

HEATHER BOWMAN
HAMILTON COUNTY CLERK & RECORDER

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR HAMILTON COUNTY BOARD MEETING ON:
DECEMBER 16, 2025**

The Hamilton County Board convened at the Hamilton County Courthouse in the City of McLeansboro, State of Illinois, on Tuesday the 16th day of December, at 6:00 p.m. and was called to order by Chairman Kelly Woodrow.

The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

On roll call, the following board members responded as being present, which represented a quorum: Kelly Woodrow, John Mead, John Carrell, and Landon Vaughan. Adam Little was absent.

County Highway Engineer, Rick Coronado, was also in attendance.

MOTION was made by Landon Vaughan, seconded by John Mead, to approve the minutes of the November 20, 2025 Truth in Taxation Hearing, the November 20, 2025 Regular Hamilton County Board Meeting, and the December 9, 2025 Special Hamilton County Board Meeting as presented. Vote by acclamation. All voting aye, none nay. Motion carried.

Chairman Woodrow thanked everyone for coming and asked if there were any public comments. There were none. He then invited Ellen Rubenacker to give a brief introduction on the agenda item related to Barker Cemetery. Ellen gave a little history on the cemetery and noted that they have started a 501(3)(c), Barker Historical Cemetery, for the purpose of taking donations to help maintain the grounds. She said they recently became aware of a grant being offered through Representative Dave Severin's office for cemetery maintenance, but would need a letter granting permission, since they do not own the property. Ellen said she understood that the County was deeded the property at one time. Chairman Woodrow asked Clerk Bowman prior to the meeting to research the ownership of the cemetery and asked what she found. Bowman said some research had been done a few years back, resulting in the deed that Ellen had a copy of. She said there were several things happening with the surrounding properties at that time; all owned by the same family. She said she found sheriff's deeds and mortgages granted from the County to the property owners, which seemed odd to her. The Clerk said she felt it may be worth paying for an abstract to find the true ownership if they wanted a definitive answer. The Chairman told Mrs. Rubenacker that he had no problem with issuing a letter granting them the permission they need, as long as it is our (the county's) cemetery.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Treasurer's Report: Chairman Woodrow noted that Treasurer, Sarah Kelly, provided her written monthly report and a copy was in the board packet.

Sheriff's Report: Sheriff Lakin provided a written report for the packets.

County Clerk & Recorder's Update: Clerk Bowman noted that she provided her monthly financial report for the board packet, along with her Semi-Annual and Annual report. Bowman said the annual reports were essentially a summary and total of what she provides on a monthly basis, requiring signatures as a formality.

EMA Report: EMA Director, Jason Stewart, said they had to put new radios in the EMA trucks due to the incompatibility between their existing equipment and the new system. He also reported 3 calls for the month, which included assistance for lifting a patient, setting up for AirEvac, and locating a suspect on foot for the sheriff's office. Stewart noted their participation in the local Christmas Parade as well. Last, there was some discussion about options for storing the EMA drone and where it had been stored in the past.

ETSB Report: Dorothy Smith, ETSB Chairman, said they did not have a quorum to meet this month.

Health Department Report: No report.

Animal Control Update: No report.

Ambulance Service Update: There was no update.

Administrative Services: Dustin Harmon, with Bellwether, said they had the Q4 variance draft started, but would wait on the final FY25 claims to finish the report. He said he thought there was around \$10,000 in claims to be thrown back. Last, he touched briefly on the escrow language for the clean energy ordinances, but noted he planned to wait and see what the legislature did next month before presenting it to the committee.

MOTION was made by John Mead, seconded by Landon Vaughan, to approve the department reports. Vote by acclamation. All voting aye, none nay. Motion carried.

CONSENT AGENDA

The consent agenda was read by Heather Bowman, County Clerk.

1. Accept checks from the Hamilton County Health Department for the month of November, 2025. Salaries: \$7,768.00 Fringes: \$927.96 Unemployment: \$129.09 Insurance: \$2,821.23.
2. Accept check #47947 in the amount of \$5,000.00 from the City of McLeansboro per the Central Dispatching agreement for the month of December 2025.
3. Accept check #40457 in the amount of \$1,000.00 from UCCI for October and November meeting attendance reimbursement.
4. Accept check # 6012483 from Hamilton County Coal, LLC in the amount of \$249,506.99 for the product of leases dated 11/01/2008 and 12/01/2007.
5. Review the 1% school facilities tax schedule in the amount of \$59,466.40.
6. Review the Hamilton County Public Safety Tax Payment received in the amount of \$59,192.33. This is liability MO- Sept 2025, Collected MO- Oct 2025 Vouchered MO- Dec 2025.

MOTION was made by John Carrell, seconded by John Mead, to approve the consent agenda as read. On roll call the vote was as follows: Yes- John Carrell, John Mead, Landon Vaughan, and Kelly Woodrow. 4 yes, 0 nays, motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Discussion was opened regarding the 2026 Hamilton County Board Meeting schedule.

Chairman Woodrow said he had a few calls earlier in the day about changing the day of the meeting and a couple different ideas were tossed around. Landon Vaughan said he would like to see something changed due to all 3 meetings being on the same night (school board, county board, city council). They continued to talk through different options and discussed what would be best to get the bills paid in a timely manner. Clerk Bowman reminded the board that they would be having a special meeting later in the week and could delay the decision until then. The board agreed that may be the best plan.

MOTION was made by John Carrell, seconded by John Mead, to table the decision on the 2026 schedule until their special meeting. All voting aye, none nay. Motion carried.

2. The board was presented with a copy of the County Clerk Semi-Annual (June 1, 2025 through November 30, 2025) report and Annual (December 1, 2024 through November 30, 2025) report.

MOTION was made by John Mead, seconded by Landon Vaughan, to approve the County Clerk's Semi-Annual and Annual report as presented. Vote by acclamation. All voting aye, none nay. Motion carried.

3. The board was presented with a request from Ellen Rubenacker for a letter granting approval for their non-profit organization, Barker Historical Cemetery, to make improvements to the Barker Cemetery.

MOTION was made by John Carrell, seconded by Landon Vaughan, to issue the letter granting the Barker Historical Cemetery, a non-profit organization, permission to make improvements to the Barker Cemetery as requested.

4. The board was presented a list of recommended changes and renewals for the 2026 employee health insurance program submitted by the Insurance Committee from their December 10, 2025 meeting.

Chairman Woodrow noted that there was a copy of the recommended changes in their board packet. He said the only change he really noticed was the increase to the County's deductible from \$25,000 to \$30,000.

MOTION was made by Landon Vaughan, seconded by John Carrell, to approve list of recommended changes and renewals for the 2026 employee health insurance program as presented. On roll call the vote was as follows: Yes- Landon Vaughan, John Carrell, John Mead, and Kelly Woodrow. 4 yes, 0 nays, motion carried.

5. A copy of Ordinance #2025-12-01 was presented to the Board.

Chairman Woodrow noted that the ordinance pertained to a ban on the sale of Kratom. He said the City of McLeansboro and other surrounding counties have passed a similar ordinance and that the substance has become quite a problem at the schools. He also clarified that they could not make Kratom illegal, but could deem it a nuisance. Dustin Harmon said he did make a quick update to the draft to add language for the scope of the ordinance that would now read: the unincorporated areas of Hamilton County.

MOTION was made by John Carrell, seconded by John Mead, to approve Ordinance #2025-12-01 as presented. On roll call the vote was as follows: Yes- John Carrell, John Mead, and Kelly Woodrow. No- Landon Vaughan. 3 yes, 1 nay, motion carried.

6. The board was provided with a list of Claims, including any Late Claims and Highway Claims.

MOTION was made by Landon Vaughan, seconded by John Mead, to approve all claims as presented. On roll call the vote was as follows: Yes- Landon Vaughan, John Mead, John Carrell, and Kelly Woodrow. 4 yes, 0 nays, motion carried.

Next, Chairman Woodrow informed everyone that the Board would be going into Closed Session for the subject of litigation.

MOTION was made by John Carrell, seconded by John Mead, to enter into a Closed Session under 5 ILCS 120/2 (from Ch.102, par. 42) Sec.2. with an invitation for the County Clerk, Highway Engineer Rick Coronado, and the County Administrator to attend. Vote by acclamation. All voting aye, none nay. Motion carried.

The Closed Session took place in the Jury Room.

Upon returning from Closed Session, the Chairman asked for a motion to resume open session.

MOTION was made by Landon Vaughan, seconded by John Carrell, to resume the open session. Vote by acclamation. All voting aye, none nay. Motion carried.

Chairman Woodrow announced that they received a letter earlier in the day from the Republican Party Chairman with a recommendation on the appointment of the Hamilton County State’s Attorney. He said they would need to have a special meeting to make the appointment. After a short discussion about their availability, the board passed around a special meeting request for Friday, December 19th at 5:30 p.m.

MOTION was made by Landon Vaughan, seconded by John Mead, to adjourn the meeting. Vote by acclamation. All voting aye, none nay. Motion carried.

MINUTES APPROVED ON: _____

COUNTY CLERK

CHAIRMAN