



## COUNTY OF JASPER

January 22, 2026

### **JASPER COUNTY BOARD STATEMENT** **REGARDING UNLAWFUL DELETION OF PUBLIC RECORDS**

The Jasper County Board is issuing this statement to address the deletion of the video recording of the open session from the duly convened county board meeting that took place on January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2026.

Following an internal review, the Board has determined that the official public video recording of the aforementioned open session meeting was intentionally and permanently deleted from the Jasper County website and County Zoom account by the County Clerk without authorization and outside of any approved records retention process. This deletion was admitted by the Clerk to not be accidental and was done outside lawful records management procedure. According to the Clerk, the deletion occurred because she had made a statement during the Board Meeting, that was recorded, which she considered personally embarrassing. As is the procedure, the video of the board meeting was uploaded to the county website for public viewing. The next day, January 16<sup>th</sup>, the Clerk accessed the Zoom website via her shared account with the Board and permanently deleted the video. No Jasper County Board member was made aware of this action before it occurred, and board members were only notified upon the realization that the video was no longer available on the county website.

The County Board takes the preservation of lawfully protected public records and government transparency seriously. Open session recordings are considered public records, and their integrity is essential to maintaining public trust. The Board is taking appropriate steps to address this incident, including ensuring the Clerk understands state records retention laws and implementing additional safeguards to prevent unauthorized deletion of public records.

The Jasper County Board regrets that this incident occurred and remains committed to transparency, accountability, and adherence to Illinois law.

**Jasper County Building • 204 W Washington Street, Suite 2 • Newton, Illinois 62448**

#### **Jasper County Board Members**

**Jason Warfel (Chairman) - Ron Heltsley (Vice-Chairman)**

**Austin Francis - Michael Geier - James Judson - A.C. Pickens - Jessica Schackmann - Eric Spiker - Doug Weddell**