

The Fremont County Board of Supervisors met in regular session on Wednesday, April 29, 2026, in the Fremont County Courthouse Boardroom, with Clint Blackburn, Dustin Sheldon, and Jeff Shearer present. A quorum was declared, and the meeting was officially called to order at 9:00 a.m. Minutes of the previous board sessions were read and approved. The agenda was approved as posted.

Let the records show that Mandy Whipple, Sheriff Kevin Aistrope, Mike Peterson, KMA, Chief Deputy Tim Bothwell, Recorder Tarah Berry, Anne Travis, Justin Shirley, Kent Benefiel, Layne Ettleman, Bill Boyd, Engineer Dan Davis, Jeff Shirley, Andy Hansen, and Darrin Hansen were present at this meeting.

Engineer Dan Davis met with the board for the following:

Engineer Davis reminded the board that at the last meeting they received bid for Projects LFM-CO36(FEMA L- 31)- -7x-36 and LFM-CO36(FEMA L-40) - - 7x-36. He said those bids were read aloud last week. He said he had to reject two bids for JB Holland and Midwest Coatings. He had asked for acknowledgement and numbers. He got the acknowledgement from both, but no numbers. He said according to IDOT specs they must meet those requirements. They didn't provide numbers. He stated that leaves them with one bid that is Manatt's. He said he recommends accepting their bid for \$2,741,767.97 and passing the resolution to award the bid to Manatt's. Motion by Sheldon to accept the bid from Manatt's. Motion carried unanimously.

Engineer Davis discussed changes to 28E Agreement with Mills County regarding shared road maintenance. He said Mills County covers everything east of West Nishna River and Fremont County covers everything west of West Nishna River. He said that there is a road off Ringland Road that is a dead end up to houses in Mills County. To service that road that is right off of J10, Mills County has to go approximately three miles out of the way. Davis would like to change the agreement so that Fremont County takes care of that road. This would be rocking, blading, etc. Chairman Blackburn stated it is approximately a half miles stretch. Engineer Davis said that the Mills County board would discuss it and would sign an agreement first then we could. If there happened to be any construction, it would be up to them. The board members individually stated they would all be in agreement to change the 28E.

Motion by Shearer to allow Chairman Blackburn to sign IDOT payment voucher with HGM Associates for engineering services for Project FM-CO36(83) - - 55-36 per agreement through April 15, 2026, \$24,465.37. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion by Sheldon to allow Chairman Blackburn to sign IDOT payment voucher with HGM Associates for engineering services for BROS-CO36(95) - - 8J-36 per agreement through April 15, 2026, for \$23,786.85. Motion carried unanimously.

Mandy Whipple met with the board to discuss township legislation. She stated she opposes SF 2500. She explained that counties with population under 75,000 would appoint township trustees instead of them being elected. She said this would create extra work for the board. They would approve budgets, make appointments, and township hall funds would go to the local school districts. She discussed the fact that the Locust Grove Township funding doesn't even cover the cost of mowing and that they rely on donations and the small amount of tax dollars they do get would move to the school. She said that as she understands it, their funds from checking would also go to the school. She questioned who would pay for the maintenance of the 140-year-old structure. She said funds for fire contracts already go into their own fund. She said the bill reads that jurisdiction is transferred to the board. Whipple concluded this topic by asking the board to reach out to legislators to oppose this legislation that has already passed the Senate with a surprising margin. She said they are extending the session. Supervisor Shearer stated he wanted it on record that they are all opposed. He said he had already reached out to David Sieck and Mark Costello. Whipple also asked the board if they were still considering a TIF on the windmills. The board said they will get more information on it.

At 9:19 a.m., motion was made by Sheldon to go into public hearing. Motion carried unanimously. A public hearing for adoption of the 2026/2027 Fremont County Budget was held. Present were Supervisors Clint Blackburn, Dustin Sheldon, Jeff Shearer, Auditor Dee Owen, Engineer Dan Davis, Sheriff Kevin Aistrope, Mike Peterson, KMA, Chief Deputy Tim Bothwell, Recorder Tarah Berry, Anne Travis, Justin Shirley, Kent Benefiel, Layne Ettleman, Bill Boyd, Jeff Shirley, Andy Hansen, and Darrin Hansen were present at this meeting. Chairman Blackburn asked for public comment. There was no comment from the public. Supervisor Shearer asked when they voted for raises for the board. Chairman Blackburn said they all voted for a 3% raise across the board for elected officials at a previous meeting. Shearer said he didn't want to approve the budget with raises. Auditor Owen said that you can lower the budget after it is approved, but you cannot raise it so that wouldn't be a problem. She said the issue is the resolutions that would pass after the hearing may have to be rescinded but she wasn't sure. At 9:25 a.m., motion by Sheldon to recess so Auditor Owen could research with the Iowa Department of Management how to proceed. At 9:35 a.m., motion by

Sheldon to go out of recess and back into public hearing. Auditor Owen said she was unable to reach anyone, but they could vote on the resolutions and may have to rescind them at another meeting. At 9:35 a.m., with no objections or public comment, motion was made by Sheldon to close the public hearing. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion by Sheldon to pass Resolution No. 2026-15 for salary recommendations. Blackburn, aye; Sheldon, aye; Shearer, nay.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2026-15 RESOLUTION FOR SALARY RECOMMENDATIONS**

WHEREAS, the Fremont County Compensation Board meets annually to recommend a compensation schedule for elected officials for the fiscal year immediately following, in accordance with Iowa Code Chapters 331.905 and 331.907, and WHEREAS, the Fremont County Compensation Board has recommended an increase of pay of 5% for all Elected Officials, and THEREFORE, be it resolved, after considerable discussion, that the raises from the Fremont County Board of Supervisors are as follows for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2026:

Elected Official	Current Salary	Proposed Increase	Recommended Salary
County Attorney	\$91,930	3%	\$94,688
Auditor	\$69,420	3%	\$71,503
Recorder	\$68,783	3%	\$70,847
Sheriff	\$101,070	3%	\$104,102
Supervisors	\$36,747	3%	\$37,849
Treasurer	\$68,783	3%	\$70,847

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Fremont County Board of Supervisors approve the following salary adjustments for the above-elected officials for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2026.

Motion made by Sheldon.

ATTEST:

/s/ Dee Owen, Auditor	/s/ Clint Blackburn, Chairman	aye
	/s/ Dustin Sheldon	aye
	/s/ Jeff Shearer	nay

Motion by Shearer to pass Resolution No. 2026-16 for appropriations for the FY27 budget. Motion carried unanimously.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2026-16 RESOLUTION FOR APPROPRIATIONS**

WHEREAS, it is desired to make appropriations for each of the different officers and department for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2026, in accordance with Section 331.434, Subsection 6, Code of Iowa.

THEREFORE, be it resolved by the Fremont County Board of Supervisors on this 29th day of April, 2026, the following:

- The amounts itemized by fund and department on the attached schedule are hereby appropriated from the resources/funds as shown.
- Subject to the provisions of other county procedures and regulations, and applicable state law, the appropriations authorized under number 1 shall constitute an authorization for the department/officer listed to make expenditures or incur obligations from the itemized fund, effective July 1, 2026.
- In accordance with 331.437, Code of Iowa, no Department/Officer shall incur any liability in excess of the amount appropriated to this resolution.
- If, at any time during the 2026/2027 budget year the Auditor ascertains that the available resources of a fund will be less than said fund's total appropriations, he/she shall immediately inform the Board and recommend appropriate corrective action.
- The Auditor shall establish separate accounts for the appropriations authorized in number 1. The Auditor shall report the status of such accounts to the applicable Departments/Officers monthly during the 2026/2027 budget year.
- All appropriations authorized pursuant to this resolution lapse at the close of business on June 30, 2027. The above and foregoing resolution was adopted by the Fremont County Board of Supervisors on Wednesday, April 29th, 2026.

The Fremont County Board of Supervisors, meeting in session on this 29th day of April, 2026, do hereby resolve to appropriate the amounts itemized by department for the fiscal year 2026/2027.

All appropriations authorized pursuant to this resolution lapse at the close of business June 30, 2027:

Board of Supervisors 218,494	Medical Examiner 45,000
Auditor 386,416	Court Administration 0,000
Treasurer 398,007	District Court 10,000
County Attorney 347,566	County Library 49,943
Sheriff 2,930,660	Communications 604,809
Recorder 321,972	Courthouse 152,538
County Farm 10,000	Data Processing 290,354
General Assistance 21,838	Elections 55,450
Local Option Tax Fund 672,000	Bonds (LEC & ISICS) 585,125
Secondary Road 9,569,000	Juvenile Court Services 105,492
Veterans Affairs 69,611	Home Health 46,330
Conservation Board 351,919	Emergency Management 118,974
Health Board/Sanitation 42,095	Landfill 60,800

Weed Eradication 7,219  
Social Services 22,200  
GRAND TOTAL: \$20,181,119

Non-Departmental 2,687,307

Motion made by Shearer.

PASSED AND APPROVED, this 29th day of April, 2026.

ATTEST:

/s/ Dee Owen, Auditor

/s/ Clint Blackburn, Chairman

aye

/s/ Dustin Sheldon

aye

/s/ Jeff Shearer

aye

Motion by Sheldon to pass Resolution No. 2026-17 for the adoption of the FY27 budget and certification of taxes.

RESOLUTION NO. 2026-17 ADOPTION OF BUDGET AND CERTIFICATION OF TAXES

Fiscal Year July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2027

At the meeting of the Board of Supervisors of Fremont County, held during public hearing as required by law, on April 29, 2026, the proposed budget for July 1, 2026, to June 30, 2027, was adopted as summarized and tax levies voted on all taxable property of this County.

The property tax levies will be levied as follows:

GENERAL BASIC	3.62828
GENERAL SUPPLEMENTAL	2.45000
RURAL BASIC	3.20388
DEBT SERVICE	0.70950

And approved a 3% increase for all elected officials as follows:

Attorney	\$94,688
Auditor	\$71,503
Recorder	\$70,847
Treasurer	\$70,847
Supervisors	\$37,849
Sheriff	\$104,102

Motion made by Sheldon and approved April 29, 2026.

ATTEST:

/s/ Dee Owen, Auditor

/s/ Clint Blackburn, Chairman

aye

/s/ Dustin Sheldon

aye

/s/ Jeff Shearer

aye

Justin Shirley, Mayor of Sidney, said he would like to start off by saying that he has no issue with services from a patrol standpoint. He said he has a deep appreciation of law enforcement and understands the importance of public safety and the sacrifices that people in their profession make. He said this is not an attack on the department. He discussed that it is the budget disparities that he has problems with, and that he would like to find a balance. He wants it to be fair to the city and his constituents. He spoke about an in-person meeting with Sheriff Aistrope, where nothing was finalized, and they were far apart from a solution. He said he came in after learning of a meeting in March of 2025, where the sheriff made public comments about supplying a \$25,000 camera system for the City of Tabor. He said whether it was true or not, which prompted him to come to the board. He said it would be tough to swallow if part of the \$100,000 plus they pay each year to the county went towards that. Shirley cited that Sidney is paying \$109 per capita each year, and Hamburg is paying \$130 per capita. He said with a one-year extension that would increase to \$112 per capita for Sidney and \$134 per capita for Hamburg. He states that after that, the closest one is at \$51 per capita. He reiterated that it is quite a disparity and strain on the budget. He said he talked to Supervisor Sheldon, and those dollars also hit the fire department funds. He knows that the board has limited control over the sheriff's office, except for control over the budget. He just doesn't want to put a burden on taxpayers in his city. Supervisor Sheldon asked how many hours it is per day. Chief Deputy Bothwell said it is 4 hours per day, 365 days per year. Shirley said he saw that Tabor also has a 28E with boilerplate language, and it doesn't delineate. Bothwell stated they have to enforce city codes, dog calls, etc. Shirley also said that it states in the contract that they will get a monthly report. He said they have not had a monthly report and just get a stack of paper that has call codes that they don't understand. He said a monthly report would go a long way. He gave one recommendation that if we had public representation and transparency, it would go towards easing the cost of this. Sheriff Aistrope said that Sidney and Hamburg get beaucoup hours because they are busier than other cities, but they don't charge more for the extra hours. Aistrope, when they wanted a contract years ago, it was worked out between the cities, the sheriff's office, and the county attorney's office. He said his department can't do it without having a person for it. He said by the time they figured out vacations, holiday hours, etc. Aistrope said he doesn't mind them getting their own officer at all. He said he was fine

with that, and fine with the county saying they'd absorb some of the costs; however, he said he couldn't do without a person and still give them service. Aistrope asked to address the camera situation. He said he must have misspoke at the meeting. He said if they get their own, they can't afford to buy their own stuff. He said the only thing the county provided to Tabor is a body camera because the sheriff's office changed its platform, and they loaned it to them until they could buy a new one. They are buying a new camera system, which is the only thing they have of ours, except for the radio system that the county paid for. Those are the radios that fire, EMS, the hospital, and everyone else have in the county. He said when they hired Mike Wake back, they borrowed a weapon from Tabor a couple of years ago. He said it was a \$1200 body camera on loan, not a \$25,000 camera. He said he had no option but to reply at the Tabor meeting. It was just plastered all over Facebook and became gospel. Justin Shirley thanked him for the clarification. Jeff Shirley asked about a laptop, and Aistrope said Tabor bought it.

Kent Benefiel said he wanted to say a lot of the same, and as a council member from Hamburg, he is not saying anything about bad patrol, and he's not saying deputies can do better, not any of that. He said he is just getting on the agenda to get something more equitable. He said he is not asking to take away from the \$260,000. He is proposing that they charge every town the same per capita. He said that equates to about \$300 less than the \$260,000. He said he knows that puts Tabor at a higher number, and they have their own officer. Chief Deputy Bothwell said there is a bill going through now that would make a city prove that it is financially responsible to have its own officer instead of contracted law enforcement. They discussed the difference in the amount Hamburg would need compared to Imogene. Supervisor Shearer asked how they came up with the numbers. Aistrope said they first did it at the beginning of his term. Bothwell said municipalities are required by code to have their own or to contract with the sheriff's office. He said they only have to respond to immediate danger to life and health. Aistrope said the Tabor agreement was between the council, the mayor, and the sheriff's office. He said when they had their own person, they had to help when Mike Wake was off, and the agreement was that if we need you to help us, we will take them out of the town. Supervisor Sheldon discussed how it affects the fire and emergency services and the next thing you know, the fire department is not being funded. He said he knows the sheriff's office helps with all emergency services calls all over the county. He said the price tag is high and it's hard to figure out, and not going to be easy. Justin Shirley questioned if there was a way to have a special revenue or LOSST tax in the area at Sapp's. After much discussion, Aistrope suggested starting now with a committee with one from each town, one board member, the county attorney, and the sheriff. Supervisor Sheldon said this may be a way to essential services levy talk going. It was asked if there was any possibility of funds from Shenandoah, since they are divided by Highway 59. Aistrope said they just annex everything in.

Chief Deputy Bothwell met with the board regarding hiring a jailer. He said they are already down one and received a resignation letter last week for another. He thinks he's got the previous one filled. Sheldon asked how many jailers they were supposed to have. Sheriff Aistrope and Chief Deputy Bothwell said, according to the jail study they had at the board's request, they said they had to hire 7 more when the new jail opened. Sheriff Aistrope said they lit on 5 instead of 7. Bothwell said a full staff is 7, and they have 5 now. He said they work two 12-hour shifts, and there are 2-3 on during the day, one at night. Aistrope said there are 8 jailers. They originally had 3 and added 5. They have 4 dispatchers. Bothwell said it is hard to train part-timers. Aistrope said during the peak hours of dispatch, they need 2, and also to cover vacations. Bothwell said that dispatchers must be certified jailers to perform any movement of prisoners. Sheldon said if they don't allow a hire to replace the position, it will create more overtime and they will be money behind. He said they should be mindful of utilizing resources as best they can. He said they have to look at things with budgets being tight. Sheldon also said they should be mindful of the operations side, perhaps implementing things to save five/ten/twenty thousand here and there, and it needs to be done. He said no one likes to change, but it could be necessary. Motion by Sheldon to allow the sheriff's office to advertise and hire for the jail position. Motion carried unanimously.

Claims were approved for May 1, 2026.

During public comment, Supervisor Shearer presented his information on supervisor districts. He said if they were divided, there would be a little over 2000 voters in each district. He asked for opinions. Someone questioned the reason, and he said that when he ran, the board members were all within a 6-mile radius circle of each other. He explained plans 2 and 3 and said he is in favor of districts voting on only the candidate in their district. There were comments about the following: being limited to only voting for someone in your district and wanting to vote for all members that represent you, what if no one ran from a district, there should be lots of public hearings to get word out, the cost of a special election if it wasn't on with another election, etc. After much discussion, Supervisor Shearer made a motion to adjourn.

At 10:34 a.m., with no further business, Shearer motioned to adjourn. The motion carried unanimously.

ATTEST:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Dee Owen", written over a horizontal line.

Dee Owen, Auditor

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Clint Blackburn", written over a horizontal line.

Clint Blackburn, Chairman