd and 9th, 2026 as follows:
January 2, 2025, Commissioner Warrants \$33,738.38
January 2, 2025, Manual Warrants \$,300.50
January 9, 2025 Commissioner Warrants \$,800,527.58
January 9, 2025 Manual Warrants \$6,051.50
December 31, 2025, Commissioner Warrants \$05, 927.98
December 31, 2025, Manual Warrants \$,992.00
Consider Approval of HHS IFS Warrants Dated December 31st, 2025, and January 9th, 2026.
Approved HHS IFS Warrants dated December 31st, 2025, and January 9th, 2026 as follows:
December 31, 2025, HHS IFS Admin Warrants \$6,356.72
January 7, 2026, HHS IFS Admin Warrants \$72,667.17
Consider Approval of HHS OBO Warrants Dated December 30th, 2025.
Approved HHS OBO Warrants dated December 30th, 2025 as follows:
December 30, 2025, HHS OBO Warrants \$1,448.42
Consider Approval of a Health Partners Microgrant.
Approved Health Partners Microgrant as presented.
Consider Approval of 4th Quarter 2025 Donations Received by the Health and Human Services Department.
Approved 4th Quarter 2025 donations received by Health and Human Services Department.
Consider Approval of the 2026 Pay Equity Report to MN Management & Budget, as Required by the Local Government Pay Equity Act.
Approved the 2026 Pay Equity Report to MN Management & Budget, as presented.
Consider Approval of a Renewal and Major Modification to the County Solid Waste License for Vonco II.
Approved a renewal and major modification to the County Solid Waste License for Vonco II as presented.
Consider Approval of a Professional Service Agreement with Bolton & Menk for Preliminary Design Services for TH 10 and CSAH 11.
Approved a Professional Service Agreement with Bolton & Menk for Preliminary Design Services for TH 10 and CSAH 11.
Consider Approval of a Legacy Grant Agreement with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources for the Great Northern Regional Trail Project.
Schumacher/Hulse unanimous to approve the Legacy Grant Agreement with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. Roll Call Vote: Danielowski- Aye, Felber- Aye, Schumacher- Aye, Gray- Aye, Hulse- Aye.
Announcements
Finalize travel arrangements to Washington, D.C.; cold weather preparation; Sherburne County History Center Executive Director resignation.
Regular Agenda
Consider Approval of Resolution No. 012026-AD-3263 to Acquire



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Hornets go 1-1

By Bill Morgan,
Editor

Last Friday, the Big Lake Hornet boys basketball team eked out a close win over Chsiago Lakes, 89-87. Big Lake was led by Trevor Stuckenholtz with 26, Judd Layton with 23 and Eddie Reinert with 17. Monday, the Hornets fell to Zimmerman, 89-82. Big Lake was led by 36 points from Stuckenholtz, 15 from Layton and 12 from Lane Pettis.

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MINNESOTA NEWSPAPER ASSOCIATION

HELP WANTED

MDA HIRING FOREST PEST (SPONGY MOTH) SURVEYORS

The Minnesota Department of Agriculture is hiring temp. intermittent Surveyors (Ag Technicians) for the 2026 Spongy Moth Trapping Survey season. \$20.51/hr. + mileage reimbursement. View job post (Job I.D. 91599) & apply online through March 2nd: <https://mn.gov/mmb/careers>. MDA is an equal opportunity employer & provider. Questions: 651/201-6692 natasha.northrop@state.mn.us

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HELP WANTED

MDA HIRING FOREST PEST (SPONGY MOTH) SURVEYORS

The Minnesota Department of Agriculture is hiring temp. intermittent Surveyors (Ag Technicians) for the 2026 Spongy Moth Trapping Survey season. \$20.51/hr. + mileage reimbursement. View job post (Job I.D. 91599) & apply online through March 2nd: <https://mn.gov/mmb/careers>. MDA is an equal opportunity employer & provider. Questions: 651/201-6692 natasha.northrop@state.mn.us

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Property for the County State Aid Highway 33 Improvement Project, in the City of Elk River.
Gray/Hulse unanimous to approve Resolution No. 012016-AD-3263 as presented. Roll Call Vote: Felber- Aye, Schumacher- Aye, Gray- Aye, Hulse- Aye, Danielowski- Aye.
Review and Consider Approval and Awarding of Bid (s) for the County Jail Piping Replacement Project.
Gray/Felber unanimous to approve and award the bid(s) for the County Jail Piping Replacement Project as presented. Roll Call Vote: Schumacher- Aye, Gray- Aye, Hulse- Aye, Danielowski- Aye, Felber- Aye.
Consider Approval of a Preliminary and Final Simple Plat of “Potato Sack One” - Hartkopff Farms.
Gray/Felber approved the Preliminary and Final Simple Plat of “Potato Sack One” as presented. Roll Call Vote: Gray- Aye, Hulse- Aye, Danielowski- Aye, Felber- Aye, Schumacher- Aye.
Consider Approval of an Amendment to the Sherburne County Zoning Ordinance for “Wrecker and Towing Services”.
Felber/Gray unanimously approved the amendment to the Sherburne County Zoning Ordinance for “Wrecker and Towing Services” as presented. Roll Call Vote: Hulse- Aye, Danielowski- Aye, Felber- Aye, Schumacher- Aye, Gray- Aye.
Consider Approval of an Amendment to the Sherburne County Zoning Ordinance on Solar Farm Prohibition - James Sanford.
Felber/Gray were unanimous to approve an amendment to the Sherburne County Zoning Ordinance on Solar Farm Prohibition, as presented. Roll Call Vote: Danielowski- Aye, Felber- Aye, Schumacher- Aye, Gray- Aye, Hulse- Aye.
Review, Discuss, and Approve 2026 Committee Assignments.
Hulse/Felber unanimous to approve the 2026 committee assignments as amended. Roll Call Vote: Felber- Aye, Schumacher- Aye, Gray- Aye, Hulse- Aye, Danielowski- Aye.
Receive, Review, and Accept the Auditor-Treasurer’s Monthly Report for December 2025.
Hulse/Felber unanimous to approve the Auditor-Treasurer’s Monthly Report for December 2025. Roll Call Vote: Schumacher- Aye, Gray- Aye, Hulse- Aye, Danielowski- Aye, Felber- Aye.
Recess Regular Meeting, Open Community Health Board
Adjourn Community Health Board, Reconcile Regular Meeting
Commissioner Correspondence, Committee Reports, Upcoming Meetings, Future Agenda Items
Commissioner Felber - Energy Transition AETAC Executive Committee, Veterans ERG, NACo Public Safety Meeting, Tri-County Long-Range Planning Committee, Economic Conditions Conference, Resilient Communities Part I webinar, NTSB, Rural Action Caucusus, praise for Public Works regarding road conditions, police shootings update.
Commissioner Schumacher - Constituent calls, M Health Fairview visit and positive feedback.
Commissioner Gray - Minnesota Area Water Supply Advisory Council planning workshop, Connexus breakfast event, Mental Health Local Advisory Meeting, Community Association of Mental Health Initiative (CAMHI), Sheriff staff meet and greet, Zoning Subdivision Workshop, Minnesota Inter-County Association (MICA), Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), Benton/ Sherburne County Corn Growers & East Central Irrigators Association meeting, Planning & Zoning meeting.
Commissioner Hulse - Economic Development Authority meeting, City of Elk River and constituent calls concerning yard waste.
Commissioner Danielowski - Area Planning Organization (APO) meeting, Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe 42nd Annual State of the Band Address, Planning & Zoning subcommittee, Substance Use Prevention (SUP) Coalition meeting, Big Lake Township meeting, Economic Development Authority meeting, ATP3 meeting., Joint Big Lake, Big Lake Township, Orrock Township, and Sherburne County meeting, Big Lake Substance Use Prevention (SUP) Coalition meeting, Agenda review, and National Association of Counties (NACo) Community, Economic & Workforce Development (CEWD) meeting.
Adjourn Regular Meeting
Commissioner Warrants
01/02/26
General Revenue Fund 224,327.88
Public Works Fund 129,926.84
County Ditch Fund 293.50
Solid Waste Fund 76,555.60
Sherco Regional Rail Authority 1,368.00
Agency Collections 20.00
Taxes & Penalties Fund 1,246.56
Total 433,738.38
Manual Warrants
01/02/26
Agency Collections 2,300.50
Total 2,300.50
Commissioner Warrants

01/09/26	General Revenue Fund	360,562.64
	Public Works Fund	232,497.60
	Human Service Fund	49.00
	Solid Waste Fund	21,125.00
	Jail Commissary Fund	13,154.94
	Justice Center Enterprise Fund	84,572.61
	Prepaid Tax Collections	562.00
	Agency Collections	443.50
	Taxes & Penalties Fund	179.85
	School Districts Collections	1,128.52
	Payroll Fiduciary Fund	1,087,380.44
	Total	1,800,527.58
Manual Warrants		
01/09/26	Agency Collections	16,051.50
	Total	16,051.50
Commissioner Warrants		
12/31/25	General Revenue Fund	92,449.04
	Jail Commissary Fund	9,388.58
	Justice Center Enterprise Fund	4,090.36
	Total	105,927.98
Manual Warrants		
12/31/25	Agency Collections	7,992.00
	Total	7,992.00
HHS IFS Admin Warrants		
12/31/25	Bonilla/Lilian	932.86
	Central MN Mental Hlth Center	1,997.50
	Elk River Printing	401.41
	Ellison Center	2,800.00
	Ettesvold/Judith M	550.20
	Grater/Justin	305.20
	Kamm/Abigail	439.81
	Mitchell/Christa	407.83
	MN Dept Of Human Services – SWIFT	4,961.00
	Olinyk/Ashley M	417.90
	Sherburne Co Public Works	551.37
	Todd/Windsong	699.37
	17 Payments less than 300	1,892.27
	Total	16,356.72
HHS IFS Admin Warrants		
01/07/26	Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC)	11,234.00
	AT&T Mobility	7,173.54
	Children Youth & families	1,115.80
	Ellison Center	1,500.00
	Hennepin County	3,861.73
	Lexis Nexis	466.00
	Lutheran Social Services of Minnesota	7,953.67
	MN Department of Human Services- SWIFT	3,491.60
	Sherburne Co Community	
	Corrections	7,528.00
	Sherburne Co Sheriff	9,152.00
	Sherburne County Auditor	
	Treasurer	313,651.70
	Trimin Systems Inc	1,800.00
	31 Payments less than 300	372,667.17
	Total	372,667.17
HHS OBO Warrants		
12/30/25	4Imprint	5,560.73
	Amazon	4,148.85
	Connexus	1,097.35
	Innovative	613.50
	Jellyfish Graphics	4,138.10
	Noodle Soup	917.40
	Progressive	451.00
	Scott Johnson	555.00
	Smilemakers	958.36
	UW PCR Programs	1,325.77
	WRS Health Edco	376.83
	11 Payments less than 300	1,305.53
	Total	21,448.42
/s/ Raeanne Danielowski, Sherburne County Board of Commissioners Chair		
Bruce Messelt, County Administrator		
(Published in the Patriot 02/07/26).		

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Bulldog boys tame Magic

By Mark Kolbinger,
Contributing Writer

The Becker boys basketball team won the battle of the M8 Conference undefeated teams last Friday, going on the road and winning convincingly, 67-55 over the Monticello Magic.

The Bulldogs brought a 13-3 overall record into the game and Monticello was 12-4, as both teams boasted a perfect conference record.

Coach Cory Nuest described his team as “poised and disciplined” as the Bulldogs performed well in front of the huge crowd.

“I was very proud of our boys in their biggest win of the season,” said Nuest. “They competed at a high level, stayed composed under pressure, and played for each other.”

Becker’s defense was stellar, as the team executed Nuest’s game plan to perfection in racing to a 35-21 halftime lead.

The Bulldogs consistently guarded the arc, walled up in the paint, and forced Monticello to score in the half court. Offensively, the Bulldogs were unselfish while sharing the ball.

Monticello made a late push, cutting the lead to eight with two minutes remaining, but Becker stayed composed.

Bulldogs Isiah Boyer and Troy Nuest sealed the game at the free-throw line, closing out the win and taking the lead in the M8 title race.

Becker played true team basketball, finishing with 21 assists and just eight turnovers while consistently winning 50-50 balls and controlling momentum.

Nathan Weiss led Becker with 19 points (seven rebounds, three assists), while Bryce Paumen added 19 points, (seven rebounds, five assists) and provided a strong presence on both ends of the floor.

Isiah Boyer was steady with 12 points (seven rebounds, eight assists) and Troy Nuest finished with eight points, (seven rebounds, four assists, and four steals).

Other stats included Saul Kreft with four points and three rebounds, while Nila Burau provided a

spark off the bench with five points in 16 minutes of action. Paumen also drew praise from his coach for his defensive effort, holding Magic big-man Hunter Miller to just four points.

“Being connected is one of our core values, and our guys showed that all night — defending together, sharing the ball, and trusting one another in big moments,” Nuest said of his team. “When you do those things on the road against a great team, good things happen.”

Vs. Saints

Earlier last week, Becker took down the St. Francis Saints in another convincing road win, 75-52.

It was a good gauge of the Bulldogs’ improvement, as they had defeated the Saints by just eight points in a home game earlier in the season.

Isiah Boyer finished with 12 points, eight assists, and six steals, while Paumen dominated the interior with 20 points and eight rebounds. Nate Weiss anchored the defense, holding St. Francis’ leading scorer to just eight points, well below his 23-point-per-game average. Troy Nuest knocked down four three-pointers and finished with 16 points, four assists, and four steals.

Saul Kreft added eight points and set several strong screens that led directly to scoring opportunities for teammates. Nolan Burau distributed the ball effectively and was solid defensively, while senior Owen Reinking provided quality minutes off the bench and scored five points.

“This was a great conference road victory,” said Coach Nuest. “It was a solid defensive performance and team basketball. We finished with 25 assists, limited them to 52 points, and allowed only five offensive rebounds.”



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Bulldog girls stand at 11-7 on season

By Mark Kolbinger,
Contributing Writer

The young but talented Becker girls basketball team last week went 1-2 in a brutal three game stretch of back-to-back-to-back games to move to 11-7 on the season.

Vs. Chisago Lakes

Last Thursday, the team played great defense in a 68-26 win over Chisago Lakes.

“We continued to rebound well, out-rebounding a taller team for the second consecutive game,” Head Coach Dan Baird said. “We secured 37 rebounds to 24 by Chisago Lakes.”

The Bulldogs picked up 16 boards on the offensive end of the court, and won the second chance points stat 18-0 over the Wildcats. Becker also used its team quickness to go around the Wildcat defenders, which led to a 40-10 scoring advantage in the paint.

Andie Changamire was dominant in this contest for Becker as the freshman scored 19 points and added six rebounds and five assists.

“Andie has been a beast on the boards lately,” Baird said. “She just played great in this contest.”

Adele Changamire added 15 points for Becker,

while Tess Brown added nine points to give the Bulldogs three scorers in double figures.

Eilidh Mrnak added nine points, while Juliana Stach had four and Aysa Johnson scored three points.

Ady Petty, Rowan Hausmann and Ella Otteson each chipped in a bucket for the Bulldogs.

Vs. Magic

Friday night, Becker fell to Conference leader and Class AAAA Monticello, 47-62.

Becker kept it close at halftime, trailing by just four points, 27-23 on the road before Monticello’s veteran team asserted their

will in the second half.

Andie Changamire was sensational, scoring 23 points and grabbing eight boards for Becker, as her sister Adele added nine points.

Vs. Tigers

On Saturday, Becker fell to an excellent Delano team, 71-47. The Tigers are 15-6 on the season and like the Bulldogs, play a grueling schedule, with most of their losses coming against must larger schools.

The Tigers took a 35-25 halftime lead and never looked back.

Becker was led by Andie Changamire’s 14 points, while Tess Brown added 13.

Becker Kick advance to State

By Maria Moore,
Contributing Writer

For the fifth year in a row, Becker kick will be advancing to the state tournament.

Unfortunately, the jazz team did not make it for the first time in five years. They finished fourth by four points out of 800.

The teams had stunning performances and ended up scoring the best that they had all season. The team knew it was going to be a difficult year to advance with all three St.Cloud area



THE BECKER KICK TEAM CELEBRATED after winning third place in sections and moving on to the state tournament. (Submitted Photo).

County seeking tips on suspect in Zimmerman abduction

Submitted Article

The Sherburne County Sheriff’s Office is requesting information from the public as part of its ongoing investigation of a child abduction case.

Joseph Andrew Bragg, 28, is charged with kidnapping and sexual assault related to a Jan. 21 incident involving a 7-year-old child. The child was ultimately recovered alive.

Investigators have de-

termined that Bragg communicated with parents through social media, offering to provide nanny or daycare services. Investigators are asking anyone who employed Joseph Bragg as a nanny for their children to contact investigators through the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension (BCA) tipline at (651) 793-2465.

The Sherburne County Sheriff’s Office is leading the investigation with as-

sistance from the BCA and FBI.

JOSEPH ANDREW BRAGG - shown in his Sherburne County booking photo - is facing charges in the Jan. 21 abduction case involving a 7-year-old child. The county is seeking tips from the public on Bragg and his provision of nanny or daycare services through the years. (Submitted Photo).

schools moving down. “The amount of work the team and coaching staff put in to make sure we earned another trip state this year was unbelievable,” said Head Coach Nadia Fischer-Danzenen. “I’m extremely proud of everyone!”

The team is ready to represent Becker at the Target Center on February 13-14. Thank you’s go out to the community and the Becker administration for all of the support and encouragement.

