

**MINUTES OF A BOARD MEETING OF THE COUNTY OF HANCOCK, STATE OF
ILLINOIS, HELD AT THE COUNTY COURTHOUSE IN THE CITY OF
CARTHAGE, ON NOVEMBER 18, 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 6:34 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by the chairman. The invocation was given by Lee Ann Lambert. Roll call was taken.

Those present were: Mark Menn, Chairman
 Stephanie Swisegood, Secretary

Wayne Bollin	Harry Douglas
Joe Boyles	Alex Blythe
Steve Lucie	Stephen Finney
Mark Hanson	Josh Turner
Dennis Castlebury	Michelle Merritt
Lee Ann Lambert	Thomas Rodgers

Mark Harrison and Ryan Weeks were absent. Visitors included Madisyn Bell, Justin Greeley, Bobi James, Jeff Dedey, and Elgin Berry. Mr. Menn stated there are 2 changes on the agenda. First there are only 4 printers that are being approved and there is no separate levy for the ambulance.

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

Ms. Bell stated that the housing grant application has gone live. They are taking applications until January 30. There have already been a couple of applications turned in.

Committee reports were gone over. Motion to approve the minutes was made by Mr. Castlebury, Mr. Finney seconded. A roll call vote was taken with all members present voting "yes". Motion carried.

Motion to approve the consent agenda was made by Mr. Finney, seconded by Ms. Merritt. A roll call vote was taken with all members present voting "yes". Motion carried. This included:

- 1) Resolution for Taxing Districts – 11-29-907-000, 11-29-908-000
- 2) County Board Meeting Schedule for 2026

Mr. Menn stated he is very proud of the board and the members who worked on the budget along with Bellwether. This is a reasonable budget and levy. Mr. Bollin thanked the finance committee and all the board members for their comments. He believes we have a healthy county economy and it makes it a lot easier each year because of that.

Mr. Lucie would like to see the levy lowered. He believes schools are a big problem. Mr. Menn believes that the levy is about as low as it can be. Hancock County is very reserved and only accounts for 10-16% on tax bills. Mr. Boyles made a motion to approve the budget for 2026. Mr. Turner seconded. A roll call vote was taken with all members present voting "yes". Motion carried.

Motion to approve the resolution for maintenance under the Illinois Highway Code for \$850,000 was made by Mr. Blythe. Mr. Lucie seconded the motion. Mr. Berry stated this is a routine resolution that the county does to be able to spend the motor fuel tax money. A roll call vote was taken with all members present voting "yes". Motion carried.

Mr. Boyles motioned to approve the engineering service agreement with Hutchison Engineering, Inc, for \$214,156. Mr. Finney seconded. A roll call vote was taken with all members present voting "yes". Motion carried.

Motion to approve the resolution for improvement under the Illinois Highway Code for \$300,000 was made by Mr. Blythe and seconded by Mr. Rodgers. A roll call vote was taken with all members present voting "yes". Motion carried.

Mr. Finney made a motion to approve the lease with the Building Commission for \$700,000/yearly, seconded by Ms. Merritt. The Building Commission is eventually going to repair and reroof the courthouse roof. Money has been set back for the last couple of years. A roll call vote was taken with all members present voting "yes". Motion carried.

Ms. Lambert moved to approve paying the retention grant to the sheriff's deputies for \$5000. Mr. Rodgers seconded. Mr. Lucie stated that this is a grant and they are in compliance. A roll call vote was taken with all members present voting "yes". Motion carried.

Mr. Douglas moved to approve the agreement with Bellwether. Mr. Castlebury seconded the motion. Mr. Greeley and Joy Swearingen from the Journal Pilot met before the board meeting to discuss Bellwether's administrative role for the county. They work in keeping liability off the county and taxpayers. They prepare resolutions which is then passed to the states attorney to look over. They work as human resources for the county courthouse and help with budget preparation. A roll call vote was taken with all members present voting "yes". Motion carried.

Mr. Finney moved to approve the appellate prosecutor resolution for \$10,000. Seconded by Ms. Merritt. This will assign attorneys for conflict and assist on cases. They also get involved in appeals. A roll call vote was taken with all members present voting "yes". Motion carried.

Mr. Boyles motioned to approve the proposal for 4 copiers through Watts for \$206/monthly. Mr. Turner seconded the motion. It is the goal of Mr. Dedey to get all offices on the same account with the same copiers. A roll call vote was taken with all members present voting "yes". Motion carried.

A motion to approve the contract retaining Kurt Dittmer as the conflict public defender. Mr. Hanson seconded. With this we are assured that an attorney will be able to show up at court within the 48-hour timeframe. If not then the person could be set free of all charges. Mr. Douglas stated that the judges are going to try to start getting restitution for the conflict public defender. A roll call vote was taken with all members present voting "yes". Motion carried.

Motion to approve the insurance premium increase from \$60/monthly to \$80/monthly was made by Mr. Blythe. Ms. Merritt seconded. The board would like all employees to understand that the county pays \$946 per person, so the employee is only paying 8.5%. A roll call vote was taken with all members present voting "yes". Motion carried.

Claims were passed around. Motion to approve the claims was made by Ms. Merritt, seconded by Mr. Boyles. A roll call vote was taken with all members present voting "yes". Motion carried. Ms. James would like to state that something happened to the credit card

bill from last month and there was a finance charge attached to the bill so she has paid for this finance charge out of her pocket.

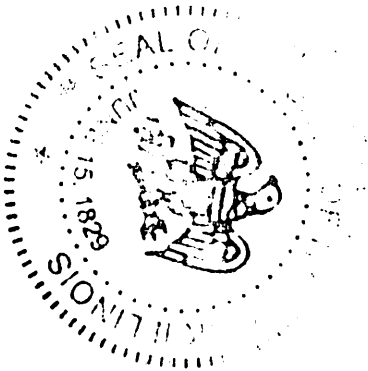
Mr. Castlebury made a motion to allow the county clerk to pay any claims through the end of the fiscal year, Mr. Blythe seconded. A roll call vote was taken with all members present voting "yes". Motion carried.

Mr. Menn stated that Economic Development has gotten more done for the county in the last year than it has over the previous years. Ms. Bell has accepted another position. She will be working part time until April.

Motion to approve the appointment of Lee Ann Lambert to the Economic Development Housing Grant board and Mike Heisler to the Building Commission was made by Mr. Blythe, seconded by Ms. Merritt. All members present voted aye.

Motion to move into executive session was made by Mr. Finney at 7:24, seconded by Mr. Boyle. All members present voted aye. Mr. Greeley was invited in by the chairman. This is in regards to 5 ILCS 120/2(c) (1). Motion to leave executive session was made by Ms. Merritt at 7:57. Mr. Blythe seconded the motion. All members present voted aye.

Ms. Merritt made a motion to recess, Ms. Lambert seconded. Meeting adjourned at 7:57.



Respectfully submitted,

Holly A. Wilde-Tillman
Holly A. Wilde-Tillman, County Clerk