



JASPER COUNTY BOARD MEETING MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 20, 2025

The Jasper County Board met on Thursday, February 20, 2025 at 6:00 p.m. at the Jasper County Building, Board Room, 204 West Washington Street, Newton, Illinois. The meeting was called to order by proclamation according to law by Sheriff Francis. Sheriff Francis led a moment of 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: None

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

Reports:

County Departments:

Ambulance Department - Incident disposition for January 2025 -911 Transports: 76; Transfers: 34; Mutual Aid 911 transports: 8; Discharges: 2; Refusals: 31 Getting price to order third new cot. Mary Heath Grant funds will be used to help pay for this ambulance cot.

Highway Department – Full Board approval needed on the following resolution: Resolution for Improvement under the Illinois Highway Code for West Liberty Road to final and balance out the Project. The Electronic Recycling Event is scheduled for Saturday, March 29, 2025, at the Highway Department. (Please see the attachment to share) The county will be going down to one time a year. Full Board Approval needed on the Road Use Agreement with BESS LLC for the solar project at the power plant. County Highway is putting together the 2025 Pavement Preservation project which consists of 21.78 miles of chip and seal work using Federal and State Funds. The roads programed this year are the Buck Grove Road (south of Newton), Hatchery (south of Newton, 100N), Lost Highway (North of Gila to County Line), and Remsburg (400E, East of Wheeler and North).

Health Department – Main office-update Exterior Remodeling: They are verifying that all the items on the punch list have been completed and reviewing closeout documents. Once these are verified, they will make the final payment to Grunloh Building. Interior Remodeling: ADG completed a pre-bid walk through on January 21st. They will open bids January 28th at 2:00 pm. Jason with ADG informed us that the building would need to be inspected for Asbestos before the interior renovations could begin. The next Cancer Support Group will meet March 13th 5-6 pm. A Blood Drive was held. Next board of health meeting will be March 24th at 5:30 pm.

County Positions/Services:

Building Maintenance – Ice/Snow guards are to be installed on the jail roof. They were called for in the plans but were overlooked during construction. They will be provided at no cost to the county. Pickens and a few other board members looked at a property in Newton. It will be discussed in a closed session.

Jasper County Courthouse – Finalizing more plans and possibly something presented next board meeting hopefully a meeting next week.

Information Technology Consultant – No report

Animal Control – in board packet

Elected Officials:

Treasurer- Reports from Bigard were sent in the board packet. The total income for January was \$301,805.64. The expenses for January were \$445,094.76. Total income less expenses for January a net loss of \$143,289.12. Fiscal year 2024/2025 income was \$504,119.30. Less Expenses were \$763,906.92 with a net loss of \$259,787.62.

Other Elected Officials/Offices – FOIA requests need to be sent to Treccia before responding for opioids because there is still an ongoing case.

Consent agenda. The following items were on the consent agenda this evening Approval of County Board January 16, 2025 Minutes; Adoption of State’s Attorney Appellate Prosecutor Resolution; Adoption of Resolution for Improvement Under the Illinois Highway Code; Approval of Discover Downstate Illinois Tourism as Jasper County’s “State Certified Tourism Bureau”; File County Reports including Six Month Reports; and Allow Claims. There was no objection, the Consent Agenda was adopted.

Old Business:

Item A. – Jasper County Flag Design Contest

The Jasper County Flag Commission was formed on September 19, 2024. Design submissions were accepted from October 7 to November 15, 2024. 5 designs along with the 1976 Prairie Chicken Flag were chosen for the first round of voting that began on November 20. Voting was available online and in person at the County Clerk’s Office, Chamber Building, and Newton Public Library. Beginning on December 12th, the designs were narrowed down to a few variations of the most popular designs. Voting concluded on January 6, 2025. The commission met on February 12, 2025, to make a final recommendation to the County Board. The flag unanimously recommended by the commission was the Unity Flag with Eagle. This flag is a variation of the flag designed by Barbara J. Eaton. The royal blue of the flag symbolizes patriotism. The circle on the flag symbolizes unity, the unity of the government and the people of Jasper County. The smaller stars symbolize the eleven townships within the borders of Jasper County. The eagle symbolizes our national bird, school mascot, and large population of eagles here in Jasper County. The blue in the middle represents the Embarrass River a natural stream of water running through the county. The fields depicted in orange symbolize agriculture and growth. Orange and

Blue also symbolize Jasper County Community Unit #1 school colors. I am asking all board members to think about this issue over the next month and we hopefully can make a final decision at the March 20, 2025 meeting.

Item B. - Request for Proposals (RFP) For County Information Technology Services

The County of Jasper is exploring new tech consulting options. Current Contract: Renewed yearly with Kemper's Tech, ending April 30th. RFP Published Submission Deadline: February 19, 2025. Review Process: Proposals reviewed by County Board and Department Heads. Decision Date: March 20, 2025 County Board meeting.

New Business:

Item A. – 2025 Jasper County Chamber of Commerce Donation

The Jasper County Chamber of Commerce annual request for membership.

Membership Tiers: Platinum Plus: Any amount over \$2,500; Platinum: \$2,500; Gold: \$2,000; Silver: \$1,500; Bronze: \$1,000; Copper: \$500; Friend of the Chamber: Donation of your choice.

Donations: Help Promote business and tourism; Create a family-friendly environment; Boost community spirit and community support. The County donated \$1,000 in 2023 & 2024 and grants ½ of the Hotel/Motel Tax, averaging \$15,000 yearly to the Chamber of Commerce. Geier moved to approve a \$1,500 donation to the Jasper County Chamber of Commerce for membership for 2025. Weddell seconded the motion. Geier made this motion because of Chamber supporting the county. Weddell agreed with Geier. Motion carried on a voice vote. The County has made a \$1,500 donation to the Jasper County Chamber of Commerce for 2025.

Item B. – Adoption of Road Use Agreement Between County of Jasper and Newton Solar BESS, LLC.

Newton Solar BESS LLC Project Agreement - Newton Solar BESS LLC plans a 52MW solar facility and 2MW battery storage at Newton Power Station. This is a Road Use Agreement between the developer, Jasper County, and South Muddy Township. Construction Road Use: Developer can use public roads for construction. Road Repair Assurance: Roads will be fixed if damaged by heavy vehicles. Parties that Participated in Drafting Agreement: Newton Solar BESS, LLC; County Highway Engineer Andrew Deters; South Muddy Township Road Commissioner Phil Rauch and State's Attorney James Treccia. Deters spoke on the legality and about looking at examples from other counties have done. Judson moved to adopt the Road Use Agreement Between the County of Jasper and Newton Solar BESS, LLC. Heltsley seconded the motion. Motion carried on a voice vote. The Road Use Agreement Between the County of Jasper and Newton Solar BESS, LLC. has been adopted.

Item C. - Jasper County Health Department Interior Renovations

The Jasper County Health Department seeking assistance from the County for renovation costs.

Health Department Renovations:

- \$509,303 for exterior, \$800,000 for interior
- Behavioral Health Building (Old Sarah Bush Building): Renovations cost \$236,803.

The Health Department covers most of its department's costs through services and grants. It receives \$181,478 from the county levy, out of a total of \$3,412,478 that the County levies.

The Health Department covers all costs for the main and annex buildings on Edwards Street, including utilities during the time the Sheriff's Office occupied the building.

Request: Assistance from the county is needed to cover the renovation shortfall. \$124,000.

Support will help maintain essential services for the community. Sarah Busch gifted the Behavioral Health Building to the health department. Woodard said modifications were made to this building. Termite damage was found. The project cost \$272,000. Phase 1 of the exterior of the Health Department was completed. Leakage was found which created change orders as they opened the building up. The total cost of the exterior remodel was \$510,000. The interior remodel quote is for \$724,000. Several changes have been made to the plan to save on the cost. They do not want to use all their reserves, but they are short of funds. There is still phase three for parking lot renovations with an estimate of \$100,000. Judson asked about the total cost. Woltman Construction is the lowest bid. There was extra electrical cost that went from 2 phase to one phase. Fixed and headed in the right direction. Heltsley moved to approve allocating \$124,000 to the Jasper County Health Department for completion of their interior building renovations. Weddell seconded the motion. Judson would like to table it. Spending a lot of money. Pickens asked about the energy grant Geier said can put it in later. Motion carried on a voice vote. Judson opposed. The motion carried on a voice vote. \$124,000 has been allocated from the County's General Fund to the Jasper County Health Department for completion of their interior building renovations. The funds will come from personal property.

Item D. - Purchase Of 64'x40' Building At 903 Van Buren Street & Item E. – Approval to Keep Closed Session Minutes Confidential & Item F – Approval to Destroy Verbatim Recordings Of Closed Sessions Prior To August 2023 will be taken up after the executive session.

Board Comments: None

Chairman's Comments:

UCCI MEETINGS

United Counties Council of Illinois Meeting Summary

Warfel attended the UCCI meeting on January 27, 2025. After the meeting, we had Board Member Training covering: Topics: Open Meetings Act (OMA)/Freedom of Information Act (FOIA); Local Records Act; County Budgeting; Position of County Administrator; and Board Member Duties and Ethics

Upcoming Events:

February Monthly Meeting on February 24, 2025, in Springfield, Illinois.

NACo Legislative Conference on March 1-4, 2025, in Washington, D.C.

Counties Together Legislative Conference on March 19-20, 2025, in Springfield, Illinois.

Electronic Recycling Event- Saturday, March 29, 2025 7AM – 1:30PM Jasper County Highway Department

Congressman Mike Bost's Mobile Office Hours

United States Representative Mike Bost's staff will be at the County Office Building on Friday, February 21, 2025, from 10 am – 3 pm for anyone who would like to stop by. This is a service provided for all citizens if they need any assistance from the Congressional Office.

What assistance can a Congressional Office provide: U.S. passports/ State Department issues, U.S. immigration, Social Security, Medicare/ Medicaid, Military benefits, Veteran's benefits, Federal taxes, Federal housing issues, Federal retiree benefits, Federal workers' compensation, U.S. Postal Service issues, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) assistance, Internal Revenue Service (IRS) issues, Office of Personnel Management (OPM) issues, U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) issues.

Jasper County Chamber of Commerce Annual Banquet Thank You Chairman. It was so nice to see you and the Board Members, Weddell and Spiker at the Chamber Banquet. We appreciate you all taking the time to attend and especially your assistance with awarding the Volunteer of the Year award. Your kind words about the Chamber, our community and volunteers were so fitting for the evening. We are so grateful to live in a community that supports us in such a big way, and we were blown away by the record-breaking attendance at our Banquet. Thank you again. We appreciate your continued support!

Executive/Closed Session - The board does have an executive session with potential action taken following the executive session on Item D "Purchase of 64'x40' Building at 903 Van Buren Street Newton, IL. Item E "Approval to Keep Closed Session Minutes Confidential" and Item F "Approval to Destroy Verbatim Recordings of Closed Session Prior to August 2023". Geier moved to go into closed session to consider the following subjects: Discussion of Property (exception 6) and Discussion of Minutes of Meetings Lawfully Closed (exception 21). Francis seconded the motion. Motion passed on a Roll Call vote. Francis, Geier, Heltsley, Judson, Pickens, Schackmann, Spiker, Warfel and Weddell voted yes.

Resume Open Session

Item D. – Purchase Of 64' X 40' Building At 903 Van Buren Street Newton, IL

Weddell moved to approve the purchase of the 64' x 40' Building and lot at 903 Van Buren Street Newton, IL at \$225,000. The West 70 feet of the following Tract Lot 3 Block 4 Martins Addition To City Of Newton Plus 2-6' Vac Alleys B 81 P 97; B 223 P 295; B 224 P 1069; B 224 P 1073; B 232 P 731; B 232 P 957; B 242 P 81; Corr B 253 P 69; And 903 Van Buren Lot 2 Block 4 Martins Addition To City Of Newton Plus 2-6' Vac Alley's B 218 P 61; B 223 P 295. Spiker seconded the motion. Motion carried on a voice vote. The County has purchased the 64'x40' building and lot located at 903 Van Buren Street Newton, IL.

Item E. – Approval to Keep Closed Session Minutes Confidential – Action After Executive Session

The County Board is required semi-annually to meet to review the minutes of all closed session meetings and determine if confidentiality still exists or if the minutes or portions are no longer

required to remain confidential. The County Board must declare these findings in an open session. Schackmann moved to Keep Closed Session Minutes Confidential. Judson seconded the motion. Motion carried on a voice vote. Previously Closed Session Minutes remained confidential.

Item F. – Approval to Destroy Verbatim Recordings of Closed Sessions Prior To January 2023 – Action After Executive Session

After 18 months assuming a written copy is kept, the County Board can order the destruction of the verbatim record of the closed session meetings. The County Board did this last in July 2024 and thus all verbatim records have been destroyed before January 2023. Another action this month would allow all records to be destroyed before August 2023. This motion must be carried out in an open session. Heltsley moved to destroy Verbatim Recordings of Closed Sessions Prior to August 2023. Francis seconded the motion. Motion carried on a voice vote. Verbatim Closed Session Recordings prior to August 2023 will be destroyed.

Geier moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:46 pm. Spiker seconded the motion. Motion carried on a voice vote.

The Next Board Meeting will be on Thursday, March 20, 2025, at 6:00 p.m.

Amy Tarr, Jasper County Clerk