

LAW & LEGAL

APRIL 6, 2026

The Law & Legal Committee held its monthly meeting on Monday, April 6, 2026 at 7:00 p.m. The meeting was held at the McDonough County Courthouse, 3rd Floor, Law Library. Committee Members present included Committee Chair Joe Erlandson, Vice Chair Ken Durkin, Clayton Cook, Travis Hiel, Ryan Litchfield, Roger Ward, and Terry Thompson. Other persons in attendance were Rod Flora, Lynne Campbell, Robbie Phelps, Ric Smart, Deborah Cousins, Sheriff Nick Petitgout, County Chair Eric Blakeley, Deputy Clerk Kyah Beck, and County Clerk Jeremy Benson. Member Jack Lowderman was absent.

Chair Erlandson called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Review & Approve March 2, 2026 Minutes

Member Durkin moved with a second by Member Litchfield to approve the minutes as submitted with corrections. Motion carried on a voice vote.

Waste Management Update

Report received and filed.

Tri-County Recycling

Report received and filed.

Veteran's Assistance and Van Report

Ric Smart gave the report. 11 Veterans were given assistance in March. Total assistance amounted to \$2,693.14. Ric also spoke about a meeting he had with the Military Rights Bureau. The county does not have a full time Veterans Assistance Officer. A possible solution was made to have a Veterans Assistance Officer come into the courthouse a few times a week. A memorandum of understanding would then be made. Ric will update the committee in May.

Sheriff's Report

Sheriff Nick Petitgout gave the report. Nick brought Robbie Phelps to the meeting to introduce him as the new Chief Deputy. Nick will be working with him until he is out of office.

Nick also spoke about several vehicles that are out of service. He discussed the Bushnell incident involving Deputy Norton, as well as the couple other vehicle incidents. The money that is given back for insurance claims, he would like to use that money for a new vehicle and have it equipped.

Assessor's Office Update

Assessor Deborah Cousins gave the report. Deborah has contacted the solar farms in the area, and has received information back on 4 out of the 5 farms.

Approve Revised Wind & Solar Ordinance

Ken Durkin and Joe Erlandson worked together and made draft ordinances based off the states example ordinances. These were sent to States Attorney Matt Kwacala and they're waiting for approval.

Member Litchfield moved with a second by Member Hiel to approve the draft ordinances. Motion carried on a voice vote. This will be going to full board.

Update on Zoning and Data Center Informational Meetings

Joe went over the information presented during the zoning information meeting. If the county wanted to be a zoned county, there are several requirements that would have to be met. A zoning commission would have to be made, and members will have to be appointed. That commission would have to develop a zoning ordinance.

Claims Review and Approval

Member Thompson moved with a second by Member Cook to approve the claims as submitted. Motion carried on a voice vote.

Other Items as Needed

Joe Erlandson updated the committee with the solid waste plan WIRC is working on.

Executive Session

None.

Public Comment

None.

County Board Chair Comments

Eric Blakeley spoke about the MDH ambulance issue. He will have a meeting with MDH, the city, and Lifeguard to talk about the next steps. This will be a costly expense for the county. Lifeguard has agreed to stay to help without a contract.

Adjourn

Member Hiel moved with a second by Member Thompson to adjourn the meeting at 8:05 p.m. Motion carried on a voice vote.