



**DUBUQUE COUNTY CONSERVATION BOARD**  
13606 Swiss Valley Road  
Peosta, IA 52068  
563.556.6745  
[www.dubuquecountyiowa.gov](http://www.dubuquecountyiowa.gov)

Brian Preston, Director  
**Board Members:**  
George Davis  
Mark Wagner  
Jim Pfeiler  
Stacy Conforti  
Nick Callahan

---

## **JUNE 24, 2026 MEETING MINUTES**

Dubuque County Conservation Board meeting was called to order by Chair George Davis at 4:00 P.M. In person meeting held at the Swiss Valley Nature Center with a Zoom link, <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81312254406?pwd=rFdWgTopHjbknXskLsUbbIBzUj8EE0.1> Meeting ID: 813 1225 4406 Passcode: 609166

### **ROLL CALL:**

Board Members Present: George Davis, Mark Wagner, Jim Pfeiler, Stacy Conforti and Nick Callahan.

Staff Members Present: Brian Preston and Nate Sisler.

### **PUBLIC INPUT:**

None

### **DUBUQUE COUNTY CONSERVATION BOND:**

Davis presented Resolution 2026-0624 requesting the Dubuque County Board of Supervisors place an \$18 million General Obligation Conservation Bond referendum on the November 3, 2026 ballot. The proposed funding would support water and land conservation, park improvements, outdoor recreation, educational infrastructure, trail connectivity, flood reduction, habitat restoration, and protection of natural resources. The resolution also included recommended project funding categories, public accountability measures, annual reporting, independent financial audits, and citizen oversight.

Board members discussed several aspects of the proposed bond resolution, including:

- Clarification of the Conservation Board's role in water quality improvement efforts.
- Potential projects including wetland restoration, streambank stabilization, flood reduction, drinking water protection, conservation easements, habitat restoration, and cooperation with private landowners and partner agencies.
- Existing long-range plan projects, including improvements at McCarthy Wildlife Area, Miller McGrath Wildlife Area, and the Little Maquoketa Greenway.
- Concern that bond language accurately reflects projects within the Conservation Board's authority and avoid creating unrealistic public expectations.
- Estimated tax impact to property owners, including discussion that previous calculations estimated a cost of less than \$3 per month for a home assessed at \$150,000, while acknowledging updated calculations are still needed from County financial staff.

- Explanation that the proposed \$18 million bond request is approximately one-half of the amount considered during the previous referendum and would likely be issued over multiple years as projects are ready for construction.
- Discussion regarding the importance of having engineering, design work, and priority projects prepared before issuing bonds in order to minimize interest costs.
- Review of potential future projects, including campground improvements, restroom replacements, electrical upgrades, park infrastructure improvements, educational facilities, natural resource restoration, and other projects identified in the Comprehensive Parks, Trails, and Open Spaces Master Plan.
- Emphasis on developing a clear list of priority projects and expanding public education efforts prior to the election.
- Board members expressed that improved parks, outdoor recreation, and conservation investments support quality of life and workforce recruitment.

Motion to adopt Resolution 2026-0624 Dubuque County Conservation Bond was made by Davis and seconded by Conforti. Motion carried 5-0.

#### **PUBLIC INPUT:**

Rick Dickinson introduced himself as a candidate for the Dubuque County Board of Supervisors and expressed his support for the proposed conservation bond.

Comments included:

- The previous conservation bond referendum failed by a very narrow margin.
- Public misunderstanding regarding projected tax impacts likely contributed to the outcome.
- Future public education should clearly explain project goals, costs, and benefits.
- Specific examples of proposed projects will improve public understanding and confidence.
- The Conservation Board should be prepared to answer questions regarding financing, project priorities, and implementation.
- Outdoor recreation and conservation amenities are important factors in attracting and retaining residents, businesses, and workforce talent.
- Encouraged continued public outreach before the referendum is presented to voters.

Board members discussed the upcoming supervisor election, anticipated voter turnout, and the importance of providing accurate information throughout the referendum process.

Art Roche addressed the Board and reflected on the previous conservation bond campaign.

Comments included:

- The previous referendum received nearly the required 60 percent approval and demonstrated strong public support.
- Suggested emphasizing how close the previous vote was when discussing the referendum with the public.
- Recommended early organization of a citizen-led campaign committee or political action committee if fundraising or campaign expenditures become necessary.
- Noted that while the Conservation Board places the referendum before voters, campaign activities would need to be conducted independently.
- Expressed appreciation for the Board's efforts to pursue conservation funding again.

Board members acknowledged that community members had already expressed interest in assisting with future educational and campaign efforts should the referendum proceed.

**NEXT MEETING:**

Thursday, July 16, 2026, at 4:00 P.M., Swiss Valley Nature Center, 13606 Swiss Valley Rd. Peosta, Iowa 52068.

**ADJOURN:**

Motion to adjourn was made by Callahan and seconded by Wagner. Motion carried 5-0 and the meeting adjourned at 4:35 P.M.

  
DUBUQUE COUNTY CONSERVATION BOARD MEMBER

  
DUBUQUE COUNTY CONSERVATION BOARD MEMBER