

# Supervisors to return money to reserves, lower taxes

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Independent Advocate

When the Warren County Board of Supervisors started working on its fiscal year 2026 budget in February, members were debating how much money they would have to draw from reserves to balance the budget.

With the budget largely complete on April 1, they were talking about how much to add back to reserves.

“I am proud of this board,” said board chair Aaron DeKock. “The board started with a pretty good-sized deficit.”

The previous board had spent more than \$1.4 million in reserves to balance the 2025 fiscal budget, said DeKock, and the state’s House File 718, which limits increases to property taxes, allowed the county only about \$440,000 in new money to spend.

“That’s important because things cost more,” he said. “It was our job as a board to figure out what’s coming in and what’s going out and to not supplement our budget with reserves, because that is not sustainable.”

In addition to putting almost \$70,000 back into reserves, the county allocated up to \$75,000 for a feasibility study of Warren County emergency

medical services to help decide whether to declare EMS an essential service, which would allow entities to impose taxes to pay for the service. Voters will make the final decision, said DeKock, but having solid information is important before moving ahead.

Another \$40,000 will go to dealing with nuisance properties across the county.

The county is slated to receive \$42,820,416 in revenue in 2026, an increase of about \$500,000 over 2025 and will spend about \$43,863,362, about \$972,000 less than it spent in 2025, according to budget documents provided by the county.

In addition, said DeKock, the rural tax rate will fall 15 cents per \$1,000 of taxable property value and the urban tax rate will go down 14 cents per \$1,000 of taxable property value.

“Big picture is the county is spending less money in the next fiscal year than they did in the prior fiscal year,” said DeKock. Adding that his “biggest take-away” is that the board “understands the assignment coming down from the state, where they’re limiting revenue” and addressing “real frustration and concern about assessments going up and increasing at a high rate.”

“Our board decided as a board that if you’re asking people to make some tough choices as leaders, it was important that we also make one. So our board decided to decrease our salary about a little more than 2 percent for next year and shift those dollars to the general assistance program so that they could have more resources. I’m proud of that.”

Aaron DeKock

That’s especially important, he said, after more than 30 residents attended a public hearing on the tax levies April 1, with most complaining about increases in the county’s assessment of their property values.

Some did note the board’s budget work.

“I do appreciate what you are doing on the budget,” Pam Ackleson told board members, but asked if the increased assessments would mean more money for the county to spend.

“No, there will not be some windfall in 2027,” DeKock told her. “It’s not coming. The assessment might have gone up, but

our taxes are not going to triple or quadruple.”

DeKock promised to hold a night meeting for residents to learn more about the assessments and the relationship between taxes and assessments.

Supervisors reduced the allocation to Warren County libraries from \$209,500 in 2025 to \$200,000 in fiscal year 2026.

Board member Stephanie Erickson said Michele Patrick, the Indianola library director, said the reduction could require cuts to services such as e-books and programming.

Dawn Bowman with the Warren County attorney’s office told supervisors she was concerned about the impact of cuts on smaller libraries.

“Even \$3,000 to \$5,000 can make a difference in their continuing to operate and provide services,” said Bowman.

Board member Brian Arnold said he had visited the Norwalk library.

“I was under the impression that people don’t go to the library, but I was wrong,” he said. “Their place was just packed with people.”

Supervisors also agreed to cut their own salaries by \$1,000 each — dropping from \$48,795.70 to \$47,795.70 — with the \$5,000 going to general assistance.

“Our board decided as a board that if you’re asking people to make some tough choices as leaders, it was important that we also make one,” said DeKock. “So our board decided to decrease our salary about a little more than 2 percent for next year and shift those dollars to the general assistance program so that they could have more resources. I’m proud of that.”

They also trimmed about \$120,000 by spending money that had been set aside for the secondary roads shop site.

“That’s reducing my budget and not really reducing my budget, because I can pull from that fund over time,” said Tim Hill, who oversees the county’s secondary roads department, during a budget work session in March. The secondary roads department will receive about \$3.6 million from the county for fiscal year 2026.

The board also asked the sheriff’s department to cut about \$30,000 by shifting hours.

A public hearing for the FY26 proposed property tax levy was held Monday, April 7. Following the tax levy hearing, the board will schedule a budget hearing to approve the final budget. The budget is due to the State by April 30 and goes into effect July 1, 2025.

## BRIEFS

**LifeServe schedules blood drives for Warren County**

LifeServe Blood Center has multiple blood drives scheduled throughout Warren County this month.

April 11: Indianola Community Blood Drive, 1 to 5:25 p.m., at Trinity United Presbyterian Church-Fellowship Hall.

April 16: Southeast Warren High School and Community Blood Drive, from 9 a.m. to 1

p.m., in the small gym.

April 17: Norwalk Community Blood Drive, from 2:30 to 6:30 p.m., at St. John the Apostle Catholic Church-Fellowship Hall.

April 21: New Life Lutheran Church Blood Drive, Norwalk, from 2 to 6 p.m.

April 25: Carlisle Community Blood Drive from 1:30 to 5:30 p.m., at Carlisle Baptist Church Fellowship

Hall.

April 30: Norwalk High School Blood Drive from 8 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., at the North Gym.

**Indianola Spring Curbside Pickup set for April 21-25**

The 2025 annual Spring Curbside Pickup is scheduled for the week of Monday, April 21, through Friday, April 25.

Spring Curbside Pickup Guidelines:

- Only large items not hauled through weekly service.
- The hauler will pick up the same day as your recycling materials. (This is an “off” week for recycling.)
- All items need to be on the curb at 6 a.m.
- Excessive quantities will not be picked up.
- No construction materials or railroad ties. Items not accepted in the collection include appliances, yard waste,

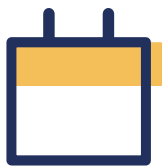
tires, electronic waste, hazardous waste, railroad ties, construction materials, drywall, broken glass and concrete.

- Items that are bulky and difficult to handle, such as swing sets, must be cut up or dismantled into smaller pieces no longer than four feet.
- The total amount of debris on your curb must fit into the size of a flatbed truck, roughly 8 ft x 5.5 ft x 3 ft. Extra debris will not be collected.



## READY TO START RIGHTSIZING?

Learn how to get started at our upcoming downsizing event!



Wednesday,  
April 16, 2025  
10:30–11:30 a.m.



712 S. Jefferson Way  
Indianola, IA

To RSVP, contact Angela Smith at [asmit101@good-sam.org](mailto:asmit101@good-sam.org) or call (515) 962-2555 by April 9, 2025.



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