



JASPER COUNTY BOARD MEETING MINUTES OF DECEMBER 19, 2024

The Jasper County Board met in regular session on Thursday, December 19, 2024, at 6:00 p.m. at the Jasper County Building, Board Room, 204 West Washington Street, Newton, Illinois. The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by proclamation according to law by Sheriff Francis. Sheriff Francis led a moment in silence and the Pledge of Allegiance. The following board members were present: Chairman Jason Warfel, Vice-Chairman Ron Heltsley, A.C. Pickens, Doug Weddell, Michael Geier, James Judson, Eric Spiker, Jessica Schackmann, and Austin Francis.

Public Comments: Peggy Hamilton born and raised in Jasper County; addressed the board and take into consideration her concern. She posted questions on Facebook when she was not able to find the information she was looking for and this not where she would like to find the information. There is no printed or radio communication. There is a communication issue, and citizens are being left out. Think need to streamline communication online and come up with a way to get information to citizens.

Adoption of the agenda. There was no objection, the agenda was adopted as distributed.

Reports:

County Departments:

Ambulance Department – Incident disposition report: 911 transports-69, Transfers-31, Refusals-27, Mutal Aid-26. November Revenue Report: Commercial Insurance- \$ 41,929.91 Patient PYMT- \$3,817.13; Medicare Elec PYMT- \$30,717.53 Category Pa PYMT- \$15,335.51. Received a grant from the Mary Heath Foundation to pay for a second Lifeline Arm XR. This is a device that will perform CPR in a cardiac arrest situation. Two employees dropped down to part-time and hired two full-time to replace them, the department is fully staffed.

Highway Department – We are in the process of taking bids on a mini excavator. Bids will be due on December 27, 2024, and will be reported at the January Board meeting. The Solid Waste Schedule is available for 2025. Solar is starting for Vistra in the spring of 2025 and Apex will be starting 2026. A public meeting is planned February 26th after the first of the year with Vistra.

Health Department – The Jasper County Board of Health met on Monday, November 25, 2024. Exterior Remodeling: Grunloh Builders said that all the punch list items have been completed (but ADG and JCHD will need to verify this) and they have begun sending us their closeout documents and they send their last pay request, then sign off on it and close the project out. ADG will also bill for the remaining fee. Interior Remodeling: ADG visited the building last week to verify some remaining items for plumbing, mechanical and electrical engineering consultants. Information has been given to them to finish their drawings and specifications. Final drawings should be around the first of December, then complete a final review of everything, then plan on meeting with health department prior to going out for bid. For bidding purposes and hopefully better pricing, can go out to bid prior to Christmas then open bids sometime in late January, there should be more interest in it from contractors. The Cancer Support Group will meet January 9th at 5 -6 pm at the Health Department. Free PSA and Lipid Screening will be February 11 at the Health Department 7 am – 1 pm. Next meeting will be Monday, January 27th, 2025, at 5:30 pm.

County Positions/Services:

Building Maintenance – Nothing to report

Jasper County Courthouse – Geier stated Jason Wright from ADG plans to have design committee meeting the first full week of January..

Information Technology Consultant – Nothing to report.

Animal Control – Nothing to report.

Elected Officials:

Treasurer- Reports from Bigard were sent in the board packet. The total income for November was \$256,440.74. The expenses for November were \$343,947.89. Total income less expenses for November a net loss of \$87,807.15. Fiscal year 2023/2024 income was \$3,961,325.86. Less Expenses were \$3,946,679.59 with a net income of \$14,646.27.

Other Elected Officials/Offices – Francis commented on a billing mix up last month so double the normal amount in the month of November due to not paying a month and one visit to the dentist. Property and Mortgage Fraud is now offered as a free service that helps protect residents from potential property and mortgage fraud. PropertyCheck will automatically alert you of any recordings regarding the property you specify. Go to <https://recordhub.cottsystems.com/> to sign up for the service. Contact the County Clerk's office for more information or assistance on signing up.

Consent agenda. The following items were on the consent agenda this evening Approval of County Board November 21, 2024 & December 2, 2024, Minutes; File County Reports and Allow Claims. There was no objection, the Consent Agenda was adopted.

Old Business:

Item A. – Jasper County Flag Design Contest

On September 19, 2024, the Jasper County Board meeting the Jasper County Flag Design Commission was formed. The commission met and set dates and guidelines for submissions. Designs were accepted between October 7th -November 15th. The commission met on November 20, 2024, and selected 5 designs along with the current flag and put those to an online & in-person vote. Since November 21, 2024, there has been great participation in both the online and in-person voting for the proposed Jasper County Flags. Two flags have emerged as the clear favorites receiving over 70% of the overall vote (Jasper County Seal Flag & Unity Flag). The Commission has narrowed the selection down to these two flags with some variations on their design for the public to consider as well. Additionally, the current Jasper County Flag is offered for consideration as well. All are encouraged to vote and anyone that previously voted is eligible to vote in the 2nd round of voting again. Please note the requirement of Name and Address is to verify one vote per person. Vote online at www.jaspercountyillinois.gov or in-person at the Jasper County Clerk's Office, Jasper County Chamber of Commerce, and Newton Public Library. Voting will be ongoing until January 6, 2025. After the public vote, the Commission will report its findings to the Jasper County Board (January or February 2025 meeting), whose members will vote on whether to adopt a new flag or retain the current flag design.

Item B. – County Extension Services Levy Increase Proposal

Jessica Wells, University of Illinois Extension County Director attended the September 19, 2024, and indicated the Extension’s request to consider a \$3,100 increase in the County Extension Services Levy for this year’s tax levy. The County Extension Services Levy amount is controlled by the Jasper County Board. The request comes as the University of Illinois Extension has seen an increase in operating expenses. The University of Illinois Extension provides educational programs & research-based information to help Jasper County residents improve quality of life, develop skills & solve problems. For 2024 Taxes the County Extension accounts for 0.31% of the taxes collected in Jasper County at \$62,013.04. Their current tax rate is [0.02480]. The proposed \$3,100 levy request would move their rate from 0.02480 to 0.02604 an increase of 0.00124 or 5%. The 5% increase is the max allowed without triggering a Truth in Taxation Hearing. Board Action is sought on the proposed request.

Fund/Name	Levy Request	Maximum Rate	Calc’ed Rate	Actual Rate	Total Extension	Total After TIF & EZ
Current Rate						
053 County Extension Service	\$62,000	0.05000	0.024795	0.02480	\$63,870.09	\$62,013.04
Proposed Rate – Estimates Calculated based on 2023-2024 Taxes						
053 County Extension Service	\$65,100	0.05000	0.026035	0.02604	\$67,063.59	TBD

Weddell moved to adopt the 0.00124 (5%) increase to the County Extension Service Levy. Judson seconded the motion. Motion passed on a Roll Call vote. Francis, Geier, Heltsley, Judson, Pickens, Schackmann, Spiker, Warfel and Weddell voted yes. The County Extension Service Levy will be increased by 0.00124 or (5%) with an estimated \$3,100.

New Business:

Item A. – Adoption of Jasper County FY2025 Annual Levy Ordinance

As part of statutory duties, the County Board is required to review the annual tax levy and make any changes or adjustments for the coming year. Please find those 14 funds and proposed amounts listed below. The only proposed change from FY2024 to FY2025 is lowering 005 I.M.R.F. by \$150,000 and increasing 001 Corporate (General Fund) by \$150,000. IMRF is financially sound and continued levied monies into that account can only be used for IMRF purposes. The proposed overall County Levy is the same as the previous year at \$3,412,478. These levies are subject to County Board changes and approval. Over the past 8 years, we have worked hard to tighten our belts as a County and live within our means. Just because we lower the County’s levy doesn’t mean your taxes will go down. The County is just one of the many taxing entities that collect a portion of your property tax and the EAV especially the continued decrease in the value of the Newton Power Plant will impact your tax bill.

Past 6 Years:

FY2019 \$3,755,000
FY2020 \$3,622,053
FY2021 \$3,536,470
FY2022 \$3,516,488
FY2023 \$3,412,988
FY2024 \$3,412,478
FY2025 \$3,412,478

JASPER COUNTY, ILLINOIS TAX LEVIES FISCAL YEAR 2024-2025			
FUND	MAXIMUM RATE	2023-2024 LEVY	2024-2025 LEVY
001 Corporate	0.3750	\$750,000.00	\$900,000.00
005 I.M.R.F.	AS NEEDED	\$200,000.00	\$50,000.00
006 County Highway	0.1000	\$250,000.00	\$250,000.00
008 Bridge Const W/ County	0.0500	\$130,000.00	\$130,000.00
021 Federal Aid Matching	0.0500	\$130,000.00	\$130,000.00
022 County Health Department	0.1000	\$181,478.00	\$181,478.00
025 Garbage Disposal	0.1000	\$250,000.00	\$250,000.00
027 Audit	AS NEEDED	\$55,000.00	\$55,000.00
035 Tort Judgements, Liability	AS NEEDED	\$337,000.00	\$337,000.00
047 Social Security	AS NEEDED	\$351,000.00	\$351,000.00
059 Special County Highway	0.0833	\$205,000.00	\$205,000.00
060 Unemployment Insurance	AS NEEDED	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00
062 Workers Compensation	AS NEEDED	\$123,000.00	\$123,000.00
064 Ambulance	0.2000	\$440,000.00	\$440,000.00
TOTAL		\$3,412,478.00	\$3,412,478.00

Geier moved to adopt the Jasper County FY2025 Annual Levy Ordinance. Spiker seconded the motion. Motion passed on a roll call vote. Francis, Geier, Heltsley, Judson, Pickens, Schackmann, Spiker, Warfel and Weddell voted yes. The Jasper County FY2025 Annual Levy Ordinance is adopted.

Item B. – Adoption of Resolutions Increasing the Fees for The County Clerk and Recorder

Illinois Compiled Statutes allow the County Board to increase fees for both the County Clerk (55 ILCS 5/4-4001) and County Recorder (55 ILCS 5/3-5018) if an increase is “justified by an acceptable cost study showing that the fees are not sufficient to cover the costs of providing the services.” Bellwether, LLC. prepared a cost analysis (\$6,000 from the Clerk’s Record Storage Fee) and made recommendations to the current fee schedule. The County Clerk/Recorder proposed these resolutions at the November 21, 2024, meeting but without sufficient information, the board did not take action. The County Clerk/Recorder is asking the board to reconsider the resolutions and has provided additional information including what the current fees are, comparison costs from other counties, and recommendation amount. The County Board may adopt the resolutions with the recommended fees, evaluate the proposed fees line by line, or take no action at all on the resolutions. If approved the new fee schedule would take effect March 1, 2025. The board discussed the items to be increased. The clerk went over the costs of the services and the frequency of the services. The board suggested fees on a schedule. Pickens moved to adopt both the Resolution Increasing the Fees for the Jasper County Clerk and the Resolution Increasing the Fees for the Jasper County Recorder with the Fee Schedule as outlined as the board suggested fee schedule. Weddell seconded the motion. Motion passed on a voice vote. Both Resolutions increasing the fees for the County Clerk and County Recorder have been adopted.

Item C. – Adoption of Jasper County Personnel Policy Resolution

At least every two years the Jasper County Board reviews and revises the County of Jasper Personnel Policy. Insurance Program Managers Group (County’s Risk Insurance) had their attorneys review our policy and recommended several changes and revisions including:

- Language changes throughout the document.
- Updates and Revisions to Leave Time.
- Revised Policy Against Discrimination, Harassment and Sexual Misconduct.
- Revised Social Media & Technology Use Policy.
- Revised Whistleblower Policy.
- Revised Drug and Alcohol Use Policy.
- Revised Political Activity Policy.

The State’s Attorney made some final revisions to the completed document. If approved at this meeting, all offices and departments are asked to make sure all employees have access to a copy of the revised Personnel Policy and that they review the policy. Weddell moved to adopt the Jasper County Personnel Policy Resolution. Geier seconded the motion. Motion passed on a voice vote. The Revised Jasper County Personnel Policy has been Adopted.

Item D. – 2025 Jasper County Employee Appreciation Luncheon

For the past couple of years, the County of Jasper has held an Employee Appreciation Luncheon to thank and recognize the hard work and dedication of our County Employees. Tentative plans for this year will follow the format of the last few years with a luncheon at the West End Reception and Event Center from 11 a.m. – 1 p.m. Proposed dates are either Wednesday, January 8, 2025, or Wednesday, January 22, 2025. Last year the County Board authorized closing all non-emergency offices/departments from 11:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. on the day of the appreciation luncheon. Schackmann moved to close all non-emergency offices/departments on Wednesday, January 8, 2025, from 11:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. for the County Employee Appreciation Luncheon. Heltsley seconded the motion. Motion passed on a voice vote. All non-emergency Jasper County Offices and Departments will be closed from 11:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. on Wednesday, January 8, 2025, for a County Employee Appreciation Luncheon.

Board Comments: Weddell wanted to invite everyone to the upcoming Economic Development meeting Jan 29. It is a meet, greet and learn at the high school auditorium at 6 pm. Pam Apke with Estate Planning and Business will be the speaker.

Pickens thanked Peggy for her concern and doesn't address the individuals who do not have internet access.

Chairman's Comments: Upcoming Holidays

Non-Emergency County Offices & Departments will be closed on Tuesday, December 24th, and Wednesday, December 25th for the Christmas Holiday and on Tuesday, December 31st, and Wednesday, January 1st for the New Year's Holiday.

Public Information/Communication

The County has collaborated to expand and change the incentives of the Enterprise Zone and with the school district to have a School Resource Officer and with the City of Newton to create one website. Earlier this year the County of Jasper partnered with the City of Newton to create a joint website that is a hub of all County and City Government news and information. This one-stop website is a great resource for County and City residents to find out about governmental information at both the County and City level. You can visit this website by going to jaspercountyillinois.gov or cityofnewtonil.com (same website both links take you to it). Our County Board meetings are at 6 pm on the 3rd Thursday of the month here at the Jasper County Office Building (204 W Washington Newton, IL 62448) in the Boardroom at the North end of the building. Since COVID-19 in 2020, all the Jasper County Board meetings have been broadcast remotely via Zoom and Phone-In. The public is welcome to attend in person or Zoom/Call-in to watch/hear the meeting in real-time. All board meeting materials including the agenda, meeting minutes, board packet, and live/recorded meetings are available on the County website. All agendas, minutes, board packets, press releases, and other relevant County government news are distributed to all media outlets that have requested it including local radio stations, newspapers, and television stations. Additionally, the information is shared on social media by several organizations. Staying informed and engaged requires effort. There is a wealth of information available to the public and the transparency from the County government is unmatched by any other governmental entity our size.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Years On behalf of the Jasper County Board and myself, Warfel would like to wish all citizens of Jasper County and the employees of Jasper County a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Executive/Closed Session - The Board does have an executive/closed session to consider the following subjects: Personnel (exception 1) and Litigation (exception 12). There will be no action taken following executive/closed session and the board will adjourn the meeting from executive/closed session. Geier moved to go into closed session to consider the following subjects: Personnel (exception 1) and Litigation (exception 12). Spiker seconded the motion. Motion passed on a Roll Call vote. Francis, Geier, Heltsley, Judson, Pickens, Schackmann, Spiker, Warfel and Weddell voted yes. 7:04 pm

Geier moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:56 pm. Weddell seconded the motion. Motion carried on a voice vote. The meeting was adjourned from executive session.

The Next Board Meeting will be on Thursday, January 16, 2025, at 6:00 p.m.

Amy Tarr, Jasper County Clerk