

FRANKLIN COUNTY BOARD

MINUTES OF MEETING

Dec 16, 2024

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; Kyle Bacon, County Sheriff; Matt Barnett, County Engineer; Ryan Buckingham, Director of Emergency Management Agency - by phone; Marty Leffler, County Coroner; Cindy Miklos, Supervisor of Assessments; Jim Muir, Circuit Clerk; Steve Vercellino, County Treasurer; and other interested parties.

PLEDGE

Curtis Overton lead everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chairman Neil Hargis asked if there is anyone who wants to make public comments?

Tom Carter: Mr. Hargis, I was listening about roof leaks and more bulletproof glass. I'm curious. It was said that in two years we'll have this place paid off. Are we still on track to pay this off in two years?

Chairman Neil Hargis: I believe so. Is that correct, Steve?

Steve Vercellino, County Treasurer: That sounds accurate. We've not done anything potentially different since last time we spoke on that. Okay.

Chairman Neil Hargis: I will tell you, that is my goal.

Tom Carter: Can you double check that for me for next meeting? Thank you.

Chairman Neil Hargis asked if there were any other public comments?

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Curtis Overton made a motion to accept the minutes of the November 18, 2024 Regular County Board Meeting and December 2, 2024 Special County Board Meeting. Angela Evans second the motion. On roll call vote, all voted yes.

COUNTY CLAIMS

Ray Minor made a motion to pay the claims on file. Kevin Weston second the motion. On roll call vote, all voted yes.

AUDIT FOR YEAR ENDED NOVEMBER 30, 2023 - ACCEPT

Chairman Neil Hargis stated were moving on to new business. First order of business is to accept the audit for the year ended November 30th, 2023. Motion to accept the audit?

Dave Bartoni made a motion to accept the audit for the year ended November 30th, 2023 as presented. Angela Evans second the motion.

Chairman Neil Hargis: Okay. Is there any discussion on the audit?

J. Larry Miller: Well, are we accepting the audit or are we also paying the bill?

Steve Vercellino, County Treasurer: So, the second piece you are referring to, they bill us as they are doing the work, so we have paid them almost all what they have asked to get paid. There's a bill in here for a couple thousand dollars, but as you mentioned earlier, their total fee is a much larger piece than just that small amount. So, they have been billing every month for services provided you know how much debt?

Chairman Neil Hargis: Any further discussion? Let us go ahead and call roll. On roll call vote, all voted yes.

**DELINQUENT TAX
RESOLUTIONS**

Chairman Neil Hargis stated that the next 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.

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

Said resolutions are made a part of these minutes as Resolution No. 2024-41 thru 2024-106.

**FRANKLIN COUNTY
HIGHWAY BARGAINING
UNIT CONTRACT -
APPROVAL**

Chairman Neil Hargis stated now moving on to number three. We have approval of the Franklin County Highway Bargaining Unit contract, and I know Matt's already discussed that.

John Gossett made a motion to approve the Franklin County Highway Union contract as presented. Curtis Overton second the motion. On roll call vote, all voted yes.

Said contract is made a part of these minutes as Agreement No. 2024-22.

**SHERIFF'S OFFICE -
BOILER \$16,000 &
MIXING VALVE \$4,000
- APPROVAL**

Chairman Neil Hargis: Number four. Approved a boiler, \$16,000 and mixing valve, \$4,000 for the sheriff's office. Again, that was discussed. So, do we have a motion to approve those?

Kevin Weston made a motion to approve the new boiler and the mixing new mixing valve for the Sheriff's office hot water system. Curtis Overton second the motion.

Chairman Neil Hargis: Motion by M. Weston than second by Mr. Overton. Any discussion?

Steve Vercellino, County Treasurer: So, do you want to use regular budget line for maintenance? Do you want to use that as contingency? Do you want use ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) funds? How do you want it to be paid through since it was something?

Kevin Weston: I think it should be Arpa (American Rescue Plan Act).

Chairman Neil Hargis: That is fine, are we all in agreement on Arpa (American Rescue Plan Act)?

Dave Bartoni: It needs to be in a motion.

Kevin Weston made the motion that we pay for the \$16,000 for the boiler and \$4,000 and something for the mixing new mixing valve for the Sheriff's office. Hot water systems out of the ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) fund. Ray Minor second the motion. On roll call vote, all voted yes.

**MAYOR JASON ASHMORE
REQUESTS \$4,700 FROM
OPIOID SETTLEMENT TO
COMPLETE THE
EQUIPMENT FOR
SESSER'S K-9 VEHICLE
- APPROVAL**

Chairman Neil Hargis stated the next item is approval of the request from Mayor Jason Ashmore for \$4,700 from the settlement to complete the equipment for the assessor canine vehicle.

Curtis Overton made the motion that we approve the request from Mayor Ashmore for \$4,700 from opioid settlement to complete the equipment for Sesser's K-9 vehicle. Dave Bartoni second the motion. On roll call vote, all voted yes.

**CLA AS AUDITOR -
APPROVAL**

Chairman Neil Hargis stated that number six, CLA as Auditor is tabled at this time.

**RICE SULLIVAN LLC
AUDITOR FOR CIRCUIT
CLERK - APPROVAL**

Chairman Neil Hargis stated moving to number seven, which is approval. Rice Sullivan, LLC auditor for the circuit Clerk's office.

John Gossett made that motion that we approve Rice Sullivan LLC auditor for the Circuit Clerk office. Curtis Overton second the motion. On roll call vote, all voted yes.

**RICE SULLIVAN LLC
AUDITOR FOR SHERIFF
COMMISSARY -
APPROVAL**

Chairman Neil Hargis stated moving to number eight. We have approval again for Rice Sullivan LLC, auditor for the Sheriff's Commissary?

J. Larry Miller made a motion approve Rice Sullivan LLC, auditor for the Sheriff's Commissary. Angela Evans second the motion. On roll call vote, all voted yes.

**CARL R. SKINION -
VIOLATION OF PLAT
ACT - APPROVAL**

Chairman Neil Hargis stated item number nine. We have approval of violation of plat act requirements on Carl Skinion and the Benton Country Club less than two acres with a survey.

Angela Evans made the motion for that approval of the violation of flat act requirements of Carl R. Skinion. Less than two acres of a survey at 1.25 acres. Dave Bartoni second the motion. On roll call vote, all voted yes except J. Larry Miller voted no.

Said plat of survey in made a part of these minutes as document number 2025-0121.

**RAYMOND & PEGGY
CLAYTON & THE BUYER
VIOLATION OF PLAT
ACT - APPROVAL**

Chairman Neil Hargis stated moving to number 10, approval of violation of Plat Act requirements on Raymond and Peggy Clayton, buyer, less than two acres on both parts with the survey.

John Gossett: Yes. I will make that motion, if we are going to do for one, we should do it for the other one. I motion for the violation of the ACT requirements for Raymond and Peggy Clayton.

Curtis Overton: I will second.

Chairman Neil Hargis: Is there any discussion?

J. Larry Miller: Yeah. My reason I voted that there was no reason for the first one to be allowed. That's my problem with it. This is a little bit different, so I will support it, but I do not know where we draw the line here. I'm so weary with this, I could scream.

Cindy Miklos, Supervisor of Assessments: I understand, there is a side that they should be able to do what they want, but then it is the acreage is there. They should abide. You can see on that first one you can see; I can see both sides.

J. Larry Miller: Yeah. There was 1.25 acres. You could have made it 2 just, but I'll vote. I'll support this. I guess I just wish somebody would tell me what the right thing here. That's a problem.

Dave Bartoni: I agree with you Larry, but I do not feel like it is this boards. I mean that's his property. He wants to divide it in pieces.

J. Larry Miller: What if we get down to a third acre?

Dave Bartoni: Say if anything less than two acres gets taxed at two acres? And if I were to divide my property into 10-foot squares, each square is taxed at 2 acres. I do not know what the answer is, but that's both sides of it.

J. Larry Miller: But is there ever going to be a no here? Apparently, she thinks there is a no at some points have you said no to anybody?

Tammi Price, GIS Coordinator: No, I do not. There should be a No. I just say that bi-county cuts us off at an acre, so yeah, when you start getting under an acre, you are getting a little squeeze.

Cindy Miklos, Supervisor of Assessments: Unless it is obviously in town lots.

J. Larry Miller: Sorry.

Chairman Neil Hargis: Any other questions?

Tami Price, GIS Coordinator: I just feel like you need to say 1%. Not all counties go by this plan. Just so you guys know, majority of Illinois counties do not.

J. Larry Miller: Like we, just like we are doing, do not allow.

J. Larry Miller: They do not allow this at all.

Tami Price, GIS Coordinator: A lot of me did not accept that Jefferson does not.

John Gossett: One more comment, Mr. Chairman and Mr. Bartoni, do they have enough room to put a driveway there, I will be for it.

Chairman Niel Hargis: Any discussion? Let us go ahead and call roll. On roll call vote, all voted yes.

**IL HIGHWAY CODE FOR
FREEMAN SPUR -
RESOLUTION**

Chairman Neil Hargis stated moving on to number eleven. The resolution for improvement under the Illinois Highway Code for Freeman Spur Blacktop in the amount of \$950,000. Matt, did you happen to talk about that in?

Matt Barnett, County Engineer: Yeah, I talked about it.

Chairman Neil Hargis: Okay. Sorry. Long meeting. Okay. So, do we have a motion to accept that?

Curtis Overton made the motion. We approve the resolution for improvement under the Illinois Highway Code for Freeman Spur Blacktop in the amount of \$950,000. Kevin Weston second the motion. On roll call vote, all voted yes.

Said resolution is made a part of these minutes as Resolution No. 2024-107.

**ANNUAL LEVY -
ORDINANCE**

Chairman Neil Hargis stated moving to number twelve is the accepting of the Ordinance for the Annual Levy. Do we have a motion to accept the annual levy?

Ray Minor made a motion to accept the Annual Levy. John Gossett second the motion. On roll call vote, all voted yes.

Said ordinance is made a part of these minutes as Ordinance No. 2024-02.

**ANNUAL TAX ABATEMENT
- ORDINANCE**

Chairman Neil Hargis number thirteen is the ordinance where we do the abatement have to sign again, this was, I believe, dealing with a tax that we have chosen, not to levy. So, do I have a motion to abate?

J. Larry Miller: I'll make the motion.

Chairman Neil Hargis: Okay. Motion by Mr. Miller.

Ray Minor: I'll second.

Chairman Neil Hargis: Second by Mr. Minor. Is there any discussion about the abatement? Hearing none we will call a vote? On roll call vote, all voted yes.

Said ordinance is made a part of these minutes as Ordinance No. 2024-03.

**OBLIGATING THE
REMAINDER OF
FRANKLIN COUNTY ARPA
FUNDS - ORDINANCE**

Chairman Neil Hargis stated and now moving number fourteen, ordinance obligating, the remainder of the Franklin County ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) Funds. We did discuss that earlier. So, do I have a motion to for that?

J. Larry Miller made a motion to accept the ordinance for the remainder of the Franklin County ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) Funds. John Gossett second the motion. On roll call vote, all voted yes.

Said ordinance is made a part of these minutes as Ordinance No. 2024-04.

**CROSSWALK COMMUNITY
ACTION AGENCY - 2
APPOINTMENTS**

Chairman Neil Hargis stated that the next item on the agenda is the appointment to the Crosswalk Community Action Agency and recommends Curtis Overton.

Kevin Weston made a motion to reappoint Curtis Overton to the Crosswalk Community Action Agency for a two year term ending December 31, 2026. Dave Bartoni second the motion. On roll call vote, all voted yes except Curtis Overton abstained.

**GREATER EGYPT
REGIONAL PLANNING &
DEVELOPMENT
COMMISSION - 1
APPOINTMENT**

Chairman Neil Hargis stated that the next item on the agenda is an appointment to the Greater Egypt Regional Planning Commission Board and he presented a letter from the Executive Director, Cary Minnis recommends Kevin Weston to be reappointed.

Curtis Overton made a motion to reappoint Kevin Weston to the Greater Egypt Regional Planning Commission Board for another three year term ending December 31, 2027. Dave Bartoni second the motion. On roll call vote, all voted yes except Kevin Weston abstained.

Said letter is made a part of these minutes.

**REND LAKE AREA
TOURISM COUNCIL - 3
APPOINTMENTS**

Chairman Neil Hargis stated that the next item on the agenda are three appointments to the Rend Lake Area Tourism Council but tonight there will be just one appointment and he recommends Kellie Hicks.

Angela Evans made a motion to appoint Kellie Hicks to replace Pat Hollada to the Rend Lake Area Tourism Council for a three year term ending December 31, 2027. Curtis Overton second the motion. On roll call vote, all voted yes.

COUNTY CLERK,
SHERIFF & CORONER -
MONTHLY REPORT

Chairman Neil Hargis stated the next item on the agenda are the November, 2024 monthly reports from the County Clerk, Sheriff and Coroner reports.

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

Said reports are made a part of these minutes.

CLOSED SESSION

Chairman Neil Hargis informed everyone that we will have no closed session. The only thing I will say is that our next committee meeting, we will probably have a short, regular special call board meeting to basically hire our auditor for this upcoming year. Everybody, one or two items that just to let you guys know ahead. So other than that, motion to adjourn?

RETURN TO OPEN
SESSION

ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Neil Hargis asked the Board if there were any questions. Angela Evans 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