

JO DAVIESS COUNTY
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
JULY 6, 2026

I. Call to Order

Committee Chairperson Creighton called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM on Monday, July 6, 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, John Creighton, Diane Gallagher, Lynn Gallagher, John Lang, John Schultz, LaDon Trost. Present: 7. Present electronically: 0. Absent – John Grizzoffi, Michael Holt. Absent: 2.

Others present: Jacob Ambrosia, Daisha Boehm, Michael Dittmar, Joseph Heitkamp, Logan Noe.

III. Approval of Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes of the June 1, 2026 Executive Committee meeting was made by Dianne Allendorf and seconded by John Schultz. The motion carried by voice vote.

IV. Citizens' Comments

Daisha Boehm, Galena resident and County Board District #5 member, read a letter on behalf of the Village of Scales Mound expressing concern that the County Board is considering an intergovernmental agreement for a Galena parking ramp but declined to partner with Scales Mound on an emergency access road needed to ensure timely response for police, fire, and EMS. They urge the board to reconsider, stating that all communities deserve equal prioritization of public safety and asking the County to explain why cooperation was possible for one project but not another.

Gerald Podraza, Apple River resident, submitted a response to a letter from John Lang to the County's Planning & Development Administrator regarding rental properties and the meeting that was held in Hanover relating to rental properties. He believes a resolution should be on the November ballot establishing fines for disorderly conduct or nuisance behavior at short-term rental properties.

V. Unfinished Business

FY2025/FY2027 Strategic Goals: After committee discussion regarding Item VI.B., the committee agreed the traffic study analysis did not support a realignment of Blackjack Road and returned to the strategic goals. **A motion to remove item 1. *Construct a new road from Blackjack to Hwy 20 to improve water management & traffic flow* from the FY2025/FY2027 Strategic Goals was made by John Creighton and seconded by John Schultz. The motion carried by voice vote.**

The Committee reviewed the monthly Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Request log. Members discussed the significant staff time required to fulfill FOIA requests and asked whether the IT Department could explore the use of AI tools to reduce workload. The Chair recommended referring the matter to the IT Committee for evaluation. Another member noted that the Sheriff's Office spent the equivalent of three-fourths of a work week responding to FOIA requests in the prior month.

VI. New Business

At this point, Chairperson Creighton exercised his prerogative and moved Item VI.A. Presentation from the Illinois Separation Foundation to allow for the late arrival of the presenter.

Presentation of the Blackjack Road Connector Traffic Analysis: The Committee reviewed the completed traffic study. Chairperson Creighton stated the counts were far lower than anticipated, concluding the results effectively ended consideration of the project. Members discussed the February traffic-count dates, with one noting that while February is a high-traffic period for Chestnut Mountain, many drivers use alternative routes such as Devil's Ladder or Hanover, reducing counts on Blackjack Road. The Committee agreed the project was no longer justifiable and agreed that removing it from the County's strategic goals and priority list made sense.

The County Administrator explained that the proposed agreement updates an earlier MOU and is intended to address longstanding courthouse parking shortages. Members discussed concerns about metered parking, noting the draft agreement appeared to require meters on all spaces. The County Administrator clarified that metering would not be required for courthouse business and that the County could designate free parking during business hours. Michael Dittmar raised concerns about project cost, referencing past courthouse renovation overruns and questioning how much additional funding the County could commit. Others emphasized that the courthouse project was already completed and that the County must now address parking needs created by the renovation. After discussion, the committee agreed to recommend approval with the understanding that the metering policy would require clarification. **A motion to recommend an Intergovernmental Agreement with the City of Galena for the purposes of building a parking ramp located at the address commonly known as 311 North Bench Street was made by LaDon Trost and seconded by John Schultz. The motion carried by voice vote.**

The County Administrator reported that new turf installed on courthouse grounds has damage due to dog waste, and current ordinances do not prohibit this action. The proposed amendment would not ban dogs from county property but would authorize enforcement actions against individuals who fail to clean up after their animals. The Committee discussed the need for a practical enforcement mechanism and acknowledged that animal control operations would be exempt where appropriate. **A motion to recommend an Ordinance Amending Title 5, Chapter 12 of the Jo Daviess County Code of Ordinances to Prohibit Dogs on County Property & to Regulate Animal Waste was made by Dianne Allendorf and seconded by John Creighton. The motion carried by voice vote.**

Presentation from the Illinois Separation Foundation: Loret Newlin, representing the Illinois Separation Foundation, traveled from Jasper County to explain the organization's referendum initiative. She described the group as a grassroots effort seeking to explore the possibility of forming a new state composed of Illinois counties outside Cook County, citing concerns about constitutional violations, Chicago-centric legislation, and increased taxes and fees. Newlin emphasized that the November referendum proposed for Jo Daviess County is non-binding, advisory only, and intended to determine whether voters want county boards to "look into the possibility" of separation rather than enact any structural change. She clarified several misconceptions, including that the initiative is not a vote to separate from Cook County, not a plan to join Indiana, and not affiliated with another organization known as New Illinois. Newlin also addressed questions about constitutional authority, noting that Article 4, Section 3 of the U.S. Constitution allows new states to be formed from existing

ones with required approvals. She explained that 33 counties have already voted on similar referenda with an average approval rate of 74%, and nine counties are scheduled for the November ballot. Committee members asked about fiscal impacts, intergovernmental revenue, and the feasibility of operating as a new state. In response, Newlin cited historical examples such as Maine and West Virginia, discussed potential cost savings, and reiterated that the referendum is only a first step to determine public interest. Members noted the agenda did not include possible action on a proposed referendum and thanked Newlin for her time.

VII. Closed Session

A motion to enter closed session at 7:19 PM was made by Dianne Allendorf and seconded by John Grizzoffi to discuss:

1. **Closed session minutes section 2(c)21** *"Discussion of minutes of meetings lawfully closed under this Act, whether for the purpose of approval by the body of the minutes or semi-annual review of the minutes as mandated by Section 2.06."* Topic of discussion: The review of closed session minutes.

The motion carried by roll call vote. Ayes – Dianne Allendorf, John Creighton, Diane Gallagher, Lynn Gallagher, John Lang, John Schultz, LaDon Trost. Ayes: 7. Nays – None. Nays: 0. Absent – John Grizzoffi, Michael Holt. Absent: 2.

VIII. Reconvene to Open Session

A motion to reconvene to open session at 7:40 PM was made by John Schultz and seconded by John Lang. The motion carried by roll call vote. Ayes – Dianne Allendorf, John Creighton, Diane Gallagher, Lynn Gallagher, John Lang, John Schultz, LaDon Trost. Ayes: 7. Nays – None. Nays: 0. Absent – John Grizzoffi, Michael Holt. Absent: 2.

IX. Possible Actions as a Result of Closed Session

A motion to open the Executive Committee closed session minutes from the following meetings: October 3, 2002; March 31, 2003; June 30, 2003; November 14, 2005; October 2, 2006; November 5, 2007; December 3, 2007; June 1, 2015; November 30, 2015; February 7, 2017; June 6, 2017; September 5, 2023; February 3, 2025; March 3, 2025; May 5, 2025; June 2, 2025; and July 1, 2025, and that the minutes from the following Executive Committee closed session minutes shall remain closed: May 5, 2014; March 2, 2015; February 29, 2016; May 1, 2018; and August 4, 2025, was made by Dianne Allendorf and seconded by John Schultz. The motion carried by voice vote.

A motion to open the County Board closed session minutes from the following meetings: June 8, 2004; August 10, 2004; September 14, 2004; December 14, 2004; August 12, 2008; October 14, 2008; January 13, 2009; August 12, 2014; August 19, 2014; September 9, 2014; and October 14, 2014, and that the following County Board minutes shall remain closed: July 13, 2004; October 12, 2004; January 11, 2005; November 27, 2007; April 7, 2008; June 14, 2011; and October 11, 2011, was made by Dianne Allendorf and seconded by John Schultz. The motion carried by voice vote.

X. Reports

County Administrator: A written report was provided and Angela Kaiser was present and available to answer questions.

XI. Citizens' Comments

James Asta, Galena resident, stated that the secession presentation lacked preparation, unity, and any concrete plan, and he argued that the idea would create division rather than solve problems. He urged the board not to validate what he called an irresponsible and poorly thought-out proposal by placing it on the ballot.

Gerald Podraza, Apple River resident, emphasized the need for rural economic development, noting that local spending is flowing to surrounding communities. He questioned the feasibility of statewide separation and asked what message the board intends to send voters if it places the referendum on the ballot.

Berni Biagini, Galena resident, said voters need clear data showing what separation would look like, noting that such information was missing from the presentation. He referenced a Southern Illinois University study concluding separation would not be economically beneficial and stated that adding such a complex question would make informed voting more difficult.

XII. Committee Member Concerns

Diane Gallagher reminded members that the Black Hawk Hills Resource Council will have a display at the Galena Library, highlighting their housing competition.

XIII. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made at 7:45 PM by John Lang and seconded by John Schultz. Motion carried by voice vote.

Next committee meeting: Monday, August 3, 2026 at 6:00 p.m.