

**PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
MACON COUNTY BOARD**



FEBRUARY 08, 2024

**Kevin Greenfield
Chairman**

**Josh Tanner
Clerk**

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. with the Sheriff and State's Attorney present.

The Roll Call showed all members present with the exception of Ms. Goodman, Mrs. Kraft, Mr. Mattingley, and Mr. Oliver.

Mr. Entler led the members in prayer

All led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

CONSENT CALENDAR

APPOINTMENTS:

1. Resolution G-5639-02-24 - Appointment of Pleasant View Drainage District #2 Commissioner

Nicholas Buzan, 10486 W. Andrew St. Rd., Blue Mound, IL 62513
Term Expires: 1st Tuesday of September, 2026

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Approval of the minutes of the January 11, 2024 meetings.

CLAIMS:

Approval of the November 2023 claims.

CORRESPONDENCE AND REPORTS:

A letter from the City of Decatur regarding the proposed creation of a tax increment financing (TIF) district that includes the Macon County Office Building at 141 S. Main in Decatur, IL.

Sheriff's Report – January 2024

Treasurer Fund & Investment Report – January 2024

Macon County Collector Report – January 2024

Coroner's Report – November & December 2023

DELINQUENT TAX DEEDS:

2. Resolution G-5640-02-24 - Executing deed to convey property on which taxes were delinquent

MOTION

Mr. Kreke moved, seconded by Mr. Yoder to approve the Consent Calendar.

There were no questions or comments from the board floor.

ROLL CALL.

Ayes: Coleman, Entler, Greenfield, Hogan, Horve, Kreke, Larner, Little, Noland, Scott, Yoder

Nays: (None)

AYES = 11
NAYS = 0

MOTION CARRIED.

The Operations and Personnel Committee had nothing to submit at the meeting.

EEHW COMMITTEE

3. Mrs. Little presented Resolution G-5641-02-24 which is approving an increase in appropriation to the FY24 Animal Control budget.

MOTION

Mrs. Little moved, seconded by Mrs. Larner to approve Resolution G-5641-02-24 by prior roll call vote.

There were no questions or comments from the board floor.

MOTION CARRIED.

4. Mrs. Little presented Resolution G-5642-02-24 which is approving an increase in appropriations in the FY24 Health Fund budget for the addition of a new position of Care Coordinator Aid.

MOTION

Mrs. Little moved, seconded by Mr. Entler to approve Resolution G-5642-02-24 by prior roll call vote.

There were no questions or comments from the board floor.

MOTION CARRIED.

5. Mrs. Little presented Resolution G-5643-02-24 which is approving an increase in appropriations in the FY24 Health Fund budget for the addition of a part-time MIECHV Coordinated Intake Worker.

MOTION

Mrs. Little moved, seconded by Mr. Entler to approve Resolution G-5643-02-24 by prior roll call vote.

There were no questions or comments from the board floor.

MOTION CARRIED.

JUSTICE COMMITTEE

6. Mrs. Little presented Resolution G-5644-02-24 which is approving a budget amendment for Court Technology improvements.

MOTION

Mrs. Little moved, seconded by Mr. Hogan to approve Resolution G-5644-02-24 by prior roll call vote.

There were no questions or comments from the board floor.

MOTION CARRIED.

7. Mrs. Little presented Resolution G-5645-02-24 which is approving an increase in appropriations in the Circuit Court's FY23 budget for expense fees in certain appeals.

MOTION

Mrs. Little moved, seconded by Mr. Hogan to approve Resolution G-5645-02-24 by prior roll call vote.

There were no questions or comments from the board floor.

MOTION CARRIED.

8. Mrs. Little presented Resolution G-5646-02-24 which is amending the Probation FY2023 budget bucket transfer to cover juvenile detention overages.

MOTION

Mrs. Little moved, seconded by Mrs. Larner to approve Resolution G-5646-02-24 by prior roll call vote.

There were no questions or comments from the board floor.

MOTION CARRIED.

9. Mrs. Little presented Resolution G-5647-02-24 which is amending the Probation FY2023 budget for an increase expenditure in the funding for the Juvenile Detention line.

MOTION

Mrs. Little moved, seconded by Mr. Hogan to approve Resolution G-5647-02-24 by prior roll call vote.

There were no questions or comments from the board floor.

MOTION CARRIED.

10. Mrs. Little presented Resolution G-5648-02-24 which is approving a contractual agreement for providing pharmacy services for inmates in the Macon County Jail.

MOTION

Mrs. Little moved, seconded by Mr. Coleman to approve Resolution G-5648-02-24 by prior roll call vote.

There were no questions or comments from the board floor.

MOTION CARRIED.

11. Mrs. Little presented Resolution G-5649-02-24 which is approving an agreement with Crossing Healthcare for inmates' health services in the Macon County Jail.

MOTION

Mrs. Little moved, seconded by Mr. Coleman to approve Resolution G-5649-02-24 by prior roll call vote.

There were no questions or comments from the board floor.

MOTION CARRIED.

FINANCE COMMITTEE

12. Mr. Greenfield presented Resolution G-5650-02-24 which is approving the February 08, 2024 Macon County Treasurer's Office Investment Policy.

MOTION

Mr. Greenfield moved, seconded by Mr. Yoder to approve Resolution G-5650-02-24 by prior roll call vote.

There were no questions or comments from the board floor.

MOTION CARRIED.

13. Mr. Greenfield presented Resolution G-5651-02-24 which is approving a budget amendment for Workforce Investment Solutions FY24 budget for receipt of a grant from the Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity (DCEO) for State LWIA Grants-Direct.

MOTION

Mr. Greenfield moved, seconded by Mr. Yoder to approve Resolution G-5651-02-24 by prior roll call vote.

There were no questions or comments from the board floor.

MOTION CARRIED.

The Executive Committee had nothing to submit at the meeting.

OLD BUSINESS:

Mr. Greenfield: Mr. Greenfield said that Shelby Electric is going to provide them with an update on where they are at with the broadband.

Josh Shallenberger: Mr. Shallenberger is the President and CEO of Shelby Electric. He appreciated the opportunity to come back and speak to them about how the project is going on the fiber to home project that Macon County has engaged Shelby Electric to help with, including the use of some ARPA funding. He wanted to run down a little bit of a timeline on where they started in the project. Mr. Shallenberger wanted to give them some high points of the project on things that have happened over the course of the last year and a half to two years. He wanted to talk about some key things and the project partners they have engaged throughout the project and where they are. He said then Nate Miller, Shelby Fiber Project Manager will give an update on the construction as well as their progress on easements. Mr. Shallenberger said they initially began discussions with Macon County in May 2021. They did a project presentation with the assistance of Finley Engineering in December 2021. The county moved forward with Shelby Electric in January 2022 in support with a resolution. They had an agreement for a Fiber Optic Project between Macon County and Shelby Electric Cooperative fully executed March 15, 2022. He said they are coming up on the two year mark since they executed that agreement. At that point in time Shelby Electric was engaged in a fixed wireless business and were already an internet service provider for about 15 years, so they had a lot of experience. They were then using a different medium when it came to broadband packet transport. Mr. Shallenberger said they had known after going through a full network upgrade in 2016 through 2018 when they did all of the back hall as well as their consumer premise equipment, that they probably wanted to do either a hybrid system or

get into a full fiber optic system to the home in the rural areas. The big challenge there was capital. Raising capital to traverse 2,200 miles of electric facilities and their average density is going to be about 4 to 4 ½ members per mile. But, if they get into the true rural areas they get down to even less than that like 3 to 3 ½. They have a couple of small communities that they actually serve electrically that already have fiber optic service. He said their intention was to get to that true last mile with the best future proof high-speed internet service that they could. He said the other option was to say maybe they should let someone else take on that challenge. He said they feel like this project has been an enormously good project for them and Macon County. They hope the county finds it to be the same way because it got them out of the gate on the fiber service. They had a lot of relationships on the engineering side, which they started tackling this beast back in 2019 with a fiber feasibility study. One of their project areas which was in the south-east part of their territory, traditionally they had a difficult time serving with fixed wireless because of the propagation, tree coverage and whatnot. It opened their eyes to the fact that they would have to come up with some grant funding or take on a project partner. Mr. Shallenberger said they tried a project partner route and found Shelby Electric's capital was a little more patient than the partner's; and it wasn't going to work if they were going to have any kind of revenue coming in from the project to the cooperative to help support the capital infrastructure, so they decided to go it alone. He said in looking at grant opportunities prior to being contacted by Macon County in May of 2021, their board had passed a resolution and funding to actually get fiber to each of their substations during the Middle-Mile Project. He said that was interrupted in a good way and they embarked on the Macon County project. Mr. Shallenberger said they have 199 miles of fiber optic cable on this project serving 743 passings. The vast majority is going to be installed on their existing electrical pole lines. He said they will run into problems because some of the poles date back to the 50's and 40's. They have some older infrastructure across their entire system. There would be 30 ft. pole infrastructure they would have to upgrade to a new standard of 40 ft. He said especially in the agricultural areas they did not want to impact the land owners, so probably they could have met clearance in a lot of areas, but chose to raise those to where they did not have any obstructions from a clearance standpoint for that agricultural impact. The total original budget for the project was \$8,675,323.82. In addition, they had contractually \$500,000 in easements perfection for a total project of \$9,175,000.00. Macon County and Shelby Electric agreed to a 50/50 split within the contract. They continued to work with Finley Engineering who is their partner who helped bring the initial proposal. They continue to work with them closely on a weekly basis. They have a bi-weekly call with Finley. They have done the outside plant design and have a lot of history in fiber optic deployment with the traditional incumbent local exchange providers, so are well known across the nation for being able to do design work. They have also done the Make Ready Engineering, which refers to getting that pole plant in shape for the fiber attachments, and then project management in conjunction with Nate internally. They did hire an internal Project Manager. That is Nate Miller who comes from an incumbent local exchange provider with 15 years of experience as a technician and a manager. They were very fortunate to bring him on shortly after they engaged with Macon County on this project. They also brought on a Fiber Staking Engineer who was actually a former Shelby Electric Cooperative Staking Engineer on the electric side. He is very familiar with the system.

They gained a lot of efficiencies and he has worked very closely with Nate and Nate supervises him on the project. They also brought on a Fiber Work Order & Material Specialist to really take care of their inventory and checking out material to contractors. Additionally, she has also segued into managing a lot of the easement activity that they have now. He said that is three core people they have working on this project internally, and additionally they have accounting and billing people in the background. There are a lot of hands in the pot, but those are the 3 people that are really on point. In June of 2022 they purchased a 15,000 square foot warehouse and office facility for their Shelby Fiber operations. They had always worked in conjunction with their power net operations, the fixed wireless. They had always had enough room within their existing facility, but with the Shelby Fiber they did need some expansion. He said none of that capital expense has been allocated to the Macon County project. On the easement side, for land services, they have engaged Toth & Associates. They are an engineering firm that specializes in that. Mr. Shallenberger said they started early on in the project contacting those landowners that were going to be impacted in an underground basis or were going to have any kind of a cabinet installed on their property that was anything other than the existing pole plant attachment. Last fall they started contacting landowners to broaden their existing electric easements to include broadband communications infrastructure for commercial use as well. In addition, on the Make Ready, which is the pole replacement they contracted with JF Electric out of Edwardsville, IL who performed 71% of the Make Ready and it is complete. The other 29% was performed by Shelby Electric Cooperative employees and linemen. The JF Electric crews were local, organized labor which is what they use. He thought that was important to the county. Mr. Shallenberger said they changed out 1,599 poles which were primarily old 30ft. to new 40ft pole infrastructure on the system. They also had 228 additional guy and anchor locations that had to be remedied to account for the additional fiber and be able to support and tension the additional fiber on the pole infrastructure. He said that was all completed in November of 2023. They have also worked with American Fiber Construction out Teutopolis, IL. They have over 20 years of splicing experience and are the ones doing the contract labor on hanging of the outside plant, and also doing the underground work. They have also been using local, organized labor for electric certified employees in addition to the contract crews that have communication certified employees. All network and consumer premise equipment has been received in. Mr. Shallenberger said their capital expenditure to date is \$10,850,000.00. They project that it will come in at a total of \$12,300,000.00, and most of that is the overage on the Make Ready. He said they were under on that Make Ready by a substantial amount. The equipment has come in over as well. That initial budget was established in the summer of 2021, even before they took it to the presentation and then ultimate proposal. They have kept that number static throughout, and intend to do what they said they would do and complete the project at the share the county is afforded. He said the single item they lack the most control over is the easements and when it comes to the turn-up of the network. He was going to have Nate Miller speak on the construction side and the easement progress.

Nate Miller: Mr. Miller said he is the Fiber Project Manager. He wanted to give a few updates on construction and where the network and easements are. He said they have about 139 miles of overhead cables placed. It's on the poles and ready for splicing. The

remainder of the overhead construction should be completed by the end of this month as long as the weather still holds. They have approximately 15 miles of underground cable to place. Hopefully, where they have easements signed on that already, they are working on getting some construction crews scheduled for this spring and hopefully get most of that work done before the farmers get in the field where they have the easement secured. The splicing crews are following up behind the construction crews. They should finish up the splicing on all of the overhead cable east of Route 51 within the next week or two. Then they will move back to the Moweaqua side, the west side of Route 51, and then work their way north. They have about four splicing crews on site right now, and they are moving at a pretty good clip. They have engineers scheduled for the week of February 26 for the network. Their Network Consulting Engineer and their Manufacturing Engineer will have a rep on site with them to turn-up their first coordinate worksite and the electronics there. They will assist with the testing and turn-up on that site. He said when that is completed they should be able to start turning up some test customers and members in that immediate area. Mr. Miller said they have been working with Toth & Associates who have been preparing the easements and doing all of the background work and title work to make sure they are sending easements to the current owner. Toth & Associates has been sending them to him in batches and he and his staff have been packing them up and mailing them out. He said as of that day they have 429 easements that they have mailed out of the little over 864 total parcels in the project. Out of the ones they have mailed out, they have 129 that have been signed and returned. So, they have a good jump on that. They have been trying to follow up with the landowners a couple weeks after mailing just to make sure they have received that easement and see if they have any questions. Most of those conversations and majority of those people are looking forward to the project and are excited to get high-speed internet. He said their biggest issue with easements is sometimes tracking down up-to-date contact information, and making contact with landowners, that and getting them to return phone calls. He feels they are in a pretty good spot with that, but it is the unpredictable time-line which is kind of out of their control a little bit.

Mr. Shallenberger: Mr. Shallenberger wanted to thank the Macon County Officials that came out to the landowner/stakeholder meeting at the Macon County Community Center in late October. It went well. They had about 80 or so landowners that came to that. They wanted to have one-on-one engagement with any landowners that had any questions. They had 6 tables around the room where the landowners could take a turn and speak to someone individually if they had questions or concerns. He said the Macon County Officials as well as the Macon County Farm Bureau assisted in that.

Mrs. Little: Mrs. Little just wanted to comment that she completely appreciated this update. She said she has been around for a long time and has seen it coming up. So, this was nice because she had kind of wondered where it was at. She had not heard any complaints and thought it must be going well, but she really appreciated the update.

Mr. Yoder: Mr. Yoder asked how many customer residences or addresses do they think they can connect to when the system is up and running at full capacity.

Mr. Shallenberger: Mr. Shallenberger said it has been engineered that they do all the passings and symmetrical feeds and have peak times for everybody at the same time. He said 643 is what they had for active electric members. There are like 750 something passings on the project.

Mr. Yoder: Mr. Yoder asked if a passing is what they call a connection with a customer.

Mr. Shallenberger: Mr. Shallenberger said it is a potential connection. It is usually a primary residence or a small business.

Tammy Wilcox: Mrs. Wilcox said the broadband project was started before she was hired, and she didn't intend on knowing very much about broadband, and now she knows more than she wanted to about broadband, and she spends a lot of hours talking about broadband. She said they just sent out their community survey, and they have a good team of people that are meeting every week for two hours a week and doing work on the side. They are going to be excited to see what comes back from the survey. The leaders are going to come next week from Benton Institute for Broadband & Society and the county is hosting and event for them. They will have the press there so they will see more about it on the news. There are going to be a couple press releases out. This will help them move forward to interview other internet service providers to get them to take service to other areas where they want them, and work the way they want it. She said this is a really good project, and they want another project like that. The internet service provider will apply for the funding, but if Macon County signs off on it the provider will get extra points. She said they will also come to the county because they want matching funds. Mrs. Wilcox asked if anyone had questions about the survey. She said there are just a couple libraries left. That was where they advertised they would have paper copies at all the public libraries for all the people who don't have internet service, so they could go there and fill out something. They do have it in English and Spanish.

Mrs. Little: Mrs. Little asked if this is being distributed through the school districts, because that is who really got hit hard during the pandemic.

Mrs. Wilcox: Mrs. Wilcox said they sent it to the Regional Office of Education and she just heard that they did send it out. Each superintendent at every school got the choice of sending it out. It sounds like Meridian sent it out and she is sure the others did too, because she knows how critical it is for the kids to have internet at home.

Mrs. Little: Mrs. Little just wanted to make sure they were reaching that audience as well.

Mrs. Wilcox: Mrs. Wilcox said they are trying to reach that audience and the farmers are a focus on this as well, so the last mile.

Mr. Yoder: Mr. Yoder asked what the deadline was for the survey.

Mrs. Wilcox: Mrs. Wilcox said the deadline for this will be March 15, 2024. They didn't get it printed on that card, but they will have to get new cards printed so they will add the deadline and send it out on a press release as well. She said that Mr. Yoder, Mrs. Kraft and Marcia Potrafka are on the broadband team that has been meeting.

Mr. Yoder: Mr. Yoder said he could not stress enough how important this is to the future of Macon County broadband expansion. They have a large map right now and there are a lot of holes in the map. This is what is going to help fill those holes. It depends on how well they fill that map out on how many dollars they will qualify for in federal grants as part of the broadband money. He said they should try to get it out there through word of mouth, share it, and text it. If they go to township meetings or village meetings have people fill it out because that will help them update the map. Mr. Yoder said he knows of people who live in a village that have come to him and said their neighbor has internet but they don't have access. It is a block by block initiative on this.

There was no new business presented at the meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Abeer Motan: Ms. Motan spoke to the board regarding some of her concerns.

There were no officeholder, department heads or employee comments presented at the meeting.

MOTION TO ADJOURN

Mr. Yoder moved, seconded by Mrs. Little to adjourn until Thursday, March 14, 2024 at 6:00 p.m.

MOTION CARRIED.

Meeting adjourned at 6:30 p.m.