

THE MARTIN COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING
May 26, 2026
MINUTES

The Martin County Board of Commissioners convened in a regular session on Tuesday, May 26, 2026, in the Commissioners' Room at the Courthouse located at 129 Main Street, Shoals, Indiana. Commissioners present were Paul R. George, Retha Warner, and Aaron Summers. Also present was Attorney David Lett and Auditor Michelle Norris.

The meeting was called to order with the Pledge of Allegiance at 5:30 p.m.

RE: APPROVAL OF MINUTES & CLAIMS

The minutes from the regular meeting of May 12, 2026, were approved with a motion made by Commissioner Summers, seconded by Commissioner Warner. All in favor, motion passed. A motion was made by Commissioner Warner to approve the claims and allowances, seconded by Commissioner Summers. All in favor, motion passed.

RE: HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT — 2025 ANNUAL OPERATIONAL REPORT

Highway Superintendent Scott Seals and Administrative Assistant Theresa Ray presented the annual highway operational report for the prior year, prepared for submission to the State Board of Accounts and the County Highway Association. Ms. Ray stated the report details all receipts and expenditures and had been distributed to Commissioners by email for review prior to the meeting. President George called for approval of the annual operational report. Commissioner Summers made a motion to approve the 2025 operational report as presented. Commissioner Warner seconded the motion. All in favor, motion passed.

RE: HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT — LPA CONSULTING CONTRACT FOR SAFETY GRANT

Ms. Ray presented a contract from USI Consultants related to a safety grant for sign inventory that had been applied for and received, noting approvals by INDOT. Attorney David Lett stated he had reviewed the contract and had no legal objections. President George requested action on the LPA consulting contract. Commissioner Warner made a motion to approve the LPA consulting contract with USI Consultants. Commissioner Summers seconded the motion. All in favor, motion passed.

RE: HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT — OPERATIONS AND ROAD CONDITIONS

Highway Superintendent Seals reported the gradall and one mower are down, but with drier weather anticipated next week the department expects to address washouts and plugged culverts following recent heavy rains. President George relayed citizen reports and observations regarding roadway conditions, including deteriorating spots on new blacktop along Rutherford Road, ditching effectiveness concerns near Emmons Ridge and Anderson Cemetery, and shoulder settlement along McBride Bluff Road on the river side. Superintendent Seals noted elevated river levels affected roadway conditions. The department will assess and address the identified locations as conditions allow.

RE: LILY POND ROAD — ACCESS AND SAFETY CONCERNS AT STATE HIGHWAY INTERFACE

Jonathan Wagler addressed the Board regarding safety concerns at the junction of Lily Pond Road and Highway 50, describing significant pavement slope and recurrent gravel washouts following downpours that create traction issues for long vehicles. President George directed Mr. Wagler to call the Highway Department and schedule a time to meet with Highway Superintendent Seals to meet onsite to evaluate conditions and develop possible solutions.

RE: NARROW COUNTY ROAD AND TREE GUARDRAIL REQUEST

Charles Day addressed the Board regarding Lyons Lane, an extremely narrow north-south county roadway bordered by a longstanding tree. Mr. Day requested consideration of a guardrail or protective posts around the tree due to frequent scraping by extra-wide equipment. Attorney David Lett explained the roadway is a historical pathway that became a county road without a platted right-of-way; under Indiana law the county's authority extends only to the actual traveled roadway, with no right-of-way to the east or west. Based on this limitation, the County cannot install a guardrail or other protective structures outside the roadway edge. President George concurred that a guardrail would further constrict passage and noted ongoing private agricultural access beyond the tree. The Board advised that any protective measures on private ground must remain outside the county roadway and comply with applicable laws and reiterated that the county's maintenance jurisdiction ends at the gravel edge of this road.

RE: CULVERT CLEANING ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Mary Smith reported that, following concerns she raised at the prior Commissioners' meeting, the culverts and ditches near her property had been cleaned and are now clear of obstructions for the first time in years. She commended the Highway Department for the timely and effective work.

RE: EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT — MITIGATION PLAN ACCEPTANCE AND DISPATCH SOFTWARE INQUIRY

EMA Director Andy Ringwald reported that the countywide mitigation plan submitted last year has been officially accepted by the federal government approximately five months after submission. He noted that, in December, the Board had agreed to the plan, and additional signatory letters are being secured from Town of Crane, City of Loogootee, Loogootee Community School, Martin County Soil and Water, Shoals Community School, and Town of Shoals, enabling these entities to be eligible for mitigation grants as they become available. Director Ringwald further reported very early-stage discussions with a vendor offering dispatch software to fire department cell phones, similar to applications currently used by the ambulance service, as a lower-cost supplement given the absence of computer aided dispatch. He will research pricing and functionality and coordinate with dispatch and Ambulance Director Jeramey Osborn as more information becomes available.

RE: PUBLIC SAFETY RADIOS AND CAD DISCUSSION

Monty Gregory reported attending a meeting with the Loogootee Chief of Police Case Cummings and Martin County Chief Deputy Keith Keller to discuss with Motorola options regarding radio equipment compatible with computer aided dispatch. He stated the County has Kenwood units that perform adequately across most of the county, with some known coverage gaps. Motorola proposed providing test radios to compare performance in identical conditions. Mr. Gregory noted equipment is high-cost, that subsequent requests related to computer aided dispatch may follow, and that further supplier information is anticipated.

RE: COUNTY ATTORNEY REPORT

Attorney Lett stated he had nothing new of interest to report at this time. In response to a question from President George regarding bridge-related legal matters, Attorney Lett indicated he is working to engage a litigation attorney for assistance, noting he no longer conducts litigation personally. President George emphasized the need for timely progress.

RE: AUDITOR'S REPORT AND STATE BOARD OF ACCOUNTS AUDIT SCHEDULING

Auditor Michelle Norris reported attendance at the Auditors' Conference in Indianapolis, with beneficial training completed last week. Auditor Norris announced the entrance conference with the State Board of Accounts auditors is scheduled for tomorrow, initiating the county's 2025 audit. The Board discussed audit frequency, noting prior two- and three-year cycles and expressing concern about annual audits and associated costs historically around \$30,000–\$35,000 per audit.

RE: LIBRARY RIBBON CUTTING AND GRAND OPENING

Mary Smith reminded the Commissioners that the Shoals Public Library's ribbon cutting will be held on Friday, June 5th at 1:00 p.m., with architects and project stakeholders expected to attend. The public grand opening will be Saturday, June 6th from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., consistent with Saturday library hours, with children's reading programs, snacks, and crafts organized by library Director Alyssa Fithian. Commissioner Aaron Summers noted the facility's excellent appearance.

RE: ADJOURNMENT

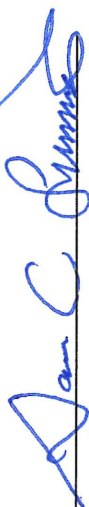
With no further business to discuss, a motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Warner and seconded by Commissioner Summers. All were in favor, and the motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 5:53 PM. The next regular meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, June 9, 2026, at 5:30 PM.



Paul R. George



Retha Warner



Aaron C. Summers

ATTEST: 

Michelle Norris, Martin County Auditor