

JO DAVIESS COUNTY
PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
FEBRUARY 23, 2026

I. Call to Order

Committee Chairperson Grizzoffi called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM on Monday, February 23, 2026 in the Jo Daviess County Board Room, Jo Daviess County Courthouse in Galena, Illinois.

II. Roll Call

Roll Call was answered as follows: Present – Jacob Ambrosia, John Creighton, John Grizzoffi, Joseph Heitkamp, LaDon Trost. Present: 5. Present electronically: 0. Absent – Steve Endress, Robert Heuerman. Absent: 2.

III. Approval of Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes of the January 26, 2026, Public Works Committee meeting was made by Joseph Heitkamp and seconded by John Creighton. The motion carried by voice vote.

IV. Citizens' Comments

John Schultz, County Board member and Galena resident, commented saying he drives through the intersection of Highway 20 and 4th Street approximately 6,000–12,000 times in the last 61 years, so feels comfortable saying it is an unsafe intersection. The idea of an alternate route is not a new idea; he was advocating for one as far back as 1967. He sees partnering with Galena during a Blackjack Road Realignment would be helpful in securing grant funding.

V. Unfinished Business

FY2025/FY2027 Strategic Goals: Not reviewed.

Two cost estimates were presented for replacing the Scales Mound shop roof. The first estimate was a contractor quote of \$22,253 that included removal of the existing roof and replacement with commercial grade steel. The second estimate of \$9,500-\$10,000 involved in-house labor and steel roofing over the existing roof. Discussion revolved around the benefits of removing the existing roof against the cost savings of not. The question of budget was raised, with County Engineer Dylan Oppold saying he had set aside \$15,000 for the replacement. Therefore, the first option would require additional funding from another source. **A motion to recommend replacing the Scales Mound shop roof at a cost of \$9,500 using in-house labor was made by John Creighton and seconded by John Grizzoffi. The motion carried by voice vote.**

VI. New Business

Discussion with the Village of Scales Mound regarding a North Side Emergency Access Road began with Member Trost reading a four-page memo refuting the comparison of this road initiative to the Blackjack Road Realignment project, which was made during the February 10, 2026, County Board meeting. At that meeting, Scales Mound Village President Nicole Winter requested to “enter into discussions with Jo Daviess County under the same terms and framework used with the City of Galena.”

The memo explained that the Blackjack Road realignment is a county-initiated and county-led project located outside municipal limits, making it a county road under County jurisdiction. The County initiated the watershed request in 2023 ("The project purpose is flood reduction along Blackjack Highway..."), led all subsequent corridor discussions, and later invited the City of Galena only for planning coordination and data sharing. The memo further clarified that Illinois law prohibits the use of county-levied tax dollars to build or improve municipal roads, and that the statutory exception in 605 ILCS 5/5-408 does not apply because the proposed Scales Mound road would not connect to or complete a County highway. While municipalities may contribute to County roads, counties cannot fund municipal roads; therefore, the Blackjack project cannot be used as precedent for the County constructing a municipal road. Member Trost also stated that he contacted Galena EMS regarding instances of trains blocking ambulances, and was told this has occurred only a few times and is "few and far between."

At this point in the discussion, County Board Member Michael Dittmar asked to speak, thanking the committee for meeting with Village representatives, and stated that he disagreed with the memo. Based on his research, he believes the Intergovernmental Cooperation Act (5 ILCS 220/1) allows such collaboration. He further stated that this is a public safety issue and that, although the County's portion of the road would not cross the tracks, it would come close enough so we should help them. Dittmar then provided a handout to the committee questioning the need for the Blackjack Road Realignment and requesting that the County consider the Village of Scales Mound's request as a shared responsibility.

Member John Creighton stated that he had spoken with County Engineer Dylan Oppold earlier in the day regarding the possibility of engineering a gravel road for the Village at a cost significantly less than that of an independent engineering firm. Dylan Oppold then presented rough cost estimates for constructing the gravel road. The County would share costs 50/50 with the Village for any culverts installed under roadways and could also provide engineering services, eliminating the need for Scales Mound to hire a costly consultant. Scales Mound Village President Nicole Winter confirmed that the Village was awarded \$650,000 through an IDOT public safety grant to construct the road. Further discussion compared the Blackjack erosion issue with the Scales Mound safety concern. Member John Schultz stated that the statute does not distinguish between safety and erosion issues, but instead addresses the legality of the proposal. Nicole Winter noted that the proposed road is still in the planning stages and could be adjusted to connect to a county road, allowing for shared costs and funding to improve EMS and ambulance access.

County Board Member Michael Dittmar again referenced the Intergovernmental Cooperation Act (5 ILCS 220/1), stating that he believes it authorizes counties to construct, maintain, and improve highways, and to collaborate with municipalities on roadway projects. He expressed support for working cooperatively with the Village of Scales Mound to pursue grant funding to address the issue, noting that the discussion was moving in a positive direction. He encouraged Nicole Winter, Dylan Oppold, and others to continue these efforts to improve public safety in the County. Discussion concluded with no action taken.

VII. Reports

County Engineer: Dylan Oppold informed the board he should have MFT bids ready for the next Public Works meeting.

VIII. Citizens' Comments

There were no citizens' comments.

IX. Committee Member Concerns

There were no committee member concerns.

X. Adjourn

Motion to adjourn was made at 7:04 PM by Jacob Ambrosia and seconded by John Creighton.
Motion carried by voice vote.

Next committee meeting is Monday, March 23, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. in Hanover