

JO DAVIESS COUNTY
LAW ENFORCEMENT & COURTS COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
APRIL 9, 2026

I. Call to Order

Committee Chairperson Allendorf called the meeting to order at 4:00 PM on Thursday, April 9, 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 – Dianne Allendorf, Daisha Boehm, Steve Endress, John Grizzoffi, Joseph Heitkamp, Logan Noe, LaDon Trost. Present: 7. Present electronically: 0. Absent: 0.

III. Approval of Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes of the February 5, 2026, Law Enforcement & Courts Committee meeting was made by Logan Noe and seconded by Daisha Boehm. The motion carried by voice vote.

IV. Citizens' Comments

Bob Wallenhorst, East Dubuque and representing the Menominee-Dunleith Fire Protection District, raised concerns about the future of the countywide Civil Defense Radio System following the Sheriff's Office transition to STARCOM. He explained that the system has historically been maintained through the Sheriff's Department and is still relied upon by all fire departments, ambulance services, and other agencies that remain on VHF. With the Sheriff's Office no longer using or maintaining the civil defense channel, he sought clarification on who will be responsible for upkeep, repairs, and funding going forward. He emphasized that the issue affects the entire county, not just his district, and asked the Committee to determine whether the system will continue to be supported and, if so, by whom.

V. Unfinished Business

FY2025/FY2027 Strategic Goals: The Committee reviewed the status of its strategic goals: 1. Employ a full-time custodian for the remodeled courthouse - Discussion noted that the Facilities Manager currently covers custodial duties; the Committee agreed the goal should be marked "Pending". 2. Obtain Grants for Squad Cars - The Sheriff's Office continually seeks grant opportunities; the Committee marked this goal "Active". 3. Plan for unfunded mandates, could require increasing GF operational budgets - The County has set aside contingency funds in the current budget for unexpected expense; the Committee marked this goal "Active".

VI. New Business

The Committee reviewed the updated intergovernmental agreements that allow municipalities and property owner associations to issue alerts through the County's emergency alert system. Administrator Kaiser explained that the revisions modernize the agreements by removing vendor-specific references, such as "CodeRED," since the County has transitioned to a new provider. Members clarified that participating entities are able to send their own localized alerts, which is the primary purpose of the agreements. **A motion to recommend Intergovernmental Agreements with the City of East Dubuque, City of Galena, Village of Elizabeth, Village of Hanover, Village of**

Stockton, Village of Warren, Apple Canyon Lake Property Owner's Association, and Galena Territory Association to allow participation in the Emergency Alert System under the County's service agreement with the system provider was made by LaDon Trost and seconded by John Grizzoffi. The motion carried by voice vote.

Update on MDFPD Communication Tower located on Route 5, East Dubuque: The Committee received an update regarding the communication tower located on Route 5 in East Dubuque, prompted by recent questions from members of the Menominee-Dunleith Fire Protection District. Administrator Kaiser explained that, due to turnover in County leadership and staff, she reviewed historical documents, including minutes, lease agreements, and invoices, to clarify how the County became responsible for the tower's construction costs and ongoing lease payments. The tower is owned by Harmoni Towers (formerly Parallel Towers), and although the County contributed financially to the installation of the tower in 2021, the County does not have equipment on it. Representatives from the fire district clarified that the repeater was installed to eliminate longstanding radio dead zones that affected communication with dispatch and incoming ambulance services. While the tower significantly improved their operational reliability, the district had believed that the equipment was not built for them specifically; rather, the tower happened to be constructed at the same time the County and ETSB were seeking solutions to coverage gaps. The County currently pays the annual tower lease, now approximately \$2,800, which was originally agreed to under a prior sheriff and prior County Board. Committee members discussed whether the County should continue paying for a tower that benefits only one fire district, especially now that the Sheriff's Office and most law enforcement agencies have transitioned to STARCOM and no longer use VHF civil defense channels. The Sheriff confirmed that VHF radios have been removed from squad cars and that STARCOM does not interface with the legacy civil defense system. Because the agenda item was informational only, no action was taken. The Committee acknowledged the need to further research the broader question raised during public comment: who is responsible for maintaining the countywide civil defense radio system going forward.

The Committee reviewed the ETSB recommendation to purchase a one-year warranty extension and spare equipment from RGB Spectrum to ensure continuity of operations for critical communications hardware. Chairperson Allendorf explained that maintaining warranties is essential due to the high cost of system components and the operational impact if equipment fails. The spare units, including a four-port receiver, four-port transmitter, cables, and a monitor, would allow immediate replacement in the event of a malfunction. ETSB has sufficient funds to cover the total cost, and no concerns were raised by committee members during discussion. **A motion to approve a quote from RGB Spectrum for a one-year warranty at a cost of \$5,400.00 to be paid out of 007-41128-702 Professional Service, and spare equipment at a cost of \$9,304.00 to be paid out of 007-41128-810 Equipment Purchase, for a total cost of \$14,704.00 was made by Logan Noe and seconded by John Grizzoffi. The motion carried by voice vote.**

The Committee reviewed the proposed intergovernmental agreement with Winnebago County to provide juvenile detention services, noting the ongoing statewide shortage of available detention beds. Probation CMO Watson explained that Jo Daviess County detains only a few juveniles each year, typically two or three, but has struggled in recent years to find facilities willing to accept them, sometimes transporting youth several hours away. Winnebago County is now accepting new contracts and offers the closest available option at a daily rate of \$200. Committee members expressed no concerns. **A motion to recommend an Intergovernmental Agreement with Winnebago**

County to provide detention services was made by Steve Endress and seconded by Joseph Heitkamp. The motion carried by voice vote.

VII. Reports

Sheriff: Written reports were provided and Sheriff Kretschmer was present to answer questions. He reported:

- First department meeting held; staffing remains short in investigations.
- Applications are being accepted; academy seats reserved for May.
- Patrol is assisting investigations to reduce burnout.
- Community engagement initiatives underway, including National Night Out and fair participation.
- A crime-suppression initiative is being developed.
- STARCOM cutover is complete and performing well.
- Jail population has ranged from 15–20 inmates.
- Staffing shortages in the jail continue; the goal is to fill two correctional officer positions.

Circuit Clerk: Written reports were provided and Circuit Clerk Phillips was present to answer questions. She reported:

- The new judge has begun and both courtrooms are operating.
- Technology grant funds have been used for bailiff check-in equipment.
- 67 index books are being scanned and stored off-site.

Probation: CMO Watson was present to answer questions. He reported:

- Continued work on probation fee restrictions and compliance.
- AOIC will conduct a pre-audit review next week.

Emergency Management Agency: No report.

Public Defender: No report.

VIII. Citizens' Comments

There were no citizens' comments.

IX. Committee Member Concerns

Member Heitkamp asked for an update on the Emergency Hazardous Materials Mutual Aid Agreement; Chairperson Allendorf will follow up.

Member Noe asked whether action items regarding the Route 5 communication tower will return next month; Chairperson Allendorf confirmed they will.

Member Trost shared concerns from local fire personnel regarding burn ban notifications; EMA Director Willis already has a plan to integrate alerts into the new system.

X. Adjourn

Motion to adjourn was made at 4:49 PM by Joseph Heitkamp and seconded by John Grizzoffi. Motion

carried by voice vote.

Next committee meeting is Thursday, May 14, 2026 at 4:00 p.m.