

## Jasper County Board Minutes

COUNTY OF JASPER NEWTON, ILLINOIS

County Office Building 204 W Washington St, Newton, IL 62448

June 15, 2023

The County Board met in regular session on Thursday, June 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023. 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.

Members present were Bollman, Deckard, Geier, Heltsley, Judson, Pickens, Spiker, Warfel, and Weddell.

Warfel clarified the Board's Rules and Procedures. The board has an adopted list of rules and procedures and as stated in the rules and procedures in the absence of a particular rule the latest version of "Roberts Rules of Order" shall govern. We follow Robert's Rules of Order. These rules provide a procedure that takes up business one item at a time, promotes courtesy, justice, and impartiality. They ensure the rule of the majority while protecting the rights of the minority and absent members. The rules allow decision makers to make decisions without confusion, and the conduct of the meeting is controlled by the general will of the membership and not any single member. In previous meetings sometimes multiple conversations spring up at the same time, for the benefit of all board members and the public, Warfel wants to make sure all discussion can be heard. If a member of this board wishes to introduce a motion, discuss, or debate a topic or address the board they must first ask the chair to be recognized and then wait until they are recognized before speaking. Members of the Public are only permitted to speak during public comments. All other conversations rise above a whisper should be taken outside of the board room. Non-board members may be asked to address the board outside of public comments only at the request of the chair or board member and only after they have been recognized by the chair.

Public comments: None

Spiker made a motion to approve the agenda. Deckard seconded the motion. Motion carried on a voice vote.

Reports:

### *County Departments*

Ambulance Department - 168 calls for service in May, 76- 911s, 30 - refusals/canceled en route/no pt found or contact, 4 – MVA's, 36 – Transfers/discharges, 2 – stand-by, 19 – Mutual Aid, 1 call run by mutual aid (ULC). Mandatory skills day with Sarah Bush resource hospital/EMS office was on May 16. All employees did well. We will be applying for the Rural Development Grant in July. We applied for the Mary Heath Grant. There are some small amount grants we will try for. Hired a PT medic and another medic is applying for PT. 1 PT medic went to FT. Wages were discussed with Ambulance Committee representatives to become competitive to hire and retain Medics. Thanked Francis and Long, they were on scene doing compressions prior to the ambulance arriving. Michael Geier gave the following statement. For quite some time, there has been a lot of false information being spread throughout this community about the ambulance service by board member, Doug Weddell. I would like to take this time to not only dispel these rumors, point by point, caused by this false information, but to also explain why I believe this has been happening. 1. **The Ambulance Service is being mismanaged by Jennifer and Andrew Hargrave.** This is the overall narrative that is being told to the community. It broadly covers the more specific rumors that Mr. Weddell has been spreading. To put it simply, this is not true. Before the Hargraves took over, the Service was financially broke and, in a tailspin, heading for total collapse. As I pointed out in my statement before the board last month, the Ambulance Service is no longer broke, and

we are fully staffed. 2. **The current management creates a toxic work environment.** Once the Hargraves took over, they had some hard decisions to make. These were the hard decisions that needed to be made and we hired them to do just that. Some then-current, now former employees, who were used to the way things were always run, didn't like these decisions. Because of these feelings, they left. On their way out, they aired their grievances in resignation letters. Change can be difficult. But it's obvious that the way the Ambulance Service had been managed prior to the Hargraves, was not working. Change had to come from the outside, not internally. Board Member Adam Deckard and I have personally spoken with a majority of the current employees at the Service. Those employees have all expressed that they enjoy working at the Service and have no complaints about the Hargraves. I even have statements from some of them, though anonymous, because they are afraid of retaliatory behavior from Mr. Weddell and others. 3. **The Ambulance Service is leaving the County uncovered with ALS.** This is the big one. This is the one that I've spent the most time investigating; mainly because it is not a simple explanation. To fully understand this one, I have to break down how the EMS world works. Ambulance services make their money by transporting patients from care center to care center. These aren't transfers from within Jasper County. These are transfers from, let's say, St. Anthony Hospital to Carle in Champaign or to a hospital in Indianapolis. Insurance pays for these transfers. Our service recently conducted a transfer that paid out \$6,000. Much of the reason our Ambulance Service broke prior to the Hargraves was because the previous policy was to refuse to do transfers, thus, no real income was coming in. Now that I've explained transfers, I would like to explain the difference in personnel on the ambulances, and what that difference means for your care. BLS stands for Basic Life Saving and ALS means Advanced Life Saving. BLS are your basic EMTs, who can do basic care on a patient. ALS are your fully certified paramedics that can perform advanced life saving measures. Most transfers require ALS staffed ambulances. In the beginning of the Hargraves taking management, money had to be made. The few ALS staffed ambulances we had were tasked with taking transfers and BLS Ambulances were left to standby for calls within the County. Jennifer and I had discussed this and it was explained that should a call require an ALS ambulance, an intercept would be requested from another ambulance service, in an adjacent county. An intercept would mean that the requested ALS ambulance would meet with the Jasper County BLS to take over patient care. Again, this practice was done at the beginning of the Hargraves taking over when the Service was at its lowest point. Because of their management, we have an ALS medic for every working truck, on every shift. Without performing transfers, no money would be made, and the Service would be in no better place now, than it was a little over a year ago. All of this has been explained to Mr. Weddell. 4. **The Board (specifically myself) are not responsive to employee complaints.** One of the complaints that was repeated in former employee resignation letters was that Jasper County Board Members were not responsive to complaints from Ambulance Service employees. To that, I will say this... We are not the managers of the Service, the Hargraves are. Chairman Warfel has stated, on multiple occasions, that employees of the various departments go to the managers with concerns. There are whistleblower protections contained in policy for employees to circumvent their chain of command, however, those were not initiated. The only concerns I had ever heard were contained in resignation letters of employees as they were leaving. Well I'll tell you what...that's not the time to bring forth concerns. However, I did look into the complaints contained in those letters. I sat down with Jennifer and she explained them to me, point by point. And her reasoning made sense. She even humbly said she knows she's not perfect, but she does her best. Which is all we can ask of her. These explanations were all sent in an email to the entire board, including Mr. Weddell. Yet, he still continued to spread these lies. 5. **The Ambulance Service is not fiscally stable and not fully staffed.** The Service is fiscally stable. It could use new equipment, but it is very expensive. Had the equipment been maintained properly before, this wouldn't even be an issue. Jennifer, Adam and I have had several discussions on how to deal with the aging equipment. Money is a little tight because we are having to purchase a new Ambulance, but we'll get there. It's going to take a little bit of time. But unlike last year, the Service is not having to borrow tens of thousands of dollars just to be able to pay the employees. In regard to staffing...we are fully staffed. So those seem to be the top lies that have been spread. And if you take a look at them, there is an overarching theme: the Hargraves' supposed incompetence. These fabricated stories have been spread by Board Member Doug Weddell, in a coordinated fashion with other individuals (not of this Board), whom I will not name. Now, **how** do I know it's been Mr. Weddell promoting these lies. Because he's been coming to me with them...since the beginning. He would either call or text me or if he saw me around town, make a point to stop and speak with me about it. I continually assured him that none of it was true. Or if I wasn't sure, I

would check into it and let him know. For example, one morning several months ago, he texted me and said that the Jasper County Ambulance Service failed their EMS inspection. Contained in his text was a screenshot of another text stating such. Of course, he never told me who messaged him. A quick check revealed this was false. Jennifer even provided copies of the inspection reports, which I reviewed. It is worth saying that even though I informed him several months ago that we passed the inspection, just last week Doug contacted the EMS Coordinator and asked for the inspection reports. He was told that he needed to get them from Ms. Hargrave. Doug, of course, never asked her for those reports. As a matter of fact, Doug has never bothered talking to the Hargraves about any of this. Even still, he continued to spread his lies. Another reason I know Mr. Weddell is undermining the Service, I have first-hand accounts from others of what Doug has been doing. Not long ago, I received a call from a trusted friend, who informed me that Mr. Weddell was at Parklanes repeating these disgusting lies to patrons there. Mr. Weddell has also spoken with a Crawford County board member. This in itself is concerning as Crawford County is where the Hargraves operate their private ambulance service. The reason I know this is because this Crawford County board member made a comment to Andrew Hargrave about their mismanagement of the Jasper County Ambulance Service. Understandably upset by this, I was asked by Jennifer Hargrave to contact this board member to explain the facts. I contacted him and he admitted to knowing and speaking with Doug Weddell and that he heard these lies while at Parklanes. And now because Mr. Weddell involved this board member, a letter was delivered just Monday to this Crawford County board member's private business. The content of this letter is apparently in line with the lies that Mr. Weddell keeps repeating. We have reached out to get a copy of the letter, but our request has not received any response for some reason. I also have an anonymous statement from someone at another ambulance service. This person works there with some former Jasper Ambulance employees and states they have heard these former employees discuss their efforts to undermine the JCAS and Hargraves. This employee wanted to remain anonymous for the same reasons as the others. Out of fear of retaliation. The second question is, why is Mr. Weddell promoting these lies? Though recently he has denied this to other Board Members, Mr. Weddell proposed that he himself manage the service. For \$60,000 he would resign as a County Board Member, to take control of the Service. The Board ultimately decided to give that position to the Hargraves because of their extensive experience. Due to the conflict of interest that the proposal created for Mr. Weddell and the Service, it was decided that he not be chosen as one of two Board Member contacts for the Ambulance Service. Instead, Adam Deckard and I were picked for those positions. Mr. Weddell has repeatedly and openly expressed displeasure in this decision and has clearly acted in his own self-interest to sabotage the Hargraves' efforts to manage the Jasper County Ambulance Service. Once I began seriously investigating this coordinated effort by Mr. Weddell and others to undermine the Service, he became increasingly concerned about tonight's meeting. He made several attempts to meet with me and Chairman Warfel, privately. Because of his behavior in the public forum, I refused. There have been past concerns with Mr. Weddell's behavior which has caused some of us to have one-on-one meetings with him. These private meetings don't do anything but enable him to keep acting out because he does not have to face any real consequence for his actions. He told another board member that he was going to quote, "be humiliated" at tonight's meeting. Why would he be humiliated? If he's so sure about his actions, why the concern? Though I refused to meet, I did relay a message that if he would come to this meeting, and give an honest and sincere apology to myself, Mr. Deckard, Mr. Warfel and the Hargraves, as well as admit he had been listening to the wrong people about the Service, I would not give this statement. He never responded. Doug claims as a Board Member, he is being kept in the dark about what is happening at the Service. I believe I have just outlined to you all that this is simply not true. As I stated earlier, not once has he ever contacted the Hargraves about his concerns. Not once. Doug, you have caused harm not only to my reputation, but to Chairman Warfel and most especially, Andrew and Jennifer Hargrave. Just last week, my family and I went to Flo's. Someone approached me and said, quote "I've been hearing so many bad things about you!". This was said in front of my family. I mentioned Doug's name and asked if it had to do with the Ambulance Service. They answered that it was. Additionally, just last week Doug emailed the entire Board on more than one occasion within that week and accused me & Chairman Warfel of "covering things up" with the Hargraves at the Service and that we had some explaining to do. What he is referring to, I have no idea. And because Doug has contacted so many people in the EMS field, including the EMS coordinators, the Hargraves are afraid their reputation as paramedics will be tarnished, affecting their private business and livelihood in Crawford Co. What he is doing to them is the most shameful thing out of all of this. They have children to raise and a private

business to run and Doug's actions are causing them stress & heartache at best, and their ability to make a living, at worst. This is not a game, Doug. These are people's lives you're affecting. With all of this being said, this is just one example of concerning behavior shown by Mr. Weddell, that I feel, warrants further discussion amongst this Board in the future. At some point Doug should take a moment to seriously consider what exactly his role is on this Board.

Weddell chose not to respond.

Highway Department - The new chipper was delivered May 23, 2023. The Resolution authorizing the issuance and payment of loan from general fund to County Highway was prepared by James Treccia, States' Attorney. This Resolution will need full board approval. Update on the new solid waste truck. It is scheduled to be built at the end of June with delivery at the beginning of July. This is being paid for with ARPA Funds. We received the 2022 Compliance Review on County MFT from IDOT. They certified the receipts and disbursements of the County MFT are true and correct and agree with the records maintained by the Department of Transportation. This report is being presented to the Full Board. Smallwood Township is requesting the County to go half on an 84" Steel Pipe. This location is on 800E approximately .5 miles south of 100N. Bridge Aid Petition will be presented to Full Board for approval. Wade Township is utilizing their Rebuild Illinois Funds with soil cement segments. A bid letting was held with Mt. Carmel Stabilization Group, Inc. submitting a bid of \$479,821.12. This project, Section 21-10131-00-FP was awarded to Mt. Carmel Stabilization Group, Inc. This is strictly township funded. Mowing is continuing on the county right of way and is about a third complete. Chip and sealing of roads have started and will be continuing through the summer. Changes are being made to the Solid Waste program per our previous board meeting discussions. Please see attached the Notice and revised schedule to be distributed. These changes are effective July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023. Brian Wagner is asking for a variance to the County Set-Back Ordinance along County Highway 600N. He is requesting a 65' set-back. The previous grain bins were approximately 52' from the center of the road. County Engineer visited the site and sees it as an improvement in the setback distance from the previous grain bins and recommends discussion and approval by the Full County Board.

Board of Health – In packet The Board of Health met on May 23. The Health Department Building will be having updates. July 24<sup>th</sup> will be the next Board of Health meeting.

### *County Positions/Services*

Building Maintenance – Windows to the county board room will have tint an additional amount. Electric upgrades should be starting soon. The assessor's office would like to see a change of hollow doors to solid doors and change the glass portion of the wall to make it a solid wall between the office and small boardroom, this would be something for next year's budget. An estimate to tint the bottom portion of the windows in the north part of the county building is \$750, there is money in the budget for this. It is a security issue that was brought up during an inspection. Kruger had a suggestion to purchase red lights to mix with the blue and white lights the county also installs around the top of the courthouse. These could be used for the patriotic holidays. Painting is complete at the county building.

Information Technology Consultant – Corey McDonald discussed the technology infrastructure, the backbone of every digital service the County provides and relies on. Services traversing the fiber include LEADS, Elections, phones, multiple internet providers, and basic internal network functions (DHCP, DNS, routing). The existing infrastructure connects the annex building to the courthouse, the courthouse to the firehouse, the firehouse to Newton PD, and Newton PD to the jail. There are fiber panels at each of these locations to allow equipment to be connected, or fiber to be patched through. In the past year alone, there were several instances where the existing fiber - and associated failure points - have brought the network down entirely. Kemper's significant investment of time in troubleshooting and remediating these issues under contract has resulted in this recommendation. The distance of the fiber runs and limitations of the existing OM1 fiber has limited bandwidth across the network. This is because OM1 - which was a standard in the 80's - can only provide gigabit up to 900 feet. In comparison, the OS2 we'd like to have installed can handle gigabit up to 40 km, and ten-gigabit between 5 and 10 km. Second, degradation of the existing infrastructure has resulted in trouble maintaining connections between each location. Kemper has used Ethernet/Fiber converters for each fiber run at each patch location, with each

being a possible (or realized) point of failure. With the new infrastructure, fiber converters are eliminated. We will maintain patch locations at each building, plus direct runs from end-to-end. This will preclude having to patch through each panel - further reducing points of failure - while allowing for equipment to be connected at each location as needed. The long lifespan of buried fiber coupled with the bandwidth capabilities of OS2 means the infrastructure should last two decades, likely longer.

There was a switch that was installed in the jail, and it is slower than it should be. A new switch would be ordered and the other one would be repurposed elsewhere in the county. Kemper has developed a website for Lawrence County. There would be a hosting fee, but the county would own the website. Each office would only have access to their office. \$45,000 was the cost to build the website. Demonstrated the backend of the website.

Supervisor of Assessment Office – Notice of Supervisor of Assessments Examination to be administered by the Department of Revenue. Wednesday, July 12, 2023, 11:00 a.m. Jasper County Board Room 204 W. Washington St. Newton, IL 62448 Individuals interested in taking this examination should contact the county coordinator by 10:00 a.m. of the day before the test to register and to obtain an application form. If no one has registered to take the exam by 10:00 a.m. of the day before the scheduled examination, the department reserves the right to cancel the exam. The coordinator will be able to provide specific details concerning the test site location. Knowing the number of applicants, and of any special needs, will enable the coordinator to ensure the room is suitable. The tests will be graded at the department and all individuals will be mailed their test score. Examination scores are good for a period of two years from the date of the examination, unless the exam is retaken and failed within the two-year period. Please bring a noiseless calculator and your completed application to the test site. Cell phones may not be used as calculators. Blank application forms will be available the morning of the exam, if needed.

Animal Control – Report in Packet

#### *Elected Officials*

Treasurer: Reports from Bigard were sent in the board packet. The income for state/general fund income of \$ 243,164.30, and the personal property income of \$134,727.26 with a total income for May of \$377,891.56. The expenses for May \$395,412.03. Total income less expenses for May a net loss of \$17,520.47. Tax season last year was the latest we have ever had them. This year the Tax bills will be sent out by July 1<sup>st</sup>. The real estate taxes will be due Aug 15<sup>th</sup> and September 15<sup>th</sup>.

Other Elected Officials/Offices: No reports added.

Geier made a motion to approve the consent agenda containing the following items: Approval of County Board May 11, 2023, Minutes; Approval of Bridge Aid Petition with Smallwood Township [800E approximately ½ mile South of 100N]; Approval of Variance to County Set-Back Ordinance along County Highway 600N; Adoption of Resolution Authorizing the Issuance and Payment of a Non-Interest Bearing Interfund Loan Between Jasper County's General Fund and the Highway Department for Purchase of the Chip Spreader; Approval of Illinois Basin Funding Review Application; File County Reports; and Allow Claims. Pickens seconded the motion. Motion carried on a voice vote.

Old Business:

#### **Item A –VISION 2031 – Jasper County Government Strategic Plan**

Warfel has mentioned the last three months, February 15, 2031, will mark the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Jasper County and Newton. Vision 2031 is designed to develop a Jasper County Government Strategic Plan for where we want to be in 2031. This plan would address assessments, vision, goals, and action plans at the department/office level but also be formulated together for a larger-scale vision for the entire County Government.

#### **Item B – Energy Transition Community Grant Stakeholders Taskforce**

As the board discussed in March, April and May, Jasper County has been selected to receive an Energy Transition Community Grant for \$565,615 from the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO), it appears that the county should anticipate receiving this same amount yearly. The plan would be for these funds to go towards the replacement or rehabilitation of the Jasper County Courthouse and the Beautification of the county-owned property on the square. The application has been submitted and July the state will determine if our plan will be approved.

New Business:

#### **Item A – Approval to Display the Amended FY2023 Jasper County Budget**

Similar to how the board approves the yearly budget, any adjustments will need to be displayed for 15 days before the board adopts amendments to the budget. This vote will be to display the amendments before a final vote at the July 13, 2023, meeting. Highlights of Adjustments: County Treasurer's Office – Adjustment for the new employee; County Clerk Office – Adjustment for the new employee; Supervisor of Assessment Office – Adjustment in office expenses, \$20,000 savings with JRACK service not required.; County Buildings – Lawn Care Expense (Mowing); Sheriff – Inmate Medical (new program) Francis explained the plan, nurse and doctors would be available along handling medications and training of staff and would help with liability issues for the county and offers 24 hour on call and Out of County Housing Expense; State's Attorney – Office Equipment and Supplies; Health Department – Federal Grant Revenue/Expense (logged revenue from the grant and expenses); Ambulance Service – Moved Management Salary out of the Salary line to a Management Line, additional fuel, radio, and training expenses. Heltsley made a motion to display the Amended FY2023 Jasper County Budget until the July County Board Meeting with a vote to take place at that meeting. Geier seconded the motion. Motion was adopted on a voice.

#### **Item B – Approval of Changes to Jasper County Solid Waste Program Effective July 1, 2023 (Page 199-201)**

At both the April and May board meetings discussion was held on various changes to the Solid Waste Program. The proposed change includes a change in hours. The Hours for the Newton site are Saturdays from 7 am – 1:30 p.m. Highway Engineer Deters can speak on the additional changes (included in the "Notice and Revised Schedule"). Citizens of Jasper County: Due to Safety/Liability Concerns, Increased Waste Cost, and Cleanliness/Environmental Impacts some changes are being made to the Jasper County Solid Waste program and are as follows: In order to improve safety, the setup for Saturday dumping at the Jasper County Highway Department will be changing to one row of dumpsters with a maximum of 14 dumpsters. The front-end loader will be required to stay on the east side of this row of dumpsters and county residents unloading waste will be required to stay on the west side of the dumpsters. The loader will be strictly used for compacting waste in the dumpsters and will no longer be used to assist with unloading waste. Residents with larger loads of waste will be responsible for bringing enough additional people needed to safely unload any waste into the dumpsters. If any dumpster becomes full the residents should proceed to filling the next dumpster in line so as not to overflow the dumpsters. In the event in which all dumpsters become filled, the gate to the Highway Department will be closed and Solid Waste Services will no longer be provided until dumpsters are placed at the scheduled township location (April 1<sup>st</sup>-October 31<sup>st</sup>) during the weekdays or at 7:00am the next Saturday at the Highway Department. Due to the cost of the increased amount of waste being disposed, no commercial/contractor waste is to be disposed of in the county dumpsters provided at the County Highway Department on Saturday or at the township locations during the week. The Jasper County Solid Waste Service is intended for residential solid waste and not for commercial/business purposes. "No Charge" Dumpster service for residential solid waste disposal will be specifically for County/Township/Municipal locations. Contractors, Organizations, Churches, Charities, etc. may rent dumpsters for use at the current rate of \$650 per dumpster (price may change with landfill fees/fuel/etc.) With the increase in waste disposed of at the County Highway Department on Saturday, there

is also an increased amount of waste being blown out of the dumpsters and ending up on the Highway Department property or adjacent landowners' property. In order to improve environmental cleanliness and decrease cleanup, the Solid Waste Program has purchased tarps to cover the dumpsters and help contain the waste. Dumpsters will be covered on Saturdays in order to prevent waste from being blown away. Once a dumpster is full and has been covered, that dumpster should no longer be used, and residents should proceed to filling the next available dumpster. For the employee working on Saturday to have time to clean up all waste and finish covering dumpsters before leaving, hours of access to the solid waste service will now be provided from 7am until 1:30pm. At 1:30 pm the gate to the Highway Department will be closed and access shall no longer be provided until 7:00am next Saturday. The revised 2023 Solid Waste Schedule is included with this notice. In addition to the change in Saturday hours the dumpster service at township locations will now only be provided from April 1<sup>st</sup> until October 31<sup>st</sup>. From November 1<sup>st</sup> until March 31<sup>st</sup> dumpster access will only be held on Saturdays at the Highway Department. Villages/Cities wanting to have a cleanup day will be able to schedule two "No Charge" dumpsters per year by contacting the Highway Department (618)783-2915. Because this is a change to the program a full board vote should take place to show that the changes were approved by the County Board. Weddell expressed his concern with Honey Do Ministry. Judson made a motion for the approval of Changes to Jasper County Solid Waste Program Effective July 1, 2023. Deckard seconded the motion. Motion was adopted on a voice.

### **Item C – Approval of FieldWrxs, Inc. Fiber Quote (Page 203-204)**

Kemper Technology provided the Board with this quote at the April 2023 meeting. Spiker said it would be something that should be done along with Weddell. Spiker made a motion to approve FieldWrxs, Inc. Fiber Quote in the amount of \$45,498. Weddell seconded the motion. Judson asked if there were any additional bids. No additional bids had been taken and Judson expressed his concern, Kemper keeps coming with expenses. Bollman said the county has not advanced the technology for a long time. Corey just said we are the only consulting, and the board can say no at anytime if not in budget. Deters brought up the amount for when bids need to be sent out for bids. The work will be set out for bids for the next meeting. Spiker will contact another company that does this work. There are not a lot of companies that perform this service.

Board Comments: Deckard wanted to thank Ed Francis and Doug Long for inviting Crawford County Fire Chief Miller and William "Bill" Burke, Jr. – County Board Chairman to help with giving their views of what happened to them during the time the tornado went through Crawford County.

Bollman invited the board members to attend a Funding Workshop on Wednesday, June 28<sup>th</sup>. The event will be held at the Kluthe Center in Effingham starting at 9am. Multiple state and federal agencies will be on hand to give short presentations about their programs and how they can benefit your community as you transition away from coal. In the afternoon, we will provide hands-on training to register in SAM.gov and GATA which will allow you to tap into the various state and federal funding sources. If you are interested in attending, please send the attached RSVP to Sarah Luce at [Sarah.Luce@usda.gov](mailto:Sarah.Luce@usda.gov) no later than Monday, June 26<sup>th</sup>.

Chairman Comments: Vistra Coal to Solar Project at Newton Power Plant Update – Brad Watson emailed yesterday. As Vistra had conveyed during the March briefing they planned to start construction this year. Unfortunately, it will be delayed for several reasons. The primary factor is that Vistra has learned through their interconnection process with the grid operation, MISO, and Ameren that this project will, unfortunately, be delayed. They are seeing more information from MISO and Ameren to fully understand why. Further, Vistra has hit some supply chain headwinds and longer lead times than anticipated for some critical parts needed for the projects. Currently, Vistra now anticipates starting construction in late 2024 or early 2025. Vistra will continue to update as more information becomes available. United Counties Council of Illinois Annual Conference – July 23 – July 25 in Galena, Illinois; Snedeker Risk Management Client Appreciation Dinner – June 27, 2023, 5:00 social hour and 6:00 p.m.

Dinner at the West End Reception and Events Center. 152<sup>nd</sup> Jasper County Fair will be held June 18 – 24, 2023; 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Cork & Pork Saturday, July 8, 2023; Reminder County Offices will be closed on Monday, June 19<sup>th</sup> for the holiday.

I've always viewed public service as a noble calling. Often times people look down on public service. I've looked up to a great number of people in public service who serve out of a desire to better our community, state or nation. As County Board members we are bound by our fiduciary responsibilities. Our fiduciary duty requires us board members to stay objective, unselfish, responsible, honest, trustworthy, and efficient. Board members, as stewards of public trust, must always act for the good of the organization, rather than for the benefit of themselves. They need to exercise reasonable care in all decision-making, without placing the organization under unnecessary risk. When we take a seat on this board or any other board you might assume you are granted great access, power, and responsibility but you also give up certain powers. The importance of confidentiality is one. As part of your fiduciary responsibilities, you do not have the right to go down to the local coffee shop and tell the public everything you know. As board members, we have an obligation to hold in confidence those things that are mutually determined by fellow board members to be confidential. Likewise, you have a fiduciary responsibility to be mindful that your words carry weight, and when discussing sensitive topics you are viewed by members of the public as a credible source even when you speak misinformation. This type of behavior can cause great harm to people and organizations. Reputations can be harmed; trust can be lost and it can get ugly resulting in lasting damage to all involved. Serving on this board places you in a trusted position, which includes the fiduciary responsibilities that this office carries with it. It is the primary expectation of all board members in this capacity. To act for the good of the County, rather than for the benefit of themselves. "There's no greater challenge and there is no great honor than to be in public service."

The board did not have a closed session.

Geier moved to adjourn at 7:40 pm. Bollman seconded the motion. Motion carried on a voice vote.

The Next Regular Meeting of the Jasper County Board will be on Thursday, July 13<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m.

FY22 Audit will be complete by the next board meeting. The audit review will be starting at 5:30 p.m. prior to the July 13, 2023 Board Meeting. The audit review will be in the Board of Review Conference room located in the County Building.

Amy Tarr, Jasper County Clerk