

**COUNTY BOARD MINUTES – MOULTRIE COUNTY, ILLINOIS
MARCH 18, 2024**

STATE OF ILLINOIS)
)
COUNTY OF MOULTRIE)

The Moultrie County Board met on Monday, March 18, 2024, rescheduled from March 14, 2024, in the County Board Room, Second Floor, Moultrie County Courthouse. Chair Billy Voyles called the meeting to order at 7:05 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 14 people in attendance, eight board members, and County Clerk Qualls.

Mission Statement – Read by Aaron Wilhelm.

Correspondence: Mr. Voyles read correspondence from Republican Party Chair, Michael McDaniel. (copy attached)

Minutes: Mr. Voyles asked for a motion to approve the February 15, 2024, county board minutes. Mr. Roe moved to approve said minutes. Ms. Kirby seconded the motion. With no discussion, roll call vote was taken; the motion carried 8 yes, 0 no.

Guest Speaker: Mr. Voyles introduced Ms. Kim Carmean, Executive Director of CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate) in Coles and Cumberland Counties. Ms. Carmean explained that DCFS has shown great interest in adding CASA services to Moultrie County. The counties cannot provide money to CASA. Coles and Cumberland counties collect fees and fines to support CASA. Currently, CASA receives approximately \$15,000.00 per year from Coles County and \$4,000.00 - \$5,000.00 from Cumberland County.

When children are removed from the home and placed in foster care, they are assigned a guardian ad litem (GAL) through the court, and in Coles and Cumberland, CASA is the GAL. CASA represents the children and whatever is in their best interests. DCFS works to reunify the family, CASA may not feel that is appropriate, so they ask for alternatives, such as a goal change. CASA visits the children at least once a month, writes court reports, and makes recommendations.

Mr. Wilhelm asked about requirements to become a CASA volunteer. Ms. Carmean said the volunteer has to be 21, pass a background check, complete 30 hours of training, mandated reporter training, and be sworn in by the judge.

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After some discussion, Ms. Carmean said CASA can ask for things that typically DCFS can't. CASA represents juveniles until the age of 21. Also, a decision would need to be made if CASA's roll will be a "friend of the court" or as "GAL", they are okay with either. In a friend of the court model, the court decides if CASA needs to be involved. In the GAL model, they are involved in every case, regardless.

Once a model is decided upon, CASA will write up a memorandum of understanding, which is an agreement between CASA, DCFS, and the Court that is good for about three years. This gives CASA the ability to be appointed to the cases.

Mr. Voyles suggested this be on the April Agenda as action/discussion since it will take time to get this in place along with the funding. After an inaudible question, Mr. Voyles referred to State's Attorney Weaver for a response. SA Weaver stated that ultimately it is up to Judge Richey to sign off on the program. The discussion will continue in April with Ms. Carmean returning.

Unfinished Business: None

Appointments by Chair:

Mr. Voyles moved to appoint the following to the Board of Review: Robert L. Elder, Steven W. Mayberry, and Dr. Gregory Mauck, terms to begin June 1, 2024, and to expire May 31, 2026. The motion was seconded by Mr. Buxton. With no discussion, roll call vote was taken; the motion carried 8 yes, 0 no.

Mr. Voyles gave the first reading to appoint Mark Risley as Trustee of the Bethany Fire Protection District with the term to expire April 30, 2027.

NEW BUSINESS

STANDING COMMITTEES

BUDGET AND FINANCE COMMITTEE (Chair: Vander Burgh)

Meeting: March 11, 2024.

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

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BUILDING AND PROPERTY (Chair: T. Graven)

Meeting: March 6, 2024.

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

ROAD AND BRIDGE (Chair: Voyles)

Meeting: March 7, 2024.

No motions.

PLANNING, ZONING and LAND USE (Chair: Phelps)

Meeting: March 1, 2024.

Mr. Phelps moved to approve an amendment to the text of the Moultrie County Wind and Solar Ordinance to include the state language for drainage and tile protection. The motion was seconded by Mr. T. Graven. Mr. Phelps explained there is a guy that has been to some training on exposure and the problems it causes the drainage. This is important to the farmers of Moultrie County. With no further discussion, roll call vote was taken, the motion carried 8 yes, 0 no.

Mr. Phelps moved to approve an amendment to the text of the Moultrie County Wind and Solar Ordinance to include a section about battery storage requirements. The motion was seconded by Mr. T. Graven. There being no discussion, roll call vote was taken, the motion carried 8 yes, 0 no.

Mr. Phelps moved to approve a Stand-Alone Battery Energy Storage System. The motion was seconded by Ms. Kirby. Mr. Wilhelm asked if this is in addition to the existing ordinance. Mr. Phelps stated it is not connected to the wind & solar, but a stand-alone for the battery storage. With no further discussion, roll call vote was taken, the motion carried, 8 yes, 0 no.

Mr. Phelps moved to approve a Temporary Moratorium for CO₂ Pipeline and Sequestration Wells in Moultrie County for Six Months. The motion was seconded by Mr. Roe. Mr. Phelps explained that ADM currently has a CO₂ pipeline storage underground and there have been inquiries to have that in Moultrie County and we just need to have the time to look further in to how we can have an ordinance concerning the CO₂ storage. If we don't have an ordinance within the six months, we can ask for an extension. With no further discussion, roll call vote was taken, the motion carried, 8 yes, 0 no.

Mr. Phelps moved to approve a rezoning request from Jamie Martin on PIN 08-08-06-000-104, 642 CR 1350N, Sullivan, IL, from IL AG to C-1 for a bait shop. The motion was seconded by Mr. Roe. Mr. Phelps explained this is a follow-up to a request we've had for three or four months. The individual has met all the requirements and we have proceeded to allow that. With no further discussion, roll call vote was taken, the motion carried, 8 yes, 0 no.

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

Meeting: March 6, 2024.

Mr. Phelps moved to approve a Resolution Declaring that Moultrie County Will Not Spend or Accept Local Tax Dollars on the Immigration Crisis for Migrants and/or Asylum Seekers entering Moultrie County. The motion was seconded by Mr. Voyles. Mr. Phelps thanked State’s Attorney Tracy Weaver for doing a great job drawing resolutions together from other counties, that this includes the best policies. With no further discussion, roll call vote was taken, the motion carried, 8 yes, 0 no.

AS NEEDED COMMITTEES

None.

AD HOC COMMITTEES

None.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Voyles moved to approve an Ordinance Reducing the Number of Election Judges to Three for Primary Election to be held Tuesday, March 19, 2024. State’s Attorney Weaver asked if the motion is being withdrawn. Mr. Voyles stated it is being withdrawn; because there was an ordinance from 2018 that was not dated, but 2020 and 2022 were. Mr. Phelps asked if we are currently under a three primary judges. Mr. Voyles explained the 2018 ordinance did not have a date tied to it. Therefore, next month there will be a redraw of that ordinance.

Mr. Wilhelm gave an update on the childcare initiative. They are currently having monthly meetings. Proto tykes is still going through the childcare certification process, there is an individual in Lovington going through the State who will be adding eight slots. Mr. Wilhelm further discussed the timeline for the process, their website, and working with the consulting firm and amending their agreement.

EXECUTIVE SESSION 5 ILCS 120/2

No executive session.

COMMENTS

BOARD

Mr. Roe mentioned he will have the prescription audit review next month.

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Mr. Tyler Graven said they will be having a dive team meeting this month and there is still no real update from Shelby County on what's going on there. Ms. Hart stated the dive team will be sending a letter to Shelby County letting them know that per our current SOP, we cannot continue to cover with no word from them on what they plan to do.

Kenny Graven asked if he could go back to the election, so now there are five judges? Mr. Voyles stated the State mandates five, but the County has reduced to three.

ELECTED OFFICIALS

None.

DEPARTMENT HEADS

County Assessor Barringer said she has three things.

First, she sent her final abstract to the State on February 7 and it came back on March 8 and she has officially rolled to tax year 2024 and rolled to the County Clerk to set levy rates, etc.

Second, during budgeting last year, she spoke to the board about a program called True Roll to help with exemptions. To find exemptions on more than one property since any one person can have exemptions on only one property, or to get those who are over sixty-five get their elderly exemption. This is a new software program which cost the County \$11,000.00 for one year, there were 700 parcels that were flagged for possible errors, by going through that, we were able to put about \$570,000.00 back in the EAV based on those exemptions that were given and should not have been. We notified 98 people that they potentially met the elderly exemption qualifications, so that removes about \$490,000.00. So, Ms. Barringer isn't sure it benefits the County to pay the \$11,000.00 per year, but maybe every four years; to help those citizens over 65 and to clean up the exemptions that are being given erroneously.

Third, Westport Apartments was approved by the State to be tax exempt. In July 2023 ownership was changed from Westport Apartments to Westport Harmony Housing, LLC. The tax-exempt status was submitted based on being a charitable organization. A man from New York owns this charitable organization and the information provided was how he donates money to causes in the local community; though it is not known if he has donated in Moultrie County yet. They get tax exempt from July 12, 2023, until the end of 2023. Previously, Westport Apartments' taxes were based on income due to being low-income housing. They did not turn in their income for 2023 so their value for 2023 will be a lot higher than in years past, so the taxes for 2023 will be roughly \$54,000.00 even though they now have the tax-exempt status they will have to pay that for 2023 pay in 2024. From 2019 to 2022 their taxes were about \$30,000.00 per year. So, though we will receive nearly two years' worth of taxes this year, for 2024, payable in 2025, they will get a zero-tax bill. This is only if they don't evict anyone for not paying rent. If they evict someone for not paying rent, Ms. Barringer said she can put them back on the tax rolls;

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this will be watched for. This is the only way they can be put back on the tax rolls or if ownership changes.

Angie Hogan of the Moultrie County Health Department informed the board that last year they set out to do a Dementia Friendly Moultrie County Designation; people were kind enough to set in on focus groups and discuss in meetings. The County did receive that designation, Ms. Hogan wanted to acknowledge the board's support for that, it did make a difference and thanked them for their support. There will be an open house and kick-off in April.

PUBLIC

Mr. Brad Graven had questions and comments for the County Clerk. He stated the number of staff the Clerk's office has, that there has been no election committee meeting since August of 2023, nothing has been brought up about election judge shortage since that meeting. Mr. Graven asked when the County Clerk called or emailed the party chairmen about the shortage of election judges? County Clerk Qualls stated she will refer that to Counsel. Mr. Graven's next question was when did the County Clerk call or email any precinct committeeperson. Again, County Clerk Qualls referred the question to counsel.

Mr. Greven then brought up the 2018 Ordinance stating it supersedes State Law. Mr. Graven addressed to the board chair his request to have the County Clerk removed from the elections board.

Mr. Mike McDaniel asked the County Clerk why the committeemen have never been sent, a week or two after the primary, forms to appoint our judges for the next two years or if she has chosen to stop or been told to stop sending out forms. Clerk Qualls explained the letters are being worked on to send out after the primary. When asked why this was not done two years ago, Clerk Qualls stated she was not in charge of that two years ago.

ADJOURN:

Mr. Voyles asked for a motion to adjourn. Mr. Roe moved to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Mr. T. Graven. Via voice vote, the meeting was adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

Linda S. Qualls

Linda S. Qualls,
Moultrie County Clerk

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March 14th, 2024

Chairman Billy Voyles
10 South Main St.
Sullivan, IL 61951

RE: Election Judges for the 2024 Election Season

Chairman Voyles,

It has come to the attention of the Moultrie County Republican Central Committee that the County Clerk's office intends to only have 2 or 3 Election Judges for both the Sullivan 1 and Sullivan 7 Precincts.

Per State Statute on even number election years there are to be five total judges (This current breakdown would be 3 Republican and 2 Democrat Judges) per Precinct. At no time is only having two Election Judges for a Precinct acceptable.

To modify the number of Judges needed the County Clerk would need a vote held by the County Board. Looking at the posted Agenda for the March 14th meeting, there is no mention of this request, therefore the County Clerk cannot legally make this change to Election Judge count for Sullivan 1 and Sullivan 7 Precincts.

If the County Clerk has a lack of Election Judges I would like to ask the following:

1. Why was the Moultrie County Republican Central Committee Chairman nor any Committee People made aware that there was a shortage?
2. Why has no member of the Moultrie County Republican Central Committee received paperwork to submit names for Election Judges and Alternates?
3. Why has there not been an Elections Committee meeting since August 7th, 2023?

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael E. McDaniel". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping "M" and "D".

Michael E. McDaniel
Chairman
Moultrie County Republican Central Committee