

FRANKLIN COUNTY BOARD

MINUTES OF MEETING

Jan 20, 2026

CALL TO ORDER

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

ROLL CALL

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

Also in attendance were Matt Barnett, County Engineer; Amanda Kink, County Board Office Manager; Cindy Miklos, Supervisor of Assessments; Steve Vercellino, County Treasurer; Alexis Williams, Animal Control Supervisor and other interested parties.

PLEDGE

Chairman Neil Hargis leads everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chairman Neil Hargis asked if there is anyone who wants to make a public comment? No public comments were made.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Vice Chairman Kevin Weston made a motion to accept the minutes of the December 15, 2025 Regular County Board Meeting and the January 5, 2026 Special County Board Meeting. Dave Bartoni second the motion. On roll call vote, all voted yes.

COUNTY CLAIMS

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

**DELINQUENT TAX
PROGRAM -
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.

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

Said resolutions are made a part of these minutes as Resolution No. 2026-01 thru 2026-40.

**LOCAL PUBLIC AGENCY
ENGINEERING SERVICES
AGREEMENT FOR MITCH
ROAD BRIDGE
REPLACEMENT -
APPROVAL**

Chairman Neil Hargis states that the next item on the agenda is to approve the Local Public Agency Engineering Services Agreement for Section 25-019128-00-BR for Mitch Road Bridge Replacement in Goode Township with Lochmueller Group.

Curtis Overton made a motion to approve the Local Public Agency Engineering Services Agreement for Section 25-019128-00-BR for Mitch Road Bridge Replacement in Goode Township with Lochmueller Group. Angela Evans second the motion. On roll call vote, all voted yes.

Said agreement is made a part of these minutes as Agreement No. 2026-01.

**MAINTENANCE UNDER
THE IL HIGHWAY CODE
- RESOLUTION**

Chairman Neil Hargis states that the next item on the agenda is to approve the Resolution For Maintenance under the Illinois Highway Code for Section 26-00000-00-GM in the amount of \$1,225,000.

Brad Wilson made a motion to approve the Resolution for Maintenance under the Illinois Highway Code for Section 26-00000-00-GM in the amount of \$1,225,000. Kevin Weston second that motion. On roll call vote, all voted yes.

Said resolution is made a part of these minutes as Resolution No. 2026-41.

**LOCAL PUBLIC AGENCY
GENERAL MAINTENANCE
- APPROVAL**

Chairman Neil Hargis states that the next item on the agenda is the approval of the Local Public Agency General Maintenance for Section 26-00000-00-GM in the amount of \$1,443,300.

Angela Evans made a motion to approve the Local Public Agency General Maintenance for Section 26-00000-00-GM in the amount of \$1,443,300. J. Larry Miller second that motion.

J. Larry Miller: I'm sorry, but I just hate approving things that I don't know what it is exactly. Matt, can you give a short explanation?

Matt Barnett, County Engineer: Yeah, so this is our yearly motor fuel tax allotments. The reason their different is because one includes other funds, the other is strictly motor fuel tax.

Dave Bartoni: I was getting ready to say, why are they different because they aren't usually are they?

Matt Barnett, County Engineer: They're usually a couple hundred thousand different.

J. Larry Miller: Some of that goes to the township, correct?

Matt Barnett, County Engineer: This one is strictly for the County. The townships do not have resolutions. Theirs goes separately by township into the state.

J. Larry Miller: But they have to submit an application for repayment on the work they do on those roads, don't they? Through your office?

Matt Barnett, County Engineer: No, it's invoiced. We have the leading, they do the work, then they get invoiced. Were basically just acting as an account for those funds.

J. Larry Miller: I was a road commissioner 45 years ago, and they might be doing it a little bit different now.

Chairman Neil Hargis asks if there are any more questions? No further questions at this time.

On roll call vote, all voted yes.

Said local public agency general maintenance is made a part of these minutes.

**JOINT FUNDING
AGREEMENT FOR STATE
PARTICIPATION ON
PEACH ORCHARD ROAD -
APPROVAL**

Chairman Neil Hargis states that the next item on the agenda is to approve Joint Funding Agreement for state participation for Section 25-00200-00-BR on Peach Orchard Rd.

Ray Minor made a motion to approve Joint Funding Agreement for state participation for Section 25-00200-00-BR on Peach Orchard Rd. J. Larry Miller second that motion. On roll call vote, all voted yes.

Said agreement is made a part of these minutes as Agreement No. 2026-02.

**CAMPBELL BUILDING
SIGNS - APPROVAL**

Chairman Neil Hargis states that the next item on the agenda is the approval of signs for the Campbell Building in the amount of \$2,050.00.

Ray Minor made a motion to approve the signs for the Campbell Building in the amount of \$2,050.00. J. Larry Miller second that motion.

Chairman Neil Hargis asks if there are any questions?

John Gossett: Yes, can we amend that and make it to where the signs are on the west side like Curtis asked?

Curtis Overton: That's my plan, unless enough people think we should put it on the front.

Chairman Neil Hargis: Were just approving the financial stuff.

Chairman Neil Hargis asks if there are any other questions or comments?

On roll call vote, all voted yes.

**CHANGE NAME OF
CAMPBELL BUILDING TO
FRANKLIN COUNTY
ANNEX - APPROVAL**

Chairman Neil Hargis states that the next item on the agenda is approval to change name of Campbell Building to Franklin County Annex.

J. Larry Miller made a motion to approve the name change of the Campbell Building to the Franklin County Annex. Ray Minor second that motion. On roll call vote, all voted yes.

**BELLWETHER
CONSULTING FEE FOR
ANIMAL CONTROL -
APPROVAL**

Chairman Neil Hargis states that the next item on the agenda is the approval of Bellwether Consulting fee for Animal Control.

Chairman Neil Hargis: We did talk about this at the previous meeting about approving Bellwether to try and look at what the communities are paying. It's been something that we have talked about for a while. I believe it's a cost of \$6,000. Is that correct Alexis?

Alexis Williams, Animal Control Supervisor: Yes, that's correct.

Chairman Neil Hargis: It hasn't been done since?

Alexis Williams, Animal Control Supervisor: 2016.

Chairman Neil Hargis: 2016, so it would be my recommendation to go ahead and get that done and take a look at our fees.

Ray Minor made a motion to approve Bellwether Consulting fee for Animal Control. Curtis Overton second that motion.

Chairman Neil Hargis then asks if there are any questions?

Brad Wilson: So, they'll do their study and then give us a recommendation on what to charge?

Alexis Williams, Animal Control Supervisor: Yes. They will give us a recommendation on what to charge the cities and on the fees for the office as well.

J. Larry Miller: Will they make comparisons with other Animal Control agencies? Will we see those comparisons or will they just make a recommendation?

Alexis Williams, Animal Control Supervisor: We should see the comparisons.

Chairman Neil Hargis then asks if there are any other questions?

Ray Minor: My understanding is without this; we really can't make those adjustments right?

J. Larry Miller: We do? We have to do this before we even change the fees?

Chairman Neil Hargis: I don't think we have to necessarily.

J. Larry Miller: Its just more just an advisory in defense if we do it. Right?

Chairman Neil Hargis: I think it makes it easier to make it justifiable.

Dave Bartoni: Just like the jail processing fees, when you get arrested. We couldn't raise that over 28 dollars or whatever, of course that was a mandated fee, so maybe that's the difference. If we tell them what we're going to charge the have the choice to seek another Animal Control. So maybe that's the difference, but we couldn't raise

the processing fee above 28 dollars, without having a feasibility study.

J. Larry Miller: Well, it gives us justification to raise it.

Dave Bartoni: Right.

Chairman Neil Hargis asks if there are any other questions?

Steve Vercellino, County Treasurer: Is contingency how you want to pay it out?

Chairman Neil Hargis: Yeah do it out of contingency.

On roll call vote, all voted yes.

**STATES ATTORNEY
APPELLATE PROSECUTOR
- RESOLUTION**

Chairman Neil Hargis states that the next item on the agenda is to approve States Attorney Appellate Prosecutor resolution.

Chairman Neil Hargis: Amanda did you get everyone a copy of that?

Curtis Overton: Is that something we do every year?

Chairman Neil Hargis: Yes.

J. Larry Miller made a motion to adopt the resolution. Dave Bartoni second that motion.

Chairman Neil Hargis asks if there are any questions?

J. Larry Miller: Do we do this every year?

Dave Bartoni: I don't know if its every year, but it's a regular thing.

J. Larry Miller: So, what does it do?

Dave Bartoni: Well, I believe, if there's a conflict, we have an agreement with the State Government for them to send out a prosecutor is that right?

Chairman Neil Hargis: I Believe so.

Dave Bartoni: Let's just say, I got arrested. Abby Dinn wouldn't

J. Larry Miller: That explains it, I got you.

Dave Bartoni: They are bringing an attorney out of Springfield to prosecute.

Chairman Neil Hargis asks if there are any other questions?

On roll call vote, all voted yes.

Said resolution is made a part of these minutes as Resolution No. 2026-42.

**SOUTHERN IL ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT
AUTHORITY (SIDA) - 1
APPOINTMENT**

Chairman Neil Hargis states that the next item on the agenda is to reappoint one member to the Southern Illinois Economic Development Authority (SIDA) Board. Chairman Neil Hargis read a letter from Warren Ribley, Executive Director of SIDA, requesting that member Lee Messersmith, to be reappointed for another six year term which will end on January 19, 2032.

Brad Wilson Made a motion to reappoint Lee Messersmith to the Southern Illinois Economic Development Authority to a new six year term ending on January 19, 2032. Kevin Weston second that motion.

Chairman Neil Hargis asks if there are any questions? No questions were asked at this time. On roll call vote, all voted yes.

Said letter is made a part of these minutes.

**HILL CITY WATER - 1
APPOINTMENT**

Chairman Neil Hargis states that the next item on the agenda is to appoint one member to the Hill City Water District and he read a letter from Paul Leffler, Chairman of the Hill City Water District Board requesting to replace Terry Moore, who's unexpired term will end April 30, 2027, with Amy Purdy Duff, to fulfill the remainder of his term.

Curtis Overton made a motion to appoint Amy Purdy Duff to the Hill City Water District Board to fill Terry Morre's unexpired term will end April 30, 2027. Angela Evans second that motion.

Chairman Neil Hargis Asks if there are any questions? No questions at this time. On roll call vote, all voted yes.

Said letter is made a part of these minutes.

**REND LAKE AREA
TOURISM COUNCIL - 1
APPOINTMENT**

Chairman Neil Hargis states that the next item on the agenda is to appoint one member to the Rend Lake Area Tourism Council. Chairman Neil Hargis recommends Jackie Taylor to be appointed to a three-year term ending on December 31, 2028 to replace Ryan Bleichner. Chairman Neil Hargis states that Jackie Taylor was a former director of the Core and is now retired and would be a good asset on the new Rend Lake Tourism Council.

Ray Minor made a motion to appoint Jackie Taylor to the Rend Lake Area Tourism Council. J. Larry Miller second that motion.

Brad Wilson: I have a quick question. Would it be out of line, when we appoint new members, for them to come to a meeting? It would sure be nice to put a face to a name.

Amanda Kink, County Office Manager: I can always ask. Because I do call them. I call them and ask them if they want to be reappointed, so I can always ask them if they will come.

Brad Wilson: It would just be nice to see who the person is, I think.

Chairman Neil Hargis: Jackie has been, I don't know if anyone will remember, when she was over the Core, she did come.

Brad Wilson: It's not a requirement to be on the board, but if we ever see them in public or have to talk to someone on that board, we would know. Just a thought.

Chairman Neil Hargis: Can't hurt to ask them.

Chairman Neil Hargis asks if there are any other questions? No questions were asked at this time. On roll call vote, all voted yes.

**COUNTY CLERK,
SHERIFF & CORONER
MONTHLY REPORTS**

Chairman Neil Hargis stated the next item on the agenda is to approve the December 2025 monthly reports for the County Clerk, and Coroner. Sheriff's monthly report was not available at this time.

Kevin Weston made a motion to accept the reports. J. Larry Miller second that 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.

**RETURN TO OPEN
SESSION**

ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Neil Hargis asked the Board if there were any additional questions? J. Larry Miller made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ray Minor second that motion. There being no further business. Chairman Neil Hargis declares the meeting adjourned.



Neil Hargis
Franklin County Board Chairman



Paris Dunk
County Clerk and Recorder