

**Jasper County Board Minutes**  
*COUNTY OF JASPER NEWTON, ILLINOIS*

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

December 14, 2023

The County Board met in regular session on Thursday, December 14, 2023. The meeting was called to order at 5:00 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, and Warfel. Weddell was absent.

Geier spoke on behalf of John Curtright retirement. On November 20, 2023, at 0700 hours. After 41 years of service with the Jasper County Ambulance Service, John Curtright has retired from full-time active-duty service. On behalf of the citizens of Jasper County, the employees of the Jasper County Government, and the Jasper County Board we extend our sincere appreciation and respect for your many years of dedicated service to the Jasper County Ambulance Service and the County of Jasper.

Public comments: None

Geier moved to approve the agenda. Bollman seconded the motion. Motion carried on a voice vote.

Reports:

*County Departments*

**Ambulance** - · Run Report for month of November 911 – 75; Transfer/Discharges – 37; Refusals/No patient found or contact – 18; Mutual Aid assists – 15 Total: 145

**Highway Department** - 2024 Solid Waste Schedule available and posted at the county building. The concrete is complete on the salt storage hoop building. Effingham Animal Health will complete the hoop in 2024. The new Solid Waste truck is at BM Truck Equipment to switch the dumpster hoist from the old truck to the new. Guardrail contractor returned and finished the punch list item. Construction is complete and finishing paperwork for submittal to IDOT. Have prepared a road use agreement for commercial Solar/Wind energy facilities and discuss with States Attorney. In the process of placing shoulder rock on county roads and preparing equipment for winter snow removal.

**Board of Health** – In packet Heltsley gave updates on the health department renovations. Windows had water and termite damage. Building progress meeting is set. The Olney department will be moving. The mental health building had an open house. 3 employees have been hired and looking for 2 more for the mental health department.

*County Positions/Services*

**Building Maintenance** – Judy McClure and Mike Swick met on beautification project between the county building and church. Flooring installation was completed in the county building. Bierman's completed the metal work on the treasurer's department drive through overhang. Bierman is preparing estimates for replacing the glass wall between the assessor office and board of review room, also an estimate on a maintenance storage room in basement of county building.

Animal Control – In Packet

Informational Technology – Kemper gave an update on moving of equipment will be January 10th from 10 am -3 pm not sure what all will be affected and down. No information on Field Works on fiber installation. Deters was able to help get the permits for the work from the state.

*Elected Officials*

**Treasurer-** Reports from Bigard were sent in the board packet. The general fund income of \$316,203.94, and the personal property income of \$0 with a total income for November were \$316,203.94. The expenses for November were \$517,755.75. Total income less expenses for November a net loss of \$201,155.81. Year to Date State/General Fund income is \$3,685,496.83, Personal Property Income \$640,135.78 with a grand total of \$4,325,221.79. Less Expenses were \$4,150,221.79 with a net profit of \$175,410.82.

**Other Elected Officials/Offices** – Dora Griffith stated the probation annual plan was approved by the state.

At the start of the new board term in December 2022 the County board purchased a Chromebooks for each board member to use in place of printing out the board packets each week. The Chromebooks were purchased at a cost of \$85 each for a total of \$765. In just one year the purchase of the Chromebooks saved printing 3,600 sheets per member for a total paper savings of 32,400 sheets and a total cost savings of \$788.31 in paper and printing costs. In just one year the purchase of the Chromebooks has paid for themselves.

Heltsley moved to approve the consent agenda containing the following items: Approval of County Board November 9, 2023, Minutes; Approval of Grant Writing Services Agreement with South Central Illinois Regional Planning and Development Commission for Capitol Grant for Jasper County Jail Facility Reimbursement; Reappointment of Marcia Street to the Jasper County Board of Health for a 3-Year Term; Reappointment of Larry Brooks to the Jasper County E-911 Board for a 3-Year Term; Reappointment of Doug Klier to the Jasper County E-911 Board for a 3-Year Term; File County Reports; and Allow Claims. Geier seconded the motion. Motion carried on a voice vote.

Old Business:

#### **Item A –County of Jasper Website**

At the November Board Meeting, the Board approved the proposal from ImagineThis! for a County of Jasper Government website. We are hoping to work with the City of Newton to have a one-stop website for both the County of Jasper and the City of Newton. Weddell and Warfel along with some members of the City government had a meeting with ImagineThis! Friday, December 1, 2023. We are still working on the logistics of what a possible combined website would look like. ImagineThis! has begun initial work on the County's part of the website.

#### **Item B – Engineering & Architectural Feasibility Study/Inspection Report for Jasper County Courthouse**

At the September Jasper County Board Meeting, we approved the feasibility and assessment study from Conner & Conner and ADG. That study was e-mailed out to board members on Wednesday, December 13, 2023. Warfel asked that board members take some time over the next few weeks to review the in-depth report. Warfel intends to ask a representative from Connor & Connor and ADG to be present at a special meeting at the beginning of January or the regular January board meeting to answer any questions related to this report. Following the examination of this report, the board in a timely manner because of the impending grand allocation will need to decide on how to proceed forward with either extensive repairs to the existing building or a complete replacement of the building. Structural Engineer has requested immediate closure of the north entrance of the building. A special meeting will be held to discuss the report. Geier said this was just a visual inspection.

#### **Item C – Energy Transition Community Grant**

The Grant has been awarded, now that we have been presented with the feasibility study/inspection report the board will need to decide on what direction we wish to proceed regarding the Jasper County Courthouse Building and the use of the grant that we approved for the repair or replacement of the courthouse building.

#### **Item D – City of Newton Green Space Project West of County Building**

Mr. Pickens received an update on the project from Councilman Mike Swick, The City voted to proceed with the project on Tuesday night contingent on the County's and Grace Methodist's approval. Pickens

spoke on the project remove concrete wall and picnic tables. This could possibly be on part of our property. The funding or some type of in-kind contribution (labor, trucks, etc.) would be appreciated. City and County can work that out. The States Attorney could come up with an agreement for a hold harmless agreement.

**New Business:**

**Item A – Adoption of 2024 Jasper County Board Meeting Dates and Times**

The proposed dates were reviewed. For many years, the Jasper County Board meetings have been held on the 2nd Thursday of the Month. The exception to this is when the 1st of the month falls on a Thursday due to the county's billing process, we have always pushed this back to the 3rd Thursday of the month (this has been the practice for the past decade-plus), such is the case in February and August of 2024. Warfel also requested the pushback of the March meeting to the 3rd Thursday of the month. Warfel will be unable to attend on Thursday, March 14, 2024. It was also suggested that we consider making a change that would move all meetings in 2024 to the 3rd Thursday of the month for easier clarification. The proposal is included as well. Warfel pointed out that the Jasper County Chamber of Commerce Annual Banquet is being held on Thursday, January 18, 2024. It has been requested that if we move the meetings to the 3rd Thursday we keep the January 2024 meeting on the 2nd Thursday, January 11, 2024. Meeting dates and times are published for the entire year in advance and are posted on the board outside of the County Building and inside the County Building. You can also check the dates and times of the monthly County Board meeting by calling the County Clerk's office at 618-783-3124.

Heltsley moved to adopt the 2024 Jasper County Board Meeting Dates and Times schedule move to 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of the month at 6 pm except for January which will be the 2<sup>nd</sup> because of Chamber Annual Banquet. Judson seconded the motion. Motion carried on a voice vote. The 2024 Jasper County Board Meeting Dates and Times have been approved.

**Item B – Approval of Updated Panic Button System from County Offices/Departments**

Mr. Pickens has a quote from Kurt Bierman to install a new panic button system. There has been a request from some offices that the new system should ring directly to dispatch. Quote for equipment for panic button upgrades \$2,025. A \$28 per month fee for this service. The equipment can be moved if needed to. Spiker moved to approve updating the panic button system for county offices and departments and having the new system ring directly to county dispatch. Pickens seconded the motion. The motion carried on a voice vote. The new panic button system ringing directly to dispatch has been approved.

**Item C – County Government Text Notification Proposal**

The County Clerk has some information and a proposal regarding a text notification system (like the Emergency System, the City of Newton's system, and others) that could be used to get real-time information to citizens of the County. Citizens would have to sign up to receive the text messages. The thinking would be that county government information: Election, Voting, Tax, Closures, Highway Department, etc. information could be sent out this way. Doug Long reached out after receiving the agenda and said this is a service we have. The departments could utilize the system.

**Board Comments:** Judson said need to stress going to preferred providers, he had attended the health insurance meeting.

**Chairman's Comments:**

The Jasper County Health Department held an open house at their newly renovated Behavioral Health office located at 910 South Van Buren Street in Newton, Illinois. The building is a welcome asset in our County and helps with the critical services provided by the Jasper County Health Department and their Behavioral Health Department. Crawford, Cumberland, Clark, Coles, Jasper, and Lawrence Counties are seeking a regional approach to Broadband. Each county is being asked to form a group of 5-7 individuals who would be interested in participating in the 16-week training and learning about Jasper County's Broadband Plan. Kemper expressed interest in being a part of this. Any interested individuals should reach out to Warfel. Warfel wanted to clarify that the motion last month did not support the wind and solar project, it just stated, the county would not impose more than the state restrictions. The 2024 UCCI

Schedule of Events was included in the Board Packet. Warfel praised our County Elected Officials, Department Heads, and Employees. As the treasurer pointed out during his report the County was once again in the black for FY2023. At a time when the cost of everything continues to rise the County continues to tighten our belt. We have continually lowered our portion of the tax levy, worked to modernize, and streamline our services, and maintain protection for the health and safety of the citizens and visitors to Jasper County. A reminder all Non-Emergency County Offices/Departments will be closed this Monday, December 25, 2023, and Monday, January 1, 2024, for the Christmas and New Year holidays. Warfel wished my fellow Board Members, Elected Officials, Department Heads, County Employees, and all Citizens of Jasper County a very Merry Christmas and a Healthy, safe and Prosperous New Year!

The board had an executive session with no action taken following the executive session, the board adjourned from the executive/closed session.

Geier moved for the board to enter an executive session under the following exception: Discussion of Collective Negotiation Matters (exception 2). Spiker seconded the motion. Bollman, Deckard, Geier, Heltsley, Judson, Pickens, Spiker, and Warfel voted yes. Weddell was absent. Motion carried on a roll call vote. The Board entered an Executive Session at 5:51 pm.

Heltsley moved to adjourn at 6:25 pm. Geier seconded the motion. Motion carried on a voice vote.

The Next Board Meeting will be on Thursday, January 11, 2024, at 6:00 p.m.  
Amy Tarr, Jasper County Clerk