

LINCOLN COUNTY PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

Wednesday, August 12, 2026 - 4:00 PM

MINUTES

1. Call to Order

2. Confirm Meeting Date and Time

Next Meeting: September 9, 2026 at 4:00pm, Lincoln County Service Center, 801 North Sales Street, Room 255, Merrill, WI 54452.

3. Pledge of Allegiance

4. Approval of the Minutes

a. Approve Minutes From: July 8, 2026

M/S Miller/Lyskawa to approve the July 8, 2026 meeting minutes. All ayes, motion carried on voice vote.

5. Public Comment

None

6. Emergency Management

a. Year-to-Date Budget Report

Verhasselt reported expenses were at approximately 50% for the year. Discrepancy regarding training expenses (Occupational Safety Training) appearing at 350% was explained as a temporary result of organizational restructuring, with expenses expected to level out to 100% as other departments reimburse the emergency management budget. Occupational Safety training will soon have it's own division moving forward to indicate revenue and expenditures. No other questions or concerns. Report placed on file.

b. Travel & Expense Report

M/S Cummings/Thiel to approve travel expenses. All ayes, motion carried on voice vote.

c. Emergency Management Activity Report

Verhasselt reported on a training (table-top exercise) conducted with the Wisconsin Elections Commission and the Department of Military Affairs regarding election security. The County Clerk, Chris Marlowe was also in attendance. Areas of improvement were identified, and enhancements will be implemented prior to the fall general election. The FEMA Advance Academy research paper, which used Lincoln County alerts as a case study, was approved for publication by FEMA.

Verhassel discussed the importance of cybersecurity protocols and expressed an intent to formally recognize the Director of IT and his team for their efforts in maintaining county system security. Due to these efforts, the county successfully navigated a recent cyber security incident without exiting the "protect" phase.

d. Res. 2026-08-XX, Acceptance of FY25 Emergency Management Planning Grant (EMPG) Reimbursement from Wisconsin Emergency Management (WEM)

M/S Thiel/Lyskawa to approve resolution Acceptance of FY25 Emergency Management Planning Grant (EMPG) Reimbursement from Wisconsin Emergency Management (WEM). All ayes, motion carried on voice vote. Thiel to author and Lyskawa to co-sponsor.

e. Res. 2026-08-XX, Acceptance of FY25 Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act (EPCRA) Grant Reimbursement from Wisconsin Emergency Management (WEM)

M/S Cummings/Lyskawa to approve resolution Acceptance of FY25 Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act (EPCRA) Grant Reimbursement from Wisconsin Emergency Management (WEM). All ayes, motion carried on voice vote. Cummings to author and Lyskawa to co-sponsor.

f. Res. 2026-08-XX, Acceptance of FY25 Computer and HAZMAT Response Equipment Grant (CHREG) Redistribution Funding

M/S Miller/Cummings to approve resolution Acceptance of FY25 Computer and Hazmat Response Equipment Grant (CHREG) Redistribution Funding. All ayes, motion carried on voice vote. Miller to author and Cummings to co-sponsor.

Verhasselt clarified that this involved an extra \$350 in funds resulting from the redistribution of unused grant money from other entities.

g. Res. 2026-08-XX, Resolution Authorizing the Issuance of a Purchasing Card for the Emergency Management Department

The committee authorized the Emergency Management Directory to obtain a purchasing card with a \$5,000 credit limit. Resolution is not necessary. The purchasing card has already been approved by the Finance and Insurance Committee. M/S Cummings/Thiel to approve a purchasing card with a \$5,000 credit limit for Emergency Management. All ayes, motion carried on voice vote.

7. Coroner

a. Year-to-Date Budget Report

Caylor reported that the budget is looking good year-to-date, with lower than anticipated autopsy numbers the the use of grant supplied body bags helping to control costs.

b. Travel & Expense Report

None.

c. Coroner's Report

i) June Report

Report reviewed, no questions or concerns. Report placed on file.

ii) July Report

Report reviewed. No questions or concerns. Report placed on file.

Caylor described a July incident involving a fire at a Lincoln County funeral home. The Coroner's office secured the decedents in their cooler, which reached close to capacity during the event.

8. Judicial

a. District Attorney and Victim Witness

i) Year-to-date Budget Report

Report reviewed. No questions or concerns. Report placed on file.

b. Clerk of Courts and Family Court

i) Year-to-date Budget Report

Report reviewed, No questions or concerns. Report placed on file.

c. Register in Probate and Circuit Court

i) Introductions and Preliminary Review of Security Assessment - Judge Jessica Fehrenbach

Judge Farenbach introduced herself and discussed the need for improved courthouse security. Citing a specific case that drew national attention and resulted in threats against the judge and their family. Judge Farenbach emphasized that the courthouse is currently not secure. Capital police have performed a security assessment. Meetings will be initiated to discuss potential security measures, including the possibility of a new building, while prioritizing cost-effectiveness and collaborative planning. Judge Farenbach highlighted measures to recover costs, including assessing jury costs to defendants for trial delays and monitoring court-appointed attorney payments. She noted that approximately \$14,000 in cash bonds have been forfeited this calendar year to hold individuals accountable. Judges, State Staff and County Staff and our citizens deserve to feel safe at the courthouse.

ii) Year-to-date Budget Report

Report reviewed. Byer reported no concerns with the budget, noting that doctor fees for exams are being monitored. Collections, including the Title IV reimbursements totaling approximately \$2,000 are progressing, and the office continues to use tax intercepts for unpaid collections. No questions or concerns. Report placed on file.

9. Sheriff's Office

a. Statistical Reports

i) Expense Budget, Revenue Budget (Year-to-date Report)

Report reviewed, no questions or concerns. Report placed on file.

ii) Recreational Officer Activity Report

Report reviewed, no questions or concerns. Report placed on file.

iii) 9-1-1 Supervisor's Report

Report reviewed, no questions or concerns. Report placed on file.

iv) Jail Census Report

Report reviewed. The jail census report indicates an average of 135 individuals, nearing the safe capacity of 160. Sheriff Schneider and Hoeft confirmed that the new staff undergo three months of field training followed by five weeks of additional training. There are currently two Correction Officers in training.

b. Discussion and Possible Action to Reduce Lieutenant Positions in the Sheriff's Office to 5 Positions when a Vacancy Occurs.

The committee debated the logistics of the civilian supervisor transition, specifically regarding wage scale classification. The 911 Dispatch Supervisor is a specialized position and having the wage scale information prior to recruitment would be beneficial when making offers to potential candidates. The committee discussed the possible additional cost to have this position created and added to the wage scale.

Motion by Chair Hartwig to amend the resolution to include creating a civilian dispatch supervisor and placing this position on the wage scale by Cunningham & Butler.

M/S Cummings/Miller motioned to postpone the resolution until the September meeting, tasking the administrative coordinator with obtaining wage scale information. All ayes, motion carried on voice vote.

Resolution postponed to the September meeting to allow for the inclusion of a civilian dispatch supervisor position on the wage scale as well as determination of the fiscal impact.

c. Resolution 2026-XX-XX - Acceptance of Bierman Family Foundation Donation for K-9 Program

M/S Thiel/Cummings to approve the resolution Acceptance of Bierman Family Foundation Donation for K-9 Program. All ayes, motion carried on voice vote. Thiel will be the author and Cummings will be the co-sponsor.

Deputy Chief Iverson confirmed that the funding covers the cost of the dog, training and necessary equipment, while existing budget lines already account for overtime and ongoing care.

10. Emergency Medical Services

a. Tomahawk Report

i) Res 2026-05-xx Resolution Authorizing the Installation of Forward-Facing Cameras and GPS Tracking Systems in Lincoln County - Tomahawk Ambulances

The committee took no action regarding the resolution for forward-facing cameras, as discussions between the parties involved are still pending. Resolution tabled until the necessary components are prepared.

b. Merrill Report

Report reviewed, no questions or concerns. Report placed on file.

c. Monthly Charge Report, Write-offs, and Collections

M/S Miller/Thiel to approve write-offs in the amount of \$11,916.44. All ayes, motion carried on voice vote.

d. YTD Budget

Report reviewed, no questions or concerns. Report placed on file.

e. 2027 EMS Budget Proposal Review (pending negotiation outcome)

Negotiations are pending. The committee agreed to postpone the resolution to the September meeting.

11. Adjourn

M/S Thiel/Miller to adjourn meeting at 4:54pm and transition to a tour of the coroner's building. Chair Hartwig adjourned meeting.

12. Tour of Lincoln County Coroner's Building