



## **JASPER COUNTY BOARD MEETING MINUTES OF JANUARY 16, 2025**

The Jasper County Board met in regular session on Thursday, January 16, 2025. at the Jasper County Building, Board Room, 204 West Washington Street, Newton, Illinois. 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. 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 December: 911 transports-70 Accidents-5 Transfers-33 Discharge-3 Refusals-25 Total number of Incidents for the year of 2024 was 1,984. Ordered a second Lifeline CPR device that will be paid for with Mary Heath Grant.

**Highway Department** – Full Board approval needed on the following resolution: Resolution Appropriating Funds for the Payment of the County Engineer’s Salary – Sec: 25-00000-00-CS The MFT Rock & Pipe Letting for County and Township is scheduled for January 16, 2025. Bids were received for a mini excavator on December 27, 2025. A bid of \$119,000.00 was received from Dittamore Implement co., Teutopolis. The mini was delivered to the Highway Department on Friday, January 3, 2025. Road use agreement from Vistra. An electronics drive will be held in March and Deters would like to discuss going to one time a year for the electronic drive.

**Health Department** – Open for bids on the interior remodel. February 13, 5-6 pm Cancer Support Group will meet February 13, 2025, 5-6 pm. A blood drive will be held on February 6<sup>th</sup> 12-5:30 pm. Free PSA and Lipid Screening will be February 11 at the Health Department 7 am – 1 pm. Next meeting will be Monday, January 27<sup>th</sup>, 2025, at 5:30 pm.

### **County Positions/Services:**

**Building Maintenance** – County Building had issues with thermostats and lock on push door. Jail has issues with caulking issues around doors.

**Jasper County Courthouse** – Met on January 9<sup>th</sup>, ADG and Stone & Waggoner presented a second round of design. Possibly bring a final design to the next meeting.

**Information Technology Consultant – no report**

**Animal Control –** Heltsley introduced Austin Ferguson to the board. Ferguson has been with animal control for 5 years.

**Elected Officials:**

**Treasurer-** Reports from Bigard were sent in the board packet. The total income for December was \$202,313.66. The expenses for December were \$308,812.16. Total income less expenses for December a net loss of \$106,498.50. Fiscal year 2024/2025 income was \$202,313.66. Less Expenses were \$308,812.16 with a net loss of \$106,498.50.

**Other Elected Officials/Offices – no additional reports**

**Consent agenda.** The following items were on the consent agenda this evening Approval of County Board December 19, 2024, Minutes; Adoption of Resolution Appropriating Funds for County Engineer's Salary; File County Reports and Allow Claims. There was no objection, the Consent Agenda was adopted.

**Old Business:**

**Item A. – Jasper County Flag Design Contest**

On September 19, 2024, at the Jasper County Board meeting the Jasper County Flag Design Commission was formed. The commission met and set dates and guidelines for submissions. Designs were accepted between October 7<sup>th</sup> -November 15<sup>th</sup>. The commission met on November 20, 2024, and selected 5 designs along with the current flag and put those to an online & in-person vote. Voting was available online at [www.jaspercountyillinois.gov](http://www.jaspercountyillinois.gov) and in person at the Jasper County Clerk's Office, Jasper County Chamber of Commerce, and Newton Public Library. Voting concluded on January 6, 2025. Following the public vote, the Commission will meet to make a final recommendation to the County Board. Due to the winter weather conditions, the Commission has not yet met to review the public vote and make a final recommendation, at this time that is anticipated at the February meeting. The Commission will report its findings to the Jasper County Board (at a future meeting), whose members will vote on whether to adopt a new flag or formally adopt the current flag design (no formal adoption was recorded in 1976).

**New Business:**

**Item A. – Approval of Federal Appraisal LLC Proposal (Newton Power Station Assessment)**

Because Coal Plants are not as common as residential or commercial properties tax assessments are often a negotiated agreement between the ownership company and the local taxing bodies. The most recent agreement was reached in 2019 and expires during the 2025 tax year. This agreement does not extend to the "end of life" of the plant and thus discussion has started as to an additional agreement that would extend through the remaining production years of the coal fire part of the Newton Power Station. On December 4, 2024, some Jasper County Officials had an initial meeting with the Robbins Schwartz Legal Team to discuss the Newton Power Station Assessment beyond Tax Year 2025. Following that meeting, attorneys with Robbins Schwartz did some initial work and received a formal proposal for appraisal and consulting services from Federal Appraisal, LLC. The cost share would be shared with the taxing bodies based on the % of total taxes received from the Newton Power Station. The participating taxing bodies will be included in future meetings/discussions regarding the Power Plant

Assessment. The county portion of the first phase of the appraisal project will be \$6,400. Judson moved to approve the Federal Appraisal LLC Proposal. Weddell seconded the motion. Motion passed on a voice vote. The Federal Appraisal LLC Proposal has been approved. Other taxing bodies will also have to approve for the appraisal to occur.

### **Item B. – Approval to Publish Request for Proposals (RFP) For County Information Technology Services**

Currently, the County of Jasper has an annual contract with Kemper’s Technology Consulting that renews yearly on April 30<sup>th</sup>. In recent discussions with County offices and departments, there has been interest in exploring alternative options. Keeping in mind that the annual contract is renewed in April if the County Board wishes to proceed forward, we would approve publishing the requests for proposals (RFP) this evening for Information Technology Services for the County of Jasper. The deadline for submission would be February 19, 2025. The County Board along with the Department Heads would review the submitted proposals and a final determination would be made at the March 2025 County Board meeting. The Board will act on whether to publish the RFP and begin the process. Weddell asked where this will be published, and it will be posted on the website.

Pickens moved to approve Publishing the Request for Proposals (RFP) for County Information Technology Services. Francis seconded the motion. Motion passed on a voice vote. Publishing the Request for Proposals (RFP) for County Information Technology Services has been approved. Spiker abstained from voting, conflict of interest.

#### **Board Comments:**

Heltsley will not agree to move the meeting time again, needs to be at the same time.

#### **Chairman’s Comments:**

**Economic Development** will hold a meet, greet and learn on January 29 at the high school auditorium at 6 pm. Pam Apke with Estate Planning and Business will be the speaker.

**UCCI Upcoming Dates:** March 19-20 Legislative Conference, July 27-29 Annual Conference, October 24-25 Fall Conference

#### **UPCOMING HOLIDAYS**

Non-emergency County Offices and Departments will be closed on Monday, January 20, 2025, in observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day and on Monday, February 17, 2025, in observance of President’s Day.

#### **COUNTY EMPLOYEE HEALTH INSURANCE**

The health insurance offered through HopeTrust to the County Employees has been a source of ongoing discussion among employees due to how much it has increased year to year over the last few years. By the time we get the renewal rates in the Fall, it is too late to make a change or alter the plan offered. Listening to the concerns of the employees, the County Clerk (who oversees County Insurance) will begin exploring alternative options to our current plan (both within HopeTrust and through other providers). Warfel has asked that a representative from each

office/department be appointed to serve on a small task force to review the options once they have been received (Board Members can also participate). This gives the employees a seat at the table to review proposed plans. Final recommendations will be made to the County Board this Spring. James Judson would like to be involved with this.

Geier moved to adjourn the meeting at 5:21 pm. Spiker seconded the motion. Motion carried on a voice vote. The meeting was adjourned from executive session.

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

Amy Tarr, Jasper County Clerk