

Richland County Board
May 14, 2026

Convene

Chairman Travis Paddock called the meeting of the Richland County Board to order at 7:00pm on May 14, 2026, in the Jail Meeting Room. The meeting was proclaimed open, the Pledge of Allegiance recited, and prayer was led by Steve Wingert. Attendance: Cindy Given, Present; Morgan Henton, Present; Travis Paddock, Present; Steve Schonert, Present; Dennis Graves, Present; Brian VanBlaricum, Present; Alexis McFarland, Present.

Changes/Approval of Agenda

Cindy Given made a motion to approve the agenda. Brian VanBlaricum seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Information, Correspondence, Upcoming Meetings

911 meets on Wednesday May 27th at 9am at the Fire Station. 708 Mental Health Board will meet May 20th at 12pm in the jail meeting room. Public Safety will meet June 9th at 8am in the jail meeting room.

Open

Tara Buerster, Katie Bell and Kylie Kocher were all in attendance to discuss the Illinois Extension Office annual report and upcoming events. Steve Schonert asked Tara if the current levy amount of \$65,000 was what they anticipated needing in the future. Tara stated that she did think it was sufficient.

Bruce from Bellwether, LLC was in attendance to give an overview of the services that they provide, including budget work, levy work and cost studies. The finance committee will be looking into hiring Bellwether for future budget work for 2027/2028. The cost is \$12,000. Bruce also noted that they can handle solar and wind ordinances and review fees.

Ted Whitehead with Snedeker Risk Management was in attendance and discussed reviewing the current county employee handbook for possible updates.

Motion/Vote - Consent Agenda

Morgan Henton made a motion to approve all items under the consent agenda. Cindy Given seconded the motion. Items approved were the minutes from April 9, 2026, for County Board, May 7, 2026, for Road and Bridge meeting; the county officer reports; pay estimate #7 for \$5000 for EJ Water Phase #82 project; appointment of Gary Houchin and Vic Colwell to Public Building Commission; raffle license for Pride Fest; renewal of Edward Byne Justice Assistance Grant; culvert aid petitions from Madison and Denver Townships; resolution to accept bid from Ambrow Asphalt Materials, Inc. for construction of asphalt shoulders on St. Marie Road section 23-00130-00-SD; appointment of Dr. Mary M. Waller to Richland County 708 Mental Health Board.

Motion/Vote - Finance Committee

Steve Schonert discussed the claims totaling \$118,933.70 county and \$990,237.52 non-county. Steve Schonert made a motion to approve the claims. Morgan Henton seconded the motion. The roll call was as follows; Cindy Given, yes; Morgan Henton, yes; Steve Schonert, yes; Travis Paddock, yes. Dennis Graves, yes; Brian VanBlaricum, yes; Alexis McFarland, yes. Motion carried.

Steve Schonert made a motion to approve Bellwether, LLC. Cost study fee of \$12,000 for Sheriff's Office, County Clerk's Office, and Assessor's Office with \$5000 to come out of County Clerk's automation fund, \$2,000 to come out of GIS fund and the remaining \$5000 to come out of Sheriff's budget. Alexis McFarland seconded the motion. The roll call was as follows; Cindy Given, yes; Morgan Henton, yes; Steve Schonert, yes; Travis Paddock, yes. Dennis Graves, yes; Brian VanBlaricum, yes; Alexis McFarland, yes. Motion carried.

Steve Schonert stated that there needs to be more discussion with the new Veterinarian in town about a possible contract with Animal Control. Will table for later discussion.

Sheriff Hires discussed issues with a current squad car, with repair costs of over \$4000. Sheriff Hires does not feel that the vehicle is worth enough to put that much money into. The department is now without a spare if anything were to happen to any other squad car. Steve Schonert stated that the county budgeted for one squad car per year, but this year did budget for an additional vehicle for an additional SRO officer. Steve Schonert made a motion to allow the purchase of another used squad vehicle. Cindy Given seconded the motion. The roll call was as follows; Cindy Given, yes; Morgan Henton, yes; Steve Schonert, yes; Travis Paddock, yes. Dennis Graves, yes; Brian VanBlaricum, yes; Alexis McFarland, yes. Motion carried.

County Treasurer Mike Hahn and County Clerk & Recorder Amanda Troyer spoke about their current salaries and what they feel would be a fair salary in comparison to other counties of our size. Mike Hahn stated that \$75,000 is the state average and he is asking for \$65,000. After much discussion, Steve Schonert made a motion to approve \$63,200 starting 12/1/26, \$65,900 starting 12/1/27, \$68,200 starting 12/1/28, \$70,600 starting 12/1/29 with an additional \$3,000 per year for the County Clerk for County Board duties. Cindy Given seconded the motion. Cindy then made a motion to amend the original motion and change the starting pay to \$65,000 then using the same percentage that Steve used in original motion for the remaining years. The motion failed to receive a second. The roll call on original motion was as follows; Cindy Given, yes; Morgan Henton, yes; Steve Schonert, yes; Travis Paddock, yes. Dennis Graves, no; Brian VanBlaricum, no; Alexis McFarland, yes. Motion carried.

Sheriff's Report

Sheriff Hires discussed the Radio project and stated that he is waiting on FCC to approve license.

State's Attorney Report

State's Attorney Mary Beth Welch stated that she had posted a job opening for Assistant State's Attorney. Mary Beth stated that they are set to have three jury trials in the next few weeks. She discussed cases and fine collection. Mary Beth stated that she will be at conference next month. Sheriff Hires added that Mary Beth has been great to work with. Steve Schonert asked Mary Beth if she would consider a part time State's Attorney. She stated that she would consider that.

Animal Control

Andrea Edwards stated that she has discussed installing air conditioning inside the kennel. She has an estimate from Royse's Plumbing.

Highway Business Motion/Vote

Dan Colwell would like to let the community know that road oiling season is beginning, with Denver Township first on the list. County roads will begin in July.

Board Committee Reports

IT.

Shelly Harmon was in attendance from RCDC to discuss the mapping project.

Old Business

Nothing to discuss

New Business

Steve Schonert made a motion to approve the Petition to remove Animal Control from the Union Contract pending approval of the Union Contract. Brian VanBlaricum seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Executive Session

Cindy Given made a motion to enter executive session to discuss possible purchases of real estate and labor union negotiations as well as possible litigation. Alexis McFarland seconded the motion. The roll call was as follows; Cindy Given, yes; Morgan Henton, yes; Steve Schonert, yes; Travis Paddock, yes. Dennis Graves, yes; Brian VanBlaricum, yes; Alexis McFarland, yes. Motion carried. The board entered executive session at 8:12 PM. The board re-entered regular session at 8:18 PM.

Motion/Vote

Morgan Henton made a motion to approve the purchase of real estate. Cindy Given seconded the motion. The roll call was as follows; Cindy Given, yes; Morgan Henton, yes; Steve Schonert, yes; Travis Paddock, yes. Dennis Graves, yes; Brian VanBlaricum, yes; Alexis McFarland, yes. Motion carried.

Cindy Given made a motion to approve the Labor's Union Contract. Alexis McFarland seconded the motion. Motion carried

Adjournment

Cindy Given made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Brian VanBlaricum seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 8:20 PM.

Amanda Troyer
County Clerk

Travis Paddock
County Board Chairman