

**COUNTY BOARD MINUTES – MOULTRIE COUNTY, ILLINOIS
APRIL 11, 2024**

STATE OF ILLINOIS)
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COUNTY OF MOULTRIE)

The Moultrie County Board met on Thursday, April 11, 2024, in the County Board Room, Second Floor, Moultrie County Courthouse. Chair Billy Voyles called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

The opening prayer was given by board member Aaron Wilhelm, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance recited by all in attendance.

Roll Call was taken, with the following members present Billy Voyles, Marsha Kirby, Tyler Graven, Travis Phelps, Scott Buxton, Aaron Wilhelm, Kenny Graven, and Josh Roe. Absent - John Vander Burgh. A quorum was present.

There were 15 people in attendance, eight board members, and County Clerk Qualls.

Mission Statement – Read by Kenny Graven.

Correspondence: None

Minutes: Mr. Voyles asked for a motion to approve the March 18, 2024, county board minutes. Mr. Roe moved to approve said minutes. Tyler Graven seconded the motion. With no discussion, roll call vote was taken; the motion carried 8 yes, 0 no.

Guest Speaker: None

Unfinished Business: None

Appointments by Chair:

Mr. Voyles moved to appoint Mark Risley as Trustee of the Bethany Fire Protection District with the term to expire April 30, 2027. Ms. Kirby seconded the motion. There being no discussion, roll call vote was taken; the motion carried 8 yes, 0 no.

NEW BUSINESS

STANDING COMMITTEES

BUDGET AND FINANCE COMMITTEE (Chair: Vander Burgh)

Meeting: April 8, 2024.

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Mr. Phelps moved to approve the Treasurer's report for March 2024. Mr. Wilhelm seconded the motion. There being no discussion, roll call vote was taken; the motion carried 8 yes, 0 no.

Mr. Phelps moved to approve all claims as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Roe. There being no discussion, roll call vote was taken; the motion carried 8 yes, 0 no.

Mr. Phelps moved to add Revenue Line Item #006-001-45086 Strengthening IL-24 in the amount of \$350,000.00. The motion was seconded by Mr. Wilhelm. Mr. Phelps explained this is a grant given to the Health Department and this is just to put it on a line item. There being no further discussion, roll call vote was taken; the motion carried 8 yes, 0 no.

Mr. Phelps moved to add Revenue Line Item #006-001-45087 Dementia Caregivers-24 in the amount of \$50,000.00. The motion was seconded by Mr. Tyler Graven. Mr. Phelps explained as before, this is for the Health Department to put on a line item. There being no further discussion, roll call vote was taken; the motion carried 8 yes, 0 no.

Mr. Phelps asked Angie Hogan of the Health Department about the open house for the Dementia Caregivers. Ms. Hogan stated it is Tuesday, April 16, 2024, at 2:30 and they will have speakers from the Illinois Alzheimer's Association about 3:00.

BUILDING AND PROPERTY (Chair: T. Graven)

Meeting: April 3, 2024.

Mr. Tyler Graven stated the committee did meet, but he has no motions.

Mr. Graven mentioned the generator work has started with the concrete pad and conduit.

ROAD AND BRIDGE (Chair: Voyles)

Meeting: April 4, 2024.

Mr. Voyles moved to approve the lowest bidder for the 2024 County Maintenance Program. The motion was seconded by Mr. Buxton. There being no discussion, roll call vote was taken; the motion carried 8 yes, 0 no.

Mr. Voyles moved to approve the lowest bidder for the Township Maintenance Program. The motion was seconded by Ms. Kirby. There being no discussion, roll call vote was taken; the motion carried 8 yes, 0 no.

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Mr. Voyles moved to approve Certificate of Authority to purchase salt. The motion was seconded by Mr. Tyler Graven. Mr. Voyles explained the State of Illinois has decided counties need a certificate to purchase salt. When asked about the cost of the certificate, Mr. Voyles explained there is not a cost for the certificate, but one analogy was that someone ordered a ton of salt, didn't use it because it was a mile winter, the county didn't pay for it and said the person didn't have the authority to buy it. Therefore, the requirement for the certificate. There being no further discussion, roll call vote was taken; the motion carried 8 yes, 0 no.

Mr. Voyles moved to approve the Resolution for Funding for County Highway 8 19-00077-01-PV. The motion was seconded by Mr. Kenny Graven. When asked about the project, Highway Engineer Eric Seibring explained this is a continuation of a project they did last year near Lowe Township to rebuild the base. There being no further discussion, roll call vote was taken; the motion carried 8 yes, 0 no.

Mr. Voyles brought up the discussion of potential building space. He stated there have been a couple buildings that have come available. Mr. Seibring explained the highway department looked at Steve Wood's law office building as a spot for the highway department. The Fields Wright building has now come up for sale, Chairman Voyles asked that they look at that. Mr. Seibring, Jef Liddiard, Tyler Graven, and Travis Phelps toured the building. The building is 26,000 square feet, at 1.1 million dollars, it comes to \$42.00 per square foot. There are currently some leases that would have to be looked at by the State's Attorney.

Mr. Voyles stated the Wood Law Office space would be good for the Highway Department, minus vehicle storage and shed space. Fields Wright Medical Center opens up way more space for the whole courthouse still minus vehicle storage and shed space.

Mr. Tyler Graven mentioned they did look at the Fields Wright Space with the realtor. They were not able to look at the entire building as the doctor's office had patients. The upstairs is in very good shape, the downstairs is mostly remodeled, but some rooms are not used and not updated. From years past, there were some water issues it looks like that has been taken care of. Mr. Graven iterated this building would cost about \$42.00 per square foot, the architect said for a new building the same size, the cost would be about \$300.00 per square foot or 7.3 million dollars. The elevator in the building works, the remodeled bathrooms are ADA compliant. There is ample room for all offices, except the court system offices.

Mr. Phelps said it checks all the boxes. He feels rather than have the architect look at the courthouse, to have the firm look at the Fields Wright building to see the potential and move to the next phase. The price will need to be negotiable then see if it would be cost effective. He feels the building will fit what we need.

Mr. Graven mentioned there are five to seven air conditioner air handlers that appear to have all been replaced about the same time maybe three years ago. The water heaters are original, one was not working; we could probably replace and use only one.

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All the other mechanicals look pretty good. The roof looked to be in good shape. There didn't seem to be any structural damage.

Mr. Phelps added that for the health services that are provided there, we need to give them ample time to find another place to continue to provide health care.

Mr. Voyles brought up buildings and subleasing. A question for [State's Attorney] Tracy [Weaver], being a government agency, knowing we can't lease and make money, but is it something we can do to support the community in the case of someone local renting it? Mr. Phelps stated the realtor informed them the leases are all annual.

Ms. Weaver stated in past situations, we haven't been able to do it, but she will double-check. Mr. Voyles stated, his focus is that if it's someone local, we don't want to kick out a local business if you go buy a building; we want to support what we've got.

Wilhelm stated he likes the idea, in comparison to the old Jim Warren building and Winskill Autobody that was on the table at one point, the cost per square foot on this is astronomically lower on this than what the other options would have been. The Warren building was around a quarter million (Phelps added it would have reached half a million with upgrades) and it's nothing compared to the Fields-Wright (F-W) building; where we'd pay three times the amount for eight times the space. With space being one of the biggest complaints, he feels the F-W building would take care of that for the rest of our lives. It also saves the money of what it would have cost to knock down walls, etc. in the courthouse. Mr. Phelps added we could add our IEMA to the F-W building, setup a board room, Tyler Graven suggested having an emergency response command post. Phelps said the parking will need to be looked at. Tyler Graven said there is some remodeling that would have to be done, we won't need 40 or 50 physicians' rooms. There are costs we have to look at before doing anything to make it work for the offices. The upper floor has been remodeled with steel studs, it is not difficult to change, but it is a tear down and rebuild. There are several more things to plan before we decide if this is a good fit for the County.

Wilhelm asked how much future planning goes into what a remodel looks like before we make an offer. Do we have the architect go through and rough sketch what each office will look like and the cost before we make an offer? Voyles affirmed.

Additional discussion was held concerning the current lessees in the building and whether or not the County can lease for no charge and giving the lessees time to find or build new buildings. Phelps agreed it's worth looking into.

Jef Liddiard mentioned that since the architect was here that morning, he got Eric's copy of the layout and gave it to the architect. Tyler Graven mentioned the architect made it sound like it was a great deal for the County also.

Roe stated one of the issues he sees with renting out the spaces and not making any money is if something goes wrong, we're liable for it.

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Phelps stated it will be a few more months looking into the project, then negotiations, so it will be six or eight months, maybe a year, then we can see where we're at. Then we talk about budgets, if it works out, it works out.

Eric Seibring said the lease terms are available, but a non-disclosure agreement would have to be signed then have the state's attorney to review to answer some of the questions in terms of when they're due.

Lori Barringer said she doesn't have the statute, but can get it later, but when you're a government entity, you're typically tax exempt. If you lease, even if you don't make money, you will lose your tax-exempt status.

Tyler Graven said we would like to avoid that, but we also don't want to kick a doctor out of his office. Mr. Voyles agreed and encouraged building and property to continue.

Mr. Buxton asked since the market seems to be massively moving around here on industrial, would that be a concern that could move pretty quick? Voyles stated, it could, but being a government entity, the diligence has do be done first and doesn't feel there is a way we can jump on it.

Tyler Graven stated he is not against having additional building and ground meetings to cover some of the bases and would hate to lose it because of how we have to move on it. He is not against having additional meetings to get the architect on the phone for the meetings. Liddiard mentioned the architect commented that if we want another set of eyes on the building, he would be more than happy to come look through it.

PLANNING, ZONING and LAND USE (Chair: Phelps)

Meeting: None

Phelps stated they did not meet but next month will be a busy month. Planning and Zoning Coordinator, Kristi Hart confirmed.

PUBLIC HEALTH, SAFETY, AND WELFARE (Chair: Phelps)

Meeting: None

Mr. Phelps stated they did not meet but they continue to monitor the effects of the Safe-T act.

AS NEEDED COMMITTEES

None.

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Tyler Graven asked if he can add something for the dive team. Voyles affirmed. He Graven said it looks like the Shelby County Dive Team is doing some kind of movement after they sent the letter. Hopefully we will hear more in the coming weeks as far as the Shelby County Dive Team being reactivated through the county.

OTHER BUSINESS

For discussion/action on committee assignments. Voyles, concerning the Personnel Committee, removed Scott Buxton from the committee and added Kenny Graven to the committee.

As for the Election Committee, Voyles removed Qualls as chair and named Buxton as chair and added Roe to the committee also.

Wilhelm gave an update on the childcare initiative. They had a meeting on the 9th [of April]. They have some new providers in the works, someone from Lovington popped up. The only community they don't have someone representing this project is Bethany.

Their website launched last month - moultriecountykids.org. It has a list of all the providers in the county licensed by the state, resources to food banks, libraries, emergency information and any other information concerning children a parent may need.

Kirby suggested having a link to the website on the county website.

EXECUTIVE SESSION 5 ILCS 120/2

No executive session.

COMMENTS

BOARD

Mr. Phelps asked if setting of the salaries for the next election cycle goes through the personnel committee first. Kirby confirmed stated those who are elected come through the personnel. There was additional discussion about setting salaries of elected officials and the assessor.

ELECTED OFFICIALS

None.

DEPARTMENT HEADS

None.

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PUBLIC COMMENTS

Brad Graven asked if the Clerk could address if the election judges have been paid. She indicated with a nod they had been.

Have the precinct committeemen received verification of their weighted vote. Qualls stated she has been working on those and should go out the next day.

Graven went on that he had one election judge tell him he was told to stand down, that he was not needed and a democrat who posted on Facebook was also told to stand down, that she was not needed. Graven then discussed that Republican Party Chair Mike McDaniel was not allowed entrance into the election county center. Qualls stated by statute, poll watcher credentials are required. When asked why she didn't issue the credentials then, Qualls stated he did not ask.

Graven asked how the Democrat chairman knew he needed them. Mr. Tim Singer, Democrat Party Chair, stated every election he has gone in there, he has gotten credentials. Mr. McDaniel stated he didn't have them in fall of 2022 when he went in. Qualls stated she didn't know what happened two years ago. Additional discussion was had about the situation.

Vickie Bathe asked if we have ever had problems with elections in this County. A few people responded that, yes, there have been. Ms. Bathe stated she has lived here all her life and never heard of it. Wilhelm stated she may have never heard about it because it wasn't brought to the public's attention and now you have one party holding another party accountable. Ms. Bathe asked, for what? Wilhelm stated what they see as being an issue, that 's the public's job. Mr. Singer stated Mike [McDaniel] told him he wasn't allowed to go in there, Singer informed him he had credentials, and he was admitted.

ADJOURN:

Mr. Voyles asked for a motion to adjourn. Tyler Graven moved to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Kenny Graven. Via voice vote, the meeting was adjourned at 7:44 p.m.

Linda S. Qualls

Linda S. Qualls,
Moultrie County Clerk