

LINCOLN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Tuesday, June 16, 2026 – 6:00PM

MEETING MINUTES

(recording delayed due to technical difficulties)

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1. **Call to Order** – Chair Friske called the meeting to order at 6:00pm.
 2. **Pledge of Allegiance**
 3. **Roll Call** – Deputy Clerk Hurley called the roll with the following members in attendance: Bialecki, Doerr, McCrank, Pergolski, Zelinski, Ashbeck, Dunphy, Thiel, Friske, Boyd, Detert, DePasse, Bishop, Lyskawa, Lemke, Miller, Nelson, Tomaszewski, Dorava (V), Cummings, Simon, and Hartwig **(22)**.
 4. **Announcements**
 - a. **New Emergency Alert System**

Directory of Emergency Management, Tyler Verhasselt announced the new Emergency Alert System is now available for open enrollment for the public. The system is designed to provide residents and visitor with timely emergency information from local public safety officials. Information has been made available via news release, radio, website and distribution of flyers.
 - b. **Finance Director Resignation**

Chair Friske announced that the Director of Finance, Heather Marheine has submitted her resignation. Her last day will be July 17, 2026. She has agreed to continue supporting her role until that time. All audits have been completed.
 5. **Appointments - None**
 6. **Awards - None**
 7. **Recognitions**
 - a. Retirement of Dave Pankow, 31 Years of Service - Highway. Chair Friske commended Dave for his years of service.
 8. **Approval of the Minutes**
 - a. **May 19, 2026 Meeting Minutes**

M/S DePasse/Bialecki to approve the May 19, 2026 Minutes as written. The motion to approve was carried by a voice vote.
 9. **Letters and Memorials - None**
 10. **Reports of Standing & Special Committees**
 - a. **Finance & Insurance Committee:** Lincoln County Year-to-Date Budget (Finance Director, Heather Marheine)

Marheine was unavailable for the meeting, however, she reported to AC Renee Krueger that she had no major concerns at this time. Friske then fielded questions from the floor. In response to why our revenues can lag or come in slowly throughout the calendar year, Krueger indicated that state reimbursements often take 3-6 months from the time of service to collect.
 - b. **Administrative & Legislative Committee:** County Board Strategic Goals for 2026-2028 Term (County Board Chair, Don Friske) Friske initiated a discussion regarding the county's focus for the remainder of the two-year term. Friske requested input from the board members regarding goals they wish to accomplish. The discussion emphasized maintaining fiscal sustainability amidst stagnant population trends. The following topics will be prioritized and presented at the next meeting.
 - Regulation of Data Centers
 - Tourism Promotion and Growth
 - Wisconsin Gravel Initiative

- ATV/UTV Campground
- Population and Fiscal Sustainability
- Infrastructure, Broadband and Housing Development

11. Public Comment

- a. Tim Burton- Mr. Burton spoke in support of the development of an Agricultural Enterprise Area and expressed the positive impact it would have on his family and business.
- b. Sam Dardouk- Chair Friske granted Mr. Dardouk three minutes to share his recent personal experience involving the Tax Deed Process.

12. Resolutions

a. Res 2026-06-30 To Support the Development of an Agricultural Enterprise Area (AEA) Within the Townships of Corning and Harding

WHEREAS, the Department of Agriculture Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) is accepting applications for the designation of Agricultural Enterprise Areas (AEA) throughout the State of Wisconsin; and

WHEREAS, an Agricultural Enterprise Area is a designated area of productive agriculture that strives to support local farmland protection goals and provides a way for landowners to participate in the Farmland Preservation Program (FPP) through Farmland Preservation Agreements; and

WHEREAS, agriculture is an important component of the Lincoln County economy, landscape, and rural character; and

WHEREAS, the Lincoln County Farmland Preservation Plan (adopted 2016) demonstrates that the agricultural industry drives \$132 million into Lincoln County's economy annually; and

WHEREAS, the total gross regional product (GRP) in Lincoln County in 2015 was 1.5 billion dollars with agricultural accounting for 4% of Lincoln County's GRP; and

WHEREAS, the Lincoln County Comprehensive Plan (adopted 2022) states a goal of "Engage in the development and implementation of the Wisconsin Working Lands Initiatives reflecting the County's desire to keep farming in the community by examining the potential to create agricultural enterprise zones and discussing areas appropriate for Farmland Preservation Zoning in areas with productive agricultural and forestry lands."; and

WHEREAS, the Lincoln County Farmland Preservation Plan states an objective of "Minimize the conversion of agricultural lands and woodlands into other uses. Encourage retaining large, contiguous, forestry and farmland tracts. Work to preserve farming as a viable occupation within the County"; and

WHEREAS, Lincoln County has experienced a decrease in the number of farms over the past 10 years; and

WHEREAS, Lincoln County believes that establishment of an Agricultural Enterprise Area will protect the local agricultural economy and rural heritage; and

WHEREAS, the continued preservation of land in agricultural use will help support jobs in the agricultural industry and attract new agri-businesses; and

WHEREAS, the farmers petitioning the State of Wisconsin, along with support from their respective Town Boards, have demonstrated that there is public support for the Agricultural Enterprise Area; and

WHEREAS, the choice to participate in activities and programs related to the Agricultural Enterprise Area will be at the sole discretion of the individual property owner; and

WHEREAS, agriculture is a critical part of land use and warrants thoughtful preservation and support.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Lincoln County Board of Supervisors hereby supports the designation of an Agricultural Enterprise Area entitled "Copper River AEA" within the Town of Corning and the Town of Harding in Lincoln County, Wisconsin.

M/S Cummings/Boyd to approve Resolution 2026-06-30. The motion to approve was carried by a voice vote.

b. Res 2026-06-31 Accepting FY2025 Computer and Hazardous Materials Response Equipment Grant (CHREG) funding from Wisconsin Emergency Management (WEM)

WHEREAS, Lincoln County is responsible for supporting emergency management, hazardous materials planning, public safety coordination, responder readiness, and local preparedness activities necessary to protect the health, safety, and welfare of its residents; and

WHEREAS, the Computer and Hazardous Materials Response Equipment Grant (CHREG), administered through Wisconsin Emergency Management (WEM), a division of the Wisconsin Department of Military Affairs (DMA),

provides funding to assist counties in maintaining and improving hazardous materials response capability and eligible emergency management equipment; and

WHEREAS; the FY2025 CHREG award is authorized under Wis. Stat. § 323.60 and Wisconsin Administrative Code Chapter WEM 5, and supports county responsibilities related to hazardous materials planning, Local Emergency Planning Committee functions, and response capability under Wis. Stat. §§ 323.60 and 323.61; and

WHEREAS; Wisconsin Emergency Management awarded Lincoln County Emergency Management FY2025 CHREG funding under Grant Number 2025-EPCRA-01-14384, State Grant #465.308, for eligible equipment and technology improvements supporting hazardous materials preparedness and response; and

WHEREAS; the FY2025 CHREG award supports Lincoln County's hazardous materials response capability by sustaining access to contracted Level A HazMat Emergency Response services provided through Oneida County's HazMat response capability, ensuring Lincoln County has access to specialized hazardous materials response resources when incidents exceed local operational capability; and

WHEREAS; the award also supports emergency management equipment and technology services necessary to maintain hazardous materials planning, incident coordination, regulatory documentation, situational awareness, and continuity of operations for Lincoln County Emergency Management; and

WHEREAS; CHREG funds are paid on a reimbursement basis and are subject to applicable grant agreement terms, approved project scope, reporting, procurement, fiscal documentation, monitoring, and closeout requirements; and

WHEREAS; Wisconsin Emergency Management issued Lincoln County Emergency Management a final reimbursement payment in the amount of \$5,220.36 for the FY2025 Computer and Hazardous Materials Response Equipment Grant, with a final award amount of \$5,220.36 and no award de-obligation; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED; that the Lincoln County Board of Supervisors hereby accepts the final payment of \$5,220.36 in FY2025 Computer and Hazardous Materials Response Equipment Grant funding from Wisconsin Emergency Management on behalf of the Lincoln County Emergency Management Department.

M/S Boyd/Thiel to approve Resolution 2026-06-31 with corrections made to the Resolution date and fiscal impact. The motion to approve was carried by a voice vote.

c. Res 2026-06-32 To Allow the Department of Social Services to Submit the Youth Justice Innovation Grant Renewal Application and Accept Funds to Continue the Intensive Supervision Services Position in 2027

WHEREAS, the Lincoln County Board passed a resolution (Resolution 2025-08-38) in August, 2025 to allow the Lincoln County Department of Social Services to write for and accept a Youth Justice Innovation Grant for fiscal year 2026; and

WHEREAS, the Lincoln County Department of Social Services hired a case manager to provide intensive supervision services in 2026 utilizing the grant funds; and

WHEREAS, the State of Wisconsin Department of Children and Families (DCF) has announced the opportunity for Continuation Grants for counties that received a Youth Justice Innovation Grant in 2025 or 2026 providing the opportunity for renewal of the grant subject to satisfactory performance; and

WHEREAS, the Lincoln County Department of Social Services is eligible to renew the Youth Justice Innovation Grant for calendar year 2027 in the amount of \$75,000; and

WHEREAS, the Lincoln County Department of Social Services has consistently had at least one youth placed in a high-cost out of home placement for the last several years; and

WHEREAS, intensive supervision services as provided by regular, frequent and consistent contact with a supervision provider, is crucial to provide sufficient time spent with youth to build essential skill-building experiences and behavioral interventions; and

WHEREAS, intensive supervision services provided in 2026 to a target group of moderate and high risk youth has resulted in youth continuing to be managed in the community and no new youth offenders being placed in high-cost out of home placements as of May 27, 2026; and

WHEREAS, the deadline to submit the grant renewal application form is June 24, 2026, and

WHEREAS, in the interest of time, the Lincoln County Department of Social Services submitted the grant renewal application form and, if approved by Wisconsin Department of Children and Families, is requesting approval to accept the grant renewal contract for \$75,000.00 in calendar year 2027 to continue the project of post-dispositional services for the purposes of retaining an additional staff position for 2027 or contracting with a service provider to continue to provide the intensive service array to moderate and high risk youth

with a goal of managing youth in the community versus placement in high-cost out of home placements; and **WHEREAS**, the funds will be used to cover approximately 71% of a position including the cost of salary and fringe or to reimburse a contractor for expenses associated with the contract agreement to provide services as defined by this project proposal; and

WHEREAS, funding for management of the Youth Aides and Community Intervention Program presents a complicated balance for work flow and financial management given that the available funds are not fully utilized in years when there are low out of home expenses for the target population (youth offenders) or they can be quickly expended when 2 youth are placed for several months in any given year; and

WHEREAS, with the anticipated outcome of reduced annual expenses for out-of-home placement expenses, the remaining 29% of salary and fringe will be reported for reimbursement as Community Intervention Program or Youth Aides expenses; and

WHEREAS, youth, families, the community, and Lincoln County tax payers are better served when youth can be safely and effectively managed in the community versus placement in high-cost out-of-home placements; and

WHEREAS, this position will end on December 31, 2027 unless it is approved by the County Board to continue.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Lincoln County Board of Supervisors approves the Lincoln County Department of Social Services to submit the grant renewal application and accept the Youth Justice Innovation Grant renewal funding in the amount of \$75,000.00, if approved, from Wisconsin Department of Children and Families for the purposes of maintaining a position in calendar year 2027 or contracting for services to provide intensive supervision to youth justice case participants.

M/S McCrank/Bialecki to approve Resolution 2026-06-32. The motion to approve was carried by a voice vote.

d. Res 2026-06-33 A Resolution to Add an Additional Economic Support Specialist Position within the Social Services Department for Quality Assurance Due to Increased Funding from Wisconsin DHS

WHEREAS, the Lincoln County Department of Social Services is part of the Northern Income Maintenance Consortium (NIMC) which is comprised of eleven counties that combine together to administer mandated public assistance programs including Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP); and

WHEREAS, the federal budget reconciliation, the One Big Beautiful Bill Act, signed into law on July 4, 2025 requires states to contribute a minimum of 5% toward the cost of SNAP benefits if their error rate is 6% or higher, facing penalty funding of between 5% and 15% of total SNAP costs; and

WHEREAS, if Wisconsin's error rate reaches 6% on or after October 1, 2027 the state's 5% cost share would be approximately \$69 million annually; and

WHEREAS, in March 2025 Governor Evers signed 2025 Wisconsin Act 116 which, among other items, appropriated additional funding to Wisconsin DHS for quality control to ensure that Wisconsin stays below the federally required 6% error rate; and

WHEREAS, the Northern Income Maintenance Consortium will receive additional funding in the amount of \$678,300.00 per year for quality assurance; and

WHEREAS, approximately six new quality assurance positions will be added to the Northern Income Maintenance Consortium utilizing the new funding appropriation; and

WHEREAS, subject to approval by the team of 11 Directors of the NIMC, if Lincoln County is able to accept one of the six quality assurance positions, it would be fully funded; and

WHEREAS, the Lincoln County Department of Social Services currently has 8 Economic Support Specialists and one Economic Support Supervisor; and

WHEREAS, the Lincoln County Department of Social Services has a contractual commitment to NIMC requiring maintenance of effort in man hours and tax levy which was agreed upon around 2016; and

WHEREAS, if Lincoln County accepts a fully funded quality assurance position, it would be required to be additional position and cannot supplant an existing position; and

WHEREAS, Lincoln County is the second largest county in the NIMC, and

WHEREAS, accepting a quality assurance position would create an opportunity for existing staff to apply to be assigned to different duties and create an additional employment opportunity in Lincoln County;

WHEREAS, the quality assurance funding has been appropriated for the current biennium (State FY 26 & 27),

however Wisconsin DHS has indicated that this will be an ongoing appropriation in future budgets; and **WHEREAS**, all funding appropriations for all Social Services mandated programs are subject to change in each federal and state budget cycle; and

WHEREAS, should funding be cut in the next state budget cycle, the additional positions would be required to be eliminated, bringing the Economic Support Specialist positions back down from 9 to 8 positions.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Lincoln County Board of Supervisors approves the Lincoln County Department of Social Services to add an additional Economic Support Specialist Position for quality assurance duties due to increased funding from Wisconsin DHS.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Director of Social Services shall be required to monitor funding appropriations in the next biennium to ensure the continued appropriation of the quality assurance funds, provide an update to the Social Services Board when the 2028-2029 State Budget is released (about a year from now), and manage staffing levels accordingly.

M/S Cummings/Hartwig to approve Resolution 2026-06-33. The motion to approve was carried by a voice vote.

e. Res 2026-06-34 To Accept Donation of Books to Support Children Serviced by the Social Services Department

WHEREAS, the Lincoln County Department of Social Services works with children and families who are in need of various services; and

WHEREAS, the following donation has been received by the Department of Social Services to support the needs of children and families served by the department:

- Books with an estimated value of \$100.00 from Lily Frederick-VanDerGeest.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Lincoln County Board of Supervisors accepts the above-referenced donation, and recognizes and thanks Lily Frederick-VanDerGeest for their thoughtful and generous donation in support of children in Lincoln County.

M/S Depasse/Zelinski to approve Resolution 2026-06-34. The motion to approve was carried by a voice vote.

f. Res 2026-06-35 Approve a Grant Application and Accept \$99,000 from the Bierman Family Foundation for the Restoration of the Lincoln County Courthouse Clock

WHEREAS, the Lincoln County Courthouse was constructed in 1903 and was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1978; and

WHEREAS, the Wisconsin Historical Preservation Covenant is in effect through 2052; and

WHEREAS, the Lincoln County Board passed the 2026 budget in November of 2025 and Lincoln County Department Courthouse Clock subsequently broke; and

WHEREAS, the Lincoln County Building and Grounds Superintendent researched companies who could restore the clock in its original form, so as to preserve the architectural and historical integrity of the clock as required by the Historic Preservation Covenant; and

WHEREAS, the only viable quote was through Wind Me Up Clock Shop, LLC out of Rhinelander, WI who would collaboratively perform the work with The Tower Clock Company (TC) from Ohio for an estimated cost of \$90,000 plus option services; and

WHEREAS, the Lincoln County Courthouse clock has been the most recognizable feature in Lincoln County, a beacon to downtown Merrill; and

WHEREAS, an application to the Bierman Family Foundation meets the spirit of the Lincoln County Resolution 2026-03-14 "Establishing "The Bierman Family Foundation Inc." as a Local Grant Resource..." ; and
WHEREAS, the Bierman Family Foundation has graciously accepted our grant application for the amount of \$99,000.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Lincoln County Board of Supervisors approves the Lincoln County Administrative Coordinator in Collaboration with the Building and Grounds Superintendent to submit the grant application and accept funding in the amount of \$99,000.00, if approved, from the Bierman Family Foundation Inc. for the Lincoln County Courthouse Clock Restoration.

M/S Bialecki/Thiel to approve Resolution 2026-06-35. The motion to approve was carried by a voice vote.

h. Res 2026-06-36 Resolution to Join the North Central Wisconsin Workforce Development Chief Elected Officials Consortium

WHEREAS, Lincoln County is presently within the North Central Wisconsin local area established under the 1998 federal Workforce Investment Act and certain citizens of Lincoln County are receiving job training and other program assistance funded under the program which is administered by the Advance Wisconsin Employment Board and the North Central Wisconsin Local Elected Officials Consortium; and

WHEREAS, Lincoln County presently has an appointed representative serving on the North Central Wisconsin Local Elected Officials Consortium and also has appointed members serving on the Advance Wisconsin Employment Board; and

WHEREAS, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (29 USC Chapter 32) has been enacted by Congress in replacement of the Workforce Investment Act, and allowing local governments to form a Consortium to create a Local Workforce Investment Area; and

WHEREAS, under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act:

1. Each County in the Consortium must designate a "chief elected official" to represent the County as a member of the Consortium, which Consortium is empowered to enter into contractual and other agreements necessary to carry out the purposes of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act; and
2. The Consortium must designate an administrative/fiscal agent to administer the program on behalf of the Consortium; and

WHEREAS, Lincoln County desires to enter into the Chief Elected Officials Consortium Agreement of the North Central Wisconsin Workforce Development Area for the Wisconsin Counties of Adams, Forest, Langlade, Lincoln, Marathon, Oneida, Portage, Wood, and Vilas under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 (Public Law 113-128), the same counties which previously comprised the North Central Wisconsin Local Elected Officials Consortium, to continue receiving the federal assistance available for workforce programs and training and as otherwise available under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act;

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS RESOLVED that the Lincoln County Board of Supervisors shall enter into an agreement to create a consortium as stated in the Chief Elected Officials Consortium Agreement, to consist of Adams, Forest, Langlade, Lincoln, Marathon, Oneida, Portage, Wood, and Vilas Counties to create the North Central Wisconsin Workforce Development Area under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Lincoln County Board of Supervisors hereby authorizes and directs County Board Supervisor Bill Bialecki to serve as the County's designated "chief elected official" until his or her successor is installed. Board Chair Don Friske shall reserve signatory authority to execute agreements as necessary for Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act purposes.

M/S Boyd/Lyskawa to approve Resolution 2026-06-36. The motion to approve was carried by a voice vote.

13. Ordinances

a. Ord 2026-06-806 An Ordinance Amending Portions of the General Code of the County of Lincoln – Chapter 17 and 17.2.03. Zoning Ordinance as a Result of Rezoning Petition by Michael Olson for Property in the Town of Harding

The County Board of Supervisors of the County of Lincoln, Wisconsin, does hereby ordain :

Chapter 17.2.03, Lincoln County Code, is amended such that property located in Section 31, T32N-R5E, in the Town of Harding, tax pin# 00832053129997, will be rezoned from Forestry (F) to Rural Lands (RL-2).

Any areas designated as Wetlands on the Wisconsin Wetland Inventory Map will not be rezoned to upland.

This ordinance shall take effect following its passage and publishing.

M/S McCrank/Zelinski to approve Ordinance 2026-06-806. The motion to approve was carried by a voice vote

b. Ord 2026-06-807 An Ordinance Amending Portions of the General Code of the County of Lincoln – Chapter 17 and 17.2.03. Zoning Ordinance as a Result of a Comprehensive Plan Amendment and Rezoning Petition by Northforest Campground LLC (Representative: Todd Jelinek) for Property in the Town of King

