JO DAVIESS COUNTY

FINANCE, TAX, & BUDGETS COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
APRIL 30, 2026

I. Call to Order

Committee Chairperson Schultz called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM on Thursday, April 30, 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 – John Creighton, Michael Dittmar, Diane Gallagher, John Lang, John Schultz, LaDon Trost. Present: 6. Present electronically – Michael Holt. Present electronically: 1. Absent: 0.

III. Approval of Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes of the March 26, 2026, Finance, Tax, & Budget Committee meeting was made by John Lang and seconded by Diane Gallagher. The motion carried by voice vote.

IV. Citizens' Comments

There were no citizens' comments.

V. Unfinished Business

FY2025/FY2027 Strategic Goals: The committee discussed the status of the Blackjack Highway 20 Road Project goal. Members noted the preliminary traffic study does not support the feasibility of the project. Several members expressed that the final report is unlikely to change the conclusion. Discussion centered on whether to classify the goal as “closed,” “inactive,” or “not feasible.” Members agreed the committee may update the status but cannot change board-adopted goals without full board action. The group ultimately supported marking the project as "Inactive" pending further board direction.

VI. New Business

Discussion and possible action regarding market impacts on the assessed value of properties with special use permits for rental activity: In the Assessor’s absence, the committee reviewed informational material regarding how vacation rental sales affect assessment ratios. Members discussed the misconception that the Assessor is attempting to tax vacation rentals differently. Chairperson Schultz indicated he believes some county board members have the mistaken idea that the Assessment office is attempting to tax vacation rentals differently and that is not correct, they cannot. The committee reviewed how higher sales prices for vacation rentals skew township sales ratios, resulting in multipliers that raise assessed values for all comparable properties, meaning non-rental homes may be assessed at a higher percentage of their true market value. Members debated the mathematical impact on tax bills, the role of CPI in limiting rates, and the complexity of the tax cycle. Several members expressed interest in a future educational session to better understand assessment, equalization, and levy interactions.

Presentation and discussion of the financial impact of sub-market rate loans: The committee reviewed an analysis of the long-term financial impact of offering 1.75% economic development loans. Chairperson Schultz explained that such loans generate significantly less interest income than Treasury investments, and while the County prefers to keep their investments local, the analysis using the higher Treasury rate was to provide a comparison scenario. Members discussed balancing fiscal responsibility with economic development goals, the potential for dynamic economic returns, and the need for measurable outcomes such as job creation, housing development, and increased tax base. Several members emphasized that economic development must be weighed alongside major county obligations, including capital improvements, IT modernization, and infrastructure needs. Others stressed the importance of tools that attract residents and businesses. The committee agreed that broader policy discussions should occur during the upcoming FY2027 budget cycle.

VII. Reports

Assessments: A written report was provided.

Grants Administrator: A written report was provided and Tammy Cahill was present to answer questions. She reported active work on Galena Country Fair grant applications, audit-related grant reconciliation, and ongoing coordination with NRCS regarding the Blackjack Watershed Project. She and County Engineer Dylan Oppold are also preparing a Safe Streets for All (SS4A) implementation grant application due May 26.

Treasurer: Melisa Hammer reported that tax bill preparation is underway, with a target due date of June 1, 2026. Printing delays may affect mailing timelines, though statutory deadlines remain under review. She also discussed audit progress, fixed asset reconciliation, and coordination with the auditors.

Financial Reports: Members reviewed the monthly financial statements. Cannabis tax revenue remains steady and consistent with prior year trends.

VIII. Citizens' Comments

There were no citizens' comments.

IX. Committee Member Concerns

Member Diane Gallagher thanked staff for their detailed work and discussed interest in future economic development conversations, tax education sessions, and coordination with regional partners.

Member Creighton shared positive news regarding the reopening of the egg processing plant south of Stockton.

Chairperson Schultz referenced an exchange at the recent Development & Planning meeting in which another board member believed him to be uninformed and urged him to research their position. He noted he did not take the remark personally, but emphasized it is not his responsibility to substantiate another member’s argument and reaffirmed his respect for all colleagues.

X. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made at 7:13 PM by Diane Gallagher and seconded by John Lang. Motion carried by voice vote.

Next committee meeting: Thursday, May 28, 2026 at 6:00 p.m.