

FORD COUNTY BOARD MINUTES
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 2026

A. CALL TO ORDER

The County Board of Ford County met pursuant to adjournment in the Ford County Sheriff's Boardroom at the Ford County jail in Paxton, Illinois on Monday, September 14, 2026, at 6:00 P.M. The meeting was called to order by the Ford County Board Chairman, Chase McCall.

B. ROLL CALL

Roll call showed the following board members in attendance: Dominic Brackenhoff, Greg Niewold, Sarah Mussman, Tim Nuss, Tom McQuinn, Cindy Ihrke, Neil Rhoades, Lesley King, Chase McCall. Gene May, Randy Ferguson, and Carson Vaughn were not present.

C. PROCLAMATION

Sheriff Johnson

D. PLEDGE TO THE FLAG AND INVOCATION

Chairman Chase McCall
Lesley King

E. APPROVAL OF THE BOARD AGENDA

Mr. Niewold made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Mr. Nuss seconded the motion.

Voice Vote – Carried

F. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mrs. King made a motion to approve **August 10, 2026, County Board minutes**. Mrs. Mussman seconded the motion.

Voice Vote – Carried

G. COMMUNICATIONS

None

H. COMMENTS FROM THE FLOOR

- Jennifer Harrison, CMO, spoke regarding the August 13, 2026, flood. Mrs. Harrison states she is speaking on the limited direction received after the flood regarding safety, the steps being taken, the amount of time it took to conduct air quality tests with no results to date. Mrs. Harrison asked for better and clearer communication, a timelier response, and a coordinated response plan in place for future emergencies. Lastly, Mrs. Harrison asked the board for approval for the temporary office space at 140 N. Market to be approved for the Ford County Probation Department to resume normal, safe practices for their department.
- Kasi Schwarz, Ford County Circuit Clerk, addressed the Ford County Board on illnesses that have occurred with her employees since the flood (using inhalers daily) and herself being hospitalized from mold exposure. She expressed her concern for all employees and courthouse patrons. Mrs. Schwarz expressed her disappointment in the lack of communication. There is also concern with the fact that many employees must access the basement several times daily to perform job duties. Mrs. Schwarz has spoken with AIOC and received advice. Mrs. Schwarz has also bought several items to improve the air quality in her office for each employee.
- Mallory Wolken, Senior Officer Ford County Probation, shared a letter that was received and the sender wanted it to be shared with stakeholders and the Ford County Board. The sender has praised the Ford County Probation for their efforts in helping to turn their life around, time spent with them, phone calls answered, and the help in being 133 days sober.

- Nick Purcell addressed the Ford County Board regarding his personal health concerns. Mr. Purcell read an email from June 2026 stating his contact with Mr. McCall, Mr. Killian, and Mr. Niewold. Mr. Purcell states he would like the board to consider his bid for harvesting his crop that he has placed.
- Glenn Miller, Ford County Public Health Department, gave his monthly report. Mr. Miller gave figures from the month and gave updates on what the Health Department has been doing in the community.
- Kevin Bachman was on the list to speak but he stated he would like to reserve the right to speak until later.

I. OPPORTUNITY FOR ELECTED OFFICIALS/DEPT. HEADS TO ADDRESS THE BOARD

Taylor Burnett, Ford County Treasurer, addressed the board regarding Public Act 104-0553. Mrs. Burnett explained the pros and cons of the act and asked that the board consider adopting a resolution, which will need to be done yearly, for the use of Joseph E. Meyer and Associates for surplus equity sales pursuant to Public Act 104-0553.

J. APPROVAL OF ALL SUBMITTED ELECTED OFFICIALS/DEPT. HEAD REPORTS

Mr. Nuss made a motion to approve all submitted elected officials/dept. head reports. Mrs. Ihrke seconded the motion.

Voice Vote – Carried

K. VERBAL COMMITTEE REPORTS

I. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

No monthly meeting. All action items will be under new business.

II. FARM COMMITTEE

Mr. Niewold made a motion to open sealed bids for custom harvesting services. Mrs. Mussman seconded the motion.

Name	Farm 1/acre	Farm 2/acre	Farm 3/acre	Discount	Total
Purcell Custom Farming	\$35.00	\$30.00	\$35.00	2% all	\$98.00
On Track Farming	\$78.00	\$59.00	\$82.00	0	\$219.00
Bachman Trucking	\$122.00	\$72.00	\$110.00	0	\$304.00
Bachman LLC	\$115.00	\$68.00	\$105.00	0	\$288.00
Sanders Enterprises	\$88.00	\$69.00	\$88.00	5% all	232.75

Discussion: Mr. Purcell states he entered the bid under the wrong entity. Mr. Killian does not believe that bid can be accepted. Question was asked whether Mr. Purcell can bid since he did not satisfy his prior contract with Ford County Farms. Mr. Killian states anyone can bid but the county is to award to the lowest responsible bidder.

Mrs. Mussman made a motion to accept the bid by On Track Farming to custom farm Ford County Farm #1, #2, #3. Mr. Niewold seconded the motion.

Discussion: All insurance certificates were submitted, equipment listed, references provided. Farmer is Matt Birkey.

Roll call – Unanimous

Mrs. Ihrke made a motion to approve the County Board Chairman and the Farm Committee chair as County Representatives to coordinate with On Track Farming regarding bid packet requirements. Mr. McQuinn seconded the motion. There was no discussion.
Voice Vote – Carried

Mr. Niewold made a motion to discuss selection of grain elevators for delivery. Mrs. Mussman seconded the motion.

Mr. Niewold moved to haul farm #1 to Cargill in Gibson City and Farm #2, #3 to Ludlow Co-Op in Paxton. Mrs. King seconded the motion.
Voice Vote – Carried

Mr. Niewold made a motion to allow the county representative(s), county treasurer, and county clerk to set up accounts at agreed to grain elevator(s) and coordinate sale of grain as it is harvested. Mr. Brackenhoff seconded the motion.
Voice Vote – Carried

Mr. Niewold made a motion to allow BCS to calculate and quote nutrient replacement value to be withheld by the County per the terminated lease agreement. Mrs. Mussman seconded the motion.

Voice Vote – Carried

Mr. Niewold moved to discuss transferring crop insurance for county farms #1,#2,#3 to Ford County and related costs associated. Mrs. Mussman seconded the motion.

Discussion: Insurance representative was present. Explained that if the County is willing to take on the premium of \$10,000 they can carry the insurance. Explanation of coverage was explained.

Mr. Niewold made a motion to approve transferring crop insurance for County Farm #1,#2, #3 to Ford County and related costs up to \$10,000. Mr. Rhoades seconded the motion.

Roll Call – Unanimous

Mr. Niewold made a motion to discuss status of Ford County Farms and outstanding amounts owed to Ford County, including but not limited to lease payment, taxes, all penalty/interest, postage, nutrient replacement, insurance, legal fees, grain drying, custom harvesting. Mrs. Mussman seconded the motion.

Discussion: Mr. Niewold would like to add storage to the above list and taxes will need to have a penalty added since they are still unpaid to date. Farm lease was terminated due to non-payment August 28, 2026, at 4:00 P.M. There will need to be a spreadsheet created to equate the amount owed plus penalty, interest, and amount received from harvest.

Mr. Niewold made a motion to discuss/possible action allowing county representative along with POA's to report production to FSA and insurance company as applicable or required. Mr. McQuinn seconded the motion.

Discussion: Ford County is required to give production to insurance company since the insurance has been transferred. Production will also need to be given to FSA. The POA's will report the information.

Voice Vote – Carried

Mr. Niewold made a motion to discuss Ford County Farms #1,#2,#3 for 2027 and beyond. Mrs. Mussman seconded the motion.

Discussion: Mr. Niewold suggests that after harvest is over that the county sell the farms and decide what to do with the profit from the farms. Farms would need to be appraised unless being sold at public auction per Mr. Killian. Mr. Niewold states that if we can do a live public auction to forgo the appraisal process, set a minimum amount per acre, and hold a live auction. Repairs are still scheduled and must be done by planting of 2027. Remove amounts of repairs from sale price. Timeline proposed is prior to the end of year 2026. Disclose previous agreements to potential buyers. Will investigate nursing home farm transfer from Public Building Commission to the county. County Board is interested in the auction route.

III. FINANCE COMMITTEE

Finance Committee met September 11, 2026.

Mrs. Mussman moved to approve all claims reviewed in the finance committee. Mrs. King seconds the motion. Discussion: WIPFLI is being paid now. The program is working as it is intended to. Mrs. Mussman and Mr. Brackenhoff created a custom report and it is working. Locis update: Update and training will take place October 2nd and October 5th. The update will hopefully help with imports of reports as well.

Roll Call – Unanimous

Mrs. Mussman makes a motion to discuss and review FY2027 preliminary budget. Mr. Niewold seconds the motion.

Discussion: Nothing has changed as far as expenses. There is no Public Building Commission amount for levy yet. Once there is a final number, the deficit amount can be confirmed. Zoning figure could change. Zoning should have a dedicated fund created to track expenses. This would not help the general fund unless there was an interfund transfer which has been done previously. Mrs. Mussman will wait to hear from Chairman McCall regarding the zoning figure. Truth in taxation has been scheduled if needed.

Mrs. Mussman made a motion to approve a resolution for the use of Joseph E. Meyer and associates for surplus equity sales pursuant to Public Act 104-0553. Mrs. Ihrke seconds the motion.

Discussion: There will need to be a County Board member appointed for approval for consideration of delinquent taxes.

Mrs. Mussman amended her motion to include the Finance Chair as the designated appointed board member responsible for approval for consideration of delinquent taxes. Mrs. Ihrke seconds the amended motion.

RES26-54

Voice Vote – Carried

IV. HIGHWAY COMMITTEE

The Highway Committee met September 9, 2026.

Mr. Nuss moved to approve all claims reviewed in the Highway Committee meeting. Mr. Niewold seconds the motion.

Roll call – 8 yes

1 no vote, absent – Ihrke

Mr. Nuss made a motion for approval of petition for aid for culvert replacement for Peach Orchard Township. Mrs. King seconded the motion. Discussion: Petition for Aid is now being done for transparency purposes.

Voice Vote – Carried

Mr. Nuss moved to approve HLR Engineering Service agreement for Kempton Road pavement overlay.

Mrs. Ihrke seconded the motion. **RES26-55**

Discussion: Agreement is for \$67,715.00

Roll call – Unanimous

Mr. Nuss attended the HSTP for Region 6 quarterly meeting to discuss transportation needs.

Mr. Nuss and Mrs. Ihrke have been working with Futures Communications and reported numbers to the board.

Mr. Niewold inquired about the intersection of Elliot blacktop and Route 9 regarding the number of accidents that have occurred here. He has been contacted stating the rumble strips do not rumble and the person who reached out wondered about solar power signs that flash. Jeremy Putnam stated that the signs are associated with the State of IL and the rumble strips are Ford County. This has been asked for several intersections previously and the State goes off statistics and numbers. There has been communication made from IDOT shed in Gibson for this issue.

V. INSURANCE & PERSONNEL

No meeting

VI. **SHERIFF COMMITTEE**

Mr. Niewold made a motion to approve all claims reviewed in the Sheriff Committee. Mrs. Mussman seconded the motion.

Roll call – Unanimous

VII. **ZONE COMMITTEE**

Mrs. Ihrke gave an update. Zoning Committee updated all text amendments to send to ZBA for a hearing. Hearing is set October 2, 2026.

VIII. **APPROVAL OF COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**

Mr. Nuss made a motion to approve all committee meeting minutes. Mrs. Mussman seconded the motion.

Voice Vote – Carried

L. **SPECIAL ASSIGNMENTS**

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| I. | <u>708 BOARD</u> | KING |
| II. | <u>9-1-1</u> Oct 14, 2026, meeting. Will hire coordinator that night | NUSS |
| III. | <u>CIRMA</u> | McCALL/VAUGHN/IHRKE |
| IV. | <u>ECCA</u> | McCALL |
| V. | <u>ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT</u> | FERGUSON/NUSS |
| VI. | <u>EXTENSION</u> | MUSSMAN |
| VII. | <u>FORD COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH DEPT</u> Next meeting 9/15/26 6:00 P.M. | McCALL/NUSS |
| VIII. | <u>MOBILE REGION 8</u> | SHERIFF JOHNSON/McCALL |
| IX. | <u>REGIONAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION</u> | McCALL/VAUGHN |
| X. | <u>UNION AFFAIRS</u> | McCALL/McQUINN |
| XI. | <u>WIA</u> | McCALL/NIEWOLD |

M. **OLD BUSINESS**

Mrs. Ihrke states the board was unaware that the mold in the basement was still an issue and thought it was being taken care of. Chase informed the board the process of insurance claims. Servpro is working in the basement. The mold test has been sent and is pending results. Necessary steps will be taken for corrections. Del Bruens, Public Building Commission Chairman updated the board on the necessary improvements needed for the basement to help prevent future issues. Department heads are to turn any receipts for anything flood related that must be purchased for their departments.

N. **NEW BUSINESS**

Mrs. Ihrke makes a motion to approve a resolution establishing an interim Zoning application procedure and directing zoning matters to the Ford County ZBA during the period in which the Ford County Planning Commission is unable to conduct business. Mr. Niewold seconded the motion. **RES26-53**

Discussion: With the pause of the Planning Commission due to not being able to successfully administer a comprehensive plan. Any Zoning matters will be routed to ZBA and then the County Board.

Voice Vote – Carried

Mrs. King made a motion to approve the appointment of Jason Stuckey to the Pella Drainage District No. 2. Mrs. Mussman seconded the motion. **RES26-56**

Voice Vote – Carried

Mr. Niewold made a motion to approve the appointment of Roger Read to the Pella Drainage District No. 1. Mr. Nuss seconded the motion. **RES26-57**

Voice Vote – Carried

Mr. Niewold made a motion to discuss temporary office space for the Ford County Probation Department. Mrs. Mussman seconded the motion.

Discussion: Mrs. Harrison explained the options of relocations. A mobile building that could be placed on location with courthouse and jail. The price on that was very high. There was also a vacant building at 140 N. Market St, Paxton that is available. The owner, Dr. Xu, would be willing to renovate the space for six

indivual offices if a lease was signed for 2 years. If no lease is signed, it would be a month-to-month agreement with the renovation cost being Ford County's responsibility. Rent will be \$3,000 per month either way. There will be a bailiff part-time when needed, and staff would have a locked door. Mrs. Harrison stated the struggles with everyone working from the small courtroom right now. Mrs. Harrison states utilities can be paid from dedicated funds. CIRMA may cover a portion of the rent for the temporary relocation. Mrs. Harrison states she is not asking for a permanent relocation. OSPS and CASA have been offered to move with probation if they wish. The move could happen by the first week of October 2026. Rent goes up the second year by \$150.00. There have been a few other options but they do not work for the needs of the Probation Department.

The Board would like to give State's Attorney a chance to review the lease before they vote on entering lease.

This meeting of the Ford County Board will be continued to Friday, September 18, 2026 at 5:00 P.M. in the Sheriff's Boardroom at the Ford County Jail.

FORD COUNTY BOARD CONTINUED MEETING MINUTES

The Ford County Board met on September 18, 2026, at 5:00 P.M. in the Sheriff's Boardroom at the Ford County Jail. This meeting is a continuation of the Ford County Board meeting held on September 14, 2026. Roll call was administered for record. The following members were present: Dominic Brackenhoff, Tim Nuss, Tom McQuinn, Cindy Ihrke, Neil Rhoades, Lesley King, Vice Chairman Carson Vaughn, and Chairman McCall. Gene May, Greg Niewold, and Sarah Mussman were not present. Mrs. Ihrke made a motion to seat Mr. Vaughn; Mrs. King seconded the motion.

Voice Vote - Carried

Continuing with the motion on the table of discussion of a temporary office location for the Ford County Probation Department.

There Air quality report has been returned. Mold and fungi were found, no asbestos in plaster walls. Asbestos in floors which will need sealed and cannot be disturbed.

Sheriff Johnson gave an update of Servpro will be here Monday to begin working on mold remediation and cleaning of the files and documents. The amount of work put into the basement by the Public Building Commission will depend on what the basement will be used for (i.e. offices or just storage)

Insurance will want to know the return plan before agreeing to pay for a temporary location.

Ford County will be the lessee of the office space and if the Probation Department moves back to their location prior to the end of the lease, Ford County can still use that space for the remainder of the lease term. Andrew Killian states the AOIC will not allow the Probation Department to work out of the small courtroom much longer as they will decertify the program. If the program is decertified there will be 90 days to remediate the cause of decertification. After 90 days, the county will lose 10% of reimbursement of salaries, and every 30 days after that another additional 10%. Mr. Killian also added that Supreme Court Rule 21E can order that this be done. AOIC also sets standards for the offices. The Chief Judge has not ordered Probation to that location but will if there is not decision made. Moving forward, this will need to be an appropriation for future fiscal years.

Mr. Vaughn makes the motion for Ford County to enter into a two-year lease at 140 N. Market St, Paxton at the agreed to amount. Mr. Brackenhoff seconds the motion.

Discussion: The Sheriff has made arrangements with Mrs. Harrison regarding bailiff staffing at the new location.

Roll call – Unanimous

There will be updates on remediation that is ongoing.

O. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. McQuinn moved to adjourn. Mr. Vaughn seconded the motion.

The meeting ended at 5:54 P.M.

P. PROCLAMATION

Sheriff Johnson

The next County Board meeting is scheduled for **TUESDAY, October 13, 2026**, in the Sheriff's Boardroom at the jail.

FORD COUNTY BOARD MEETING	9/14/2026 CONT TO 9/18/26
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FORD COUNTY BOARD MEETING	9/14/2026 CONT TO 9/18/26
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ROLL CALL Present = P Absent = A	BOARD MEMBER	HIRING CUSTOM FARM OPERATOR CO FARMS #1,2,3		TRANSFERRING CROP INS AND RELATED COSTS		FINANCE CLAIMS		HWY CLAIMS		HLR SERVICE AGREEMENT		SHERIFF CLAIMS					
		YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO
A	MAY, Gene	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
P	BRACKENHOFF, DOM	X		X		X		X		X		X					
A	FERGUSON, Randy	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
P	NIEWOLD, Greg	X		X		X		X		X		X					
P	MUSSMAN, Sarah	X		X		X		X		X		X					
P	NUSS, Tim	X		X		X		X		X		X					
P	McQUINN, Tom	X		X		X		X		X		X					
P	IHRKE, Cindy	X		X		X		-		X		X					
P	RHOADES, NEIL	X		X		X		X		X		X					
P	KING, Lesley	X		X		X		X		X		X					
A	VAUGHN, Carson (VC)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
P	McCALL, Chase (CHAIRMAN)	X		X		X		X		X		X					
RESULTS = PASSED OR FAILED		PASSED		PASSED		PASSED		PASSED		PASSED		PASSED					
		YES -9	NO - 0	YES -9	NO - 0	YES -9	NO - 0	YES - 8	NO VOTE, ABSENT -1			YES -9	NO - 0				

COUNTY CLERK: KELSIE VAUGHN

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