

**JO DAVIESS COUNTY
DEVELOPMENT & PLANNING COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
AUGUST 25, 2026**

I. Call to Order

Committee Chairperson Diane Gallagher called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM on Tuesday, August 25, 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 – Michael Dittmar, Diane Gallagher, Lynn Gallagher, John Lang, John Schultz, LaDon Trost. Present: 6. Present electronically: 0. Absent: 0.
Also present electronically — John Creighton, Jacob Ambrosia.

III. Approval of Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes of the July 28, 2026 Development & Planning Committee meeting was made by John Lang and seconded by John Schultz. The motion carried by voice vote.

IV. Citizens' Comments

Tony Jones, Stockton, introduced himself as the newly appointed board member to fill the vacancy in District #16 — Wards Grove & Stockton I.

V. Unfinished Business

FY2025/FY2027 Strategic Goals were reviewed with no changes.

VI. New Business

The Committee engaged in an extended discussion regarding FY2027 program priorities, focusing heavily on childcare development, the structure of loan programs, and the sustainability of Fund 018 revenues. Members referenced the downward trend in projected revenue and the need to balance economic development with capital and personnel obligations.

A concept for a forgivable loan program supporting childcare development was presented, emphasizing the need to identify childcare as a top priority even if funds are not immediately expended. Members discussed current childcare planning efforts in the county, including grant activity, facility requirements, and infrastructure considerations such as sprinkler systems. Members debated whether the program should be a standalone initiative or incorporated into revisions of the existing Revolving Loan Program. The initial proposal allows for the forgiveness of the interest charged to the loan. **A motion to recommend developing a Forgivable Loan Program for Childcare for FY2027 with a maximum loaned of \$80,000 was made by John Schultz and seconded by John Lang. The motion carried by roll call vote. Ayes – Michael Dittmar, Diane Gallagher, Lynn Gallagher, John Lang, John Schultz, LaDon Trost. Ayes: 6. Nays – None. Nays: 0. Absent: 0.**

The Committee considered whether to recommend reinstating a small business grant program. Members expressed concerns about public perception of grants versus loans and the sustainability of grant funding. **A motion to recommend a Small Business Development Grant Program for FY2027**

with a maximum grant total of \$50,000 was made by Michael Dittmar and seconded by Lynn Gallagher. The motion failed by a tied roll call vote. Ayes – Michael Dittmar, Diane Gallagher, Lynn Gallagher. Ayes: 3. Nays – John Lang, John Schultz, LaDon Trost. Nays: 3. Absent: 0.

The Committee reviewed the proposed \$250,000 Target Loan Program, intended to support housing, industry, and childcare projects identified through prior ad-hoc work. Members discussed whether the program duplicated existing tools, whether Fund 018 could sustain the amount, and whether priorities should instead be embedded in the Revolving Loan Program. **A motion to recommend a Target Loan Program for FY2027 with a maximum loan total of \$250,000 was made by Michael Dittmar and seconded by John Schultz. The motion failed by roll call vote. Ayes – Michael Dittmar. Ayes: 1. Nays – Diane Gallagher, Lynn Gallagher, John Lang, John Schultz, LaDon Trost. Nays: 5. Absent: 0.**

VII. Reports

Building & Zoning Monthly Report: A written report was provided and William Meeker, Planning & Development Administrator was present electronically to answer questions. He reported issuance of 15 building permits in July with a total construction value of approximately \$500,000, including one accessory dwelling unit. Guest accommodation licensing and inspections continued steadily.

Northwest Illinois Economic Development (NWILED) Monthly Report: A written report was provided and David Schmit, Executive Director was present to answer questions. He reported multiple regional development activities, including Stockton's \$90,000 site-readiness grant, Hanover's comprehensive plan update, industrial building tours, and preparations for Manufacturing & Trades Day involving 35 businesses and regional schools. The Committee discussed how these efforts align with countywide economic development priorities.

Local Redevelopment Authority (LRA) Monthly Report: No report provided.

Economic Development Fund (018) Financial Reports: A written report was provided. The committee reviewed current balances, outstanding loans, and anticipated revenues. Members discussed the distinction between cash-on-hand and loan-receivable assets, noting that while Fund 018 shows approximately \$296,000 in banked funds, outstanding loans reduce available cash for new programs. No cannabis revenue had yet been received for the fiscal year.

VIII. Citizens' Comments

Jacob Ambrosia, County Board Member District #15, attending as a member of the public, spoke multiple times during the discussion to reinforce and support Member Dittmar's positions on economic development programs.

IX. Committee Member Concerns

Members raised questions regarding senior services survey outreach, upcoming zoning meetings, and facility maintenance issues at the Highway Department building.

X. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made at 7:50 PM by John Lang and seconded by John Schultz. Motion carried by voice vote.

Next committee meeting: Tuesday, September 22, 2026 at 6:00 p.m.