

RESUME OF MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING OF THE
COUNTY BOARD, CHAMPAIGN COUNTY, ILLINOIS
February 19, 2026

The County Board of Champaign County, Illinois met at a Regular Meeting, Thursday, February 19, 2026, at 6:30 PM in the Shields-Carter Meeting Room, Bennett Administrative Center, 102 East Main Street, Urbana, Illinois, County Executive Steve Summers presiding and Matthew Cross as Clerk of the meeting.

ROLL CALL

Roll call showed the following members present: Vanichtheeranont, Wiggs, Wilson, Arres, Cagle, Crane, Esry, Farney, Fortado, Hanauer-Friedman, Lokshin, Peugh, Rodriguez, Settles, Sexton, Sullard, Thorsland, and Locke – 18; late: Carter (arrived sometime before 6:40 PM) – 1; absent: Cowart, Fava, and Rogers – 3. County Executive Summers declared a quorum present and the Board competent to conduct business. Due to the length of the meeting, various board members were occasionally not present in the room for votes, the specifics of which could not be discerned on voice votes but are noted on roll-call votes.

PRAYER & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

In lieu of a prayer, County Executive Summers held a moment of silence for the recent passing of Rev. Jesse Jackson, and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag was recited.

READ NOTICE OF MEETING

The Clerk read the Notice of the Meeting, said Notice having been published in the *News Gazette* on February 5, February 12, and February 18, 2026.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA/ADDENDA

Board Member Esry offered a motion to adopt the Agenda/Addenda; Board Member Lokshin seconded. Board Member Hanauer-Friedman offered a motion to amend the agenda to move item XVI. A. Resolution No. 2026-26 to follow item VII. B. Resolution No. 2026-40, to move item XVI. C. 1. ARPA Update to follow item X. B. HOPE Program – DREAAM presentation, and to remove item XV. E. Resolution No. 2026-51; Board Member Farney seconded. The motion to amend the Agenda/Addenda carried by unanimous voice vote. The motion as amended carried by unanimous voice vote.

DATE/TIME OF NEXT MEETINGS

Standing Committees:

- A. County Facilities Committee
Tuesday, March 3, 2026 at 6:30 PM
Shields-Carter Meeting Room, Bennett Administrative Center
- B. Environment and Land Use Committee
Thursday, March 5, 2026 at 6:30 PM
Shields-Carter Meeting Room, Bennett Administrative Center
- C. Highway and Transportation Committee
Friday, March 6, 2026 at 9:00 AM
1605 E Main St, Urbana

Committee of the Whole:

- A. Justice and Social Services; Policy, Personnel, and Appointments; Finance
Monday, March 10, 2026 at 6:30 PM
Shields-Carter Meeting Room, Bennett Administrative Center

County Board:

- A. Regular Meeting
Thursday, March 19, 2026 at 6:30 PM
Shields-Carter Meeting Room, Bennett Administrative Center
- B. Study Session
Tuesday, March 23, 2026 at 6:00 PM
Shields-Carter Meeting Room, Bennett Administrative Center

EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION

Board Member Wilson offered a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2026-39 Honoring County Employees for Years of Service; Board Member Arres seconded. The motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

Board Member Sexton offered a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2026-40 Honoring Retiring County Employees; Board Member Farney seconded. The motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

RESOLUTION No. 2026-26

Board Member Lokshin offered a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2026-26 amending the Schedule of Authorized Positions in the Administrative Services Department – Program Director, Therapist, Case Manager, and Family Engagement; Board Member Farney seconded. Board Chair Locke moved to table the resolution indefinitely; Board Member Peugh seconded. The motion to table Resolution No. 2026-26 indefinitely passed by voice vote.

PUBLIC INPUT

Benjamin Beaupre, of Champaign, compared the recent violent and repressive actions of the Department of Homeland Security and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to historic contemporaries in the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, the Ku Klux Klan of the early 20th century, and *Gestapo* police of Nazi Germany.

Jim McGuire, of Champaign Township, spoke against Resolution No. 2026-43 supporting the Responsibility in Firearm Legislation (RIFL) Act legislation, spoke against County Executive Summers' recent executive order restricting ICE activities in county facilities, spoke against the SAFE-T Act, and asked the Board to support state legislation allowing election judges to work shifts on election day.

Urbana Police Chief Larry Boone spoke in support of Resolution No. 2026-43 supporting the RIFL Act legislation.

Reynaldo Camas, of Champaign, spoke in support of Resolution No. 2026-43 supporting the RIFL Act legislation, spoke about recent negative interactions with Board Member Carter and defended his right to speak during public input at County Board meetings.

County Clerk and Recorder Aaron Ammons spoke about the delayed County Audit, which may bar his office from state reimbursement grants for election expenses, if not completed by May 2026. The various reimbursements will total more than \$250,000. He also spoke about County Administration deducting funds from his department to pay for union-negotiated employee bonuses.

County Circuit Clerk Susan McGrath spoke about County Administration deducting funds from her department to pay for union-negotiated employee bonuses, and questioned why the Board decided to strike Resolution No. 2026-51 appropriating funds to cover a shortfall in personnel lines for FY2025 without informing her.

Rebekah Mangels of Champaign spoke against artificial intelligence (AI) data centers and in support of the proposed Data Center Task Force. She distributed a document with findings and recommendations for the Board to consider regarding AI, data centers, and the proposed task force.

Isabel Scott of Champaign spoke against AI data centers and AI, in general; she spoke in support of the proposed Data Center Task Force.

Zev Alexander of Champaign spoke against AI and tech billionaires and spoke in support of the proposed Data Center Task Force.

Alice Smith of Urbana spoke about community water needs, noting they are at odds with those of AI data centers, and spoke in support of the proposed Data Center Task Force.

Farah Abi-Akar of Urbana spoke against data centers and in support of the proposed Data Center Task Force.

Board Member Sullard offered a motion to suspend County Board Rule (Resolution No. 2025-64, X. E. 6) that prevent board members from “engaging in dialogue with members of the public during public input”; Board Member Lokshin seconded. The motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

County Auditor George Danos spoke about the delayed County Audit, noting the delay has increased significantly since being taken over by County Administration. He also noted his refusal to approve non-compliant purchases due to his inability to investigate those purchases. Various Board Members questioned Auditor Danos.

Board Member Farney moved to close public input; Board Member Sullard seconded. The motion to close public input failed by roll-call vote:

Yeas: Cagle, Esry, Farney, Hanauer-Friedman, and Sexton – 5

Nays: Vanichtheeranont, Wiggs, Wilson, Arres, Carter, Crane, Fortado, Lokshin, Peugh, Rodriguez, Settles, Sullard, Thorsland, and Locke – 14

Board Member Fortado offered a motion to extend public input by 15 minutes for board member questions of Auditor Danos, as the allotted 60 minutes had been exceeded; Board Chair Locke seconded. The motion carried by voice vote.

CONSENT AGENDA

Board Member Thorsland offered a motion to adopt the Consent Agenda; Board Member Cagle seconded. The motion consisting of twelve resolutions (Nos. 2026-27, 2025-28, 2025-29, 2025-30, 2025-31, 2025-32, 2025-33, 2025-34, 2025-35, 2025-36, 2025-37, and 2025-38) and two ordinances (Nos. 2026-3 and 2026-4) carried by unanimous roll-call vote:

Yeas: Vanichtheeranont, Wiggs, Wilson, Arres, Cagle, Carter, Crane, Esry, Farney, Fortado, Hanauer-Friedman, Lokshin, Peugh, Rodriguez, Sexton, Sullard, Thorsland, and Locke – 18

Nays: none

Absent for vote: Settles – 1

PRESENTATION

County Executive Summers noted that representatives of the Prairie Research Institute were not available to present on the Mahomet Aquifer Mapping Results.

DREAAM Assistant Director of Community Services Kathy Garrison gave a presentation on DREAAM’s American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funded HOPE gun violence response program; HOPE Street Outreach Leader Travon Pickens spoke about the Street Outreach program.

ARPA Project Manager Kathy Larson provided a brief update on various ARPA-funded projects, noting the memo in the Agenda Packet.

County Executive Summers noted the Broadband project update in the Agenda Packet.

COMMUNICATIONS

Board Member Peugh stated his opposition to data centers and spoke about the expense and usefulness of outside staffing for the internal County Audit.

Board Member Carter spoke about Black History Month and her dedication to the black community.

Board Member Wilson stated his unequivocal support for ICE.

Board Member Fortado noted a documentary screening on the Don Moyer Boys and Girls Club at the Virginia Theater in Champaign on February 20, 2026.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Board Member Vanichtheeranont offered an omnibus motion to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of the County Board on January 22, 2026 and the Study Session on January 27, 2026; Board Member Settles seconded. The motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

STANDING COMMITTEES

County Executive Summers noted that the Summaries of Action Taken for County Facilities Committee of February 3, 2026, and Environment and Land Use Committee of February 5, 2026, were received and placed on file.

Board Member Thorsland offered a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2026-41 authorizing the creation of a Data Center Activities Task Force as a County Board Select Committee; Board Member Rodriguez seconded. The motion carried by unanimous roll-call vote:

Yeas: Vanichtheeranont, Wiggs, Wilson, Arres, Cagle, Carter, Crane, Esry, Farney, Fortado, Hanauer-Friedman, Lokshin, Peugh, Rodriguez, Settles, Sexton, Sullard, Thorsland, and Locke – 19

Nays: none

County Executive Summers noted the Summary of Action Taken for the Highway and Transportation Committee of February 6, 2026, was received and placed on file.

Board Member Sexton offered a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2026-42 awarding of contract for the replacement of a bridge deck located on County Road 800N in Philo Township, Section #24-19140-00-BR; Board Member Esry seconded. The motion carried by voice vote.

AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY

County Executive Summers noted that the Summary of Action Taken for Committee of the Whole Meeting (Justice and Social Services; Finance; *and* Policy, Personnel, and Appointments) of February 10, 2026, was received and placed on file.

Board Member Hanauer-Friedman offered a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2026-43 supporting the Responsibility in Firearm Legislation (RIFL) Act; Board Member Thorsland seconded. RIFL Act advocate Anthony Douglas, MD, was invited to join the discussion. The motion carried by roll-call vote:

Yeas: Vanichtheeranont, Wiggs, Arres, Carter, Fortado, Hanauer-Friedman, Lokshin, Rodriguez, Settles, Sullard, Thorsland, and Locke – 12
Nays: Wilson, Cagle, Crane, Esry, Farney, and Sexton – 6
Absent for Vote: Peugh – 1

Board Member Arres offered a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2026-44 appointing Alicia Beck to the Rural Transit Advisory Group, unexpired term ending 12/31/2027; Board Member Sullard seconded. The motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

Board Member Sullard offered a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2026-45 appointing Linda Turnbull to the Housing Authority Board of Champaign County, unexpired term ending 7/31/2030; Board Member Arres seconded. The motion carried by voice vote.

Board Member Vanichtheeranont offered a motion to adopt Ordinance No. 2026-5 amending Ordinance No. 2022-10 establishing Travel and Business Expense Policy for Champaign County, Illinois – to prioritize Willard Airport for air travel; Board Member Farney seconded. The motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

Board Member Farney offered a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2026-46 approving Budget Amendment BUA 2025/12/1292 an appropriation to cover remaining expenses for FY2025; Board Chair Locke seconded. The motion carried by unanimous roll-call vote:

Yeas: Vanichtheeranont, Wiggs, Arres, Cagle, Carter, Crane, Esry, Farney, Fortado, Hanauer-Friedman, Lokshin, Peugh, Rodriguez, Settles, Sexton, Sullard, Thorsland, and Locke – 19
Nay: none

NEW BUSINESS

Board Member Arres offered a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2026-47 authorizing payment of claims; Board Member Vanichtheeranont seconded. The motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

Board Member Arres offered a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2026-48 approval to apply for and, if awarded, accept the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority Restore, Reinvest, Renew (R3) grant funding for Champaign County; Board Member Sullard seconded. The motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

Board Member Fortado offered a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2026-49 Budget Amendment BUA 2025/12/1318 an appropriation to cover shortfalls in county-wide personnel lines for FY2025; Board Member Esry seconded. Director of Administration Michelle Jett and County Finance Director Travis Woodcock were invited to join the discussion The motion carried by unanimous roll-call vote:

Yeas: Vanichtheeranont, Wiggs, Arres, Cagle, Carter, Crane, Esry, Farney, Fortado, Hanauer-Friedman, Lokshin, Peugh, Rodriguez, Settles, Sexton, Sullard, Thorsland, and Locke – 19

Nay: none

Board Member Lokshin offered a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2026-52 authorizing the award of contract to X-Treme Mechanical for the ILEAS Air Handling Unit Replacement Project, pursuant to RFP #2026-001; Board Member Thorsland seconded. Board Member Wiggs announced his abstention because he is employed by one of the bidding contractors. The motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

Board Member Rodriguez offered a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2026-53 appointing Den Arres as the County Board liaison on the Mental Health Board; Board Member Lokshin seconded. The motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

OTHER BUSINESS

Board Member Esry offered a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2026-50 approving the award of contract for employee health insurance and related benefits broker/consultant services, pursuant to RFQ #2025-012; Board Member Thorsland seconded. Director Jett was invited to join the discussion. The motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

County Executive Summers noted the Adult Redeploy Illinois Grant update in the Agenda Packet.

ADJOURNMENT

County Executive Summers adjourned the meeting at 9:54 PM.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Aaron Ammons". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'A'.

Aaron Ammons, Champaign County Clerk
and ex-Officio Clerk of the Champaign County Board
Champaign County, Illinois