



THE MARTIN COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING
March 31, 2026
MINUTES

The Martin County Board of Commissioners convened in a regular session on Tuesday, March 31, 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 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 March 17, 2026, were approved with a motion made by Commissioner Warner, seconded by Commissioner Summers. President George abstained. 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 UPDATES

Highway Superintendent Scott Seals presented a contract from Rejuvtec; Rejuvtec's system helps preserve the more recently blacktopped roads. Superintendent Seals stated this will cover approximately three and a half to four miles of roads. A motion was made by Commissioner Summers to approve the contract with Rejuvtec in the amount of \$70,768.48. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Warner. All in favor, motion passed.

Superintendent Seals also reported he had a meeting with the company who will be doing the community crossings work and they plan to start within the next two months. Superintendent Seals stated the John Deere mower has been sent out for repair and should be back in the department within the next two weeks. Superintendent Seals stated two part-time employees are in the process of being hired; one person will be utilized for mowing and the other for general work. One of the applicants has a class A CDL. Monty Wolf raised a concern regarding a gap on a bridge on Highway 50, West of the 4-H grounds; Superintendent Seals stated he would reach out to INDOT.

RE: CENTRAL DISPATCH AND COMPUTER-AIDED DISPATCH (CAD) SYSTEM

A comprehensive discussion was held regarding the county's dispatch services and the potential implementation of a central dispatch and Computer-Aided Dispatch (CAD) system. Jonah Shaw provided a detailed analysis, estimating that establishing a centralized dispatch could increase annual costs to the taxpayer by approximately \$380,224, potentially rising to around \$640,000 with benefits included. Mr. Shaw highlighted several ongoing issues, including analog radios failing to transmit reliably to the dispatch center, a problem persisting since a lightning strike in 2020 or 2021. He recommended repairing or upgrading the existing repeater, moving all emergency dispatching through the Martin County repeater, and utilizing the existing Fire 800 MHz frequency for Fire and EMS to resolve interference with law enforcement traffic. He strongly advocated for acquiring a CAD system, noting Martin County is one of the few in the state without one, which would modernize operations and improve record-keeping.

Loogootee City Mayor Brian Ader stated an issue with upgrading repeaters is when the Loogootee Fire Department goes North, as they also service Crane, they cannot communicate back because there is a dead zone and another tower and repeater is needed for that area. Rather than buying a new tower and repeater, money may be more wisely spent on a CAD system or central dispatch.

Loogootee Chief Deputy Case Cummings supported a CAD system but stressed the concurrent need for increased dispatch personnel, stating both are necessary for safety. He

explained that modern CAD systems integrate with report writing software, aiding in NIBRS data compilation and future resource allocation. Martin County Chief Deputy Keith Keller stated the dispatchers do an outstanding job with the equipment they have. There are improvements that need to be made, one of them being the 911 system. Chief Keller stated a CAD system would be everyone's dream in law enforcement, and Martin County is probably one of the few counties which does not have one. He recalled a previous Motorola quote for approximately \$400,000 and mentioned a more cost-effective option might be available if bundled with a necessary 911 system upgrade.

Dispatch Commander Tiffany Evans was asked by President George her opinion on the situation. Commander Evans stated it is important to know that Martin County is officially the only county in Indiana that does not have a CAD system. She compared not having a CAD system to a construction worker working without a hammer; she gave an example that they cannot communicate to the EMS building on their repeater, radio traffic is broken there. EMA Director Andy Ringwald stated the issue with the EMS building is that the metal building blocks radio communication inside the building, outside the building there is great communication. Director Ringwald stated he fully supports a CAD system. The ambulance department uses a text alert system; the fire departments have their own kind of alert system which listens to radio tones and then sends a text to fire department members when it hears the tones come across the radio. Director Ringwald would like the alert to come directly from the dispatch center rather than relying on a weak radio link for notification. The system currently used by the fire department costs \$1,200 annually; there are some small expenses which could be saved if a CAD system was installed.

Commissioner Summers asked if a CAD system would allow officers to run license and plate checks from their vehicles. Commander Evans stated that feature would be an add on package; they had received a different quote from the one previously mentioned, which was a lower priced package where the CAD system was only available to dispatchers at the dispatch center. Commissioner Summers stated he would like to see the officers be able to pull up information in their vehicles and know who they are dealing with before they get out of the vehicle. Commander Evans stated a CAD system would transmit information more securely to officers and other law enforcement agencies, rather than dispatching over the radio. Loogootee Chief Cummings stated with agencies where he was previously employed, he has been able to run a plate while a vehicle was pulled over, it would generate the plate as well as every registered owner and their picture, along with any safety concerns that were placed by previous law enforcement, and if the person has a firearm license. He stated emergency personnel can also enter safety alerts into a CAD system for specific addresses, which would then be displayed during any future encounters. It was relayed that currently dispatchers are utilizing handwritten notes which must be flipped through while taking the emergency call, at the same time as they are dispatching emergency personnel to the scene.

A CAD system is also a record management system which can be utilized for crime reporting. Commander Evans stated as they were researching grants, they did not meet the criteria for a grant because of their crime reporting software. Kristi Risk advised the Commissioners to research systems thoroughly, suggesting a representative attend the FDIC conference in Indianapolis to explore options. She also mentioned there are grants available for communications, which she has emailed to the Commissioners.

The consensus was that a collaborative effort is needed. President George proposed a meeting between the Sheriff's Department, the City of Loogootee, the Town of Shoals, fire departments, EMA, EMS, and equipment providers. Tony Abel emphasized that public safety leaders must first define their needs vs wants. Loogootee Chief Cummings stated a 911 advisory board would be ideal to oversee the dispatch center and would foster communications between leaders from all relevant agencies, including fire, EMS, law enforcement from the county, Shoals, and Loogootee, and representatives from Crane, to develop the best county-wide solution. Loogootee Chief Cummings will send the Commissioners information he has gathered regarding a 911 advisory board.

RE: EMA UPDATES

Director Andy Ringwald announced that the National Weather Service severe weather spotter training would be held on April 13, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. He stated that due to high interest, the location will likely be moved from the EMA building to the community building next door. This will be the last in-person training available in the state this year, otherwise training will be available online.

RE: SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT UPDATE

Chief Keller stated there are currently thirty-one inmates.

RE: 2025 AMBULANCE SERVICES YEAR-END REPORT

President George acknowledged receipt of the 2025 Ambulance Services Year-End Report; there were a total of thirteen hundred and sixty-one runs for the year 2025. President George mentioned Ambulance Director Jeramey Osborn stated the first quarter report would be sent to them by the end of April. Commissioner Summers stated he spoke with Director Osborn today and things were going well.

RE: AUDITOR'S OFFICE COPIER PURCHASE

Auditor Michelle Norris requested approval to pay for the Auditor's office copier purchased from Hoosier Business Machines in the amount of \$7,367.00. The funds will be paid from the auditor's ineligible deduction fund. A motion was made by Commissioner Summers to approve the payment to Hoosier Business Machines in the amount of \$7,367.00, seconded by Commissioner Warner. All in favor, motion passed.

RE: WHEEL TAX UPDATE

Auditor Norris provided an update on the wheel tax fund, explaining that Data Pit Stop had to reconfigure its software to separate the wheel tax revenue from license plate money. This was completed, and distributions for the City of Loogootee, Crane, and Shoals will be prepared this week. Auditor Norris is still working with Attorney David Lett to set up the county's specific funds so the highway department can access the revenue for upcoming road work.

RE: COUNTY FUNDING AND ROAD CONCERNS

Kristi Risk, candidate for State Senate District 39, discussed state funding formulas for roads, suggesting the county should lobby for a larger share of the gas, diesel, and registration taxes collected. President George mentioned a need to investigate the last time the state updated the percentage of money sent to counties from timber sales. Commissioner Summers acknowledged hearing complaints about road conditions and stated the issues are on the highway department's radar.

RE: LIBRARY RENOVATION UPDATE

Mary Smith provided an update on the library project, stating a new punch list was created on March 26, 2026, but she has not seen much progress. She noted that dirt is being moved back around the building, but books have not been moved, as the updated/new facility requires a major cleaning first.

RE: RELOCATION OF HISTORICAL BOOKS

Auditor Norris reported that the Historical Society has requested the relocation of the county's historical books from their building. President George suggested checking with Community Corrections, the Sheriff's Department for inmate labor, or Behind the Wire Ministries to move the books to the basement of the prosecutor's office before considering professional movers.

RE: SURPLUS COUNTY FURNITURE

Auditor Norris stated that a significant amount of surplus furniture remains in the former recycling center building. President George suggested offering the items to other county offices, municipalities, and local schools before recycling/disposal.

RE: ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to discuss, a motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Summers and seconded by Commissioner Warner. All were in favor, and the motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 6:41 PM. The next regular meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, April 14, 2026, at 5:30 PM.



Paul R. George



Retha Warner

Aaron C. Summers

ATTEST:



Michelle Norris, Martin County Auditor