

FINANCE
October 8th, 2025

Call to order

The Finance Committee meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m. by Finance Chairman Gary Koch. Committee members Bruce Strnad, Wayne Jerrett, and Greg Russell were present. Gerry Krachey was absent. Also present were Tom Cornford, County Board Chairman; Kyle Kozelka, Hwy Commissioner; Nicole Asleson, Circuit Court; Linda Redman, Register of Deeds; Mark Lee, Driftless Development; Pete Flesch, Driftless Development; Sasha Kozelka, Driftless Development and Roberta Fisher, County Clerk.

Verify posting

The Finance Chairman verified that the meeting notice was properly posted at the Courthouse, Administration Building and on the county website.

Approval of Minutes

Motion by Strnad, second by Jerrett to approve the minutes from the September 17th Finance Committee meeting. The motion carried with no negative votes cast.

Approval of Bills and Proposals

The Clerk presented two invoices for approval today.

- Klein McCarthy - \$21,647.33
- NaCo Membership - \$450

Motion by Strnad, second by Jerrett to approve payment of the above invoices. The motion carried unanimously.

Driftless Wisconsin Contribution

A letter was submitted to the Finance Committee respectfully requesting a contribution of \$5,500 or consider an increase to Driftless Wisconsin for 2026.

This organization promotes the region by giving visitors more things to do and more reasons to stay longer, which benefits all the communities in the county. County support represents an investment not only in Crawford County, but the many small towns and villages that depend on Driftless Wisconsin for promoting their communities.

Gary Koch, Finance Chairman, stated we will consider this request when working out the 2026 County Promotional Budget. No action was taken today.

A letter was also submitted on behalf of the PdC Historical Society requesting \$4,500 for the 2026 Budget Year. This will also be considered when finalizing the budget.

**Driftless
Development
Inc.**

Sasha Kozelka, president of the Board of Directors for Driftless Development appeared before the Finance Committee today, along with Pete Flesch and Mark Lee.

Kozelka updated the committee with recent data highlighting how county investments are driving economic growth. She emphasized the importance of ongoing economic development efforts. The 2025 Economic Impact Report was shared with the Finance Committee members today, showing measurable progress and active initiatives across the county. Driftless Development, Inc. (DDI) continues to invest in Crawford County's future by fostering business growth, expanding workforce opportunities, and enhancing the region's appeal to create vibrant, sustainable communities where people want to live, work, and play.

Mark Lee, Director of DDI, spoke about the organization's contributions to community development and regional growth. Over \$1.3 million in grant funding has been secured and strategically used to support business expansion, tourism, and community development throughout Crawford County.

Lastly, DDI Board Member Pete Flesch thanked the committee for its past support and requested a similar contribution from Crawford County for 2026. Flesch also asked the county to consider making a long-term commitment to support DDI in the future.

Koch informed the DDI representatives that the county strives to maintain a consistent level of support for DDI each year, though at times that support is shared with other economic development requests. He noted that this year it appears the county will be able to provide the same level of support as last year, possibly even a little more. A final decision will be made at the next Finance Committee meeting on October 22nd.

**Gays Mills Hwy
Shop Bonding
Discussion**

The Highway Department is looking at consolidating the Gays Mills and Soldiers Grove shops into one new location on CTH X, just East of the North Crawford School. The current shop in Gays Mills is located in the flood plain, and this has been an issue with the DNR and losing salt due to flooding.

The new parcel of land has been purchased, and a schematic has been prepared. The Highway Committee's next step is to seek guidance on how to proceed with potential borrowing. They are questioning whether it would be in the county's best interest to include this project in the final bonding for the jail project or to utilize separate bonding for the new highway shop. The Highway Committee wants to explore all funding options, including using some of their fund balance.

Gary Koch, Finance Chair, recommends using a portion of their fund balance and borrowing the remainder, noting that this should be handled as a separate bond issue from the jail project. Ultimately, Koch suggests inviting Carol Wirth, Wisconsin Public Finance Professionals, to provide financial advice at an upcoming Highway Committee meeting and answer any questions the committee may have.

2026 Budget Progress

The Finance Chairman presented his ideas and outlined the key elements in finalizing the 2026 Budget.

- 5% negotiated wage increase for Law Enforcement union members
- 2% wage increase for all other county employees
- Eliminated the funding for the HR position
- Changed the County share of health insurance premium to 80%. Last year the county contributed 88%.
- Increased sales tax by \$300,000
- There was a small increase in the levy limit (\$109,000)
- Created four new full-time jailer positions; 1 for the full year and 3 for eleven months.
- A minimal increase in state funding for Shared Revenue, Land Conservation; and Circuit Court.
- A full-time therapist position was eliminated in Health & Human Services Dept.
- Elimination of a full-time Emergency Management position
- Utilized carrying forward some unused funds rather than levying new money
- Utilized \$100,000 of the TIF fund
- Decreased the contingency fund to \$25,000
- ADRC is contributing \$100,000 of their fund balance
- Highway Department is contributing \$500,000 of their fund balance
- There will be a spenddown of the General Fund Balance of \$550,000
- Borrowing for capital improvement of \$140,000 for squad cars
- Short-term borrowing for Highway equipment of \$1,100,000.

Gary Koch is asking the Finance Committee today to consider a motion to recommend to full county board a decrease in the county portion of health insurance to 80%; borrowing for capital improvement in the amount of \$140,000; and a short-term borrowing for Highway equipment in the amount of \$1,100,000. At the next Finance meeting, members will vote on approval of the 2026 Budget, county promotional funding, and the proposed wage increase for county employees.

Motion by Strnad; second by Russell to recommend to full county board a decrease in the county portion of health insurance premium to 80%; borrowing for capital improvements in the amount of

\$140,000; and the short-term borrowing for Highway equipment of \$1,100,000. The motion carried unanimously upon call of the roll.

**October Co.
Board Agenda**

Items to be placed on the October County Board agenda are as follows:

- Carol Roth will give a report on the Alice In Dairyland event
- Resolution Approving Budget Appropriation for County Aid Bridge Construction Under 81.38 of the Wisconsin Statutes
- Resolution in Support of Increased State Funding Toward County Costs to Provide “SNAP” Foodshare Services
- Ordinance Repealing and Recreating Chapter 16 of the Crawford County Ordinances Re: Shoreland Protection Ordinance
- Ordinance Amending, Repealing, and Recreating Section 4.15(3) of the Crawford County Ordinances re: to Paid Funeral Leave for the Services of any Coworker within each department
- Report of the General Claims Committee

Motion by Koch, second by Jerrett to approve the Resolution Approving Budget Appropriation for County Aid Bridge Construction Under 81.38 of the Wisconsin Statutes. Motion carried with no negative votes cast.

Next meeting

October 22nd, 2025, at 9:00 a.m.

Adjournment

Motion by Cornford, second by Strnad to adjourn. The motion carried unanimously, and the meeting adjourned at 10:00 a.m.

Roberta A. Fisher, County Clerk