**MINUTES OF A BOARD MEETING OF THE COUNTY OF HANCOCK, STATE OF ILLINOIS, HELD AT THE COUNTY COURTHOUSE, IN THE CITY OF CARTHAGE ON JUNE 17, 2025**

STATE OF ILLINOIS )

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COUNTY OF HANCOCK )

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The meeting was called to order by chairman Mark Menn at 6:30 p.m. The invocation was given by Joe Boyles. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by the county clerk.

Those present included: Mark Menn, County Chairman

Holly Wilde-Tillman, County Clerk

Michelle Merritt Lee Ann Lambert

Tom Rodgers Joe Boyles

Alex Blythe Steve Lucie

Harry Douglas Mark Hanson

Mark Harrison Wayne Bollin

Steve Finney Josh Turner

Dennis Castlebury Ryan Weeks

Visitors included Justin Greeley, Bobi James, Michelle Monroe, Jordan Hawes, Mark Brady, and several members of the community.

Ms. Merritt made a motion to approve the May minutes and executive minutes, Mr. Weeks seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken with all members present voting “yes”. Motion carried.

Hancock County 4H Federation was to be at the meeting but because of the weather decided to postpone.

Jordan Hawes introduced himself and announced that he will be running in 2026 for Hancock County Sheriff. He is a lifelong resident of Hancock County. He is currently a detective in Macomb. He started as a dispatcher in 2008 and a corrections officer. He has worked for Warsaw Police Department, and then moved to the Hamilton Police Department. Sheriff Bentzinger hired him in 2015 and was chief deputy until 2021 when the safety act came in to play. Officers were going to have to make reports that were consistent with body cameras. He did not have a union or insurance to protect him so he decided to do something different.

Michelle Monroe spoke of concerns regarding the disparity of the wages of the courthouse employee. She asked why the board does not want equality, why would they want to hold off, those with higher wages are getting more IMRF benefits. What is the downside of compensating good employees? The years of employment should count for something. Is there any consideration of payroll being done outside of the courthouse for transparency? When employees were given a 4% raise and others got a 16% raise it should have raised a red flag.

Mr. Menn declared the opening of the public hearing for 1500th Sun, LLC, Commercial Solar Project of up-to-a 3.9 MWac Solar Project. Mr. Menn stated Mr. Farkes was unable to come due to the birth of their baby and the board wishes them well. He introduced Mr. Brady of 22c. Mr. Lucie asked why not go to one of the school and build a solar project there so they could use the lease proceeds. Mr. Brady stated that you had to have a willing landowner and how close it is to the grid. They need to comply with citing requirements that are put in place by the county. The power from this solar project will mostly go to Carthage and will be used locally. This will help maintain the flow of power to the community and have less interruption in electricity. The hearing was closed at 6:48 p.m. Mr. Hanson arrived at 6:48 p.m.

Committee reports were gone over. Mr. Lucie motioned to approve the committee minutes, Ms. Merritt seconded. A roll call vote was taken with all members present voting “yes”. Motion carried.

Mr. Bollin moved to approved the consent agenda. Mr. Blythe seconded. A roll call vote was taken with all members present voting “yes”. Motion carried. This included:

1. Approval to Charge WL Miller for 19 working days at $2000/day for the Connable Road Project
2. 90-day Extension to Submit Circuit Clerk’s Annual Audit to the Administrative Office of Accountability
3. Resolution for Designation of Depositories of County Funds

Mr. Castlebury made a motion to approve the resolution for supplemental MFT for microsurfacing of the Bluff Road in Warsaw. Mr. Finney seconded. A roll call vote was taken with all members present voting “yes”. Motion carried.

Mr. Douglas moved to approve the 1500th Sun, LLC, commercial solar project with Mr. Boyles seconded the motion. There was short discussion regarding the taxes for solar projects. Mr. Greeley stated they are 100% compliant with their current ordinance and state statute. A roll call vote was taken with Rodgers, Blythe, Lucie, Merritt, and Turner voting no and all other members voting “yes”. Motion carried.

Mr. Lucie motioned to approve paying the vet invoice and sending the bill to the dog owner. Mr. Douglas seconded. Mr. Lucie asked why this invoice was pinpointed. It was stated so this can be sent to the dog owner by the states attorney. A roll call vote was taken with all members present voting “yes”. Motion carried.

Motion to skip D was made by Mr. Douglas, seconded by Mr. Turner. All members present voted aye.

Motion to increase the Information Technology credit card from $5000 to $7500 was made by Ms. Lambert. Mr. Boyles seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken with all members present voting “yes”. Motion carried.

Mr. Lucie motioned to approve the states attorney retaining outside counsel. Mr. Castlebury seconded. There was discussion regarding the states attorney’s case load. She has went 12 months without an assistant over the last couple of years. She would like a part-time civil assistant. It was stated that she could use the rest of the assistant states’ attorney’s wage and then maybe pull money out of tort liability or do a budget amendment if needed. Mr. Lucie amended his motion to read for the states attorney to use the allocated money that is in her budget to spend on outside counsel. Mr. Castlebury seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken with all members present voting “yes”. Motion carried.

Mr. Bollin made a motion to for the termination of the Board of Review Member Troy Pierce, Mr. Weeks seconded. A roll call vote was taken with all members present voting “yes”. Motion carried.

Motion to approve the amendment to the resolution opposing the unsolicited transportation of undocumented non-united states citizens to Hancock County was made by Ms. Merritt, seconded by Mr. Weeks. Ms. James has not had a chance to look this amendment over. A roll call vote was taken with all members present voting “yes”. Motion carried.

Motion to move into executive session was made by Mr. Bollin at 7:33, seconded by Ms. Merritt. A roll call vote was taken with all members present voting “yes”. Motion carried. Mr. Greeley was invited in. Mr. Weeks made a motion to move out of executive session at 8:24 p.m. This was seconded by Mr. Lucie. A roll call vote was taken with all members present voting “yes”. Motion carried.

Motion to adopt the pay scale was made by Mr. Boyles, Mr. Blythe seconded this to be effective July 1, 2025. A roll call vote was taken with all members present voting “yes”. Motion carried.

Ms. Merritt made a motion at 8:27 p.m. to recess until July 15, 2025, at 6:30 p.m. Mr. Weeks seconded the motion. All members present voted aye. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Holly A. Wilde-Tillman, County Clerk