

**Jasper County Board Minutes**  
*COUNTY OF JASPER NEWTON, ILLINOIS*

County Office Building 204 W Washington St, Newton, IL 62448  
February 19, 2026

The County Board met in regular session on Thursday, February 19, 2026. 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. The members present were Geier, Heltsley, Judson, Pickens, Shackmann, Spiker, Warfel and Weddell. Francis was absent.

Public Comments: Jasper County Chamber Board President Lea Creadore presented Alisha Blake Wise with the February Hometown Hero award. As the Animal Control officer, she has rebuilt the program. She was recognized for going above and beyond to make sure lost pets find their way home, neglected animals find safety, and every situation is handled with care, patience, and professionalism. Because of her dedication, families are reunited, animals are protected, and our community is stronger. Jeannie Wagner nominated Alisha Wise.

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

Reports:

County Departments:

**Ambulance Department** - January 2026- 911 Transports 36; Transfers 23; Accidents 8; Refusals 18; Mutual Aid Standby 28. Received IV medication pumps this month due to Sarah Bush Region 6 protocols updating. These pumps are used to administer new medications that we will soon be receiving. All crew members will be checked off on competency before being allowed to use these medications and IV pumps. Upcoming State and Region 6 inspections have been scheduled for February 24th.

**Highway Department** – The Rock & Pipe Letting for the County & Townships was held on January 22, 2026. Rock was up approximately on average 5% and pipe was like last year. The Electronic Recycling Event is scheduled for Saturday, March 28, 2026, at the Highway Department. The 2026 Pavement Preservation project consists of 25.31 miles of chip and seal using Federal and State Funds. The roads planned this year are Wheeler Road, Golf Course Road, Kedron Road which is from Golf Course Road west to Wheeler Road, Apple Shed Road and Yager Road (400N). We received the 2025 Compliance Review from IDOT for County MFT, Township MFT and Township Bridge Funds. They certified the receipts and disbursements of these funds as documented by the County Highway Department and agree with the records maintained by the Department of Transportation. This must be reported to the Full Board and kept in file at the County Highway Office. In a month or 2 we will have the new trucks in service.

**Health Department** – There was 195 clients. Flu and covid vaccinations are still available. Monthly Cancer Support Group meeting will be March 12 from 5-6 pm. 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Open House Wednesday, March 25, 2026, 2:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. Next Monday, February 23<sup>rd</sup>, the board of health will meet.

County Positions/Services:

**Building Maintenance** – Jan 24, Matt Wilson & crew moved the contents of the Health Dept. annex building to the main health dept. building and the county storage building. Feb 17, Carpet installation is completed in the health department annex building. Total for material and labor was \$15,513.38. The county is splitting the cost with the health department. The county's half is \$7,775.69. We went over the approved budget of the \$6,000. Pickens moved to make up for short fall. Judson seconded. Motion carried.

**Jasper County Courthouse** – Woodard has been checking with ADG on the blueprints. They will have something soon.

**Information Technology** – 90 day 251 tickets 247 4 tickets remaining and currently in progress. Server has been purchased and only charged for actual hardware. Devnet Tax software system in the process of moving over, selected users to test area on the new server running parallel, once tested will move everyone over. There has been an increase in phishing attempts. Magoo still sending emails and training. Assessors' office has new PCs. Life of the sheriff's router is ending April 2026 and should be considered. It connects sheriff network.

**Animal Control** – There have been adoptions. Ron has been coming out and walking dogs. The blading and drainage issues have been taken care of. It looks good when people come to the facility. Law enforcement has been supportive. Be aware of need to keep rabies vaccines up to date. 2 people are coming to meet the dogs. Volunteers and donations are appreciative.

Elected Officials:

**Treasurer-** Reports from Bigard were sent in the board packet. The total income for January was \$400,923.96. The expenses for January were \$500,521.10. Total income less expenses for January a net loss of \$99,597.14. Fiscal year 2025/2026 income was \$682,749.04. Less Expenses were \$890,823.09 with a net loss of \$208,074.05.

**Other Elected Officials/Offices –**

**County Clerk** – In Packet

**ROE** – In Packet

County Clerk gave an update on the Primary Election: Wade Township polling location will be at JCCU #1 school district office.

**Consent agenda.** The following items were on the consent agenda this evening: Approval of County Board January 15, 2026 Meeting Minutes; Approval of Discover Downstate Illinois Tourism as Jasper County's "State Certified Tourism Bureau."; File County Reports Including Semi-Annual Reports; and Allow Claims. There was no objection, the Consent Agenda was adopted.

**Old Business:**

**Item A. – Jasper County Courthouse Contents & Offices Moving**

Updates on preliminary moving plans for the contents and offices of the County Courthouse to the Health Annex building and County Storage building. When Magoo gets done with IT, it will be ready to occupy. Dumpster is ready to be picked up from the Health Annex Building. Hoping we will be getting 2 more quotes for moving of contents of courthouse. Currently we have one.

**New Business:**

**Item A. - Appointment of Captain Pond Drainage and Levee District Commissioners**

Drainage districts construct, maintain, and repair drains and levees, and engage in other drainage or levee work for agricultural, sanitary, or mining purposes. A board of commissioners governs districts. They do not levy property taxes; however, they may collect assessments, and they have bonding authority. The Captain Pond Drainage and Levee District is in Jasper County. According to 70 ILCS 605-4-3, whenever a drainage district is located within a single county, the commissioners for the district shall be appointed by the County Board of the county in which said district is located. Attorney Ed Deters, who represents Captain Pond Drainage and Levee District, reached out on February 13, 2026, regarding appointments and reappointments to the district. One of the commissioners has passed away (Donald Kraus), another commissioner is stepping down (Norbert Ochs), and the third needs to be reappointed (David Helregel). In addition, the district has a new treasurer for the first time in over 20 years. Mr. Deters is with us this evening to speak on the changes in commissioners and ask the County Board to consider and act upon the appointment and reappointment of the commissioners of the district. Attorney Ed Deters was present to speak on behalf of the drainage district; Norb Ochs is going to be advisory capacity. Staggered positions, only meet once a year for the levy and talk about maintenance. Weddell moved for the following appointments and reappointments: David E. Helregel reappointment as commissioner of Captain Pond Drainage and Levee District (Term expires September 2026); Anthony “Tony” Strutner appointment as commissioner of Captain Pond Drainage and Levee District (Term expires September 2027); Kenneth Kraus appointment as commissioner of Captain Pond Drainage and Levee District (Term expires September 2028). Geier seconded the motion. Motion carried on a voice vote. The commissioners of the Captain Pond Drainage and Levee District have been appointed and reappointed.

#### **Item B. – Approval of Use of County’s Name on Build Grant Towards IL-33 Lis Turn Lane Project**

With the ongoing expansion of the Lis Total Grain Marketing, LLC (TGM) location and the anticipated additional truck traffic that will be coming and going from the site, TGM is concerned about the safety on the roadways surrounding the property. They would like the State of Illinois to invest in turn lanes on IL-33 for accessing the Lis location.

TGM has identified a Federal U.S. Department of Transportation Program, “Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) Grant Program formerly Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE). The grant requires a local unit of government to submit the application. TGM has contracted a grant writer who is willing to write and submit the grant on behalf of the County, and TGM will cover the cost of the grant writer and any costs associated with the application process.

TGM needs permission from the County to use the County’s name on the Grant. The deadline for submission is February 24, 2026. Spiker moved to approve the use of the County’s Name on BUILD Grand towards IL-33 Lis Turn Lane Project. Weddell seconded the motion. Motion carried on a voice vote. The use of the County’s Name on the BUILD Grant has been approved.

#### **Item C. – Jasper County Chamber of Commerce 2026 Membership Donation**

The Jasper County Chamber of Commerce's 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, and boost community spirit and community support.

The County donated \$1,500 in 2025 and \$1,000 in 2023 & 2024, and grants ½ of the Hotel/Motel Tax, averaging \$15,000+ yearly to the Chamber of Commerce.

Weddell moved to approve a \$1,500 donation to the Jasper County Chamber of Commerce for membership for 2026. Schackmann seconded the motion. Judson asked about the Hotel/Motel and what it has to be used on. Motion carried on a voice vote. Judson voted no. The County has made a \$1,500 donation to the Jasper County Chamber of Commerce for 2026.

Action will be taken after the Executive Session on the following Agenda Items:

Item D. - Approval of Changes to the Jasper County Ambulance Service Manager Contract

Item E. - Consideration and Approval of A Resolution Authorizing and Directing Robbins Schwartz to File an Assessment Complaint Regarding Newton Power Station

Item F. - Consideration and Approval for A Resolution Authorizing Intervention in Proceedings Before the Jasper County Board of Review and The Illinois Property Tax Appeal Board

Item G. - Approval to Keep Closed/Executive Session Minutes Confidential

Item H. - Approval to Destroy Verbatim Recordings of Closed/Executive Sessions Prior to August 2024

Matson was asked about the assessment of power plant, and it is assessed at 5 million dollars and power plant is paying \$400,000 in property taxes.

### **Board Comments:**

Weddell has been comments going to ask fire or resignation. Has the board made the right decision. Geier has had heard from individuals, been contacted. Why was the board not keeping their thumb on the office. She has control over her office. Wondering why have special meeting have to do open session or do nothing about it. Also elected officials have control of their offices; board has no control over the offices.

### **Chairman's Comments:**

#### **Lunch & Learn with CASA for Kids**

Thursday, February 26, 2026, 12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m. Newton Public Library

#### **Dancing with the Jasper County Stars**

Saturday, February 28, 2026, 5:00 p.m. West End Reception & Events

#### **Jasper County Health Department Open House – 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

Wednesday, March 25, 2026, 2:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

#### **Electronic Recycling Event - Jasper County Highway Department**

Saturday, March 28, 2026, 7:00 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. (unless trailer is filled before)

## **UCCI Meetings**

- February 21-24, 2026 – NACo Legislative Conference, Washington, D.C.
- March 2, 2026 – UCCI Meeting, Springfield, IL
- April 14-15, 2026 – UCCI Legislative Conference, Springfield, IL

**Executive/Closed Session** - The Board does have an executive/closed session to discuss: Personnel, Litigation, and Minutes of Meeting Lawfully Closed. Anticipated action following executive/closed session on Agenda Items D, E, F, G, and H under New Business.

Heltsley moved for the board to enter an executive session under the following exception Personnel (exception 1), Litigation (exception 11) and Minutes of Meeting Lawfully Closed (21). Spiker seconded the motion. Geier, Heltsley, Judson, Pickens, Shackmann, Spiker, Warfel and Weddell voted yes with a roll call vote. Francis was absent. The Board entered an Executive Session at 6:44 pm.

Resumed open session at 7:54 pm.

### **Item D. – Approval of Changes to The Jasper County Ambulance Service Manager Contract**

Proposed changes to the Jasper County Ambulance Service Manager Contract are being proposed to adjust the allowed hours worked for paramedic compensation. The current contract compensates for 52 24-hour shifts. Spiker asked about the period of contract, Geier answered not an annual contract. Treccia was not part of the new contract.

Geier moved to approve the changes to the Jasper County Ambulance Service Manager Contract that would increase compensated hours worked as a paramedic by the manager from 52 24-hour shifts to 80. Weddell seconded the motion. Motion carried on a voice vote. Judson abstained. The change to the Ambulance Service Manager Contract has been approved increasing the compensated hours as a paramedic to 80 24-hour shifts.

### **Item E. – Consideration and Approval of a Resolution Authorizing and Directing Robbins Schwartz to File an Assessment Complaint Regarding Newton Power Station**

If approved in this Resolution, the County Board would authorize and direct Robbins Schwartz to file complaints on behalf of Jasper County with the Jasper County Board of Review or parcels owned by Vistra for the tax year 2025 and authorize and direct Robbins Schwartz to represent the County before the Jasper County Board of Review in the proceedings. Spiker moved to approve a Resolution Authorizing and Directing Robbins Schwartz to file an assessment complaint regarding the Newton Power Station. Pickens seconded the motion. Motion carried on a voice vote. The resolution has been adopted.

### **Item F. – Consideration and Approval for A Resolution Authorizing Intervention in Proceedings Before the Jasper County Board of Review and The Illinois Property Tax Appeal Board**

If approved in this Resolution, the County Board authorizes and directs Robbins Schwartz to file requests to intervene in such appeals as directed by the County and to represent the County before the Property Tax Appeal Board and the Jasper County Board of Review. Schackmann

moved to approve a Resolution authorizing intervention in proceedings before the Jasper County Board of Review and the Illinois Property Tax Appeal Board. Geier seconded the motion. Motion carried on a voice vote. The resolution has been adopted.

**Item G. – Approval to Keep Closed Session Minutes Confidential**

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. Judson moved to Keep Closed Session Minutes Confidential. Weddell seconded the motion. Motion carried on a voice vote. Previously Closed Session Minutes remained confidential.

**Item H. – Approval to Destroy Verbatim Recordings of Closed Sessions Prior To August 2024**

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 2025, and thus, all verbatim records have been destroyed before January 2024. Another action this month would allow all records to be destroyed before August 2024. This motion must be carried out in an open session. Spiker moved to destroy Verbatim Recordings of Closed Sessions Prior to August 2024. Schackmann seconded the motion. Motion carried on a voice vote. Verbatim Closed Session Recordings prior to August 2024 will be destroyed.

Geier moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:00 pm. Schackmann seconded the motion. Motion carried on a voice vote.

The Next Board Meeting will be on Thursday, March 19, 2026, at 6:00 p.m.

Amy Tarr, Jasper County Clerk