

Solar concerns raised again as commission approves Frontenac museum funding increase

CRAWFORD COUNTY COMMISSION MEETING – FEBRUARY 24, 2026

BY PHILIP STEVENS
HOMETOWN GIRARD

►► The Crawford County Commission met Tuesday morning, Feb. 24, at the Crawford County Courthouse, approving additional museum funding, reviewing remaining ARPA balances, and hearing renewed public concerns about the proposed Shasta solar project.

Following the pledge of allegiance, commissioners approved the Feb. 20 meeting minutes and signed motions from the previous meeting. During public comments, Paul Frederick, who lives on 240th Street near one of the proposed Shasta project areas, addressed the commission regarding the company's survey process and what he described as ongoing uncertainty surrounding the development.

Frederick said he and his household chose not to respond to Shasta's survey, in part because of language he interpreted as limiting public communication if participants signed in favor of the project. He also expressed concern about what he described as "so many unknowns," including financial, environmental, and aesthetic impacts.

He questioned the company's handling of survey data, stating that he believed all surveyed areas should remain part of the overall data pool rather than be excluded because of strong opposition. He also raised concerns about shifting project boundaries, referencing previous statements about whether certain areas, including portions near Deer Creek, would be included or excluded.

Frederick said he would like to see definitive plans and historical performance data from other counties where Shasta has operated. "Where's the

data?" he asked, noting that he had not seen information showing documented impacts in other communities.

Commissioner Bruce Blair confirmed that the company had notified the county it would not attend the Feb. 24 meeting and may instead appear in March.

Commissioners also discussed reports that elderly residents may have felt pressured during contact from company representatives. Frederick said Shasta representatives had not personally visited with him beyond leaving surveys and voicemail messages.

No additional members of the public spoke.

Moving to new business on the agenda, County Counselor Jim Emerson provided an update on remaining ARPA funds, noting that the statutory deadline to expend the funds is Dec. 31, 2026.

Of the \$7.5 million allocated to Crawford County, approximately \$7.175 million has been expended, leaving \$364,851 remaining. Emerson reviewed remaining balances in several line items, including funds reserved for public safety communications, EMS training, health department expenses, county attorney software, courthouse boiler work, infrastructure allocations to Arcadia and Cherokee, comprehensive planning, and childcare centers, including New Foundations and Sugar Creek.

Emerson said the county is on track to fully obligate the funds before the deadline.

Later in the meeting, commissioners approved a corrected ARPA allocation sheet to reflect adjustments involving Turnkey LLC. Emerson explained that the original project allocation had been reduced from \$60,000

to \$40,000, with \$20,000 redirected to courthouse boiler expenses. The adjustment was made to avoid exceeding approved limits and potentially returning unused funds to the federal government.

Emerson also presented a resolution authorizing participation in a Kansas Department of Health and Environment solid waste cleanup program for a property located at 394 S. 260th Street near U.S. Highway 160.

The program provides up to \$10,000 in cleanup assistance on a 75-25 cost share, with the county's 25 percent match eligible to be satisfied through in-kind labor and equipment costs. Emerson said the cleanup would address significant tire and solid waste accumulation at the site.

Commissioners approved Resolution 2026-009 authorizing the agreement.

Commissioners said the property has generated repeated complaints and expressed appreciation for KDHE's assistance.

Commissioners approved the fiscal year 2027 Comprehensive Plan grant for the 11th Judicial District Juvenile Services, totaling \$499,668. The funding supports core programs including Juvenile Intake and Assessment and Intermediate Intervention services.

Emerson noted the grant had been reviewed by the Juvenile Corrections Advisory Board and represents required state programming.

Commissioners approved an additional \$5,000 in county funding to support the newly opened Frontenac Museum, bringing county museum funding from \$45,000 to \$50,000 for 2026.

Explore Crawford County approved contributing an additional \$20,000, allowing the Frontenac Museum to receive \$25,000,

consistent with funding provided to the county's other museums. Emerson said the adjustment equalizes funding among the museums.

The additional \$5,000 county contribution will be taken from operating reserve funds for 2026, with future adjustments anticipated in the historical fund budget.

During commissioner comments, concerns were raised about increased litter along U.S. Highway 69, including entire bags of trash observed along the corridor. Deputies had been asked to investigate potential violators and suggested stronger enforcement, including possible coordination with the Solid Waste Commission.

Commissioners agreed to have Emerson contact relevant agencies and stakeholders to explore potential enforcement and long-term solutions.

County Clerk Lisa Lusker announced that early voting began Feb. 24 in her office for the March 3 Frontenac special election question. Early voting will continue weekdays from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. through Monday, March 2, at noon.

Commissioners entered two 15-minute executive sessions under the non-elected personnel exception, one regarding maintenance department matters and another concerning EMS personnel. No binding action was taken following the sessions.

Upcoming meetings include a March 3 work session with Zoning Administrator May Smith to discuss RHID matters, a March 5 Planning and Zoning public hearing at the Girard Civic Center, and multiple bid openings and public hearings scheduled for March 6.

The meeting adjourned following approval.

Events through March 6



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Building Strong Readers Ages 0-5 - Join us for Building Strong Readers - our story time program - at Girard Public Library on **Wednesday, March 4th at 10:00 am or Thursday, March 5th at 10:00 am!** Have some winter fun with stories and a craft!

Craft with a Conservationalist - Join Crawford County Conservation District for a craft at Girard Public Library on **Wednesday, March 4th at 2:30 pm!** Mindy Goble, with the Crawford County Conservation District, will be present to lead the activity. Learn about native flowers and color a plantable bookmark!

Teen Time Grades 6th-12th - Enjoy an evening at Girard Public Library for Teen Time on **Monday, March 2nd at 5:30 pm!** This program is for those is Grades 6th-12th.

Game On: Tabletop Game Nights - Level Up Your Tuesdays with Game Night at the Library and join us on **Tuesday, March 3rd from 6:00 pm - 9:00 pm!** Looking for something fun to do in Girard and a great way to meet new people? Join us for an evening of play! Whether you're a master strategist or a casual player, our monthly game night has something for everyone. Dive into a variety of board games, card games, and tabletop games in a relaxed, friendly atmosphere. It's the perfect opportunity to make new friends and discover your next favorite game. You are welcome to bring games to play!

When: First Tuesday of every month 6:00 pm-9:00 pm

Where: Girard Public Library

Who: Adults & Young Adults (Teens welcome)

Come connect, play, and have fun! Don't miss out on the new social event in town! Please invite your friends to this event!

Spice Vault - Girard Public Library is excited to offer the Spice of the Month for February! **This month's spice is Cumin and the recipe is for Cumin-Spiced Carrot and Lentil Soup.** Each month, we will have a feature spice, complete with a recipe for you!

Stop by the library to pick up the feature spice and the recipe. The recipe has been compiled by Heather Horton, owner of TOAST, located in Pittsburg.

This is a great opportunity for anyone wanting to try some different spices and recipes!

The spice will be available at the main circulation desk upstairs. Thank you to Heather Horton and TOAST Restaurant for including our library in this program!

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.

Adult Fiction

- *Girl Lost* by Kate Angelo
- *Voodoo River* by Robert Crais (Cole and Pike #5)
- *The Witching Hours* by Heather Graham
- *The Chain* by Adrian McKinty
- *Cold Zero* by Brad Thor

Adult Mystery Fiction

- *Burning Moon* by Richard Barre (Wil Hardesty #5)
- *Full Circle* by Pat Browning
- *Death in the Palace* by Barbara Hambly (Silver Screen Historical #4)
- *Standing Dead* by Margaret Mizushima (Timber Creek K-9 #8)
- *A Little Bird Told Me* by Laura Bradford (Mysteries of Cobble Hill Farm #6)

Adult Science Fiction

- *Harvest of Stars* by Poul Anderson; Harvest of Stars #1)
- *Desperate Measures* by Joe Faust (Angels Luck #1)
- *House of Ice & Shadows* by Sharrilyn Kenyon (Myths & Outlaws #2)
- *Hyperion Cantos* by Dan Simmons Hyperion #1-2)

Magazines

- *Countryside March/April 2026*
- *Hobby Farms March/April 2026*
- *National Geographic March 2026*
- *People February 23, 2026*
- *Time February 23, 2026*
- *US Weekly February 23, 2026*

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