

FRANKLIN COUNTY BOARD

MINUTES OF MEETING

Apr 21, 2025

CALL TO ORDER

The Regular Meeting of the County Board was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Neil Hargis. This meeting was held in the Franklin County Courthouse, County Board Room 133, 100 Public Square, Benton, Illinois.

ROLL CALL

Secretary, Kevin Wilson, called the roll. Members in attendance were Neil Hargis, Dave Bartoni, Angela Evans, John Gossett, J. Larry Miller, Ray Minor, Curtis Overton, and Kevin Weston. Brad Wilson was absent.

Also in attendance were Gayla Prather, County Board Office Manager; Amos Abbott, E-911 Director; Kyle Bacon, County Sheriff; Matt Barnett, County Engineer; Ryan Buckingham, Director of Emergency Management Agency - by phone; Marty Leffler, County Coroner; Lorie LeQuatte, Franklin-Johnson-Massac-Williamson Regional Superintendent; Cindy Miklos, Supervisor of Assessments; Jim Muir, Circuit Clerk; Amanda Kink, County Board Office Manager and other interested parties.

PLEDGE

Chairman Neil Hargis lead everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chairman Neil Hargis asked if there is anyone who wants to make public comments? No comments at this time.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

J. Larry Miller made a motion to accept the minutes of the March 17, 2025 Regular County Board Meeting. Kevin Weston second the motion. On roll call vote, all voted yes.

COUNTY CLAIMS

John Gossett made a motion to pay the claims on file. Curtis Overton second the motion. On roll call vote, all voted yes.

**DELINQUENT TAX
RESOLUTIONS**

Chairman Neil Hargis stated that the first item on the agenda is the Delinquent Tax Program resolutions regarding authorizing my signature (Neil Hargis) to execute deeds on the parcels sold thru the County's Delinquent Tax Program.

Kevin Weston made a motion to accept the resolutions as presented. David Bartoni second the motion. On roll call vote, all voted yes.

Said resolutions are made a part of these minutes as Resolution No. 2025-27 and 2025-28.

**RESIGNATION &
SEPARATION AGREEMENT
WITH ANIMAL CONTROL
SUPERVISOR**

Chairman Neil Hargis stated that the next item on the agenda is to accept the resignation and separation agreement with Animal Control Supervisor Bobbie Adams.

John Gossett made a motion to accept the resignation and separation agreement as presented. Angela Evans second the motion. On roll call vote, all voted yes.

Said agreement is made a part of these minutes as Agreement No. 2025-08.

**APPOINT AN INTERIM
ANIMAL CONTROL
SUPERVISOR**

Chairman Neil Hargis stated that the next item on the agenda is to appoint Anthony Skobel as the Interim Animal Control Supervisor.

Ray Minor made a motion to appoint Anthony Skobel as the Interim Animal Control Supervisor as presented. David Bartoni second the motion. On roll call vote, all voted yes.

**FLOCK CAMERA SYSTEMS
FOR SHERIFF
DEPARTMENT -
APPROVAL**

Chairman Neil Hargis stated that the next item on the agenda is to the approval of the proposal for the flock camera systems for the Sheriff's Department County to pay \$14,000 from the opioid account for the purchase of eight cameras.

David Bartoni made a motion to approve the flock camera systems for the Sheriff's Department as presented. Ray Minor second the motion.

J. Larry Miller: Just remind me of what that, what this is exactly. I'm sorry. I know you talked about it. It's been a couple of days since we did it.

Sheriff Kyle Bacon: It was the camera system that are mounted throughout the county.

J. Larry Miller: The one's going to make me behave right? No, we're not going to check speed.

Sheriff Kyle Bacon: No, Sorry.

On roll call voted, all voted yes.

Said proposal is made a part of these minutes.

**PAY NOVACOM FOR
INSTALLATION OF
ANTENNA ABOVE
GENERATOR AT
COURTHOUSE -APPROVAL**

Chairman Neil Hargis stated that the next item on the agenda is to the approval of the invoice to pay Novacomm for the installation of the antenna above the generator at the courthouse. The county pays \$1,979.38 from 1 % Sales Tax.

Kevin Weston made a motion to approve paying Novacomm for the installation of the antenna as presented. Curtis Overton second the motion.

J. Larry Miller: Yeah, I have a question? Why do we need this now? And didn't need it before?

Sheriff Kyle Bacon: We changed radio systems and we found out that the digital system had a hard time transmitting outside of the courthouse. Court Security was unable to contact the dispatch center without an external antenna.

J. Larry Miller: I'm going to say that I have a little bit of concern about paying with 1%, I know its nineteen hundred dollars, but here we go again.

On roll call vote, all voted yes.

Said invoice is made a part of these minutes.

**BEGG'S LAWN CARE'S
BID FOR COUNTY
MOWING - APPROVAL**

Chairman Neil Hargis stated that the next item on the agenda is to the approval that the Beggs Lawn Care bid for the county mowing and I know we had a one year or a three year and all that. Whoever makes the motion to decide on that.

Curtis Overton: I'll make the motion for the approval of Beggs Lawn Care bid for county mowing under a three-year contract with 10% increase next year and the following year.

John Gossett: I move to amend that to make it for one year.

David Bartoni: I'll second the motion of Mr. Overton.

J. Larry Miller: As a point of order. You can't do it that way. You have a motion, you get a second. Then if you want to amend the motion after that happens, I'm confused. Where are we at?

John Gossett: Okay, then we'll do it that way. Take back your second, I'll amend it, tell you why the other group said the other two people that bid on this do not get a chance to bid for 3 years. He's the only one. We never heard anything about them having an opportunity to bid on a three-year contract. I don't think it's right. I don't think it's fair, I don't like it. I think it should be amended.

Curtis Overton: We never gave Mr. Biggs that option either when we initially opened the bids and got the pricing. It is an interesting point.

J. Larry Miller: I don't know whether we'd legally have to bid it. With that amount.

Chairman Neil Hargis: We have a motion for three years from Mr. Overton a second by Mr. Bartoni.

Kevin Weston: We can vote on that.

J. Larry Miller: Well, he wants to amend the motion and he gets a second and then you vote to amend the motion and then you roll back the original. It is my understanding of Robert's Rules of Order.

Kevin Weston: Has anybody seconded it?

David Bartoni: Mr. Wilson?

Kevin Wilson, County Clerk: That motion on the floor is from Mr. Overton three-year contract with Mr. Beggs. There is an amendment question. There is a second in play at this point.

J. Larry Miller: So, what would we be voting for?

Kevin Wilson County Clerk: You have a motion. You have a second. Mr. Gossett has stated his amendment before Mr. Bartoni's second, but has now changed it to after. A vote is in order.

David Bartoni: If we wanted to change it to a one-year contract, we need to vote no on the current motion.

Kevin Wilson, County Clerk: That's correct.

David Bartoni: And then?

Curtis Overton: Okay. I will amend my motion to make it for a one-year contract and then the next time we do it, we can notify each one of 'em that we may, we might do a two or three year.

David Bartoni: I see what you're saying. John, you made a good point.

John Gossett: Thank you.

Curtis Overton: Yeah, I hadn't thought about that. That's a good point, John.

David Bartoni: I will second to Curtis' motion.

Chairman Neil Hargis: Are there any questions?
Okay. Please call roll

On roll call vote, all voted yes.

Said bid is made a part of these minutes.

**CONCRETE FOR PARKING
AREA - APPROVAL**

Chairman Neil Hargis stated that the next item on the agenda is to the approval of the Concrete for Parking Area for the EOC (Emergency Operation Center). We kind of all heard our options. here is the approval. We have concrete, but one of the bids would be for concrete slash asphalt. The other one is just for concrete, so I will entertain motion to the concrete I think was at the price of \$224,000. The concrete slash asphalt was \$189,000.

Kevin Weston: Well, I want to make a motion that we approve a concrete parking area and drive at the emergency management center and sheriff's office parking area for \$224,000.

Ray Minor: I will second that.

Chairman Neil Hargis: I do have, and I should have mentioned this before the motion, we do have money in the local assistance of Tribal Consistency fund. There is \$164,000 in that fund, which was part of, if I'm not mistaken, Steve, it was part of some of the covid not Arpa?

Steve Vercellino, County Treasurer: Covid, not ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) money, but it's part of that same time period where they released some additional money that that's not ARPA money. So, it's not that group of funds, but the separate fund that we've had for a couple years now, we've not tapped into that we need to spend and so this would be a good example of way we can produce what we're spending on the actual county budget and we did actually put in the budget for that fund pay all of it out.

Ray Minor: Does that have to be a motion to spend that money?

Chairman Neil Hargis: Well probably will amend your motion.

Kevin Weston: I amend the motion to use the tribal \$164,000 tribal fund.

Chairman Neil Hargis: Let me give you the give you the official name it. The local assistance and tribal consistency fund.

Kevin Weston: The local assistance, and tribal consistency fund amount of \$164,000 should be used for paying part of this and the rest would be ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) money.

Ray Minor: I will second Mr. Weston's motion and amendment as stated.

J. Larry Miller: So, my question is that's the only thing that money could be used for?

Steve Vercellino, County Treasurer: I mean that's kind of broad statement here. So, I mean

J. Larry Miller: My point is, its money. It is money in the fund. We can take that money and pay it on. There are various things that we could do with that.

Steve Vercellino, County Treasurer: Right. I don't think you want to use it for pension related items or paying down debt, things of that nature. But anything that's ordinary, normal, regional thing for the county government would spend money on. Yeah, I think that would be OK.

J. larry Miller: We could pay on this facility itself and reduce our amount that we're paying by that amount. Is that correct?

Steve Vercellino, County Treasurer: We've already obligated ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) funds to pay the contract of the EOC building, but there were additional things on top.

J. Larry Miller: If we wanted to use that money to pay for the flagpole over at the coroner's office and go ahead and put the rest of that culvert in and make sure it's going to drain correctly. We could use it for that. We could use it for a number of things. And the, my point is we're just robbing Peter to pay Paul.

Angela Evans: Yes.

J. Larry Miller: We're still going to pay \$234,000 or whatever for a parking lot that I'm just concerned about.

Steve Vercellino, County Treasurer: But the 164 was....

J. Larry Miller: Could jump up and say, well, I got a hundred thousand dollars and a fund back there that I can use. We're just robbing Peter to pay Paul.

Chairman Neil Hargis: Any other questions? Okay, call roll.

Kevin Wilson, County Clerk: Dave Bartoni. Yes. Angela Evans. No. John Gossett. No. Larry Miller. No. Ray Minor. Yes. Curtis Overton. Yes. Kevin Weston. Yes. Neil Hargis. Yes. Five yes's to three no's. Motion carried.

**ENCLOSURE WALL FOR
THE GENERATOR -
APPROVAL**

Chairman Neil Hargis stated that the next item on the agenda is to the approval on the enclosure wall for the generator. I believe the cost of that was \$30,660.

Kevin Weston: I'll make a motion to approve the enclosure wall for the generator and I'll explain

one thing. The generator will supply power for our emergency management operations center as well as the new dispatch center. It's about five hundred six hundred-thousand-dollar generator and the issue is if the generator, something would happen to it that like a car run into it would take it out, we would lose not only the ability to have the operation center running during a storm or whatever, but to get another generator here would probably be a six to eight month or longer time span because they're just not setting on shelves. So we want to protect that generator at all costs. So that's why I know it's a lot of money, but we've got an enclosure around the generator here for the courthouse, so it's a good thing to have this.

Chairman Neil Hargis: We have a motion from Mr. Weston. Do we have a second?

Angela Evans: I'll second.

Chairman Neil Hargis: A second for Mrs. Evans. Any additional questions?

J. Larry Miller: So, my question is, is concrete structure around is the purpose of that is for security in case a car would hit it or something? Or is it for possibility of sabotage?

Kevin Weston: Well, it is kind of for both. I mean it could be if it is just got a chain link fence around it, it is very visible. It will not be very visible with the enclosure and someone could want to take it out, could do it very easily with a chain link fence. Not only that, just these things are not easy to come by. They're very expensive, so we want to protect it and it's going to be, the enclosure will match the building addition that we're putting in and they're going to have rebar running all the way into the slab as well as vertically across there plus another bottom beam. So, it's a pretty structurally build well-built facility.

Dave Bartoni: Larry. It's also my understanding that it would control noise of the generator running from going into the neighborhood. It would reflect that noise back towards the parking lot. Instead of into the neighborhood across the street.

J. Larry Miller: Into the parking lot. Why? How would it be that it's going to be closed on four sides?

Dave Bartoni: Three sides.

J. Larry Miller: Three sides.

Dave Bartoni: The backside's going to be chain link for access to the generator.

Angela Evans: Yeah.

J. Larry Miller: Will it be tall enough that the generator is not visible?

Fager-McGee Commercial Constructor: Yes. They'll be slightly, I think they'll be 12-16 inches.

J. Larry Miller: As I recall. You can see the generator coming up more.

Kevin Weston: You see this one here?

Fager-McGee Commercial Constructor: Yes. It'll be 12-16 inches above, but there's an air restriction in the specifications for it.

J. Larry Miller: So, the answer is it will not be visible if the wall will?

Fager-McGee Commercial Constructor: It will not be visible generator. Right. You'll just see basically it's enough room for the exhaust to get out and not to travel. You'll not see it. It's like you said for sound, aesthetics and security.

J. Larry Miller: And well, I got arguments here that leads me to believe I'll go vote for it. Okay. That makes some sense. I just needed to.

Kevin Weston: It's got a metal cap on it instead of a stone, Cap like we used on this one here to cut costs and the cap, it won't deteriorate.

Fager-McGee Commercial Constructor: Matching the same concrete block and the same metal caps.

J. Larry Miller: About the, how is that fuel? Is it natural gas or is it diesel gas? Yeah, but it is a power natural.

Kevin Weston: It's primary natural gas.

J. Larry Miller: So, there is no auxiliary.

Ryan Buckingham, Director of Emergency Management Agency: So, if I can make a comment to you, I know that I've been, when asked about the generator enclosure, when I thought it was just a block, I thought that's expensive. But when you explained in our meeting that the rebar and the reinforcement and stuff like that, I do have a concern about, and of course I'm always thinking about the worst-case scenario would be if debris was lofted towards it that it should deflect in debris in a storm or straight-line wind damage, a pole goes down or something like that. Where does it knock that generator off the base? That's my main concern for the protection. I understood that a little bit better now. Full concrete rebar, concrete. Even a small tornado can lose a car.

Chairman Neil Hargis: Any other questions? Go ahead and call roll.

On roll call vote, all voted yes.

**VIOLATION OF PLAT
ACT ON KIRSTEN
HOUSEWORTH FATHER'S
PROPERTY - APPROVAL**

Chairman Neil Hargis stated that the next item on the agenda is to approve the violation of Plat Act requirement file a transfer, two acres deferred will leave only one acre remaining, which is less than the two acre minimum required that will leave one acre, which is in violation of the Plat Act. They will be required to have a survey is there a motion to approve the violation of the client act.

Dave Bartoni made a motion to approve the violation of the plat act on Kirsten Houseworth father's property. Curtis Overton second the motion. On roll call vote, all voted yes.

**ILLINOIS CORONERS &
MEDICAL EXAMINERS
ASSOCIATION - MUTUAL
AID AGREEMENT**

Chairman Neil Hargis stated that the next item on the agenda is to approve the Illinois Court Medical Examiner Association of Mutual Aid.

Curtis Overton made the motion to approve the Illinois Coroners and Medical Examiners Association Mutual Aid Agreement. Dave Bartoni second the motion. On roll call vote, all voted yes.

Said agreement is made a part of these minutes as Agreement No. 2025-09.

**BOARD OF REVIEW - 1
APPOINTMENT**

Chairman Neil Hargis stated that the next item on the agenda is an appointment to the Board of Review and I recommending Scott Ward, who's already on the board, be reappointed to Board of Review for another two year term ending June 1, 2027.

Curtis Overton: Tell me exactly what the Board of Review is?

Kevin Weston: Review those land owners that has issues with their property taxes. They would meet with owner, and of course Cindy and the board.

Cindy Miklas, Supervisor of Assessments: We've got three members on the Board of Review.

Kevin Weston: Is Scott from Sesser?

Angela Evans: Yes.

John Gossett made a motion to your reappoint, Scott Ward to the Board of Review as presented. Angela Evans second the motion. On roll call vote, all voted yes.

**CAVE - EASTERN FIRE
PROTECTION DISTRICT
BOARD - 1
APPOINTMENT**

Chairman Neil Hargis stated that the next item on the agenda is an appointment to the Cave-Eastern Fire Protection District Board, and recommending the reappointment of Steve Sniderwin for another three year term ending May 1, 2028.

Kevin Weston made a motion to reappoint Steve Sniderwin as presented. J. Larry Miller second the motion. On roll call vote, all voted yes.

**HILL CITY WATER
DISTRICT - 1
APPOINTMENT**

Chairman Neil Hargis stated that the next item on the agenda is an appointment to the Hill City Water District Board and I recommend reappointing Paul Leffler for another five year term ending April 30, 2030.

Curtis Overton made a motion to reappoint Paul Leffler to the Hill City Water District Board. Angela Evans second the motion. On roll call vote, all vote yes.

**PLUMFIELD WATER
DISTRICT - 1
APPOINTMENT**

Chairman Neil Hargis stated that the next item on the agenda is an appointment to the Plumfield Water District Board and recommends to reappoint Travis Eastwood for another four year term ending May 1, 2029.

Kevin Weston made a motion to reappoint Travis Eastwood to the Plumfield Water District Board as presented. John Gossett second the motion. On roll call vote, all voted yes

**SESSER FIRE
PROTECTION DISTRICT
- 2 APPOINTMENTS**

Chairman Neil Hargis stated that the next item on the agenda is an appointment to the Sesser Fire Protection District Board and I recommend reappointing Mark Lappin and Wayne Shannon for another three year terms ending April 30, 2028.

Curtis Overton made the motion to reappoint Mark Lapin and Wayne Shannon, the Sesser Fire Protection District Board as presented. Angela Evans second the motion. On roll call vote, all voted yes.

COUNTY CLERK,
SHERIFF & CORONER -
MONTHLY REPORTS

Chairman Neil Hargis stated the next item on the agenda are the March, 2025 monthly reports from the County Clerk, Sheriff & Coroner reports.

J. Larry Miller made motion to approve the reports as presented. Kevin Weston second the motion. On roll call vote, all voted yes.

Said reports are made a part of these minutes.

ROE - QUARTERLY
REPORT

Chairman Neil Hargis stated the next item on the agenda is the ROE (Regional Office of Education) Reports of Official Acts for July 2024 - June 2025.

Angela Evans made a motion to accept the ROE Report as presented. Dave Bartoni seconded the motion. On roll call vote, all voted yes.

Said report is made a part of these minutes.

CLOSED SESSION

Chairman Neil Hargis informed everyone that we will have no closed session.

RETURN TO OPEN
SESSION

ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Neil Hargis asked the Board if there were any questions. Curtis Overton made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Kevin Weston second the motion. There being no further business Chairman Neil Hargis declared the meeting adjourned.



Neil Hargis
Franklin County Board Chairman



Kevin Wilson
County Clerk and Recorder