

Jasper County Board Minutes
COUNTY OF JASPER NEWTON, ILLINOIS

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

May 11, 2023

The County Board met in regular session on Thursday, May 11th, 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: Clinton Bigard introduced Amanda Stanford as a relatively new employee. Thanked her and made everyone aware of her efforts to get paychecks for all this week.

Carl Baker, Regional Director for the University of Illinois Extension spoke on the annual agreement between the County and the University of Illinois Extension. He also handed out a breakdown of the funds to see what was accomplished with the funds. He spoke about the programs the Extension offers. Mr. Baker mentioned he has become a certified shooting instructor and is hoping to add more shooting sports to the local area. He thanked everyone for their support of the Extension. Baker also mentioned Jason Warfel will be leaving the extension board as he is maxed out his terms. Only able to serve two 2-year terms and Jason's terms were extended due to covid. Mr. Baker would like to have someone from the county board to be on the extension board. They meet 4 times a year with a 5th meeting scheduled during winter months that may or may not be cancelled.

Ray Diel invited everyone to the Snedeker Risk Management client appreciation dinner on June 27th. They will update on insurance (property, casualty, work comp), health care and upcoming education opportunities. He said there are 1-3 regional meetings, and the annual meeting is in Peoria. He also mentioned it is a great chance to network with others from other counties. RSVP requested by June 16th.

Judson made a motion to approve the agenda. Bollman seconded the motion. Motion carried on a voice vote.

Reports:

County Departments

Ambulance Department - 120 Runs in April; 61 – 911's; 21 – Refusal's or canceled en route; 1 – MVA; 24 – Transfers; 1 – Special (coroner assist); 12 – Mutual Aid. A medic resigned to go teach full time. An EMT has been hired who is in Medic school to take his place. Annual Skills review with the resource hospital for all ambulance employees is May 16. The department participated in school events this month. Talked with 4th grade students, participated in health career day, St. Thomas Sectionals Track Meet, and plans to volunteer at the Health Departments Health Fair. EMS week is May 21-27 – please feel free to reach out and recognize them for all the hours and hard work they put in. A meal and small gift are planned for them to show appreciation. #2358 is broke down again. Mr. Geier gave an update on Hargrave's progress with the department. When they started, they had \$30,000 in the checking account and now hold a balance of \$165,000. Started understaffed and massive overtime; they are now fully staffed with 20 employees. EMT's are now able to be reimbursed for their schooling. Currently have 5 in school with 2 receiving reimbursement. The equipment they inherited was poorly maintained and now it receives regular maintenance. He thanked the Hargraves profusely.

Highway Department - New employee, Levi Fitzmaurice started on April 28, 2023, replacing Bruce Ochs. The Day Labor culvert project will be finished soon for Crooked Creek Township Road District 14 of 17

have been completed. The mowing of the county highway right of ways will start before Memorial Day. The department has been cleaning out ditches, patching roads and hauling rock for this summer's oil and chip projects. Shoulder rock will soon be pulled in. Mowing of the county highway right of ways will begin in late May with intent of areas around cemeteries being completed before Memorial Day. James Judson and A.C. Pickens, County Board point of contacts for the highway department, held a discussion regarding possible change options for the Solid Waste program. This item was further discussed in the board meeting.

Board of Health – Building updates – Connor and Connor had made a sketch of exterior on building. Bids for repairs are due May 25th. Major repairs will be contacted first. Jeannie is hoping to have an open house at the new mental health building at the end of summer. Next meeting of board of health will be May 25th at the health department.

County Positions/Services

Building Maintenance – Estimates were presented from Dan's Glass to replace the board room windows and a second estimate to install an "escape" window in ROE office. It is the only room that doesn't have a secondary escape option. Mindy Hartke was interested in creating a sign to place on the courthouse lawn to thank flowerpot sponsors. Later discussion was proposed to just continue with individual signs in each flowerpot. This will remove another mowing obstacle on the courthouse lawn. It was noted that the Riverwalk sign is still up, and the project is no longer being done so the sign needs to be removed. James and AC had met to discuss painting. All is done except for a bit possibly left to do in Clinton's office. Painters were going to use leftover paint to maybe paint the bathrooms.

County Jail and Sheriff Office – New flags have been ordered for buildings. Questions about landscaping around jail, it was noted that it was included in the construction bid.

Information Technology Consultant – Corey spoke via Zoom. Fiber optics update, they were questioning how to proceed with courthouse project. Corey mentioned the fiber optics can proceed, when the courthouse project moves forward, they can patch another line into the existing fiber optic line with no down time. Networking equipment is due to arrive in June.

Supervisor of Assessment Office – Tom said final abstract was mailed 4/28, a full month ahead of last year. Farmland assessment approved. Tom has completed the second and third classes of six. One more next week, another the following week and the last in June. Jason emailed a video from the Farm Bureau explaining why farmland continues to increase in price. The state is the reason.

Animal Control – Report in Packet Austin Ferguson will be at the June meeting to introduce himself to those who have not yet met him.

Elected Officials

Treasurer: Reports from Bigard were sent in the board packet. The income for general fund is \$245,359.28, and the personal property income of \$83,037.67 with a total income for April of \$328,985.72. The expenses for April were \$328,985.72. Total income less expenses for April results in a net loss of \$588.77. Fiscal year 22/23 State and General fund income is \$905,705.94 and Personal Property Income is \$288,646.20 with a total income of \$1,411,275.53. Total expenses for Fiscal year 22/23 \$1,563,508.68 with a loss of \$152,233.15. Bigard spoke on the issues with CIC the accounting software. He mentioned that there has been little to no response from them this week regarding the issues. 2 years ago, personnel information was compromised. He was disappointed they had learned nothing from that. He will be having conversations with them soon regarding the necessity of a backup plan should this ever happen again. There are only two companies in the area to choose from for their services, so it isn't like we have many options.

Other Elected Officials/Offices

Deckard made a motion to Approve of County Board April 13, 2023, Minutes; Approve of the Annual Agreement between the University of Illinois Extension and Jasper County; Appoint of Susan Iffert Lindley to the Jasper County Housing Authority Board; Reappoint John Miller to a 2-Year Term (June 2025) on the Board of Review; Reappoint of Brock Kessler to a 2-Year (June 2025) Term on the Board of Review; Appoint of Jolyn Bigard to an Unexpired 1-Year Term (June 2024) on the Board of Review; Reappoint of Dr. Scott Bloomberg to an At-Large 3-Year Term (July 2026) on the Board of Health; Reappoint of Dr. Patricia Kessler-Bookhout, to the Dentist 3-Year Term (July 2026) on the Board of Health; Appoint of Deborah Rubsam to an At-Large 3-Year Term (May 2026) on the Board of Health; Reappoint of Evan Semple to a 3-Year Term (January 2026) on the Jasper County E-911 Board; Reappoint of Mandy Rieman to a 3-Year Term (January 2026) on the Jasper County E-911 Board; Reappoint of Doug Weddell to a 2-Year Term (January 2025) on the Jasper County E-911 Board; Reappoint of Daniel Stark to a 2-Year Term (January 2025) on the Jasper County E-911 Board; Reappoint of Larry Brooks to a 1-Year Term (January 2024) on the Jasper County E-911 Board; Reappoint of Doug Klier to a 1-Year Term (January 2024) on the Jasper County E-911 Board; Adoption of Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Week May 21-27, 2023 Proclamation; File County Reports; and Allow Claims. Heltsley seconded the motion. Motion carried on a voice vote.

Old Business:

Item A –VISION 2031 – Jasper County Government Strategic Plan

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. 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 held a department head meeting before the board meeting to highlight further discussion on this project. 102 Illinois counties and 15 have no website. It is something we need to do. It could possibly limit calls and foot traffic to the offices, not to mention make accessibility to the information more readily available to the public.

Item B – Energy Transition Community Grant Stakeholders Taskforce

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), it appears the grant would be annual, with the county receiving the same amount or more each year till 2033. The plan would be for these funds to go towards the replacement or rehabilitation of the Jasper County Courthouse and the Beautification of the county-owned property on the square. There was a public meeting held Mr. Geier attended. He said it went well.

Item C – Changes to Jasper County Solid Waste Discussed in April there has been some abuse of the Solid Waste program by contractors as well as the continued issue with out-of-county dumping.

Additionally, the board needs to clarify the policy regarding requests for dumpsters from organizations within the community. Currently two rows of dumpsters are set out. This creates safety/liability issues as the loader must intermingle with the individuals dumping. The loader is used to smash down dumpsters and create more room. The solution discussed is making one row of 14 dumpsters. This would create a barrier between the loader and the individuals dumping. It would also create more of a reason to NOT help unload vehicles (which employees should not be doing anyway). If you can't unload your trash, it don't belong. Tarps have been purchased to cover Saturday dumpsters to avoid trash blowing around the neighborhood. Dumpsters aren't tarped until they are hauled off. Tarping each one as it is full will

also help eliminate overfilling. More discussion about contractors not using dumpsters, it has been agreed that they are for residential use only. Sherriff Francis said that they could possibly have a deputy out there but would only be part of the time. Currently there is still no penalty for out of county dumping. Still searching for an enforcement plan. The current hours are until 3:30 pm on Saturday. Next month will be further discussion on the time change to 1:30 pm and hold a vote to approve and become effective July 1. Signs will be made and displayed to give individuals notice. The Health Department has purchased a mobile, digital sign that may be available. Discussions were held about making dumpsters more available for the villages, municipalities, and townships only. Free dumpsters to churches, benefits will more than likely be eliminated. But events like the County Fair and City Clean Up projects would still be provided for. Possibility of reduction of winter dumpsters. The possibility of leaving dumpsters overnight instead of just a few hours during the day, giving more people access to them. No motions were made regarding any of these issues.

New Business:

Item A – Approval of County Building Windows and Electrical Improvements A.C. & James had quotes on the replacement of the County Board Room Windows (current windows are plexiglass) and installing an emergency escape window in the Regional Office of Education office. To replace board room single pane would cost approximately \$950. To use double pane, new frames would be needed and there would end up being dry wall repairs necessary, resulting in \$4,000 plus. Someone mentioned energy savings, but that there is no insulation in this building so that is relatively insignificant. Single pane was decided would be the option to go with including a mirror finish to reduce sunshine glaring in. An escape window will cost \$2,400. The board room electric installation was discussed, to go through the concrete walls to an increase in price of \$1,000 or to have power poles from the ceiling. Most everyone agreed to no obtrusive pole, which would make the Burford Electric estimate \$18,865 for electrical improvements throughout the entire county building. Judson made a motion to approve the County Building Windows from Dan's Glass in the amount of \$2,400 for ROE office and \$950 and tint for the board room window. and Electrical Improvement Quotes from Burford Electric in the amount of \$17,865 plus \$1,000. Spiker seconded the motion. The motion was adopted.

Item B – Approval of the Energy Transition Community Grant Phase 2 Application and Proposed Project Use Phase 2 of the Energy Transition Community Grant is due May 31, 2023. This would be the formal vote of the Jasper County Board to approve the application prepared by the South Central Illinois Regional Planning and Development Commission (SCIRPDC). This motion would also approve the \$565,615 in Grant Monies for FY2023 to be allocated toward the replacement or rehabilitation of the Jasper County Courthouse. Geier made a motion to approve the Energy Transition Community Grant Phase 2 Application and Proposed Project Use towards the replacement or rehabilitation of the Jasper County Courthouse. Pickens seconded the motion. The motion was adopted. Mr. Warfel stressed this is NOT an approval to build a new courthouse. The question of future year amounts arose. It was mentioned that the DCEO Rep, Kayla had said we would receive the same amount or more each year. Mr. Geier attended the webinar with other grant recipients. There was \$400 million allocated to the whole project.

Board Comments: Weddell mentioned there will be several events happening at the Fairgrounds this year. He will be holding a memorial semi-truck show for Troy Huddleston. 60 semis have preregistered with an expectation of 100-200. There will be pedal tractor pulls, inflatables and food trucks. He is currently in talks with Confederate Railroad and Kentucky Headhunters for an evening concert. Concert tickets would be \$55/\$65/\$75. Entrance to view the truck is free. Judson mentioned a swine show with people coming from as far as South Carolina and Florida.

Chairman Comments: Wind Development – Last Wednesday, May 5, 2023, a group of individuals met with Mr. James Prescott who represented a potential wind development (Tenaska/Cordelio) looking at various locations in Illinois. Jasper County was one of many locations they were looking at to potential place a large wind development (80+ turbines). Wind development projects in Illinois do not have the ability to use eminent domain. Any project of this size like other exploratory solar/wind projects would require the company to enter into a direct agreement with the landowners for use of the land. In January the Illinois General Assembly passed HB4412 which the Governor signed, this piece of legislation severely limited local government control over zoning of wind and solar developments. Upside would include possible road improvements and intersection widening. Before anything moves forward there will be a need to set up community meetings. United Counties Council of Illinois Annual Conference – July 23 – July 25 in Galena, Illinois. Snedeker Risk Management Client Appreciation Dinner – June 27, 2023, 5:00 social hour and 6:00 p.m. Dinner at the West End Reception and Events Center. Stephen Willis is stepping down from the Jasper County Housing Authority Board after 32 years of service. On behalf of the citizens of Jasper County I want to extend my thanks and appreciation for his many years of dedicated service in a variety of areas to our community. Stephen and his wife Scherry will be greatly missed as he returns to his home state of Ohio. Susan Iffert Lindley will be replacing Stephen.

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

Geier motion for the board to enter closed session under the following exception: Discussion of Personnel (exception 1). Deckard 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 7:45 pm.

Geier moved to adjourn at 7:59 pm. Judson seconded the motion. Motion carried on a voice vote.

The Next Regular Meeting of the Jasper County Board will be on the 3rd Thursday, June 15th at 6:00 p.m.

Amy Tarr, Jasper County Clerk
Traci Lybarger, Deputy Clerk