

**Macon County Board  
Operations & Personnel Committee Meeting  
Macon County Office Building  
141 S. Main St. – Room 514  
Decatur, IL 62523**

**July 24, 2023,**

**5:30 P.M.**

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Debra Kraft, Chair  
Ed Yoder  
Karl Coleman (5:32)  
Jeff Entler

**COUNTY PERSONNEL PRESENT**

Tamara Wilcox, County Administrator  
Mary Eaton, Recorder  
Josh Tanner, County Clerk  
Rocki Wilkerson, Workforce  
Carol Reed, Auditor  
Crystal Hugger, County Board Office

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

Kristen Larner

*Chair Kraft called the meeting to order at the Macon County Office Building.*

**Minutes**

Motion to approve minutes of prior meeting 06/20/2023 made by Mr. Entler, seconded by Mr. Yoder. Motion carried 3-0.

**Approval of Payroll**

Motion to approve payroll made by Mr. Yoder, seconded by Mr. Entler. Motion carried 3-0

**Approval of Claims**

Motion to approve the claims made by Mr. Entler, seconded by Mr. Yoder.  
Motion carried 4-0.

**Reports**

*County Board* – Ms. Wilcox reported that she has been here a year and her evaluation done last week. I have given the Chair of O&P that information, but it is not all finalized yet. The Highway Engineer started today, and I checked in with him and he was doing well. We will meet up with him later this week and see where he is at with our big projects we have going on. We will have our third or fourth officials meeting tomorrow. We are meeting on the second and fourth Tuesday of every month. Tomorrow we are going to have Building Commission come to that meeting also and talk about where they are at with office remodeling. I know that the office holders have other questions for them. We are almost done with the animal control contract with the City of Decatur. I have been working on that. I just looked up a broadband grant it called a Kick Starter grant. We have been waiting on an RFP to come out and it did come out I must have missed it when it came

out. It is for \$50 or \$60 thousand dollars, but it helps you get a study done to write the bigger grant. That is something we are going to work on.

***Macon County Migration to Employee Navigator***

I am mentioning the Employee Navigator because we got an email from John Malachowski with Gallagher. The auditor's office implemented during the employee renewal this employee navigator. I have used it before and liked it which I pushed it, but they had problems after problem with it. None of it was the auditor's fault or Jessie fault it was a problem with the people who were imputing the stuff to employee navigator. John Malachowski was nice and sent an email that he was really upset with the way it went and the mistakes there were in it. Which employees were getting confused, and Jessie was having to oversee it all. It commends Jessie for managing it professionally and putting up with all of it because she spent time on it. (Ms. Wilcox passed out her copies for an example of the online portal for employee navigator insurance that is not public information and collected them back at end of meeting). Jessie advocated for more during enrollment time for employees to get more life insurance and voluntary life which we did not have before. I thought that this was nice that John sent this email about Jessie and the things she had to go through. Jessie, I think was getting blamed and it was not her fault.

***County Clerk – Macon County Board Resolution Increasing Compensation of Election Judges***

Mr. Tanner reported that the Governor signed a public act which increases the reimbursement of an additional \$20 dollars for our election judges from the State what I am proposing is we increase the total amount by \$40 dollars which half of that would be reimbursable by the State and the other half would come out of the Counties expenses. Currently if you are an election judge and you went through your training you are at \$150 dollars for the entire election period, and this would move it to \$190 dollars. The County would be absorbing \$20 dollars' worth of that increase. We typically have around two hundred judges you can do the math and figure out what the cost is, but I did get a report from the State that shows what the election judge pay is across the State, and we are the largest County in the bottom twenty five percent. We have gotten behind the times a little bit with the pay. I do not anticipate that paying them \$190 dollars that they will be beating down my door to be an election judge, but I think it will help with retaining the ones that we already have. A certain point when you are paying less than minimum wage it is already a tough job people just will not do it anymore.

Mr. Coleman said one, I have assumed you have done the figures to figure out what the offsetting cost is going to be to increase to \$190 dollars what it will be if you have done \$200 from the additional \$10 dollars. The offset of the County at the end of the day may be significant but what purpose of what we are talking about doing \$190 dollars can we do that last \$10 dollars.

Mr. Tanner replied that the last \$10 dollars for two hundred judges would be another \$2000 dollars per election. I just chose the similarity of the County is going to do \$20 and the State is going to do \$20 there was no other reason behind that. The two-hundred-dollar mark will move us back up to the medium level of pay which for our county size we are in a medium level, but oddly enough size of county does not necessarily dictate the pay it is all over the place. I do not know what the bearing is, or the reason is for that but that is up to the board. I just chose an even number

that the State was giving twenty and we are going to match twenty which brings us to one ninety which puts us back toward the middle. That back towards the middle of the survey data before everybody started making their changes. I am more than happy after the 2024 election to get that survey data again and find out where we fall if the board wants to put an additional money towards that. I am more than willing to do that research and bring it back. Until we get reimbursed and until we file our reimbursement in March the State won't have that data but after March if you want to do it for November, we can come back in the summer this time next year and increase it for the fall election. I will have the new set of data for you and what I will do is bring the data to you after the March election and then you can decide what you want.

Chair Kraft said that would be good, I would like to see that.

Mr. Tanner said November is where we usually need the help.

Mr. Yoder said on our election judges today since we have all these long election sights now do they rotate in and out the office to assist during the early election or is it just your staff doing it.

Mr. Tanner replied no, it is not just our staff doing early voting. Depends on the election the consolidated elections I usually only have three or four election judges supplement my staff. In a March primary we will have five or six and for presidential election a dozen. I just pull from the list of election judges that we have. Availability is a huge issue it is hard to find someone who is available for forty days.

Mr. Yoder said are you paying them that rate per day or is that hourly.

Mr. Tanner said what we have been paying is pay the minimum wage rate for the election judges because this would be less. We really cannot pay this the \$150 would be less than minimum wage. I have senior people that we pay a little more simply because we have them registered with the state and they can get on long and process voter registration and they can do additional work besides voting voters. Those people change every cycle. March is tough because people are still down South, and I have different people in November. I just pull from the list of certified election judges.

Chair Kraft said she have had people question her about consolidating voting. I have said if we cannot get people to step up and be election judges we will probably be consolidating more, and it is a possibility is what I said.

Mr. Tanner said that we have lost a polling place this summer. Christ United Methodist Church is closing so we have lost that polling place. We just secured a new polling place with the Decatur Park District at the Poage Arts and Recreation Center which is the old Tillman Dealership. We are moving the Harristown polling place in the Tabernacle Church, and it is Niantic Harristown, and it will be Niantic, Harristown, Decatur Twelve, and Decatur Nineteen will all vote at Tabernacle. They will be getting their voter ID card in the next month or so notifying them that is where their

polling place is. Consolidation is a function of getting election judges but also when the church close, we call other churches nearby, but people do not want to be involved with elections anymore. Polling places draw publicity that people do not want associated with their building. Various churches expressed security concerns, scheduling if they are doing things in their church, they do not want to block out two to three days to have an election. There were consolidation and voters will be notified of that I assume going forwards as election day numbers get smaller and smaller and early voting and vote by mail gets larger and larger you are going to consolidate because we have had a couple of elections were a polling place did nothing all day. They may have voted twenty or thirty voters. Consolidation will happen more going forward.

Mr. Coleman replied you said it would be about \$2000 dollars to increase from \$190 to \$200 dollars.

Mr. Tanner said yes, because it is \$10 dollars per judges, and I usually have about two hundred judges.

Mr. Coleman said it is a pretty negligible amount I think it would go a long way or trying to get at to do \$200 per say initially. I know people make for it to get some data behind such, but I would be in favor for doing \$200.

Mr. Tanner said that is the committee pleasure if you want to change it, I will take it forward on to the full board to whatever you want.

Mr. Entler said I would be okay with that.

Chair Kraft asked if you want to increase it to the \$200.

Mr. Entler said sure.

Mr. Yoder said OKAY.

Mr. Tanner said he will modify the resolution.

**Mr. Coleman said he will make a motion to amend the motion to \$200 because we are voting on that tonight right. I make a motion to amend the resolution so that it is \$200 as opposed to \$190 for compensation.**

**Chair Kraft said we have a motion to amend the pay to \$200, seconded by Mr. Entler. Motion carried 4-0.**

**Chair Kraft said we will vote on this resolution as amended. Mr. Coleman made a motion that the resolution be adopted as amended, seconded by Mr. Yoder. Motion carried 4-0.**

Mr. Tanner said he had one last thing that the budget is moving not through oversight but finance itself. I am putting in for additional position in the office for an election administrator. That is to manage the transition my Chief Deputy is retiring, and I am needing to get someone onboard and get election experience under their belt before she retires. I am not sure if that is a permanent position going in perpetuity, but it is needed until she retires in training period to transition someone. She will be here until December of 2026. The problem with training someone with elections is you only get one or two practices per year. It takes a while to get someone up to speed and I am going to finance before the budget hearing to give them the heads up as well. That is something I am asking for and it is just transition planning. I have no interest of any of the union employees in my office, surprisingly. We will see what it generates.

Mr. Coleman said for clarification you are intending to hire them for employee's sake, but they would not officially be acting in capacity for the County.

Mr. Tanner said no I am intending to hire them for the 2024 election and they would be doing that job for 2024 but the problem is you cannot really hire anyone that already knows how to administer an election because all of the surrounding election administrator makes more than what we can afford to pay so I will have to train someone to do the job. That is the reason I want them to be on for the 2024 so that my Chief Deputy and I can train this person to do the pieces that I am doing and the pieces that she is doing because when she retires I need someone who can step right in and do it I can't be training someone after she is gone. With all that knowledge of thirty years walks out the door when she retires and if I do not get it transmitted to someone else other than myself that 2027 election is going to be rough.

Mr. Yoder said to clarify you are hiring an assistant for the deputy and then once the deputy retire you will promote the assistant to the deputy.

Mr. Tanner said not necessarily the Chief Deputy does other functions than elections. I do not know if this person would necessarily be interested in those functions. I need to make sure that elections are covered because when she retires, we go right into the next election. There is no one in the office that has interest in that.

Mr. Coleman said when you are we talking about 2024 I assume are we talking general or primary. Do you have a projected date you would like to hire somebody?

Mr. Tanner said yes, as soon as the budgets approved through finance, I would like to post the job. I am not overly optimistic on finding someone right away. The pay is \$45 to \$50 thousand dollars which sounds good until you look at what other election administrators are paid. It is not great, but I cannot hire another election administrator from another county they are not going to come and that will be too difficult, so I am going to train my own.

Chair Kraft asked how many other counties you have as just an election administrator.

Mr. Tanner said oddly enough most. Sangamon and Champaign are much bigger than us and their election administrator are paid quite a bit more than that. A lot of the smaller counties even have election administrators and the problem you find is that it is hard for me to manage all the nuts and bolts on election night and also be available to the public when something doesn't necessarily go the way we anticipated. That is why getting someone in that place is important. Just a reminder September 5<sup>th</sup> you can begin circulating petitions and the candidate guide will be available mid-August I believe, and I get that from State Board of Elections. They do not want to release it until closer to circulation date because they are afraid that people will begin circulating before they are supposed to. I will have the packets middle of August ready for all the position that are open for election.

**Recorder** – Ms. Eaton said she does not have anything but would be glad to accept any questions about her June monthly report.

**Workforce Investments** – Ms. Wilkerson reported that they have been busy. We just started on our new fiscal year July 1<sup>st</sup> and we have been reorganizing, cleaning out files and trying to cover vacations and trying to regroup as to what we want to go after this next fiscal year. Currently we have Illinois Work Pre-Apprenticeship class going on and we started out with 20 and 18 are going to graduate on August 17<sup>th</sup> and the Decatur Public Library. During this time, we are moving from the main level upstairs, and we got three new classrooms, and we are in transition of moving at the same time. The guys that will graduate and there are three women in there as well too. They will be looking for entry dates from when they can apply to an apprenticeship of their choice. The problem is that if they wanted to go in and be an electrician at IBEW hall they do not take application until February.

All these different apprentices take applications at different time so my concern is that they get work from the time they graduate until the time that they can apply and so we are collaborating with them very closely making sure they got paychecks coming in. One of the biggest problems with that class is that we do have funding to assist with their barriers like if they do not have a place to live, we had a couple homeless issues and we had a couple foodbank issues. There are issues you might not think about when you get it started but we have been able to address it from all the social service partnership that we have and then we will put a list together so all students have access to know where to go and how to get the resources that are available. We are going to dive into that a little different with the next class when we get it started. I am going to start it off in the beginning that all the students have survival packets that they know where to get resources if they need them without singling out anybody.

The last time that I reported out I think I told you that we had a CNA class under the JTED grant which is Job Training Economic Development that is to help people that normally wouldn't be able to go and take that kind of training and it was an adult class we graduated sixteen and fourteen out of sixteen just passed their state board. The two that did not pass are in remediation right now so I will keep you posted on those two and we got them working with Project Read. Just recently we partnered with Juanita Morris and her fierce fourteen and this is in school youth.

These are juniors in high school and her program runs under the Jerry Dawson Civic Leadership Institute and there are several pillars there that they work with, with high school kids, Law Enforcement, Healthcare, Education and Government. Juanita did something incredibly unique with her fierce fourteen students because it is a residential CAN program which means she takes them out of their household, and they have dorms in Millikan that they stay in for eight weeks. She puts them in civic partnership opportunities they do breakfast, lunch, and dinner. They have tutoring in the evening and study sessions. These fourteen are graduating this Saturday at the Civic Center and Workforce will be in attendance because we provided the tuition, books, and fee for all fourteen of them. My goal is they take their state board Tuesday, and Wednesday of this week. I would love to see all fourteen of these juniors in high school pass their state boards because then they will go back to high school as seniors and be able to work at the hospital, and nursing homes their senior year.

Chair Kraft said keep us posted on that.

Ms. Wilkerson said she would, and it is very awesome to be a part of that. She has done an excellent job with that. We have had workshop we had July 12<sup>th</sup> Veteran's job fair and the 18<sup>th</sup> Amentum Hiring Event that was for electrical, industrial, electricians, and HVAC and then we have two workshops coming up that are free. The 25<sup>th</sup> is resume building and the 26<sup>th</sup> is free computer class and the 27<sup>th</sup> Caterpillar is coming in and doing a big hiring event. I am hoping that people take advantage of those free workshops before they come to the hiring event so that we will have everything that they will need. We are continuing to work with future grants like the Green Energy grant and I do not know a lot about it, but we are getting more involved as time move forward.

Mr. Yoder said have you started the new lab.

Ms. Wilkerson said yes, we have, and I think it is in September we are going to have an O&P meeting at the Workforce office, and I will be able to show you the new lab. I do not know the date off top. We will get an email out to you.

**Old Business** - *None*

**New Business** - *None*

**Citizen's Remarks**- *No citizens were present.*

**Closed Session** - *Not needed.*

**Adjournment** - Meeting adjourned at 5:59 p.m.  
*Minutes submitted by Crystal Hugger, Macon County Board*