

Frontenac Mayor Morrison opposes Mulberry annex

CRAWFORD COUNTY COMMISSION MEETING – OCTOBER 31, 2025

BY PHILIP STEVENS
HOMETOWN GIRARD

► Frontenac Mayor Steve Morrison appeared before the Crawford County Commission on Friday to oppose the City of Mulberry's proposed annexation of 1,700 acres in northern Crawford County, telling commissioners the move was “not being a good neighbor” and would impede Frontenac's future growth.

All three Crawford County Commissioners (Tom Moody, Bruce Blair, and Carl Wood) were present for the October 31 regular meeting, held on Friday, 10 a.m. at the courthouse.

During the public comment portion, Lisa Rhodes, representing Shasta Power, addressed the board with new information related to the proposed Shasta Power solar energy project and Mulberry's annexation request. Rhodes said she had invited Pittsburg State University researcher Dr. Ram Gupta and two others to present on battery safety but that they declined to appear publicly, offering instead to meet privately with commissioners or host a tour of the PSU research facility.

Rhodes shared documentation with the commissioners on potential battery technologies being studied with Pittsburg State University researcher Dr. Ram Gupta, emphasizing the project's focus on safety and fire prevention. She said the preferred battery chemistry for future storage applications was sodium-ion rather than lithium-ion, citing its stability and nonflammable properties.

Rhodes added that discussions had begun on

fire suppression measures, potential training, and equipment funding that Shasta could provide through a contract once the project advanced. She said those responsibilities could fall under Crawford County Fire District No. 2, although no formal communication had yet occurred with the district's chief. Rhodes also explained that reclamation and decommissioning costs after the solar farm's 40-year lifespan would be covered through a state bond requirement, and that agricultural use, including grazing sheep through a veterans' program managed by Robert Dutton, was part of the long-term site plan.

Frontenac Mayor Steve Morrison spoke next, voicing opposition to Mulberry's proposal to annex approximately 1,700 acres for the solar project. Morrison said that as the mayor of the nearest neighboring city, he had received no official notice or outreach from Mulberry before the action appeared on its council agenda. He said several residents of Frontenac had contacted him expressing strong opposition, while none had voiced support.

“When I became mayor, Mulberry was eight miles away,” Morrison said. “Now Mulberry is looking to be our neighbor. That's not being a good neighbor.” He expressed concern that solar development near Frontenac could limit future city growth and reduce property values. Morrison also questioned whether State Representative Ken Collins' dual role as a Mulberry council member presented a conflict of interest.

Commissioner Bruce Blair encouraged Morrison to share Frontenac's position formally at the

upcoming county public hearing on November 13. Morrison said he planned to attend and would bring the matter before his city council at its November 12 meeting.

Later in the meeting, resident Judy Prince asked several procedural questions about the annexation process, including whether multiple cities could attempt to annex the same land and how long affected parties would have to appeal. County Counselor Jim Emerson said annexation decisions would have to proceed one at a time, in the order they were received, and that any appeal would have to be filed through the district court, assuming 30 days for the appeal. However, he noted that he would have to confirm the timeframe.

Rhodes concluded by emphasizing that the landowners themselves had petitioned for annexation into Mulberry, stating that they had long family ties to the community and were seeking to support its economic survival.

Following public input, the commission entered a 30-minute executive session under the non-elected personnel exception with Health Department Director Debra Anthony, other department representatives, Sheriff Billy Tomasi, and Undersheriff Jason VanBecelaere.

When open session resumed, Emerson presented two financial transfer requests to stabilize end-of-month EMS operations: \$36,039.48 from the EMS reserve and \$13,215.04 from ARPA training funds to reimburse two months of instructor wages. The commission approved both transfers unanimously.

Emerson noted that remaining ARPA training funds would total roughly \$3,700 after the transfer.

Emerson also presented a right-of-way easement request from the City of Girard for a water line installation near Fire Station No. 4. He reported that Fire Chief Scotty Thomas had reviewed the location and raised no objections, noting the line would run behind the building on the west side. The commission approved granting the easement as the governing body for Fire District No. 4.

In other business, Emerson discussed a temporary easement correction related to bridge work on 610th Avenue and updated the board on final expenses for a recent road project totaling \$81,663, including engineering and asphalt costs.

The board then held two additional executive sessions, one on budget matters and another for attorney-client consultation regarding the zoning board.

Before adjourning, commissioners reviewed the upcoming schedule. The regular meeting, set for Friday, November 7, was canceled because County Clerk Lisa Lusker and her staff will be “busy with election stuff” that day, and Commissioner Tom Moody and County Counselor Jim Emerson will both not be in attendance. The mill levy presentation by Leslie Lackamp of Mosaic and Bob Davis of Class LTD, originally planned for November 7, was rescheduled to Friday, November 14, at 9 a.m., coinciding with the Board of County Canvassers' meeting to certify the election results.

Events through November 14th



Building Strong Readers Ages 0-5 - Join us for Building Strong Readers - our story time program - at Girard Public Library on **Wednesday, November 12th at 10:00 and or Thursday, November 13th at 10:00 am!** Have some Thanksgiving fun with stories and a craft!

Building Strong Readers Ages 5-11 - Have some fun with stories, crafts, and games on **Wednesday, November 12th at 2:30 pm!**

Wreath Making Class - Get into the holiday spirit with our Wreath Making Class on **Saturday, November 15th from 9:30 am - 11:00 am!** Sign up for the class is required - minimum of 5 sign ups to hold the class. Cost is \$20 and may be paid the day of the class. **Deadline to sign up for the class is Friday, November 7th.**

Friends of Girard Public Library - The next meeting of the Friends of GPL will be held on **Monday, November 10th at 3:00 pm.** Reach out to Girard Public Library to find out how to become involved.

Community Bingo Night - Join us at Girard Public Library for an evening of Bingo on **Monday, November 10th from 5:30 pm - 6:30 pm!** Every person will receive 1 Bingo card to play - additional cards will be available. Concessions will also be available. Have fun and win prizes! Books, movies, and more!

Teen Time Grades 6th-12th - Enjoy an afternoon at Girard Public Library for Teen Time on **Monday, November 10th at 5:30 pm!** This program is for those is Grades 6th-12th.

Digital Estate Planning - Come to Girard Public Library on **Thursday, November 13th at 6:00 pm** to learn more. Digital Estate Planning is the process of organizing your digital assets and creating a plan for how they should be managed after your death. We will be going over what all constitutes digital assets, appointing an executor, and leaving instructions on what to do with all the different on-line materials and resources you have and own.

Girard Public Library will be closed on Tuesday, November 11th in observance of Veterans Day. We will reopen on Wednesday, November 12th at 9:30 am.

Library Hours

- Monday: 9:30 am - 7:00 pm
- Tuesday - Thursday: 9:30 am - 6:00 pm
- Friday: 9:30 am - 5:00 pm
- Saturday: 9:00 am - 2:30 pm
- Sunday: Closed

New Items at Girard Public Library

The following items are just part of the new items that have been added to our shelves recently. Stop by the library to find out what else we have added.

Young Adult Fiction

- *Just Another Girl* by Elizabeth Eulberg

Children's Picture Books

- *Ten Gorillas* by Lidia Blomgren
- *Hooper's Store (Sesame Street)* by Susan Hood
- *Cats Don't Like Christmas* by Andy Wortlock

Children's Chapter Books

- *Remembering Mrs. Rossi* by Amy Hest
- *Piper Reed, Navy Brat* by Kimberly Holt
- *Strawberry Girl* by Lois Lenski

Magazines

- *Grit Nov/Dec 2025*
- *National Geographic November 2025*
- *People November 2, 2025*
- *Prevention December 2025*
- *US Weekly November 2, 2025*
- *World November 2025*

CFSEK/GACF Match Week 2025 begins next week

PRESS RELEASE

Girard Area Community Foundation

► The Girard Area Community Foundation (GACF) is expanding its annual Match Day event into Match Week, taking place from Monday, November 10 through Friday, November 14, 2025!

Match Week is an exciting fundraising campaign to help provide matching funds for community contributions to participating charitable funds. Match Week is a way your generosity can have an even greater impact in supporting our community by amplifying your donations. GACF is offering \$25,000 in matching funds this year,

plus “Daily Challenges” that will match another \$5,000 to boost your donations! Visit the GACF Facebook page or the Match Week website for details about the challenges.

“This is such an exciting time for Girard and our surrounding communities,” said Danielle Randall, GACF Board President. “No matter which fund(s) you contribute to, you are not only helping that organization, but you are also helping our ENTIRE

community. My hope every year is that we can all come together to help us fulfill our mission of making Girard, and our surrounding communities, a great place to call home.”

Donations are accepted online, in-person, or via mail during Match Week. Please visit GirardAreaFoundation.org/MatchWeek to see a full list of funds and how to donate.

* * *

match week
November 10-14, 2025

GACF Charitable Funds Participating in Match Week this year:

- Carly Twarog-Carnes Foundation
- Friends of Crawford State Park Fund
- GACF General Endowment Fund
- Girard History Museum Endowment Fund
- Girard Medical Center Foundation Endowed Fund
- Girard Public Library Endowment Fund
- Girard Youth Activities Endowment Fund
- Herman & Ailene and Terry & Marian Parsons Family Legacy Fund
- Raymond Community Home Endowment
- United Methodist Church of Girard Endowed Fund



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