

**Jefferson County  
Finance Committee Minutes  
September 2, 2025**

Committee members: Jones, Richard (Chair) Zarling, Karl  
Christensen, Walt Drayna, David  
Jaeckel, George (Vice Chair)

**1. Call to order** – Finance Committee Chair Richard Jones called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

**2. Roll call (establish a quorum)** – Finance Committee members present were Richard Jones, George Jaeckel, Walt Christensen, David Drayna, and Karl Zarling. Other board members in attendance were Phil Ristow. Staff in attendance included County Administrator Michael Luckey, Corporation Counsel Danielle Thompson, Finance Director Marc DeVries; Assistant Finance Director, Tammy Worzalla; Budget Analyst, Morgan Toutant; Human Resources Director, Terri Palm; Facilities Director, John Fox; Planning and Zoning Director, Matt Zangl; Human Services Director; Brent Ruehlow; Fair Park Director; Rebecca Roberts; Economic Development Director, Deb Reinbold; Financial Partnership Manager, Emily Clavette; Court Commissioner, Jennifer Weber; Parks Director Kevin Weismann; Human Services Director, Brent Ruehlow; Administrative Services Division Manager, Brian Belford; and Paralegal, Sarana Stolar. Members of the public present were Shayne Kavanaugh of the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA).

**3. Certification of compliance with the Open Meetings Law** – County Administrator Luckey certified compliance with the Open Meetings Law.

**4. Approval of the agenda** – Agenda was approved as presented.

**5. Approval of minutes for Finance Committee for August 5, 2025** - Motion by Jaeckel/Zarling to approve the minutes from the Finance Committee meeting held on August 5, 2025. The motion passed 5-0.

**6. Communications** – DeVries distributed a document with 2026 budget considerations, the GFOA Reserve Study, and a list of tax delinquent properties.

**7. Public comment** – None.

**8. Discussion and possible action on presentation on Government Finance Officers Association Reserve Study** – Shayne Kavanaugh presented the results of the reserve study that the County commissioned from GFOA. The study recommends holding a maximum of \$15.3 million in reserves as a hedge against risk exposure. The study also contained suggestions for policy changes and additional reserve strategies. The Committee accepted the study and directed Administration and Finance to draft policy suggestions consistent with the findings in the study to be considered at a future meeting. There was no action taken.

**9. Discussion and possible action on allocating strategic plan funding for management of flood mitigation properties and amending the 2025 budget** – County Administrator Luckey explained that the Parks and Emergency Management departments were working together to install signage

around the County's property at Blackhawk Island. The project has exceeded the grant budget so Luckey is petitioning the Committee to transfer \$9,836 from other contingency – strategic plan initiatives to complete the project. Motion by Jaeckel/Drayna to approve the transfer of \$9,836 from other contingency – strategic plan initiatives. The motion passed 5-0.

**10. Department 2026 Budget Hearing**

a. **Human Services** – Human Services Director Ruehlow presented the 2026 Human Services Budget. No action was taken.

**11. Discussion and possible action on use of excess fund balance from closing of City of Watertown TID #4** – Finance Director DeVries explained that the City of Watertown was closing Tax Increment District #4. The fund that collected the increment is closing with a surplus, which will be distributed to the taxing jurisdictions. Jefferson County's share will be \$707,000. DeVries suggested that this surplus should be transferred to the Live Local Development Fund program to help support staff costs in the Economic Development Department. Motion by Jaeckel/Drayna to approve the transfer. The motion passed 5-0.

**12. Discussion and possible action on 2026 capital budget and financing plan** – DeVries presented the capital budget and the impact on borrowing for 2026 to finance the capital plan. The plan conforms with the parameters set forth by the Committee to limit mill levy growth to 0%. No action was taken.

**13. Discussion and possible action on 2026 budget** – Finance Director DeVries sought guidance from the Committee on the use of terminated TID levy for operations or capital. The Committee decided to use the levy for operations. Guidance was sought for amounts in the capital plan that exceeded the borrowing capacity as mandated by the Committee. The Committee decided that use of reserves was acceptable to fund the difference. Guidance was sought for the funding of the Financial Partnership Manager position in the Economic Development Department. The Committee decided that it was appropriate to direct reserves in excess of the risk reserve as defined by the GFOA reserve study to the Live Local Development Fund, where the interest generated from developer loans would be used to fund the Financial Partnership Manager position. No formal action was taken.

**14. Discussion and possible action on Jefferson County's participation in a financing agreement with Aztalan Bio (If appropriate and necessary for the public interest, the Committee may convene in closed session pursuant to Wis. Stat. § 19.85(1)(e) to discuss negotiation strategy for parameters of a possible loan agreement with Aztalan Bio. Following any closed session, the Committee will reconvene in open session)** – The Committee discussed the request by Aztalan Bio to pass through a \$18 million loan from the Board of Commissioners of Public Lands to Aztalan Bio. No action was taken.

**15. Discussion and possible action on determining the disposition of foreclosed properties, setting minimum bids for the sale of foreclosed properties, and considering offers to purchase on foreclosed properties** – Corporation Counsel Thompson and Paralegal Stolar updated the Committee on the status of tax delinquent collections. No action was taken.

**16. Discussion and possible action on 2025 projections of budget vs. actual revenues and expenditures** – No action was taken.

**17. Review of the financial statements and department update for July 2025-Finance Department** – No action taken.

**18. Review of the financial statements and department update for July 2025-Treasurer's Office** - No action taken.

**19. Review of the financial statements and department update for July 2025-Child Support** - No action taken.

**20. Update on contingency fund balance** – DeVries reported the current balances of 2025 contingency funds before action taken at this meeting are \$500,000 for general contingency, \$532,250 for Other Contingency and \$300,000 for vested benefits. No action was taken.

**21. Discussion of funding for projects related to the new Highway facilities and sale of old Highway facilities** - No action was taken.

**22. Set future meeting schedule, next meeting date, and possible agenda items** - The next scheduled meeting is set for September 15, 2025, at 8:30 a.m. Potential agenda items include department presentations on 2026 budget.

**23. Review of invoices** - Motion by Jaeckel/Drayna to approve invoices totaling \$40,176,233.05. The motion passed 5-0.

**24. Adjourn** - Motion by Jaeckel/Drayna to adjourn at 10:57 a.m. The motion passed 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Marc DeVries, Finance Director  
Jefferson County