

## Jasper County Board Minutes

COUNTY OF JASPER NEWTON, ILLINOIS

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

February 15, 2024

The County Board met in regular session on Thursday, February 15, 2024. The meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm by proclamation according to law by Kurt Long. Kurt Long led a moment in silence and the Pledge of Allegiance. Members present were Bollman, Deckard, Geier, Heltsley, Judson, Pickens, Spiker, Warfel, and Weddell.

193 Anniversary of the County and City of Newton on today's date.

Public comments:

Sarah Diel Kinkade from the Jasper County Chamber of Commerce gave a presentation. The Hometown Hero Award for February 2024 was awarded to Al Thompson. Micheal Geier nominated him for the work for the patriotic display for the annual Veterans Day. Geier nominated Al Thompson for this award for obvious reasons. The amount of time and energy he put into the Veteran's Day program every year cannot be understated. There have been times when Geier has been working, Geier has driven past the square and has seen Al out on the lawn marking and driving stakes for the flags into the ground, by himself. Because of his dedication and selfless sacrifice, Jasper County has a beautiful, patriotic display that honors our veterans every November 11th. When Geier spoke as guest speaker during the Veteran's Day program in 2021, Geier read a quote from George Washington. *"The willingness with which our young people are likely to serve in any wars, no matter how justified, shall be directly proportional to how they perceive the Veterans of earlier wars were treated and appreciated by their nation."* Geier can assure you; Jasper County veterans feel appreciated, and the community is appreciative of everything Al does. So, on behalf of the citizens of Jasper County Geier wanted to express gratitude for all the work Al put forth regarding the annual Veteran's Day Program. Geier cannot think of anyone more deserving of this award.

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

Reports:

### *County Departments*

**Ambulance** - January 2024 Run Report; 911 – 89; Transfers – 36; Refusals/no patient contact/ canceled en route – 16; Mutal Aid assists – 15 Total: 156

**Highway Department** - The Rock & Pipe Letting for the County & Townships was held on January 22, 2024. Pipe and rock prices were up approximately 5% on average. County Highway is putting together the 2024 Pavement Preservation project which consists of 28.6 miles of chip and seal work using Federal and State Funds. The roads programed this year are the Run Around Road, Bogota, and Rose Hill East Road. We are also putting together the plans and paperwork for the West Liberty Soil Cement Project which consists of 2.75 miles. The Electronic Recycling event is scheduled for Saturday, March 23, 2024. Please see the attachment for this event. Randy Kistner is asking for a variance to the County Set-Back Ordinance along County Highway #4 (1100E - Buck Grove Road). He is requesting a 70' set-back. County Engineer visited the site and finds no issue with the 70' set-back and recommends discussion and approval by the Full County Board.

**Board of Health** – January meeting was cancelled. The next meeting will be February 26<sup>th</sup> at 4:30 pm. The health department building renovations are at 75% complete.

*County Positions/Services*

**Building Maintenance** – Jan 19 Pickens took an insurance inspector to all the county buildings and the communications tower for inspection. Feb 2 Pickens met with Tiffany Keller and Lee Beckman about a federal grant for courthouse sidewalks and light poles.

Animal Control – In Packet

IT Consultant – Logan will be in contact with FieldWrxs, so fiber work should be started in the future.

*Elected Officials*

**Treasurer-** Reports from Bigard were sent in the board packet. The general fund income of \$245,181.65, and the personal property income of \$61,957.61 with a total income for January were \$307,139.26. The expenses for January were \$354,537.26. Total income less expenses for January a net loss of \$47,398.17. Year to Date State/General Fund income is \$444,918.91, Personal Property Income \$89,976.19 with a grand total of \$534,895.10. Less Expenses were \$644,984.36 with a net loss of \$110,089.26.

**Other Elected Officials/Offices**

The County Clerk's office is open for early voting. There has been a total of 42 voters, and it has been a week to date. The office is open for early voting 8 am – 4 pm. M-F and will be open the Saturday before the election 9 am to 12 pm. If anyone knows of anyone who is not able to get out and vote an application for a ballot can be requested and then a ballot will be sent to the voter.

Bollman moved to approve the consent agenda containing the following items: Approval of County Board January 11, 2024, and February 1, 2024, Minutes; Approval of Variance to County Set-Back Ordinance along County Highway #4 (1100E-Buck Grove Road); File County Reports; and Allow Claims  
Pickens seconded the motion. Motion carried on a voice vote.

Old Business:

**Item A – County of Jasper/City of Newton Website**

Imaginethis! is continuing to work on the County of Jasper/City of Newton website. A sitemap will be included in the packet and content submission forms will be distributed to all County Offices/Departments. The content submission forms are due back by February 29. On the proposed timeline considering time for review and feedback, we are on pace to have a test site completed by the first part of June with a website going live by the end of June if all goes well.

**Item B – Energy Transition Community Grant**

The Grant has been awarded and the State is awaiting decisions from the County regarding how we wish to proceed forward. With the help of the South Central Illinois Regional Planning and Development Commission, we have begun the process of applying for Year 2 of the Grant. Additional information on the Year 2 cycle will be sent to board members are updates are received.

**Item C – Jasper County Courthouse**

Following the Public Meeting and with the Year 1 award from the Energy Transition Community Grant pending we need direction from the board on the path forward. Both options New Construction or Rehabilitation will be a lengthy process but the path starts with an initial step. Board votes to proceed forward.; Request for Qualifications for Engineering and Architectural Services.; Selection of Engineering and Architectural Services.; Preliminary cost estimates on Judicial or All-encompassing building.; Initial Building Floorplan/Concept – Price Estimate.; Final Floorplan/Concept Approval.; Bid Process.; Board approves or rejects Bids.; Board approves contract. The first step is a direction from the board so we can proceed forward. This is far from the final step or vote in this process. Heltsley asked about the remodel of the courthouse if this is an option. Bollman asked if we changed our minds, it would be able to be changed up until the building is demolished. Warfel said once we hit 50% of the current value of the building then we must bring up to code. Geier said Edgar County has run into a lot of problems and the cost is more. Geier said need to look at the standing of the future of the building. Woodard commented that the building needs to withstand the remodel. Judson said he would like to see all the offices under one building. Pickens said to keep the county building and build a smaller courthouse. Treccia said the chief judge must approve the courthouse. Geier moved to approve for the Board to move forward with plans for replacement of the Jasper County Courthouse in the current location. Spiker seconded the motion. Bollman, Deckard, Geier, Heltsley, Judson, Pickens, Spiker, Warfel, and Weddell voted yes. Motion carried on a roll call vote. The county will proceed forward with plans for the replacement of the Jasper County Courthouse at the current location.

New Business:

**Item A – 2024 Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program (ITEP) Courthouse Square Streetscape Improvements**

Tiffany Keller has been working with Milano Grunloh Engineers, LLC from Effingham on this grant. The purpose of the grant would be to upgrade the street lighting and sidewalks on the county property of the courthouse square to look like the city property around the square. In addition, plans would be to add a handicapped parking space on the east side of the courthouse lawn. Applications for the grant are accepted starting later this year but prior to that, a public hearing must be conducted on the proposed grant. The timing of the grant would coincide with any future plans for the courthouse, and most likely take place after work on the building had been completed. The grant is an 80/20 grant on the streetscape improvements and a 50/50 grant on the streetlight improvements. If the grant moves forward the County would be the sponsor and responsible for the cost not covered by the grant. An estimate of that cost will be provided by Milano Grunloh Engineers and the County Board will need to vote in a subsequent meeting on proceeding forward as the sponsor of the grant.

**Item B – Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for Architectural & Engineering Services – Courthouse Project**

For the Sheriff's Office and Jail Project, the County partnered with Architecture & Design Group ADG and Connor & Connor for the Architectural & Engineering Services. Unlike other proposals the County may seek, when it comes to the Architectural & Engineering Services on a project the services are based on a % of the overall cost of the project. Therefore, architecture and engineering firms do not "compete" based on price because the price is fixed % rather they are competing based on their reputation and experience. If the board wishes to consider other firms for the project, we will need to issue an RFQ or Request for Qualifications. A Request for Qualifications helps the County find architects or engineers who have the necessary expertise, resources, and financial stability to complete the project based on their experience, past performance, technical capabilities, and other relevant criteria. If we want to issue a Request for Qualifications for the Courthouse project, Warfel suggested announcing that at the February meeting and having the RFQs due back to the board by March 18, 2024, for review and selection at the March meeting. Heltsley said he would like to see a request for qualifications. Geier said

he would not know what others would be like. Pickens said he would like to see local individuals involved in the project. Heltsley moved to issue a Request for Qualifications for Architectural & Engineering Services (RFQ) for the Jasper County Courthouse Project. Weddell seconded the motion. Motion carried on a voice vote. An RFQ has been issued for Architectural & Engineering Services for the Jasper County Courthouse Project.

**Board Comments:**

Judson said we have our work cut out for ourselves.

**Chairman's Comments:** Jasper County Economic Development, Inc. will host a Meet-Greet-& Learn on February 21<sup>st</sup> beginning at 6pm at the Newton KC Hall. Kala Lambert with Illinois DCEO will be on hand. The Jasper County Chamber of Commerce will be hosting "Bye Bye Miss American Pie, an Evening with Mike Hartrich on Friday, March 1, 2024 starting at 5:30 p.m. Jasper County Highway Department will hold an Electronic Recycling Event on Saturday, March 23, 2024 from 7AM until 1:30PM (unless the trailer is filled before). This is for Jasper County residents only and is free of charge. A reminder all Non-Emergency County Offices/Departments will be closed this Monday, February 19, 2024, in observance of the President's Day Holiday.

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

Geier moved at 6:49 pm for the board to enter an executive session under the following exception: Discussion of Property (exception 5). Bollman seconded the motion. Bollman, Deckard, Geier, Heltsley, Judson, Pickens, Spiker, Warfel, and Weddell voted yes. Motion carried on a roll call vote. The Board entered an Executive Session.

Geier moved to adjourn at 7:33 pm. Bollman seconded the motion. Motion carried on a voice vote.

The Next Board Meeting will be Thursday, March 21, 2024, at 6:00 p.m.  
Amy Tarr, Jasper County Clerk