

JO DAVIESS COUNTY
LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
JANUARY 8, 2026

I. Call to Order

Committee Chairperson Lang called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM on Thursday, January 8, 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 – Peggy Bastian, Michael Dittmar, Logan Noe, John Schultz, LaDon Trost, John Lang. Present: 6. Present electronically – 0. Absent – Lynn Gallagher. Absent: 1. Also present were County Board members - John Creighton, Diane Gallagher, Bob Heuerman. Present: 3.

III. Approval of Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes of the November 13, 2025, Legislative Committee meeting was made by John Schultz and seconded by Logan Noe. The motion carried by voice vote.

IV. Citizens' Comments

There were no citizens' comments.

V. Unfinished Business

FY2025/FY2027 Strategic Goals were not reviewed.

VI. New Business

Committee Chairperson Lang introduced State Senator Andrew Chesney and invited him to speak on the agenda topics, as well as any additional subjects he wished to address.

State Senator Chesney spoke about the Veto Override Session, noting that it was generally quiet and has recently taken on the character of a mini session. He highlighted several items of concern, particularly socially controversial legislation, including an Assisted Suicide bill that narrowly passed despite opposition and was signed into law. He also noted significant attention given to legislation involving the reallocation of road funds and an increase in the toll tax. State Senator Chesney stated that he has called on Republicans to reject additional revenue measures until a better balance is achieved within the legislature. He referenced 2019, when Republicans joined Democrats in supporting the largest gas tax increase in Illinois, resulting in the second-highest gas tax in the nation, behind California. At that time, there was bipartisan agreement on the need for additional revenue to fund road improvements. Senator Chesney also discussed the Lock Box Amendment, noting that its definition has continued to change over time. He reported that the proposed Amazon delivery tax supported by Governor Pritzker did not pass in the House. Additional discussion during the Veto Session included the Green Energy Deal passed in 2019. Senator Chesney stated that since its implementation, electric bills have increased statewide. He emphasized the need for Illinois to reinvest in nuclear energy, stating that wind and solar power alone are insufficient. Lastly, Senator Chesney addressed bipartisan legislation passed during the Veto Session that he stated restricts ICE

agents from carrying out their duties, and noted the need for Illinois to address ongoing immigration issues.

State Senator Chesney addressed proposed Tier 2 pension modifications, noting that such changes are expected and advising local governments to prepare for future obligations related to retirement fund contributions.

State Senator Chesney identified rental regulations and registration requirements as issues to watch.

Major initiatives for 2026 include affordability and the budget. Senator Chesney noted that the session is expected to be quiet, with a Lame Duck session following the elections, and advised residents to be prepared for potential financial impacts.

In response to a question regarding affordability for FY26 and planned actions, State Senator Chesney stated that he will continue to oppose what he described as harmful proposals, including the Amazon delivery tax. He noted that the Senate remains significantly divided on public policy issues and stated that he has not supported the Democratic budget and does not intend to do so.

Committee Member Noe asked Senator Chesney what specific actions he plans to take. Senator Chesney responded that compromise must come from the majority party. He further stated that the state continues to sweep funds from counties across Illinois, including Jo Daviess County, and emphasized the need for more conservative voices to speak out.

Committee Member Diane Gallagher spoke on the cost of business in Illinois and how it seems to differ greatly from Iowa and Wisconsin. She suggested that the party could assist by providing information to keep Illinois residents informed about legislative developments. Senator Chesney expressed hope that small meetings and groups, such as the Legislative Committee, can help influence public opinion and stated that residents should be informed when they are voting against their counties' best interests.

Committee Member Creighton spoke about a UCCI conference he attended last year and expressed concern over discussions related to the elimination of townships. State Senator Chesney responded by explaining that certain proposals seek to require all roads in Illinois to be maintained by union employees, noting that townships are currently the remaining exception. He also stated that there is broad appreciation for townships within government and a general desire for them to remain.

Committee member Trost spoke about a new law disrupting the 2nd amendment for guns. Senator Chesney confirmed that the Safe Gun Storage Act (Senate Bill 8) took effect on January 1, 2026 in Illinois.

Articles of interest and potential legislative issues were provided to committee members for review. No discussion was held at this meeting.

VII. Legislative issues Committee Members or County Officials want the committee to be aware of and take action on at another meeting

Committee Chairperson Lang inquired whether there were any upcoming legislative issues requiring the committee's awareness or action. State Senator Chesney noted that roughly 5,000 bills are filed

each session and encouraged committee members to contact his office in support of legislation they favor. He further stated that 30 to 40 bills, both large and small, will be filed or refiled, with continued efforts to move select measures through the legislative process.

VIII. Citizens' Comments

There were no citizens' comments.

IX. Committee Member Concerns

Committee Member Trost expressed appreciation to State Senator Chesney for his willingness to attend and speak with the committee. Committee Member Creighton thanked the Senator for his observations regarding business growth in Iowa and Wisconsin and the lack of manufacturing expansion in Illinois, and for his continued efforts on those issues. Committee Chairperson Lang also thanked State Senator Chesney for attending the meeting and sharing his insights.

X. Adjourn

Motion to adjourn was made at 7:11 PM by John Schultz and seconded by Michael Dittmar. Motion carried by voice vote.

Next Legislative committee meeting scheduled for Thursday, February 5, 2026, at 6:00 p.m.