



MINUTES

DEKALB TOWNSHIP BOARD

Regular Board Meeting

2323 SOUTH FOURTH STREET - DEKALB, IL 60115

May 19, 2026

The DeKalb Township of DeKalb, Illinois convened for a regular meeting on May 19, 2026. In addition, there was a hearing for the Budget and Appropriation Ordinance for the Fiscal year Beginning April 1, 2026 and ending March 31, 2027 at the township building in the conference room.

A. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Supervisor Hess called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.

Clerk Joan Watson-Protano called the roll, and the following members of the Board of Trustees were present: Supervisor Mary Hess; Trustee Dale Thurman; Trustee Katherine McLaughlin; Trustee Greg Akers; Trustee Bradlo. Other in attendance included Highway Commissioner Craig Smith and Assessor Rich Dyer.

B. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited, led by Trustee McLaughlin.

C. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

MOTION: A motion was made by Trustee Akers and was seconded by Trustee Thurman.

DISCUSSION: Supervisor Hess made a request to modify agenda item 'F' under Hearing, sub item 'F' from Ordinance 2026-002 (R) to Ordinance 2026-001 (R).

VOTE: The agenda was approved as modified by unanimous voice vote.

D. PRESENTATIONS

Proclamation recognizing Motorcycle Awareness Month

Supervisor Hess presented and read the proclamation from Open Road Abate of IL, highlighting and making awareness of motorcycles and motorcycle safety. Abate of Illinois, Inc, is a brotherhood aimed toward education, promotes motorcycle safety, education and awareness. They have presented motorcycle awareness programs to over 120,000 participants in Illinois over the past nine years. The month of May recognizes 39 years of Abate of Illinois Inc., for leadership in safety and awareness to over 352,500 registered motorcyclists statewide.

E. PUBLIC COMMENT None.

F. HEARING

Hearing regarding the DeKalb Township and DeKalb Road District Budget and Appropriation Ordinances.

MOTION: A motion to open the hearing was made by Trustee Bradlo and seconded by Trustee Thurman. The hearing was opened at 6:09 p.m. It was noted that the budget has been made public for over a month and that the trustees received the budgets in advance.

Presentation: The Town budget was reviewed in depth by Supervisor Hess. Within the town budget there are five (5) funds; 1) General Town Fund, 2) Cemetery Capital Fund, 3) Building Capital Fun, 4) Peace Park Restricted Fund and 5) General Assistance Fund. The General Town fund includes the assessor's budget and the cemetery budget. The General Town Fund is broken down into categories; personnel, contractual services, commodities, and capital outlay.

The Assessor's Budget is part of the Town Budget and is very similar to the previous year's budget with the exception of an increase in building expenses pending a respective move.

The Cemetery Fund includes a capital outlay with the current Peace Park Project with a portion being funded by a donor. The funding of columbarium and installation is included in this year's budget.

Comments and Questions: In response to Trustee Akers query, Supervisor Hess clarified that the General Assistance Fund is restricted. We can transfer Town Fund's into the General Assistance fund if needed, however, General Assistance funds cannot be transferred to the Town Fund.

Highway Commissioner (HC) Smith presented the budget for the Road District. The General Road Fund is also referred to as the Road and Bridge Fund. The budget also includes the Permanent Road Fund, The Building and Equipment Fund, Special Bridge Fund and the Capital Fund. There is an increase in the line item for fuel which HC feels may not be sufficient. Equipment Maintenance is higher due to aging equipment. The Special Bridge Fund does have a significant balance; however, a bridge replacement is very costly and the fund balance anticipates the expense allocation.

Trustee Thurman asked if using robotic mowers would be feasible; Highway Commissioner Smith did not see any advantage to their use at this time.

There being no further questions Supervisor Hess requested a vote for approval of the Budgets.

MOTION: A motion for the Approval of Ordinance 2026-001(T) DeKalb Township Budget and Appropriation Ordinance for the Fiscal year Beginning April 1 2026 and ending March 31, 2027 was made by Trustee Thurman and seconded by Trustee Akers.

DISCUSSION: There was no further discussion.

VOTE: The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present with all AYES by: Supervisor Hess; Trustees: Bradlo, McLaughlin, Akers, and Thurman.

MOTION: A motion for the Approval of Ordinance 2026-001(R) DeKalb Township Road District Budget and Appropriation Ordinance for the Fiscal year Beginning April 1 2026 and ending March 31, 2027 was made by Trustee Bradlo and seconded by Trustee McLaughlin.

DISCUSSION: There was no further discussion.

VOTE: The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present with all AYES by: Trustees: Bradlo, Akers, McLaughlin, and Thurman and Supervisor Hess.

Close the hearing:

A motion to close the hearing was made by Trustee Thurman and seconded by Supervisor Hess. The Hearing was closed at 6:32 p.m.

Return to regular meeting:

G. Clerk Vacancy and Resignation

MOTION: A motion to accept the resignation of Township Clerk effective June 1, 2026 was made by Trustee Bradlo and seconded by Trustee McLaughlin.

Interview of Township Clerk Applicants

Initially there were three letters of intent for the position, as the interview date drew closer, two of those applicants withdrew. Therefore, our only applicant is Katherine McLaughlin. MS. McLaughlin was given an opportunity to share her interest with the board. Elected officials were given an opportunity to ask her questions.

Executive Session to Discuss the Appointment to the Clerks Position – 5ILCS 120/2 (c) (3)

MOTION: The Motion to go into Executive Session failed. There was NO executive session.

Discussion of Clerks Applicants and Motion to Approve Warrant of Appointment of Township Clerk to Fill Vacancy in Term of Office Expiring on or about May 19, 2029.

MOTION: A motion for above was made by Trustee Thurman and seconded by Trustee Akers.

DISCUSSION: Supervisor Hess reviewed the Warrant to appoint a new clerk and identified Katherine McLaughlin as the candidate to fill the remaining term of the clerk pursuant to 5ILCS 120/2 (c) (3)

VOTE: A roll call vote was taken with Trustees Akers, Bradlo, and Thurman and Supervisor Hess all voting aye. Trustee McLaughlin abstained.

Motion carried:

Supervisor Hess congratulated Trustee McLaughlin and requested that she submit her resignation as trustee.

NOTE: The new clerk will be sworn in on June 1, 2026 and we will formally announce the open position for the remaining trustee term.

H. REPORTS

- a. **Supervisor:** Supervisor Hess reported that the funding report in the board packet covers the first month of the new fiscal year. General assistance numbers remain steady, with a slight decrease due to a few clients being approved for Social Security or Supplemental Security Income (SSI). The township's entry into the Memorial Day parade was withdrawn due to a death in the family of Events Coordinator, Kim Barrios, who has been the lead coordinator. A Senior Car Clinic was held at Kishwaukee College with 42 seniors participating. A joint education program in partnership with Prairie State Legal, RAMP, and Hope Fair Housing Center will be held via Zoom and in person regarding Fair Housing & Disability Discrimination Training. In the most recent month staff have attended a General Assistance conference, and participated in the DeKalb Chamber of Commerce Showcase. After meeting with the Joint Review Board we will not pursue TIF funds for the building

security project. Currently there are no available funds and there is some opposition regarding taxing bodies receiving TIF Funding.

Supervisor Hess shared a heartwarming success story regarding a former General Assistance client who has secured employment and is now paying it forward by sharing cake on his birthday with the tenants in his building and handing out roses on Mother's Day.

Supervisor Hess and Trustee McLaughlin attended the Metro Township Association Capital Day which provided them an opportunity to network with state senators, representatives, and other township officials.

The auditors have made their first visit and will be returning in June for three days. We partnered with the Illinois Department of Human Services and Passion Pursuit to present a program reviewing the changes to SNAP benefits. Attendance was lighter than we anticipated. Our goal is aimed at educating recipients so they are better prepared for impending changes.

Supervisor Hess was pleased to report that she had received notice from our law firm that the tax objection lawsuit was dismissed for the fourth consecutive year. The township will be working on projects that will require utilization of capital funds earmarked for the cemetery and building projects, as well as moving some funds from the General Town Fund to the General Assistance Fund. This should alleviate excess funds in accounts and avoid this type of lawsuit.

DISCUSSION: A query was made regarding the success of the recent shred day. Trustee McLaughlin reported that the event was well-attended. Special thanks were extended to Coldwell Banker and other volunteers. It was noted that they also collected shoes, eyeglasses, hearing aids, and pop tabs for the Alliance of Illinois Foundation recycling program. Trustee McLaughlin inquired if volunteers could step in to ensure that our participation in the Memorial Day Parade could still happen and received an affirmative reply.

- b. **Clerks Report** – Clerk Protano thank everyone for their support and the opportunity to serve.
- c. **Highway Commissioner's Report:** Highway Commissioner Smith reported that they were doing a lot of mowing and clean up ahead of the Memorial Day activities being held at the cemeteries. They are finishing up a few things on the new building including erecting a privacy fence between township property and the residential neighborhood. HC is very pleased that the recently hired administrative assistant, Amy, is acclimating well, and gets along with others, including himself. Road Projects bids are being finalized. This week is National Public Works Week; thanks for all those who service roads and parks was expressed.
- d. **Assessor's Report:** DeKalb Township Assessor Rich Dyer reported that property tax bills are out. In addition, to the assigned property review they are reviewing properties which have had building permits to determine value after completion. The Chief County Assessor officer is retiring and they will be hiring a replacement, this is a contracted position. Continuing education classes are upcoming, and staff will be out of the office to participate.
- e. **Trustees Reports:** McLaughlin - reported that she and Supervisor Hess had a beneficial and positive experience meeting state representatives and other township officials at the recent Capital Day hosted by the Metro Township Association.. She acknowledged the positive feedback others shared regarding our Township and that Supervisor Hess has very well liked and respected.

I. Bill Paying

Approval of May Bills to Pay and April Audit Reports

MOTION: A motion to approve the payment of May Bills for the Township in the amount of \$66,432.89 and the May bills for the Road District in the amount of \$62,903.91. April Audit Reports for the Township in the amount of \$168,384.94, and the April Audit Report for the Road District in the amount of \$42,492.05 was made by Trustee Bradlo and seconded by Trustee Thurman.

DISCUSSION: None.

VOTE: The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present with all AYES by: Supervisor Hess; Trustees Bradlo, McLaughlin, Akers, and Thurman. Clerk Protano declared the expenditures authorized.

Receive, File and Approve Treasurer's April Budget Reports

MOTION: A motion to Receive, File and Approve the Treasurer's April Budget Reports was made by Trustee Thurman and seconded by Trustee McLaughlin.

DISCUSSION: Supervisor Hess reports reflect the new budget and Highway Commissioner Smith noted that the reports looked a little different from previous meetings as a result of updated Quick Books software and new staff. They are still working out some challenges and asked for our understanding.

VOTE: The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote with all AYES by: Trustees McLaughlin, Bradlo, Akers and Thurman, and Supervisor Hess. Clerk Protano declared the expenditures authorized.

J. Unfinished Business: none

K. New Business:

a. **Discussion and Approval of Authorization for Supervisor to Approve Quote in the Amount of \$24,939.00 from M. Spinello & Son Locksmith Safe Security Experts Inc. for the Installation of Three (3) Door Cloud Access Control Solution (Secured Doors).**

MOTION: A motion was made by Trustee Akers and seconded by Trustee Bradlo.

DISCUSSION: Supervisor Hess provided a recap of the decision to install secured doors and the process to determine and identify the appropriate solution. The need for a secure door system has been necessitated by safety and access issues in our current times. There was a lengthy discussion, including clarification that this is not changing the doors to be automatic opening, or ADA compliant door, which is a future need. The proposed system, will offer an extra layer of security. It will allow staff to 'buzz' people in as well as out. A key fob will be issued to those needing to access the building. Software and software fees for cloud services was reviewed. Reports regarding access will be available to elected officials. The company chosen has installed many systems and came highly recommended from several avenues including our IT consultant. Supervisor Hess will be working with our attorney to create policy regarding the key fobs and building access. There is a battery backup for the system. It was suggested we investigate grant options for the future installation of ADA compliant doors.

VOTE: A vote to approve the purchase and contract was taken via voice vote with all ayes and no nays or abstentions. Motion for purchase and contract approved.

b. Extended agreement between DeKalb Township and Dekalb Township Road District Relating to Highway Commissioners Compensation and Benefits

MOTION: A motion was made by Trustee Akers and seconded by Trustee Bradlo.

DISCUSSION and BACKGROUND: Illinois Township code states that the Highway Commissioner (HC) salary is to be paid for out of township funds. This code goes back to the early 1800's. The code does allow for 25% of the HC salary to be paid for out of the Permanent Road and Bridge fund AND 50% of the HC benefits be paid for out of the Permanent Road and Bridge fund.

VOTE: A vote to approve the extension of the previously approved and signed Resolution 2024-011 (T) was taken via voice vote with all ayes. The extension was approved.

a. Approval of Minutes of the Board of Trustees Meeting of April 21, 2026

MOTION: A motion to approve was made by Trustee Thurman and seconded by Trustee Akerss.

DISCUSSION: None

VOICE VOTE: A vote to approve the minutes was carried by a 4-0 voice vote with AYES by all present: Supervisor Hess, Trustees; Bradlo; McLaughlin; Akers; and Thurman. Supervisor Hess declared the motion passed.

L. Old Business

a. Township Office Space Update

DISCUSSION: Supervisor Hess shared a listing of available spaces for lease with the board. Assessor Dyer and Supervisor Hess are working with a real estate agent who has identified available office space that may suit our needs. They have toured some properties. They are narrowing down the spaces that would be the most workable to the needs of the Assessors office and be fiscally prudent as well.

Supervisor Hess reviewed that the current space constraints within the building have been an ongoing issue for several years. As programs to the public have been expanded more meeting space has been needed. Training requirements of staff also necessitates access to meeting space. The safe and secure storage of confidential documents continues to expand as does the security of our technology assets. The current storage space for confidential files and paperwork that must be retained per record retention requirements continues to shrink.

HC Smith provided the board with building schematics highlighting how the building is currently laid out and utilized. His recent meeting with the auditors highlighted the requirements of the comptroller for certain personnel and activities. That being employee information, general assistant applicant information and any handling of township financial information. Anyone with access to this type of information needs a secured space and secured keeping of records which we are not able to be in compliance with..

As a response to inquiries about the feasibility of keeping all staff under one roof, HC Smith decided to explore the feasibility of making changes to current office space in order to keep all departments under one roof. He observed that within the area of the assessor's office there was an abundance of unused space as well as open space. This observation allowed him to consider the feasibility of reconfiguring the

assessor's area so that additional office space could be added. It was noted that this is only a temporary solution as this does not address the lack of storage of files and records within all departments. In addition, it is not allowing for the clerk to have their own work station which is needed as the clerk duties have been expanded. Discussion and a search for the best solution will be ongoing.

M. EXECUTIVE SESSION:

- a. Approval to Hold an Executive Session for Discussion of the Purchase or Lease of Real Property – 5 ILCS 120.2 (c) (5)

Supervisor Hess requested a motion to enter into a closed session to discuss a legal matter relating to the township as permitted by 5 ILCS (120/2)(c)(8).

MOTION to approve was made by Trustee Akers and seconded by Trustee Thurman

VOTE: A vote to approve the closed session and recess the regular session was carried by a 5-0 roll call vote with AYES by those present: Trustees: Thurman; Akers; Bradlo; McLaughlin; Supervisor Hess. Clerk Protano declared the motion passed.

RECESSION:

The regular meeting recessed at 7:44 p.m. in order to go into Executive Session.

RECONVENIENCE

VOTE: A vote to approve the closed session and recess the regular session was carried by a 5-0 roll call vote with AYES by those present: Trustees: Thurman; Akers; Bradlo; McLaughlin; Supervisor Hess. Clerk Protano declared the motion passed.

Supervisor Hess recessed the regular meeting at 7:44 p.m.

Return to Regular Session:

Supervisor Hess reconvened the regular meeting at 8:13 p.m. and requested roll call.

Roll Call: Clerk Joan Watson-Protano called the roll, and the following members of the Board of Trustees were present: Trustee Greg Akers; Trustee Katherine McLaughlin; Trustee Nancy Bradlo; Trustee Dale Thurman, Supervisor Mary Hess and Highway Commissioner Craig Smith.

MOTION: A motion to reconvene to regular sessions was made by Trustee Thurman and seconded by Bradlo

VOTE: An affirmative voice vote reconvened the regular meeting at 8:13 p.m.

- N. Other Business: none
- O. Next Regular Board meeting is June 16, 2026 at 6:00 p.m.
- P. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: A motion to adjourn was made by Trustee Bradlo and seconded by Trustee Thurman.

VOICE VOTE: An affirmative voice vote ended the meeting at 8:14 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Clerk Protano vacated position 6/1/26

Submitted by Clerk McLaughlin appointed 6/1/26

Joan Watson-Protano, Township Clerk

Mary Hess

Mary Hess, Township Supervisor

Katherine McLaughlin

Attested by: Katherine McLaughlin, Township Clerk