

**MARION COUNTY BOARD
MINUTES – AUGUST 23, 2022**

Meeting called to order at 7:00 P.M. By Chairwoman Debbie Smith

Invocation by Ms. Judith Meeks-Hakim, Board Member

Pledge of Allegiance to Flag by Chairwoman Debbie Smith

Roll Call by Ms. Deb Reed, Board Member

Members Present: Chairwoman Debbie Smith, Dr. Creighton Engel, Ms. Sharon Woodward, Ms. Judith Meeks-Hakim, Mr. Adam Smith, Mr. David Iossi, Ms. Angela Hiestand, Mr. Jim Purcell, Ms. Deb Reed, Ms. Judith Shafer, Mr. Steven Whritenour and Mr. Chris Krupp. Member Absent: Mr. Bill Henson.

Others Present: Judge Mark Stedelin, Judge Sanders, Circuit Clerk Tiffany Schicker and State's Attorney Tim Hudspeth. Also, from Office of Statewide Pretrial Services were Deputy Chief Lowry, and PSO Lauren Meadows, Deputy Director Donald Jones and Region 4 Chief Josh Shelton. Also, attending were the following: Treasurer Gary Purcell, County Engineer Mike McCormick, Detective Kevin Cripps, Salem Times Commoner Dennis Rosenberger, WJBD Bruce Kropp, Marion County ESDA Coordinator Sheri Brooks-Barter and citizen Bill Smith.

Elected Officials and Other Guests: Judge Stedelin, Judge Sanders, Circuit Clerk Tiffany Schicker and State's Attorney Tim Hudspeth. Purpose of presentation was State's Attorney Tim Hudspeth was wanting to increase his salary for Assistant State's Attorney from \$50,000 to \$80,000. Judge Sanders had reached out and applied for a grant from AOIC allowing increase of \$30,000. It is only a one year grant and will re-apply next year; however, in the event she doesn't get the grant, they are wanting a commitment from the Board to absorb the \$30,000 the coming years. Please note this does not apply to FY '23.

The Assistant State's Attorney would be for juvenile abuse and neglect cases. Judge Stedelin stated that Marion County has one of the highest rates per capita regarding juvenile cases, and attorney workforce shortage. Trials have been lost and juveniles were released back to their undesirable homes which was mainly due to inexperienced attorney(s).

Judge Sanders indicated that Circuit Clerk Tiffany Schicker had given her website information. After reviewing the Assistant State's Attorney salaries it was determined pay should be anywhere from \$97,000 to \$109,000. All participants indicated that you **can not hire a qualified attorney anywhere for \$50,000 that has the experience necessary for presiding over juvenile cases.**

Judge Stedelin stated that it is time to reconsider priorities with juvenile cases (currently low priority). Many juvenile cases go on for years and have complex litigation. Judge Stedelin indicated that we must make a commitment to raise priorities and be comparable to drug court cases. These juveniles deserve better judicial services.

Dr. Engel asked State's Attorney Tim Hudspeth how long the salary had been \$40,000. Response was that under Bill Milner's term it was \$40,000 and Tim Hudspeth raised it to \$50,000. It took him from December 1 2020 to August 2021 to hire an attorney. First week of July he again posted and received one applicant. Dr. Engel asked if we would have more response if salary was raised to \$80,000 and Mr. Hudspeth replied "yes".

Circuit Clerk Tiffany Schicker indicated that we could certainly look into more grants available in the future in the event this grant is not renewable.

Ms. Sharon Woodward asked if juvenile attorneys get burned out. Tim Hudspeth said it would be more possible especially seeing and hearing what a small child goes through. Judge Stedelin indicated that we just don't pay enough for attorney to preside over these cases. And, yes they could experience passion fatigue. Marion County is in urgent need of a competent, dedicated juvenile attorney who has the in site and experience to successfully prosecute.

Board Member Steve Whritenour asked Judge Stedelin questions on the Illinois Safety Act which goes into effect January 1, 2023. Both agreed the big ball is about to drop. Judge Stedelin stated it is not truly defined at this time and the judicial system and Pretrial Officers will be enduring an entire change from past and it will have to be resolved and information will trickle down to law enforcement regarding basically who can and cannot be retained. He further indicated there would be an increase of no shows and can only detain under certain conditions. Judge Stedelin indicated this Act is a "ground swell." He further stated there would be no modifications or amendments to this bill prior to January 1, 2023. Mr. Whritenour stated monies lost due to this new Act would be approximately \$350,000 of revenue.

Chairwoman Debbie Smith proceeded with Board on raising the Assistant State's Attorney's salary from \$50,000 to \$80,000 for FY '24 in the event the grant is not renewable. At that time Board Member Wes Gozia asked to speak. Mr. Gozia indicated that this is why Judge Sanders dedicates her time to these ongoing juvenile cases and unfortunately these cases go on for years and years. With having someone there for years they know the histories of these children and become their advocate. He further indicated it makes our county a better place. Mr. Gozia further stated that he did not think \$80,000 would be enough to attract a qualified attorney and looking at closer to \$100,000. It must be taken under consideration that this could be a difference of life and death for the children. After discussion, it was decided to change \$50,000 to \$70,000 on State's Attorney's County Budget for FY '23 plus the \$30,000 grant monies from Judge Sanders making the position salary \$100,000. Please note, if grant is not received, county budget will have to absorb the \$30,000 grant monies not available. Mr. David Iossi made motion to approve monies with second by Ms. Judith Meeks-Hakim. Roll call vote: All Ayes.

Pretrial Officer: Office of Statewide Pretrial Services, Deputy Director Donald Jones spoke to the board requesting space for his Pretrial Officer (PSO) Lauren Meadows. Under State Statute passed in 1987 pretrial services were required in each county. He indicated that we were only one of few counties that was already performing the pretrial services. The Officer will be counseling pretrial individuals with offering specific counseling needs such as mental health, drug addiction, etc., which will then be relayed to the courts. It was indicated that the toughest duty is to monitor so they don't have repeat offenses. After Discussion, Judge Stedelin recommends the basement area which has a waiting room/pass-through and office. Pretrial Services has offered to lease the space at \$12.00 per square foot. Deputy Director Donald Jones indicated that with the County's case load that it may necessitate another case load employee.

During discussion, it was first considered having Coroner's secretary move out of her office and relocate her to the Coroner's office used for storage, and his storage records would be moved to the Moose Annex. However, Public Defender Craig Griffin would like that space instead of space proposed to Pretrial Services.

Approval of Board Minutes:

Minutes from July 26, 2022 (tabled from August 9, 2022): Ms. Sharon Woodward made motion to approve and second by Ms. Judy Shafer. Voice Vote: 13 Ayes 1 Nay David Iossi

Minutes from August 9, 2022: Motion made by Ms. Judith Meeks-Hakim and second by Mr. Jim Purcell: Voice Vote: All Ayes. Mr. Iossi indicated he didn't have time to read minutes since he was having difficulties with his PAD. Mr. Whritenour and Mr. Gozia helped those at meeting with problems regarding IPADS.

COUNTY CLERK: STEVE FOX CORRESPONDENCE

Absent – no report

REPORTS FROM STANDING COMMITTEES

BUILDING AND HISTORICAL -CHAIR CREIGHTON ENGEL

Request from State Office of Pretrial Services to rent space for PSO Lauren Meadows with possibility of an additional office based on County's workload. Space would be in basement which includes waiting area, pass-through and office. They are also in need of internet access. Rental would be \$12.00 per square foot. Motion made by Wes Gozia and second by Ms. Sharon Woodward to lease space to State Office of Pretrial Services. Roll Call Vote: All Ayes

Security Alarm had made an inspection and report was attached to agenda. They will be getting back regarding items that need to be corrected.

FINANCE/INSURANCE – CHAIR CREIGHTON ENGEL

Resolution 2022-90 Permanent Parcel Number 14-00-060-190 Centralia Township. The bid was \$823.00, the Treasurer will receive \$300.00 and remaining disbursed according to law. Dr. Creighton made motion to approve with second by Ms. Sharon Woodward. Voice Vote: All Ayes

Resolution 2022-91 Permanent Parcel Number 14-00-054-615 O.T. North ½ Lot 2 BLK 64. Bid was \$7,395.73. The Treasurer will receive \$794.31 and remaining disbursed according to law. Dr. Creighton made motion to approve and second by Mr. Jim Purcell. Voice Vote: All Ayes

Note: The University of Illinois – Illinois Extension regarding County's Commitment of \$153,000 for FY '23 from Levy was not discussed at this time. Dr. Engel made motion to table until next meeting with second by Wes Gozia. Tabled until September 13, 2022.

LAW ENFORCEMENT – CHAIR STEVE WHRITENOUR

Mr. Whritenour had nothing to report. Kevin Cripps did indicate he would start attending Board Meetings on a regular basis and Sheriff Andy Garden is bringing him up to date on issues and the two of them are anticipating a smooth transition in December. Detective Cripps did mention the recent cattle rustling that occurred in our county. It was determined 78 cattle were stolen valued at approximately \$90,000.

LAW ENFORCEMENT CONTINUED

Marion County ESDA Coordinator Sheri Brooks-Barter indicated they had assisted at the Centralia Balloon Fest on August 19, 20 and 21, 2022. She indicated that she will be on vacation the following week and week of September 6 she will be attending IEMA Summit. One of the classes she will be attending is involving youth in ESDA. Following Summit will be Antique Power Days at the Marion County Fairgrounds.

ROAD AND BRIDGE – CHAIR STEVEN BRADLEY

Ordinance 2022-04: County Engineer requests to open County Highway budget and allow moving \$100,000 out of previous year MFT monies from 2010 to Expenditure line of his budget. Please note this ordinance was written by State's Attorney Tim Hudspeth with the assistance of Dustin from Bellwether. Of the \$100,000 transferred \$40,000 will be allocated for equipment and \$60,000 for bridges. Motion to approve opening budget and transferring monies made by Dr. Creighton Engel and second by Mr. Steven Bradley. Roll Call Vote: All Ayes

Resolution 2022-89 Purchase of pre-owned single axle truck in the amount of \$35,838.00. Ms. Judith Meeks-Hakim made motion to approve and second by Mr. Steven Bradley. Roll Call Vote: All Ayes.

COUNTY AND COMMUNITY – CHAIR BILL HENSON

Mr. Henson was unable to attend; therefore, Chairwoman Debbie Smith addressed the board. City of Centralia has not hired an Animal Control Office as of this date. They are only receiving applications from CNA's and Waitresses. This job requires knowledge of animal handling in all situations. At this time the City is continuing their search.

In reference to the flag poles, My Tree Service has provided a bid of \$2,000 for removing the flag poles to and from Americana. At last meeting Mr. Wes Gozia asked Mr. Henson to check into Landers. Upon contacting Landers they have offered to complete the job at no cost to the County.

WEBSITE – CHAIR WES GOZIA

Since the Board Secretary resigned effective August, 19, 2022 he had nothing to report. County Board Chairwoman Debbie Smith has made arrangements with Board member Deb Reed to work with Serpentine and bring website to date and she in turn will train Board Chairwoman.

MARION COUNTY 2023 BICENTENNIAL – CHAIR WES GOZIA

Mr. Gozia indicated that he has been playing telephone tag with Mr. Mark Decker. He will see if he can get Mr. Decker to attend our next meeting on September 13, 2022.

PERSONNEL/LABOR RELATIONS – CHAIR ADAM SMITH

Previously addressed at August 9, 2022 meeting it has been determined by our Labor Attorney Andy Martone and agreed by State's Attorney that \$996 September installment payment due for Central Laborer's Pension Fund must be paid until issue has been resolved. This payment is due each month until advised otherwise. If it is determined that no monies are owed the County will be reimbursed. Adam Smith made a motion to approve with second by Mr. David Iossi. Roll Call Vote: All Ayes.

With reference to Laborer's Contract negotiation there has been no word from Laborers' rep or employees. Chairwoman Smith will reach out to the laborers' rep to determine status of negotiations.

911/ESDA – CHAIR STEVE WHRITENOUR

The second meeting of committee was held on August 16. Basically it was a repeat of first meeting with the exception leaders of the municipalities will be contacted to participate at next meeting to be held Tuesday, September 20, 2022 at 6:00 P.M. Discussion included dis-functional tornado sirens and looking at alternatives. Forbes Lake and Odin are not working; however, parts have been ordered. Looking for long-term solutions.

Notes from first meeting will be sent out with September 13, 2022 agenda information. It was not a formal meeting since there was no quorum; however, general notes were taken.

Treasurer Gary Purcell addressed the board indicating that the first distribution of real estate taxes was made. He had received 23.6 million dollars and issued 104 checks. County will receive in General Fund 1.2 million dollars with the entire county receiving 2.7 million dollars (this includes mental health, county highway, etc.). Compared to FY '21 Mr. Purcell indicated there was some increase.

There was nothing else to come before the board; therefore, Mr. Wes Gozia made motion to adjourn with mileage and per diem and second by Mr. Steve Whritenour. Roll Call Vote: All Ayes

Adjourned: 8:30 P.M.


Debbie Smith, Marion County Board Chair