

Jasper County Board Minutes
COUNTY OF JASPER NEWTON, ILLINOIS

County Office Building 204 W Washington St, Newton, IL 62448

April 13, 2023

The County Board met in regular session on Thursday, April 13th, 2023. The meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm by proclamation according to law by Sheriff Francis. Sheriff Francis led a moment in silence and the Pledge of Allegiance.

Members present were Bollman, Deckard, Geier, Heltsley, Judson, Pickens, Spiker, Warfel, and Weddell.

Public comments:

Jasper County 4-H Ambassadors and the Youth Development Program Coordinator Katie Turkal spoke on 4-H. She handed out a list of 4-H Programs and Activities offered in and outside the county and school programs. Katie Shamhart spoke about what she likes about the programs. Katie thanked the board and about moving into a location where she can spread out more. Added a new program this year and adding two more next year. She has fifty ambassadors who help her with the programs. August will be the next Hunting Safety Class. Warfel serves on the Extension Board and says we have a large 4-H Program.

Ryan Probst introduced the new Jasper County Economic Development Coordinator Brian Muska. The first job for Brian was to go out in the community to compile a list of what the county has. He is originally from Maryland and is a father and grandfather. He gave data of what he has gathered so far. There are job openings in eighteen businesses out of thirty-two businesses he has went to. Businesses want to see county and city grow so their business can prosper also.

Geier made a motion to approve the agenda. Pickens seconded the motion. Motion carried on a voice vote.

Reports:

County Departments

Ambulance Department - 162 runs for March; 911 – 87; Refusals/canceled en route 29; MVA 3; Transfers 16; Stand by 6; Mutual Aids (some resulted in 911 runs) 21. A new medic was hired. 1 EMT will be graduating at the end of this month from Medic school so that will give us another medic on staff. Sending one EMT to medic school currently and will hopefully be licensed by the very end of this year. We were awarded a small grant to go towards training and education and this will help with sending EMTs to medic school. We are applying for more grants for equipment. 2 ambulances are on order and will be received in 2 years. Trying to maintain the current fleet as much as possible. 2358 is still having problems. An EMT class will be completed early next month; this will help place more EMTs in the area. Another EMT and an Advanced EMT class is scheduled for Fall 2023. Hopefully, the class will be taught at the station. A PHRN class is hopefully in the works for this Fall as well (this is for RN's to also become Medics essentially – and run as a provider on an ambulance). May 21-27, 2023, is the 48th annual National EMS Week. In 1974, President Gerald Ford authorized EMS Week to celebrate EMS practitioners and the important work they do in our nation's communities. This year's theme is EMS: Where Emergency Care Begins. If the county would like to recognize our twelve full time and 7 part time members. Finances are looking good, and the other ambulance is back in service.

Highway Department - The Electronic Recycling Event was held on Saturday, March 25, 2023, we collected 22,576 lbs., with no extra charges incurred. E.D. Etnyre & Co. has indicated the new chipper will be delivered sometime in June. The Oil Letting for Jasper County and Townships was held on

Tuesday, March 28, 2023, with prices on an average of about 10% higher than last year. We budgeted for this increase and will proceed with oiling the program as planned. Bruce Ochs is retiring after 31 ½ years of service to the highway department and his last day will be Friday, April 14, 2023. We have interviewed all candidates that applied to fill this position with plans of having a new hire May 1, 2023. Levi Fitzmaurce will be the new employee. We received the award notice from IDOT for our TARP Grant Funds to be used on the West Liberty Road Soil Cement Project from Highway 130 to Ste. Marie Road. Construction is planned in the summer of 2024. Continued concerns being expressed on the increasing amount of trash being generated (out of county, contractors/businesses, etc). There was a discussion on the county trash program.

Board of Health – In packet Behavioral Health moved to their new building. Carl Baker spoke about the use of the Health Annex Building for the Extension.

County Positions/Services

Building Maintenance – Angie Probst Aggeratt was able to go through the courthouse and point out concerns about the building. The elevator system is getting obsolete \$68,000 for the modernization of electronics of the elevator. Dan's Glass is quoting replacement of four windows in the board room. Bufford Electric is quoting for additional outlets. Big Dog Painting quoted \$3,270 for the painting and new ceiling tiles for the county building. The work will be at night, the other quote was much more. Electrical outlets will be more costly.

County Jail and Sheriff Office – The department has moved into the new jail. Francis is thankful for the new building. There are still a few items still needing to be completed. By end of month have may inmates.

Information Technology Consultant – Corey McDonald have proposal for fiber, it is necessary for the network of the county. Finished the modernization of the circuit clerk's office and network upgrades are in the process.

Supervisor of Assessment Office – Tentative Abstract was sent to the Department of Revenue on March 10th. Board of Review met on March 27th. A Tentative Multiplier was received from the state and was a one, which is 0.00% from the state. Notices were sent and no appeals returned. The Farmland Assessment Review Committee meeting is set for June 1. Tom completed the first of six classes and passed the class for CAIO. Four more classes in May and 1 in June.

Animal Control – Report in Packet

Elected Officials

Treasurer: Reports from Bigard were sent in the board packet. CD Rates have been high and hit peak so set up new CD's. The income for state/general fund income of \$ 221,309.28, and the personal property income of \$52,267.42 with a total income for March of \$273,576.70. The expenses for March are \$376,564.75. Total income less expenses for March a net loss of \$102,988.05.

Other Elected Officials/Offices

Amy Tarr, County Clerk / Recorder introduced her new employee, Traci Lybarger. The election had a low turnout and people did not know about the election and what was on the ballot. Communication is difficult without a way to reach all voters.

Brandon said it will be National Telecommunicator Week.

Geier made a motion to approve the consent agenda containing the following items: Approval of County Board March 16, 2023, Minutes; Appointment of Mike Murbarger to a 3-Year Term as Trustee of Wade Community Fire Protection District; Appointment of Larry Dorn to a 3-Year Term as Trustee of Wade

Community Fire Protection District; Appointment of Galen Mendenhall to a 3-Year Term as Trustee of Wade Community Fire Protection District; Appointment of Melvin Birk to a 2-Year Term on the County Farmland Assessment Review Committee; Appointment of William Michl to a 2-Year Term on the County Farmland Assessment Review Committee; Appointment of A.C. Pickens to a 1-Year Term on the County Farmland Assessment Review Committee; Adoption of State's Attorney Appellate Prosecutor Resolution; Adoption of Recording Fee Increase Due to State Rental Housing Surcharge Program Fund Increase Resolution; Adoption of National County Government Month – April 2023 Proclamation; File County Reports; and Allow Claims. Weddell seconded the motion. Motion carried on a voice vote.

Old Business:

Item A –VISION 2031 – Jasper County Government Strategic Plan

As Warfel mentioned the last two months, February 15, 2031, will mark the 200th anniversary of Jasper County and Newton. Vision 2031 is designed to develop a Jasper County Government Strategic Plan for where we want to be in 2031. Warfel encourages all departments, offices, and elected officials to think about strategic planning. Warfel wants to work toward developing a comprehensive Jasper County Government strategic plan. This plan would address assessments, vision, goals, and action plans at the department/office level but also be formulated together for a larger-scale vision for the entire County Government. Warfel plans to hold a department head meeting in May to discuss this more in depth. ***“If you don't know where you are going, you'll end up someplace else.” – Yogi Berra***

Item B – Energy Transition Community Grant Stakeholders Taskforce

As we discussed in March, Jasper County has been selected to receive an Energy Transition Community Grant for \$565,615 from the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO). Michael Geier has formed a stakeholder taskforce to meet the requirements set forth by the State. As part of this process a public meeting will be held on Thursday, April 20 at 5:30 p.m. in the St. Thomas Gym. Geier will have a presentation and will open up to community to discuss.

New Business:

Item A – Approval of County Audit Contract for FY2023, FY2024, FY2025

During the January 2023 board meeting the board approved the request from Kemper CPA Group LLP to increase the audit fees for 2023 due to the additional expense associated with the single-phase audit that is triggered when the County receives more than \$750,000 in federal grant monies. It was also noted at that time that this is the final year of the 3-year county audit contract with Kemper CPA Group. The consensus was that we should seek proposals for county audit services. Please note Kemper CPA Group submitted a proposal for FY2023, FY2024, and FY2025 but encouraged us to seek other proposals as well. Working with the County Treasurer and UCCI, Warfel compiled a list of twelve firms that are used by other counties in the State of Illinois and sent a request for proposal for audit services. The deadline to submit a proposal was Monday, April 10th. In addition to the previously submitted proposal from Kemper CPA Group, only two others, Dennis G Koch & Associates LLC, CPAs, and WIPFLI LLP submitted proposals. The three proposals were included in the board packet for review. Items to consider. Dennis G Koch & Associates LLC, CPAs is not ranked in the top two hundred firms. They are a smaller operation, and the concern is the number of counties they are taking on and the long-term viability of the firm with the personnel size. Kemper's has already said if we switch, they will take on additional clients and would not be able to manage us in the future if we wanted to switch back. Speaking with the Treasurer, Health Department, and others involved, they would prefer either Kemper or WIPFLI, both of which are highly rated. Weddell said thinks it would be a big task for a new company. Bigard says they are local, and they do take his phone calls for questions. Bigard says we do not want to have the state audit the county. The fees have gone up significantly in the last few years, but the health

department will help with the costs. Heltsley made a motion to approve Kemper CPA Group audit contract for FY23 \$75,000, FY24 \$77,750, & FY25 \$ 80,600. Judson seconded the motion. Motion was adopted on a voice.

Item B – Approval to Participate in National Opioid Lawsuit Settlement

The County agreed to participate in an opioid lawsuit along with most other counties in Illinois and across the nation a few years ago. State's Attorney Treccia has received a packet containing documentation to participate in the new national opioid settlement. To participate the board must act and authorize the State's Attorney to participate on our behalf. If the board fails to participate, the county cannot share in the settlement funds. It is the recommendation of the State's Attorney to participate in the new national opioid settlement. A copy of the settlement packet is included in the board packet. The money is there, and it will go to drug prevention. \$17,000 has already been received for the first settlement. Bollman made a motion to approve the County of Jasper participating in the National Opioid Lawsuit Settlement and authorize State's Attorney James Treccia as a representative and signatory on any necessary documentation. Deckard seconded the motion. Motion was adopted on a voice vote.

Board Comments: Weddell said the new sign is installed and a guy is coming tomorrow for programming and should be functional.

Chairman Comments: Vistra Corp. Meeting with Community Leaders was held on Wednesday, March 22; United Counties Council of Illinois Legislative Conference – March 28 & 29 Warfel attended the UCCI Legislative Day/Educational Seminar a few weeks back. Topics of discussion included: Statewide Siting Standards (Wind & Solar) Counties that had previously passed ordinances are having to redraft them to comply with State. Paid Leave for All Workers Act New legislation that takes effect January 1, 2024. Currently, Jasper County is already in compliance. Annual Conference will be held July 23-July 25 in Galena, IL; **2023 Consolidated Election** – Warfel had the privilege last week to participate in the election as an election judge. Warfel wanted to extend his gratitude and thanked all the women and men who gave their time to perform this great civic duty. It is an exceptionally long 14-hour day and many of these individuals do this year in and year out. Also, a big thank you to the County Clerk and Staff for all the time and effort that is put into the voting process. **Farm Safety** - Reminder as planting season gets underway to be mindful of agricultural equipment on roadways and wishing all farmers and ag related personnel a very safe and productive planting season. Congratulations to Bruce Ochs on his years of service.

The board had a closed session with no action following the closed session, the board will adjourn from closed session.

Heltsley motion for the board to enter closed session under the following exception: Discussion of Property (exception 5). Spiker seconded the motion. A Roll Call vote was taken with Bollman, Deckard, Geier, Heltsley, Judson, Pickens, Spiker, Warfel, and Weddell voting yes. The motion was adopted. The Board entered Closed Session at 7:24 pm.

Geier moved to adjourn at 8:08 pm. Pickens seconded the motion. Motion carried on a voice vote.

The Next Regular Meeting of the Jasper County Board will be on Thursday, May 11th at 6:00 p.m.

Amy Tarr, Jasper County Clerk