



JASPER COUNTY BOARD MEETING MINUTES OF APRIL 16, 2026

The Jasper County Board met in regular session on Thursday, April 16, 2026, 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 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, Eric Spiker, and Austin Francis. Jessica Schackmann arrived at 6:08 p.m. and James Judson arrived at 6:13 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda. Two items of note. The current agenda lists an Executive/Closed Session this evening for Property and Litigation. There will be no property discussion; however, there will be a discussion on personnel, along with litigation. Additionally, under New Business, the Board will have a discussion on Crawford County's request for an Energy Transition Community Grant Letter of Support. Geier moved to adopt the agenda. Francis seconded the motion. Motion carried on a voice vote. The agenda is adopted.

Reports:

County Departments:

Ambulance Department – March 911 Transports – 61; Transfers – 25; Accidents – 5; Refusals – 28; Fire Standby – 7; Mutual Aid Standby – 8.

Highway Department – The Electronic Recycling Event was held on March 28, 2026, we collected 22,906 lbs., with no extra charges incurred. The next collection will be in March of 2027. The oil letting for Jasper County and the townships was held on March 17, 2026. The prices were equivalent to last year. The Highway Department is planning to oil approximately 13 miles using Motor Fuel Tax Funds and 25.31 miles with Federal and State Match Funds (Pavement Preservation Project). A 26' span bridge located on the rock road along the Jasper/Effingham County line between 1700N and 1800N was closed in 2021. See the location map included. The road which this bridge is on is a low traffic volume road with agricultural land use only and no houses. This bridge is not a high priority compared to other bridges in either county and therefore is not being considered for bridge replacement using Township Bridge Program (TBP) funds. Currently Effingham County and St. Francis township have done some survey work, preliminary engineering, and cost estimation for the project. Since this is a structure on the county line, it is done as a cost share between the counties involved per 605 ILCS 5/5-503. This cost share is based on Assessed Valuation of the Counties and results in 80% Effingham County (which will be Bridge Aid Petition with a 50%/50% split between Effingham County Highway Department County Bridge Funds and St. Francis Township Funds) and 20% Jasper County (which will be Bridge Aid Petition with a 50%/50% split between Jasper County Highway Department County Bridge Funds and Grove Township Road District Funds). Ryan Cochran, the Grove Township Road Commissioner has been informed and agreed to be involved in the cost sharing of the project. The total proposed project cost is \$150,000, \$30,000 for Jasper sharing \$15,000 with county and township. Proposed is low water crossing with a culvert, which would handle most storms.

Health Department – Total Number of clients served for the month of March – 806 clients served Nursing – 299; Behavioral Health – 476; Environmental Health – 31. Next Cancer Support group meeting - is on May 14th from 5-6 pm at the Health Department. This session will be on mindful painting and hand massages with Debbie Goss. Jasper County Health Fair- May 27th 10am -1 pm at the West End Events Center – see flyer. Safe sitter baby-sitting class - May 28th Spots available for 24 Jasper County students entering 6th through 8th grade this coming 2026/2027 school year. Thanks to the Maxine Spittler Grant we can offer this class free of charge. Thanks to all who came out for the 60th Anniversary open house. Next BOH meeting is May 18th at 5:30pm.

County Positions/Services:

Building Maintenance – With no conflict or issue with the use of using the courthouse lawn, Kevin Colclasure has been granted use of the courthouse lawn on May 7 at 12:00 pm for National Day of Prayer,

Jasper County Courthouse – Geier stated waiting for bid window to close. Jason from ADG said there has been a lot of interest.

Information Technology – Kishon introduced his replacement, Jeremy. Kishon thanked us, he recently got married and will be working in the background from New York. The team handled 332 support tickets, achieving a 97% resolution rate, 322 resolved, 10 open. A new server has been installed with confirmed connectivity for all DEVNET users; it is covered by a 7-year warranty. The Annex server and UPS were replaced to prevent power-related outages. Quarterly maintenance on all network appliances is complete. A new county router has been provisioned. Installation is tentatively scheduled for next Wednesday at 3:00 PM. Phishing attempts are on the rise. While technical mitigations are in place, the strategy remains focused on user awareness. Ongoing training via simulated phishing and educational modules will continue to reinforce the human firewall. Information is needed regarding the temporary relocation site (move dates, department layouts, and device counts) to begin infrastructure prep. Magoo managed move of all equipment. Requires a formal quote (out-of-scope) but includes reconnection and configuration at no additional cost. Moving Company moves users label machines for transport by movers. Magoo will reconnect items but assumes no liability for damage, security, or loss. An investigation over the Easter holiday revealed that the courthouse network is failing due to obsolete infrastructure. Current issues are spliced cabling, unmanaged switches from 2004, and "daisy-chained" devices. Performance is poor (slow speeds/disconnections). Temporary loaner equipment has been installed, but this is a short-term band-aid. The current building cannot adequately support modern tech. It is vital that the new building's network be professionally designed from the ground up to avoid these systemic failures. Spiker and Geier coordinate a meeting with the offices so we can have a plan in place.

Animal Control – 25 County Calls and 10 City Calls. 1 Reported bite; 1 Pet Relinquished; 8 dogs impounded. 2 dogs adopted and 2 returned to owners.

Elected Officials:

Treasurer- Reports from Bigard were sent in the board packet. The total income for March was \$263,793.04. The expenses for March were \$341,752.00. Total income less expenses for March a net loss of \$77,958.96. Fiscal year 2025/2026 income was \$1,205,012.47. Less Expenses were \$1,576,279.73 with a net loss of \$371,267.26. Look at year to date \$30,000 difference from last year. Personal property, income and sales tax up. Personal property should be on track mid-year.

**Other Elected Officials/Offices –
County Clerk – In Packet**

ROE – In packet

Consent agenda. The following items were on the consent agenda this evening: Approval of County Board March 19, 2026, Meeting Minutes; Reappointment of Ron Zwilling to the Jasper County Board of Review (2-Year Term); Reappointment of A.C. Pickens to the County Farmland Assessment Review Committee (2-Year Term); Reappointment of Deborah Rubsam to the Jasper County Board of Health (3-Year Term); Reappointment of Bruce Elliott as Trustee of the Montrose Fire Protection District (3-Year Term); File County Reports; and Allow Claims. There was no objection, the Consent Agenda was adopted.

Old Business:

Item A. – Jasper County Courthouse Contents & Offices Moving - Moving Services Request for Proposals RFP

Public Notice Issued March 23, 2026: The Jasper County, Illinois Board is hereby accepting Proposals for moving services for moving of offices and contents of the Jasper County Courthouse located at 100 W Jourdan Street Newton, IL 62448 to the Jasper County Health Annex Building approximately 0.7 miles away at 1002 S Van Buren Street, Newton IL 62448 with additional items being moved to the Jasper County Storage Building approximately 0.6 miles away at 903 S Van Buren Street, Newton, IL 62448. Moving services are anticipated to begin as early as possible following May 21, 2026, with a completion date as soon as possible. Proposals are due by 4 pm on Monday, April 27, 2026, to the Jasper County Board located at 204 W Washington Street, Suite 2, Newton, IL 62448. Proposals are also accepted via email at acpickens@jaspercounty.illinois.gov. Proposals will be reviewed in April, with the selection of the awarded moving company in Early May. The Jasper County Board reserves the right to reject any and all proposals. Copies of the detailed request for proposals (RFP) can be found on the Jasper County website at <http://jaspercountyillinois.gov>. Any additional questions, please contact AC Pickens at 217-259-8144 or email acpickens@jaspercounty.illinois.gov.

New Business:

Item A - Consideration and Adoption of County Officers' "Elected Officials" Compensation Resolution (FY2027-FY2030)

The County Board shall fix at least 180 days (June 4, 2026) before the beginning of the terms (December 1, 2026) of the officers whose compensation is to be fixed: County Clerk, County Sheriff, County Treasurer, and Supervisor of Assessments. At the same time the County Board establishes compensation for the Clerk of the Circuit Court, whose salary can be adjusted yearly. Compensation for the Elected Officials that will be considered and adopted would be for years commencing December 1, 2026; December 1, 2027; December 1, 2028; and December 1, 2029. Proposed Salary Schedule: December 1, 2026: \$72,000, December 1, 2027: \$74,500, December 1, 2028: \$77,000, December 1, 2029: \$79,500

Background: Since the last Elected Officials Compensation Resolution, the cost of living has increased by 17.2%, while elected officials' salaries have increased by only 5%, resulting in a 12.2% gap. This proposal addresses that disparity by adjusting the current salary of \$62,000 to approximately \$69,500, followed by annual increases of approximately 3.5% over the next four years. Under Illinois statute, the County Board sets elected officials' salaries once every four years. While other countries' wages have been adjusted during this period, elected officials' compensation could not be modified mid-term.

Rationale for Proposed Increases: Initial Adjustment (12.2%) - The 12.2% figure reflects the cumulative shortfall between salary growth and Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) over the past four years. This adjustment aligns compensation more closely with inflation and was rounded to \$69,500 for simplicity. Annual Increases (3.5%) - Based on discussions with other counties, typical annual increases for elected officials range from 3.0% to 3.5%, often about 1% higher than increases for other employees due to the managerial nature of these positions. Recent employee increases have averaged 2.5%, making 3.5% a reasonable and consistent benchmark. This proposal represents a fair and good-faith effort to bring elected officials' compensation in line with inflation, comparable counties, and the responsibilities of the offices. The proposed increases are consistent with recent adjustments across County government and remain fiscally responsible. Geier moved to approve the Jasper County Officers' "Elected Officials" Compensation Resolution for FY2027-FY2030. Weddell seconded the motion. Francis, Geier, Heltsley, Judson, Pickens, Shackmann, Spiker, Warfel and Weddell voted yes with a roll call vote. Pickens was absent. The Jasper County Officers' "Elected Officials" Compensation has been approved.

Item B - Consideration – Crawford County Request for Illinois DCEO Energy Transition Community Grant Letter of Support

Crawford County Board Chairman Bill Burke contacted me on Tuesday to request the Jasper County Board consider a letter of support for Crawford County to apply for the Energy Transition Community Grant. Any taxing entity within a 30-mile radius of a closed or closing plant or mine is eligible to apply. The lead entity (local government where the Plant is located) for Newton Power Plant is the County of Jasper, which is required to provide a letter of support for any entity applying for the grant using the Newton Power Plant closure. *The County of Jasper has previously written letters of support for: Jasper County Community Unit #1 School District, Wade Fire Protection District, City of Newton and North Muddy Township. Entities that have requested letters of support in the past have been denied because of the County Board's policy of limiting letters of support to taxing entities within Jasper County: Crawford County (2024); Village of Montrose (2025); and Village of Dieterich (2025). Entities Eligible: A 30-mile radius of the Newton Power Plant would encompass more than 300 entities (Counties, Municipalities, Schools, Townships, Etc.) In addition to all taxing entities of Jasper County, all of Effingham County, Clay, Richland, and Cumberland Counties would be eligible. Additionally, portions of Wayne, Marion, Fayette, Shelby, Clark, Lawrence, and Crawford Counties. Again, past practice over the past two years has been to limit support letters to Jasper County taxing entities. Yearly, up to \$40 million is allocated to meet the needs of individual localities by addressing the economic and social impact of plant closures. Any applicant receives a minimum award of \$50,000. In year one (2023), a total of \$12,213,478 was awarded to 36 entities; Jasper County received \$565,615. In year two (2024) a total of \$30,125,530 was awarded to 67 entities; Jasper County received \$874,316. In year three (2025) Jasper County received \$738,746, details on the total entities and award amount for 2025 have not been finalized. The awarded amount is based on a formula of impact of closure based on the taxing entity, and this formula was adjusted slightly from year one to year two. Burke did call no hard feelings, if just staying with Jasper entities, not going to hinder any future relationship that Jasper and Crawford County have together. Warfel wanted direction from the board members. Geier stated need to stick with Jasper County. Schackmann said we have set a precedence already and need to stay with it. Heltsley and Francis agreed. Spiker also added he would feel that we would have to open it up to the other entities we declined also.*

Board Comments: Geier thanked and congratulated Kishon and welcomed Jeremy.

Chairman's Comments:

Upcoming Meetings

Community Events:

- April 29, 2026, Jasper CEO Trade Show, Jasper County Community Unit #1 Unit Office 5-7PM
- June 21-27, 2026, Jasper County Fair – Fairgrounds
- July 3, 2026, Jasper County for America's 250th Celebration – Ste. Marie, IL

SRM/HOPE Trust Meetings:

- April 8, 2026 – Effingham, IL Informative Warfel, Schackmann and Tarr attended the meeting.
- July 23-24, 2026 HopeTrust Annual Conference – St. Charles, MO
- September 23-24, 2026 SRM Annual Conference – East Peoria, IL

UCCI Meetings:

- April 14-15, 2026 – UCCI Legislative Conference, Springfield, IL Warfel attended
- August 27 12- 2 pm all elected officials. State taking away authority for local officials.
- May 18, 2026 Membership Meeting – Springfield, IL
- July 26-28, 2026 Annual Conference – Galena, IL

Warfel extended a thank you for cooperation with the elected officials in the room, County Treasurer Clinton Bigard, Circuit Clerk Jamie Blake, Supervisor of Assessment Tom Matson, and our County Clerk and Recorder Amy Tarr. Warfel thought the compensation talks and proposals went extremely well, there was a lot of good input.

Executive/Closed Session - The Board does have an executive/closed session to discuss: Personnel 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(6) and Litigation 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(11). Previously, Property 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(6) was listed; this will no longer be discussed. There will be no action taken following the executive/closed session and the board will adjourn the meeting from the executive/closed session. Schackmann moved for the board to enter an executive session under the following exception: Personnel 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(6) and Litigation 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(11). Geier seconded the motion. Francis, Geier, Heltsley, Judson, Shackmann, Spiker, Warfel and Weddell voted yes with a roll call vote. Pickens was absent. The Board entered an Executive Session at 6:41 pm.

Geier moved to adjourn the meeting from Executive/Closed Session at 7:44 pm. Francis seconded the motion. Motion carried on a voice vote.

The Next Board Meeting will be on Thursday, May 21, 2026, at 6:00 p.m.

Amy Tarr, Jasper County Clerk