

Jasper County Board Minutes
COUNTY OF JASPER NEWTON, ILLINOIS

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

March 21, 2024

The County Board met in regular session on Thursday, March 21, 2024. 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: Jessica Wells U of I Extension happy to be able to attend on Zoom and Tractor Safety Day and Welcome to the Real World will be taking place for the students of Jasper County. Herb Meeker with Hometown Register, Clay County approved an immigration resolution to not take funds from the state and was wondering if it would be happening in Jasper County. Jim Kocher said he likes preserving historical buildings. He has read articles about the county building a new courthouse. He thinks having a building built as a 2 story and would like to see the green space to remain and he would like to see things used from the old courthouse.

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

Reports:

County Departments

Ambulance - February 2024 Runs - 911 – 93; Transfers – 28; Refusals/canceled in route – 15; Discharges – 4; Mutual Aid – 11 Total 151 runs. IDPH inspections were at the end of February – Passed full inspections for both state and resource hospital. New ambulances expected Summer 2024. 3 EMTs are expected to be Medics by Summer – we will then have more medics than basics on the schedule. Remount for 2356 quote to be delivered 2026, would need to lock in the price.

Highway Department – A Resolution to be attached to the Joint Federal Funding Agreement for the 2024 Pavement Preservation Project – Sec. 21-00141-00-PP needs Full Board Approval. This project consists of the Run Around Road, Bogota Road, and Rose Hill East Road. A Resolution to be attached to the Joint Federal Funding Agreement for the West Liberty Road Soil Cement Project – Sec. 21-00140-00-FP needs Full Board Approval. On the West Liberty Road, several of the existing pipes and box culverts have been replaced with new pipes in preparation for the soil cement project. Reminder. The Electronic Recycling event is scheduled for Saturday, March 23, 2024. We are taking sealed bids for the 2004 Peterbilt Solid Waste Truck. They are due on Friday, March 22, 2024 at 10:00 a.m. Jake Semple is leaving the Highway Department after 12 years of service. His last day will be March 28, 2024. We are currently reviewing new employee applications with the intention of filling a position in April. Oil letting is scheduled for March 26, 2024, 9:00 a.m. at the Highway Department.

Board of Health – Building updates finish exterior and window trim 75-80% complete. The interior part will take longer due to the cost being more than anticipated. Judson asked if he read it correctly being more than \$315,000. Jasper County Health Fair will be May 22 from 10 am -1 pm at the West End Event Center. The Safe Sitter Class has been scheduled for May 23, 2024.

County Positions/Services

Building Maintenance – Feb 27- Jason Bierman built the new wall between Tom's office and the meeting room. Robards will do the drywall. We haven't discussed painting. Judson is going to talk to Roy Smith. March 19 – Kurt Bierman from Barlow's got the panic buttons installed and operational in both the courthouse and the county building.

Technology – Requested downtime all in one sweep a week of downtime. 2 different connections must worry about. They can split it up but quoting down time. This is asking a lot they would have done this week. They said they do not due weekends. If mobile hotspot to get the ambulance covered. Francis said they could use the conference room at jail. Logan would like to make sure this would work. 2 days for courthouse and annex. Meeting of department heads next Wednesday to discuss this.

Animal Control – In Packet

Elected Officials

Treasurer- Reports from Bigard were sent in the board packet. The general fund income was \$239,215.58 for February. The expenses for February were \$263,512.37. Total income less expenses for February a net loss of -\$24,296.79. Year to Date State/General Fund income is \$684,134.49, Personal Property Income \$89,976.19 with a grand total of \$774,110.68. Less Expenses were \$ 908,496.73 with a net loss of -\$134,386.05.

Other Elected Officials/Offices

County Clerk Tarr reported the Historical Records which were scanned is now available online at <https://recordhub.cottsystems.com> allowing searches to be completed online. I have completed and have been approved my records disposal request. The Primary Election had a 33% turnout. It was a good day, and the work has begun for post-election. Preparation of the General Election November 5, 2024 will begin when the post-election is finished.

Consent agenda. The following items were on the consent agenda this evening: Approval of County Board February 15, 2024 Minutes; Appointment of Tony Hartrich as Trustee for a Three-Year Term on the Wade Community Fire Protection District; Appointment of Richard Ochs as Trustee for a Three-Year Term on the Wade Community Fire Protection District; Approval of SCIRPDC Grant Writing Services Agreement for Energy Transition Community Grant – Year 2; Adoption of Resolution for Section 21-00140-00-FP – West Liberty Road Soil Cement Project; Adoption of Resolution for Section 21-00141-00-PP – Run Around, Bogota & Rose Hill East Road Oil & Chip Project; File County Reports and Allow Claims. There was no objection, the Consent Agenda was adopted.

Old Business:

County Of Jasper/City of Newton Website ImagineThis! is continuing to work on the County of Jasper/City of Newton website. The content submission forms from the various offices and departments were due back by February 29. Only a few offices are still outstanding. 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/first of July if all goes well.

Energy Transition Community Grant The Deadline for Year 2 of the Energy Transition Community Grant was Friday, March 15, 2024. The County once again submitted our application for the grant. In addition, the County of Jasper provided letters of support for Jasper County Community Unit #1 School District, Wade Community Fire Protection District, and the City of Newton. The next step will be review and approval by the State. Once approved an amount will be assigned and we are responsible for holding a stakeholder/public meeting to discuss our proposed use of the funds. This is the same process as last year. Depending on the State's timing the plan is to hold the stakeholder/public meeting prior to the April 18, 2024, County Board meeting.

Jasper County Courthouse This will be a constant agenda item for the foreseeable future. At the February 15, 2024, meeting the board voted unanimously to proceed forward with the demolition and new construction of the Jasper County Courthouse on the current site. There is nothing specific under this agenda item to act on at the March meeting. Action will be taken on the selection of an Architectural & Engineering firm for new business. Once an architectural and engineering firm have been selected a formal agreement will be approved at the April meeting. Once selected, preliminary work can begin on the design and floorplan concepts. Identifying the necessary square footage for combined or segregated

(meaning only Judicial Offices) courthouse building. From there a more accurate cost estimate can be derived and the board presented with options.

New Business:

Adoption Of Resolution Supporting Illinois House Bill 4512 – Change to Assessor Publication Requirement Currently, the Illinois Property Tax Code requires at certain times the Jasper County Assessor to publish assessment information for the county and/or properties for which assessments have been added or changed in some public newspaper or newspapers published in the county. The cost this year to publish the general assessment (once every 4 years) was over \$12,000. In other years it averages around \$3,000. Illinois State Representative Nicholas has proposed HB4512 which would amend the Illinois Property Tax Code and allow assessors in counties of less than 3 million (all counties besides Cook) to post the required information on the chief county assessments officer's website in lieu of publishing in a newspaper. Posting online would provide the same information to taxpayers while reaching a larger portion than the limited circulation of a local newspaper. The Supervisor of Assessments Tom Matson has requested that the County Board, like many other county boards, adopt this resolution as a sign of support for this House Bill in hopes that enough support from counties may help facilitate change at the State level. Spiker moved to adopt the Resolution Supporting Illinois House Bill 4512 – Change to Assessor Publication Requirement. Bollman seconded the motion. Motion carried on a voice vote. The Resolution in Support of Illinois House Bill 4512 – Change to Assessor Publication Requirement is adopted.

APPROVAL OF JASPER COUNTY AMBULANCE SERVICE REMOUNT FOR #2356 IN THE AMOUNT OF \$167,279 The Jasper County Ambulance Service is requesting approval to lock in a price for the remount of their 3rd truck #2356. Currently, a remount would be 2 years out but approval now would lock in the price at \$167,279. #2356 will need to be replaced in 2 years due to mileage and normal wear and tear. The Ambulance Service is still sitting at \$433,000 in funds from the tax disbursement last Fall and has not seen much dwindle in funds due to increased services. Deckard moved to approve the Jasper County Ambulance Service Remount for #2356 in the amount of \$167,279. Geier seconded the motion. Payment will be at time of delivery, and it will be out of the ambulance budget. Judson asked how often this needs to be replaced every 2 to 3 years. Motion carried on a voice vote. The Jasper County Ambulance Service Remount of #2356 has been approved.

Adoption Of Resolution Authorizing The County Of Jasper's Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program Grant Application We have been working with Milano Grunloh Engineers, LLC from Effingham on the Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program 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 similar to 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. A public meeting was conducted before the February 15, 2024 board meeting. The timing of the grant would coincide with any plans for the courthouse, and most likely take place after work on the building had been completed. The grant is an 80/20 grant with some communities receiving 90% or 100% depending on community income levels. Milano Grunloh estimates the cost of the project to be around \$500,000. 80% of that cost would be \$100,000. Because the grant requires a sponsor and a possible commitment of 20% of funds the board at some point before the grant application needs to adopt a resolution authorizing the County to apply for the grant. Weddell moved to adopt the Resolution Authorizing the County of Jasper Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program Application. Pickens seconded the motion. There is a window of five years to complete the project. Motion carried on a voice vote. The Resolution Authorizing the County of Jasper ITEP Application has been adopted.

SELECTION OF ARCHITECTURAL & ENGINEERING SERVICES FOR THE JASPER COUNTY COURTHOUSE PROJECT At the February County Board Meeting, the Board voted to proceed forward with demolition and new construction of a Courthouse on the current location. In addition, the Board approved going out for Request for Qualifications for Architectural and 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. The deadline for submittal of an RFQ was 4:00 p.m. on Monday, March 18, 2024. RFQs were submitted in PDF form and distributed to all board members for review. Statements of Qualifications were received from four architectural firms: Architecture & Design Group (ADG) – Mt. Carmel, IL; Upchurch Group – Mattoon, IL; UTZ+Associates Architects P.C. – Effingham, IL; White & Borgognoni Architects, P.C. – Carbondale, IL. 8 Requested information and only 4 submitted proposals. Geier moved to select ADG as the County’s Architectural and Engineering Firm for the Jasper County Courthouse Project. Pickens seconded the motion. Motion carried on a voice vote. ADG and Stone & Waggoner Engineers has been selected at the County’s Architectural and Engineering Firm for the Jasper County Courthouse Project.

JASPER COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE DONATION The Jasper County Chamber of Commerce has sent out its annual request for membership. Platinum Plus: \$ - Any amount at your discretion over \$2,500; Platinum \$2,500; Gold \$2,000; Silver \$1,500; Bronze \$1,000; Copper \$500; Friend of the Chamber: \$ - Donation amount of your choice. Each tier comes with additional benefits. In 2023 the Jasper County Board donated \$1,000 membership to the Chamber. It should also be noted that Jasper County for many years now has authorized giving ½ of the Hotel/Motel Operators Occupancy Tax to the Chamber of Commerce yearly. The amount varies per year but averages around \$15,000. Deckard moved to make a \$1,000 donation in 2024 to the Jasper County Chamber of Commerce. Weddell seconded the motion. Motion carried on a voice vote. The County of Jasper will donate \$1,000 in 2024 to the Jasper County Chamber of Commerce.

APRIL 8, 2024 “THE GREAT AMERICAN ECLIPSE” – JASPER COUNTY OFFICE HOURS On April 8, 2024, at around 2:00 p.m. the Great American Eclipse will pass through Jasper County. We will be in the path of totality for about 3 ½ minutes. This will not occur in this area again for another 129 years! This will be the last time an eclipse will occur in the continental United States until 2045 (only in the southern states). This will be the last total eclipse in this area until 2153. This will be the last eclipse/total eclipse many of us may ever see! What is a Solar Eclipse? A solar eclipse occurs when the Moon passes between the Earth and the Sun, thereby obscuring the image of the Sun for a view on Earth. A total solar eclipse occurs when the Moon’s apparent diameter is larger than the Sun’s, blocking all direct sunlight, and turning day into darkness. Totality occurs in a narrow path across Earth’s surface. This Great American Eclipse will bring many visitors into our area. Plans and preparation are well underway. The Jasper County Community Unit #1 School District like many other area districts has decided to cancel school for the day due to the expected heavy traffic and significance of this event. I am asking board members to consider closing all non-emergency County Offices & Departments at Noon on Monday, April 8, 2024, to allow county employees to view and participate in this once-in-a-lifetime event. Geier moved to close all non-emergency County Offices & Departments at Noon on Monday, April 8, 2024. Judson seconded the motion. Geier commented on the traffic from the experience from Marion County. There was a discussion. Motion carried on a voice vote. All Non-Emergency County Offices and Departments will be closed at Noon on Monday, April 8, 2024.

Board Comments: Bollman wanting to do a similar resolution on immigrants like other counties. No taxpayer dollars would go towards this. Treccia would draft a resolution on this if the board suggests this. A resolution will be drafted to be considered next month.

Chairman’s Comments:

United Counties Council of Illinois 2024 Legislative Conference will be April 10 – April 11.
Primary Election – March 19, 2024 Warfel wanted to extend a thank you to the County Clerk, her employees, all poll workers, and everyone who had a hand in the primary election. There is a tremendous amount of work that goes into each election, and we have a number of individuals who step

up year after year to ensure our democratic process runs as smoothly as possible, thank you! And thank you to everyone who went out to vote, voted early, or voted by mail.

Jasper County Electronic Recycling Event will be Saturday, March 23, 2024.

Jasper County Offices will be closed Good Friday, March 29, 2024 as outlined in the Jasper County Employee Personnel Policy for all Non-Emergency County offices.

Condolences go out to Marla and the entire family of Ronnie Diel who passed away on March 14, 2024.

Ronnie served for many years on the Jasper County Board of Review and did several carpenter related jobs for the County.

Warfel wished all Board Members, Elected Officials, Department Heads, Employees, and Citizens a very blessed Easter Season ahead.

Geier moved for the board to enter an executive session under the following exception: litigation (exception 11) & personnel (exception 1). 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 at 7:10 pm.

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

Geier moved to adjourn. Deckard seconded the motion. Motion carried on a voice vote at 7:29 pm.

The next board meeting will be on April 18, 2024 at 6 PM.

Amy Tarr, Jasper County Clerk