

Fiscal Year 2026 Budget Meeting
9.22.25
1504 3rd Avenue, Rock Island IL. 61201
Conference Room #210

Dr. Luis Moreno called the meeting to order at 3:32pm

Roll Call: Dr. Luis Moreno, Brian Vyncke, Dr. Rodney Simmer, Larry Burns, Johnnie Woods, David Adams.

Also present: County Auditor April Palmer, Circuit Clerk Tammy Weikert, Bridgette Edgewater, Public Defender Rebecca Klein, Amanda VanDaele, County Administrator Jim Grafton, Finance Director Ryan Berger, States Attorney Dora Villareal, Animal Care and Control Operations Coordinator Samantha Wiley, Human Resources Director Erin Hughes, County Clerk Karen Kinney, County Board Chairman Richard Brunk, Jim Nelson, Jared VanTieghem.

Dr. Moreno made three calls for Public Comment: None

Animal Care and Control Operations Coordinator Sam Wiley: Operations Coordinator Wiley asked if anyone had any questions for her. Dr. Rodney Simmer asked if she had enough in her budget so she could be independent and not depend on other entities Dr. Simmer noted that we should be independent and if someone helps us that would be great, but sometimes you can't depend on the help. Sam told Dr. Simmer that she would love to tell him she is not going to get anymore animals but right now we are sitting on 105 dogs and 400 cats, and last Wednesday 15 more came in. Tomorrow we could have 15 adoptions and this would improve. Dr. Moreno asked if we could send out a press release requesting adoptions. Sam noted that everyone has the same problem. County Board Chairman Brunk noted that IT Director Davis is going to update pictures for pet adoptions of animals that are available. We are trying to promote adoptions in every way we can. Dr. Moreno said he wanted to over some items one more time, operating supplies is a \$5,000 increase will that be enough. Sam explained that she feels we are in a good place with that. Dr. Simmer told her not to be afraid to come back and ask for more if it is needed. Dr. Moreno asked where she is right now with Purina. Sam answered it just depends on when you contact them and what they have available. Paws has helped out in that process also.

Court Administration Victoria Bluedorn Trial Court Administrator: Victoria noted that Chief Judge Darrow is in another County right now. We need to appropriate money from the Law Library Fund to pay a small portion of wages for Court Administration employees. This request is relatively small it will have as large and positive effect on the Law Library. The Law Library is just kind of self-supporting. Through judiciary the people that come into court already know their court date they know everything they need to go into the Law Library for. Now the needs have really changed. The staff is still pretty busy with a few of the jury system and I will give more of an update on that later on in the months to come. Besides doing that sometimes 11 different languages. We are busy getting interpreters and that keeps about four of our employees busy. We are also busy with ZOOM'S by the time the Judges say it is OK, then we have to get them a link. It really is difficult. So, this kind of explains why we are asking for this money to come back from the Law Library to the General Fund so we can buy cycle books that go to special areas of the law. We have not even bought State Statute books for the Judges because so many of them say we can look it up online. Now we are getting to the point with these specialty cases and they have to be right on the money. Dr. Simmer asked about the specialty cases. Vicki answered different types of orders of protection. Finance Director Berger noted that there are a couple of other increases that I actually did not get to you guys so we should probably talk about those. Vicki noted

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Office supplies and operating expenses. A lot of Office supplies have turned up when people have retired. The money used in our budget does not reflect the fact that we have been using the leftover from retirees supplies. Vicki noted that we have not used this year's money we have been using leftover supplies. Vicki noted that the storeroom is packed that kind of answers all of that. Finance Director Berger said there are a couple of other increases that I wanted to talk about. Professional Services comes in at \$1.2M to \$1.7M and I think we should talk about that, it is about a \$500,000 increase. Vicki noted that by Statute it is \$150 per hour that we have to pay and I know the Auditor and Amanda do a super job with Dawn Tanner does. She is absolutely fabulous when it comes to checking every single petition if there is something on there that doesn't jive she will catch it. The other thing is the interpreters. They are coming now and asking for at least 2 hours minimum and they also want mileage it used to be interpreters got \$65 per hour it is just not like that anymore. We really have to hunt for certified interpreters. We do get reimbursed for the interpreters I should have that for you seen how much money we have gotten for sexually violent and for interpreters. So, again Dawn Tanner does a fantastic job of getting money back to the County. But the increase is just because we have 5 murder trials set and they have been continued. Some of these murders are old and they have to be investigated. I am sorry but that is what that is. We try to get the registered and certified interpreters for this reimbursement, but sometimes we can't. We use language line which is cheaper and sometimes that one call cuts out five times. You are sitting there with the one person and you are on language line and maybe it is 11 and you only have 120 people left in the courtroom. Dr. Moreno asked how much will Court Administration budget will be going up this year. Ryan Berger answered \$500,000. Dr. Simmer asked if there was any way you could get a computer like translator. The interpreters have been certified by the Court. For a reliable translation. Vicki noted that our Courtrooms are really State of the art.

County Auditor April Palmer: You have my explanations for the two-line items in question line item 644.00 Outside contractual and 630.00 Training and education. The training and education increase is due to increases in presentation fees over the years and the increase in 644.00 Outside Contractual is due to contracts management software with Debtbook is an agreement I would like to enter into to keep track of our contracts and an Audit requirements on those Countywide and a couple of the best points besides that there are other modules that will cost less down the road if we enter into a new Bond they do have a Bond module and it will cost us less to add that on as well as if Nick or whoever the future Treasurer is decided they wanted a cash management program software Countywide they could enter into those modules. The real thing that I found was particularly recognizable to this particular company in all that I talked to was there are unlimited users. So, I can push this out to anyone in the County that wants access to it, The Circuit Clerk's Office could have staff load their contracts in themselves and go out there and see the States Attorney is contracting with this particular company maybe I want to talk to them before I go out on my own. It is really a good source for Ryan to get into and he can see Countywide every single contract that we have out there as well as anyone else. Plus, the labor intensive of getting it initially up and running is all on Debtbook staff and installation is included in the cost of the software. Of course, I will have the contract if this is approved by the budget committee I will forward the contract to the States Attorney's Office for it to be reviewed by them before I would enter into anything. This will not begin until probably January maybe more likely February of next year.

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They are still making sure that all of their offerings and such are exactly accurate as to what our needs are. Committee Chair Dr. Moreno asked if anyone had any questions for County Auditor Palmer.

States Attorney Dora Villareal: Asked for her requests for FY2026 to be tabled until the next budget committee meeting on September 29th.

Circuit Clerk Tammy Weikert: Circuit Clerk Weikert said she went a step further just to kind of go through all of the different funds my office is responsible for many funds outside of the General Fund to kind of give you an idea of expectations for revenues and expenses for all of the line items that I am responsible for. There aren't actually a lot of really large changes which is surprising considering the changes that we have gone through as far as the Pre-Trial Fairness Act and also with the Supreme Court rules changes. I think I have encapsulated it all within this document, (Circuit Clerk's Budget Committee report dated September 22, 2025). If anyone has any questions. Dr. Moreno asked if anyone had any immediate questions for Circuit Clerk Weikert. Dr. Rodney Simmer asked about the overtime (412.00). Circuit Clerk Weikert answered that is not something that you can hire more people for. This is for after hours and Saturdays. So, we use existing employees to cover that. Finance Director Ryan Berger added that in the past ARPA had been covering so much of the overtime for your office so that is going to be seen more in our actual budgets. Circuit Clerk Weikert said in the last couple of years the court backlog that we were paying overtime out of ARPA for, however we always incur about \$14,000 to \$15,000 annually in overtime and it's not anything that will ever go away. It is outside of the hours of 8:00am to 4:30pm and on Saturdays and holidays. Dr. Moreno asked Circuit Clerk Weikert to explain Court Document Storage. Circuit Clerk Weikert said a lot of the changes to the funds that you might see as increases are because in previous years those expenses were paid for out of the Court Technology Grant and or ARPA and I moved some expenses around from fund to fund. Now all those things are coming to an end. So that is why you may see an increase. Dr. Moreno said he just wanted an explanation and now that ARPA is gone they are back on the budget again. Circuit Clerk Weikert said it is not just ARPA so much as the Court Technology Grant. We took advantage of that and it was covering a lot of our annual contracts. Dr. Moreno thanked Circuit Clerk Weikert for securing those grants.

Public Defender Rebecca Klein: Public Defender Klein stated that she is requesting salary increases for two Attorney's in her office to try to create more consistency and create an actual scale to have an idea where people stand based on years of experience. Right everybody is just all over the place and there is no rhyme or reason of why. I would like to be able to clean that up once and for all so that I don't have to keep coming here year after year asking for more increases for everybody. There are two Attorneys that are out of line, one makes a significantly lower salary based on his years of service also he is going to be our first assistant in the office so I am suggesting his salary increase more than others. Then I have two others in the office that were hired within a few days of each other yet one is making significantly more than the other. So, I would like to bring those two into parity with each other to create consistency. I would add that currently the last two years and for FY2026 we have been receiving funds from AOIC the Public Defender funds so these increases for FY2026 most of those will be covered by that Public Defender fund to reimburse the County for those increases. Dr. Moreno asked the County Board Chairman if we had done this same thing 2 years ago. County Board Chairman Brunk stated that Public Defender Khoury did do that 2 budgets ago. Public Defender Klein noted that recently he had

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asked for an increase for one of the open positions we had someone in mind that was going to come in at a salary of \$107,000 and that got approved we ended up not filling that position. We will probably put that back down to the original salary amount. Finance Director Ryan Berger stated that you can see where they are at not per statute where they are at in FY2025. Dr. Moreno said he thought they were brought up a couple of years ago. Public Defender Klein asked to keep in mind that the States Attorney's office is up to scale and I would like to see them in line with each other and also like to see them not unrealistically far away from each other. Dr. Moreno noted that he knew that there was a disparity in pay. Public Defender Klein noted that Scott County Public Defenders office offers considerably more also and we have lost at least one person to Scott County. Dr. Simmer asked if these are all Lawyers right. Public Defender Klein answered yes why is there such a discrepancy in pay as far as union and nonunion. Dr. Moreno noted that was something that was done many years before we got here. States Attorney Villareal noted that the SAO does have a scale but it is set by how many years they have been a lawyer. Dr. Simmer said this should be the same across the board. Dr. Simmer said the Defense should be as strong as the prosecution.

Dr. Moreno asked if there was anyone that would like to speak about what has been done. No other questions.

David Adams made a motion to go into closed session as allowed under 5ILCS 120/2 (c) (1) the appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance or dismissal of specific employees of the public body or legal counsel of the public body, including hearing testimony on a complaint lodged against an employee of the public body or against legal counsel for the public body to determine its validity.

Motion was seconded by Dr. Rodney Simmer

Members voting aye: Dr. Luis Moreno, Brian Vyncke, Dr. Rodney Simmer, Larry Burns, Johnnie Woods, David Adams

members voting No: None

The Budget Committee went into closed session at 4:01 pm

The Budget committee returned from closed session at 4:10pm

Members present: Dr. Luis Moreno, Brian Vyncke, Kai Swanson, Dr. Rodney Simmer, Larry Burns, Johnnie Woods, David Adams

Also present: Chairman Brunk, Jim Grafton, Ryan Berger, Jared VanTieghem, Jim Nelson

Dr. Moreno announced there was no action taken in closed session and no action needed

Committee member opportunity for comment: Dr. Moreno made a comment about the Animal Control said he was under the impression. County Board Chairman Richard Brunk noted that this will be addressed once the County receives the Evergreen Consultants report and start acting based on the Evergreen recommendations. The Chairman went on to say at this point the Auditor has control of New World systems and insists that the Chief Accountant are the only individual that are allowed to enter changes in New World so, Mr. Berger is not able to accomplish certain entries within our Financial software at this time. Dr. Moreno noted that the budget committee agreed to wipe clear that slate so you are telling me that has not occurred is that what I am understanding. Finance Director Ryan Berger

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noted that there were some conversations about that. If you look at the reports the Auditor sends out there is additional information about a fund that was to be used for a specific purpose. There was like \$400,000.00 that was charged to the General Fund but it was supposed to be used for a different usage. So, the amount that we have to pay off now is we don't know what that number is because those funds should have been used first. That is a part of why it is so confusing if you look at those reports once we know what that number is. Why are we always talking about the debt of that fund? I think that is the question they are asking. Dr. Simmers asked who do we pay it off to? County Board Chairman Brunk said that the Auditor is looking at Animal Control as a separate entity and calling them a special use District. Even though the County Board has for years has been allocating a certain amount of funds to cover Animal Control costs the Auditor looks at it like a loan. Finance Director Berger noted that what they were doing is they have it set up so it balances in our budget. That amount of these expenses and these revenues equals zero. What happens is if Animal Control isn't spending everything even though the Board has approved the substantial amount of the General Fund the full transfer is not done and it is never getting out of the negative. Because the full transfer isn't coming from the General Fund and Animal Control fund. Dr. Simmer asked if Animal Control still considered part of the Sheriff's Office initially that was the argument years ago that it should have been a part of the Sheriff's Office and the funding should be coming through them. Chairman Brunk said no it was not. Finance Director Berger said he thought the goal is not for Animal Control be in the negative all the time. Board Member Dave Adams mentioned that if Ryan can't enter certain things through New World Systems is this new Contract Software for the whole county is there going to be just one person that has control over that, it was explained to us that there will be limited access or will the Auditor have control over all of our contracts? Finance Director Ryan Berger said this comes up because the GASB (Governmental Accounting Standards Board) ruling has said that the Auditor needs to be the bookkeeper or gatekeeper of all the contracts. So, it will be their roll that they have all of the contracts. Every year we ask who has contracts some of the offices get frustrated because they say I gave you all my contracts last year why do I have to keep giving you all the contracts if it is a five-year contract. There is no organization to it. Now would that help organize it? Probably, because this is one of the things the Auditor is supposed to do which is good supposedly everyone will be able to see it. But there is also a lot of other ways to do it can't we just put it on the shared drive. Board member Adams said again his question is does everyone have to send their contracts to the Auditors Office or can anyone enter their contract into the program. Finance Director Berger said he thought everything will need to be sent to the Auditors office and they will upload it somewhere. Board member Adams said that we are not eliminating sending the contracts to the Auditor every year then why couldn't you (Ryan) upload bidding contracts or the Sheriff when he awards a contract. Finance Director Berger said this is supposed to streamline the ability of the Auditor to keep track of contracts and I don't know what the software will look like on the backside whether only the Auditor will see everything or if everyone can see everything. Board member Adams said her briefing on the software says unlimited users we are not sure who will be able to see it. Ryan said he is not sure if we want that and there is a reason why separate offices have certain contracts. Do we want anyone from any office to see all of the contracts for the county? Finance Director Berger said there needs to be some sort of control. Dr. Moreno said that even on the shared drive you can limit who has access to it. Finance Director Berger said eventually all the contracts come to the board for approval. Finance Director Berger said just as a reminder the next Budget meeting will be next Monday September

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29th at 3:30pm. For next Monday we will be talking about Highway, Fleet Services and the States Attorney's Office along with the rest of the non-union increases. After the budget committee approves everything we will have a meeting where we will present the proposed levy options and that will be October 15th at 3:30pm.

Motion to adjourn by: David Adams
Voice Vote
motion carried

Seconded by: Brian Vyncke

The Budget Committee adjourned at 4:12pm