

COUNTY OF MENARD)
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STATE OF ILLINOIS)

The Menard County Board of Commissioners met on Thursday, August 28, 2025, at 9:00 AM at the Menard County Courthouse, 102 South Seventh Street, Petersburg, Illinois. Commissioners Ed Whitcomb, Troy Cummings, Rich Brauer, and Dalton Whitley were present. A quorum was present. County Clerk Marty Gum, County Coordinator Dara Worthington, State's Attorney Gwen Thomas, and County Treasurer Molly Bettis were also present. Chairperson Lott was absent. Acting Chair Whitcomb called the meeting to order.

Commissioner Brauer moved to approve the Consent Agenda which consisted of the Regular Board Minutes and the Executive Session Minutes from the August 12, 2025 meeting along with the Monthly Department Expense Reports from July 2025. Commissioner Whitley seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Scheduled/Unscheduled Guests

Tim Bass, Candidate for the Eighth Judicial Circuit Judge was present to introduce himself to the commissioners and give an overview of his background and qualifications for the elected office of at-large judge.

County Probation Officer's Report/Request for Board Action

Dara Gilbert was in attendance and presented a very brief overview of the changes to the Probation Fee Fund and how her office plans to address those changes. Gilbert reported that she would be submitting her FY26 Annual Plan with those new plans by the end of the month.

County Zoning Officer's Report/Request for Board Action

County Zoning Officer Joe Crowe was in attendance and presented an update of his office activities which included permits issued, receipt of an application for a solar farm and the timeline and steps to follow for response to that application, RCM plans, and the proposed new zoning ordinance for the county.

County Assessor's Report/Request for Board Action

Supervisor of Assessments, Dawn Kelton, was in attendance and presented a new proposal from Eagleview for a county flyover. Kelton indicated the options offered with the flyover. Discussion ensued over the options and costs relating to the new fiscal year budget. It was the consensus of the commissioners present to proceed with the flyover with 3-inch ground sample distance. The Assessor relayed that her office is

sending out change notices to property owners so that they can add the appropriate exemptions that they might be entitled to.

County Engineer's Report/Request for Board Action

Engineer Dowd was in attendance and provided a briefing on his department's activities which have included: conclusion of the oiling season, Sangamon Valley Trail, White's Crossing, Montgomery Bridge, and bridge inspections. It was reported that his office was in receipt of the Teamster's letter regarding a demand to bargain.

County Sheriff's Report/Request for Board Action

Sheriff Mark Oller was in attendance and reported that the current jail census stood at twelve inmates with those inmates being from Cass, Sangamon and Menard Counties. Oller provided a brief overview of ongoing remodeling projects at the Menard County Courthouse and Menard County Courthouse Annex.

County Treasurer's Report/Request for Board Action

County Treasurer Bettis was in attendance and gave a brief overview of her office activities. Bettis indicated that the distribution for the first property tax installment had been completed and that FY26 budget worksheets would be going out this week.

County Clerk's Report/Request for Board Action

County Clerk Marty Gum was in attendance and reported that no one had picked up packets in order to run for public office.

County State's Attorney's Report/Request for Board Action

State's Attorney Gwen Thomas was in attendance and provided an update on county cases. Thomas reported on the results of the Eminent Domain case that went to court noting that the final settlement was set at what the professional consultants had determined to be fair and just compensation for the land parcel.

Thomas announced that it was her plan to file to run for the office of State's Attorney on the upcoming ballot. She expressed her appreciation to the commissioners for their appointment of her to the position of State's Attorney and assured them of her dedication to Menard County.

County Coordinator's Report/Requests for Board Action

Coordinator Dara Worthington was in attendance. Worthington presented Executive Session minutes from February 13, 2024, and February 11, 2025, for opening. Commissioner Whitley made a motion to open the minutes, and Commissioner Cummings seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Worthington indicated that Cresco funds were last received in October 2024 and that a follow-up was needed with the other four counties involved with the agreement so that a letter can be sent as a reminder. Worthington reported that Pleasant Plains had reached out to the county regarding the possibility of our county providing animal control services to their village. It was the consensus of the commissioners not to provide said services. The coordinator reported that Connecticut Interlocal Risk Management Agency (CIRMA) had reached out to her and expressed an interest in becoming the county's insurance carrier. It was the consensus of the commissioners to remain with ICRMT. Worthington also reported on the following: completion and application of the FY26 insurance renewal packet, the county farm auction, IDPH notification, the FY23 audit status, and New Leaf Energy's inquiry about leasing the county farm for a solar energy project.

EMS/EMA Chief's Report/Request for Board Action

Chief Huss was in attendance and supplied an update on the new ambulance wrap, a new staff member hired, and football season.

Individual Board Members - Report/Requests for Board Action

Commissioner Cummings provided a brief synopsis of the recent Sunny Acres Advisory Board meeting.

Executive Session

Commissioner Cummings made a motion to enter Executive Session as allowed by (5 ILCS 120/2)(C)(11) Litigation and (2) Collective Bargaining. Commissioner Brauer seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously at 10:22 AM.

Other Scheduled Topics

Approval of Menard County EMS Local 4622 Collective Bargaining Agreement – Commissioner Whitley made a motion to table the topic and Commissioner Cummings seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Discussion of FY26 Salaries for Elected Officials and Employees – Commissioner Cummings suggested the salary of county commissioners be raised to \$10,000 annually. It was noted that a new ordinance was needed and that the new ordinance would need to be approved 180 days prior to that elected official taking office. Due to the different office terms of the commissioners, the new salary would take effect in a staggered manner based upon when each term of office began.

It was the consensus of the commissioners that for budget planning purposes only, elected officials and department heads should plan on including salary increases of 4%.

Approval of 2026 HOPE Trust Participating Employee Information Verification Form for Employee Health Insurance.

The Coordinator reported that there were no changes needed to the health insurance plans being offered to employees and that premiums had remained the same. Commissioner Cummings made a motion to approve the plans as selected, and Commissioner Whitley seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Adjournment

With no other business coming before the Board, Commissioner Brauer moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:47 AM. Commissioner Cummings seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.