

RESUME OF MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING OF THE  
COUNTY BOARD, CHAMPAIGN COUNTY, ILLINOIS  
May 23, 2024

The County Board of Champaign County, Illinois met at a Regular Meeting, Thursday, May 23, 2024, at 6:35 PM in the Shields-Carter Meeting Room, Brookens Administrative Center, 1776 East Washington Street, Urbana, Illinois, with County Executive Steve Summers presiding and Matthew Cross as Clerk of the meeting.

**ROLL CALL**

Roll call showed the following members present: Hanauer-Friedman, Locke, Lokshin, Michaels, Owen, Peugh, Rodriguez, Rogers, Sexton, Smith, Stohr, Straub, Taylor, Wilson, Cowart, Farney, Fortado, and Carter – 18; absent: Thorsland, Vanichtheeranont, Esry, and Greer – 4. County Executive Summers declared a quorum present and the Board competent to conduct business. Two members departed early: Peugh (at 7:58PM at the conclusion of Board Member Communications) and Carter (at 11:04 PM, missing the discussion and vote on Resolution 2024-129). County Executive Summers declared a brief recess from 9:22 to 9:33 PM.

**PRAYER & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

County Executive Summers read prayer, and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag was recited.

**READ NOTICE OF MEETING**

The Clerk read the Notice of the Meeting, said Notice having been published in the *News Gazette* on May 9, May 16, and May 22, 2024.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA/ADDENDA**

Board Member Owen offered a motion to approve the Agenda/Addenda; Board Member Taylor seconded.

Board Member Farney offered an amendment to move up items XV. D. (American Rescue Plan Act) to be placed between XI. (Presentation) and XII. (Standing Committees) and XV. B (Adoption of Resolution No. 2024-130 Establishing Salaries of Countywide Officials) to follow XV. D. (American Rescue Plan Act) before XII. (Standing Committees); Board Member Locke seconded.

The amendment carried by unanimous voice vote.

The motion as amended carried by unanimous voice vote.

**DATE/TIME OF NEXT MEETINGS**

**Standing Committees:**

- A. County Facilities Committee  
Tuesday, June 4, 2024 at 6:30 PM  
Shields-Carter Meeting Room
- B. Environment & Land Use Committee  
Thursday, June 6, 2024 at 6:30 PM  
Shields-Carter Meeting Room
- C. Highway & Transportation Committee  
Friday, June 7, 2024 at 9:00 AM  
1605 E Main Street, Urbana

**Committee of the Whole:**

- A. Justice and Social Services; Policy, Personnel and Appointments; *and* Finance  
Tuesday, June 11, 2024 at 6:30 PM  
Shields-Carter Meeting Room

**County Board:**

- A. Regular Meeting  
Thursday, June 20, 2024 at 6:30 PM  
Shields-Carter Meeting Room

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Jeffrey Trask, of Urbana, spoke about improving County contracts with minority- and black-owned businesses.

Joseph Hackney, St. Joseph Village Administrator, appeared for an American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding request for the Village's water project.

Marilyn Banks, of Champaign, spoke about improving County contracts with minority- and black-owned businesses.

Minnie Pearson, Champaign County National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) President, spoke about improving County contracts with minority- and black-owned businesses.

Blanton Bondurant, Champaign County NAACP Vice President, spoke about improving County contracts with minority- and black-owned businesses.

Circuit Clerk Susan McGrath submitted a letter to the Board about the Circuit Clerk's salary (Resolution No. 2024-130) to be entered into the record. She then preceded to speak about James Burgess, the subject of Resolution No. 2024-128.

Joan Dixon, of Advocates for Aging Care, spoke about nursing home needs in the county.

Kathy Vance, of Advocates for Aging Care, Spoke about nursing home needs in the county.

Heather Soder, former County Animal Control Director, spoke about a dangerous dog in Sidney.

Amy McIntosh, of Sidney, spoke about a dangerous dog in Sidney; her daughter was bitten by the dog.

Jewel Cox, former employee of the Auditor's Office, spoke about her mistreatment and firing by Auditor George Danos and Chief Deputy Auditor Jill Stewart.

James Martinkus, personal attorney for County Auditor George Danos, spoke in opposition to Resolution No. 2024-129 Censuring Auditor Danos, claiming the Board and County Executive did not have authority to censure an elected official, and disputing allegations in the resolution.

Michael LaDue, of Champaign, spoke about improving County contracts with minority- and black-owned businesses.

Will Kyles, Champaign City Council Member, spoke about improving County contracts with minority- and black-owned businesses, suggesting the need for better and more detailed reporting and plans.

Benjamin Beaupre spoke about improving County contracts with minority- and black-owned businesses.

Board Member Farney offered motion to extend Public Participation beyond the prescribed 60-minute limit; Board Chair Carter seconded. The motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

Robbie Walker and Nicole Massey, of Healing Invisible Wounds, spoke about the second Stop the Violence conference focusing on the Post Traumatic Stress Disorder education, to be held June 1, 2024, at the Illinois Law Enforcement Alarm System (ILEAS) building in Urbana.

Denni Shurts-Hurbert, of Urbana, spoke about Resolution No. 2024-130 establishing countywide elected official salaries *and* Resolution No. 2024-129 Censuring Auditor Danos, and discussed the problematic behavior of Auditor Danos and Chief Deputy Auditor Stewart.

Craig Walker, of Champaign, spoke about improving County contracts with minority- and black-owned businesses, and the need for an independent, elected County Auditor.

Cristian Schlesinger, Forefront Power Systems Manager, spoke in favor of Ordinances 2024-5 and 2024-6 for solar farms.

### **CONSENT AGENDA**

Board Member Farney offered a motion to approve the Consent Agenda; Board Member Sexton seconded. Board Member Wilson requested to remove Resolution No. 2024-105 from the Consent Agenda and consider it separately in section XII. B. (Environment and Land Use Committee). The motion comprising 21 resolutions (Nos. 2024-102, 2024-103, 2024-104, 2024-106, 2024-107, 2024-108, 2024-109, 2024-110, 2024-111, 2024-112, 2024-113, 2024-114, 2024-115, 2024-116, 2024-117, 2024-118, 2024-119, 2024-120, 2024-121, 2024-122, and 2024-123) carried by unanimous roll-call vote.

Yeas: Hanauer-Friedman, Locke, Lokshin, Michaels, Owen, Peugh, Rodriguez, Rogers, Sexton, Smith, Stohr, Straub, Taylor, Wilson, Cowart, Farney, Fortado, and Carter – 18

Nays: none

### **COMMUNICATIONS**

Board Member Locke noted the rededication of Skelton Park in Champaign on June 7, 2024.

Board Member Taylor congratulated former Board Member Jordan Humphrey on the recent birth of his child.

Board Chair Carter spoke about toxicity in the Office of the County Executive and County Administration and accused Board Members Farney and Fortado of negative behavior; Board Member Farney objected to the personal attack and was spoken over by Board Chair Carter. Board Members Farney (at 7:53 PM), Sexton (at 7:54 PM), and Rodriguez (at 7:54 PM) walked out in protest of Board Chair Carter's accusations; all three returned at the conclusion of Board Chair Carter's communications at 7:56 PM.

Board Member Michaels spoke about the dust hazard from tilling agricultural fields and urged drivers to be cautious with dust hazards and large agricultural vehicles.

Board Member Peugh thanked the Public Participation speakers and stated his support of countywide elected official salary resolution approved two years ago.

Board Member Rodriguez proposed the Facilities Committee explore adding diversity language to the Project Labor Agreement. She also noted a recent issue with Auditor Danos, when he interrupted an American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) meeting with Auditor's Office staff, disrupting the meeting by loudly stating that staff did not need to organize.

Board Member Wilson noted the Stop the Violence conference on June 1, 2024, at the ILEAS building and a recent veterans' resource fair at Parkland College organized by Congresswoman Nikki Budzinski. He spoke about Memorial Day weekend and read an excerpt of a speech President Ronald Reagan delivered at Arlington National Cemetery. He also distributed small American flags for display on Memorial Day.

Board Member Owen praised the Champaign Urbana Mass Transit District's Juneteenth themed bus.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Board Member Lokshin offered a motion to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of the County Board of April 18, 2024; Board Member Locke seconded. The motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

### **PRESENTATION**

County Clerk and Recorder Aaron Ammons and Clerk and Recorder and Information and Technology Specialist Katie Barber presented updates on the Restrictive Covenants and Jim Young Projects. The Restrictive Covenants Project is an on-going project to identify housing subdivisions with archaic language restricting ownership and/or residence by African Americans. Board Member Farney asked if the 19 identified subdivisions are all that contain restrictive covenants and expressed surprise that the restrictive covenants were only identified in Champaign and Urbana and not in smaller communities in the county; Clerk Ammons stated the covenant search has concluded and he does not expect to identify any more subdivisions. Board Member Hanauer-Friedman asked about future steps in the project. Specialist Barber stated they will next start a general education program—they do not want to send landowner letters immediately, which might be surprising and confusing; Clerk Ammons stated the legal process to strike the restrictive covenant language, requiring a two-thirds majority of subdivision residents, and the Recorder's Office will not charge any fees to strike the language. Board Members Rodriguez and Fortado and Clerk Ammons discussed usefulness of incorporating the data in County GIS maps. Board Member Lokshin suggested that the Restrictive Covenants Project is setting an example that could be copied by other communities outside the county. Board Member Owen and Clerk Ammons discussed the relationship between the restrictive covenants and redlining. Clerk Ammons stated the project is a continuing effort to repair the harm of history. The Jim Young Project is an effort to document the 1971-1972 effort for student voting rights. Clerk Ammons solicited the public to come forward with their personal stories about early student voting rights efforts and stated that he is interested in conducting interviews with participants. Board Member Owen noted similar documentary work by local Public Broadcasting Service-affiliate WILL and suggested a possible collaboration.

### **AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT**

American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Project Manager Kathy Larson presented an update of ARPA-funded projects, noting the monthly memorandum in the meeting Agenda Packet.

First Followers members (Marlon Mitchell, James “Tiger” Corbin, Carlos Harvey, and Sharice Lee) provided an update the H3 (Harm, Hope, and Healing) project. They noted the project is a partnership, uniting a number of smaller community programs, taking aim at the root cause of community violence through social justice. James “Tiger” Corbin stated the project is reaching a level of stability and H3 is looking to expand their reach and establish permanence through grant funding beyond the county. Board Member Rogers offered her private assistance as a licensed lawyer. Various board members praised the program.

### **RECESS**

County Executive Summers declared a brief recess at 9:22 PM and re-called the meeting to order at 9:33 PM. Roll call showed the following members present following the recess: Hanauer-Friedman, Locke, Lokshin, Michaels, Owen, Rodriguez, Rogers, Sexton, Smith, Stohr, Straub, Taylor, Wilson, Cowart, Farney, and Fortado – 16; late: Carter (returned from recess at 9:41 PM) – 1.

### **AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT (Continued)**

In lieu of a prolonged discussion, in an already three-hour meeting, Board Member Fortado proposed additional ARPA funding of \$100,000 to the St. Joseph water project, \$100,000 to the Regional Planning Commission’s (RPC) summer cooling program, \$50,000 to the RPC’s emergency rental assistance program, \$15,000 to Vision to Succeed, and \$25,000 to the Drainage District Project. Board Member Wilson objected to the board using a showing of thumbs to direct ARPA funds; Board Members Fortado and Lokshin explained that the ARPA funding categories had already been approved by the Board and these are already established projects to which the board is merely directing additional funds. The board signaled their approval of Board Member Fortado’s suggestion by a majority of thumbs.

### **ADOPTION OF RESOLUTION NO. 2024-130**

Board Member Farney offered a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2024-130 Establishing Salaries of Countywide Elected Officials; Board Chair Carter seconded. Board Member Farney distributed a memorandum showing comparison analysis he conducted of countywide elected officials in the 16 largest Illinois counties, excluding Cook County, in which Champaign is at the median ranking eighth. Using this data, Board Member

Farney proposed Resolution No. 2024-130 Option B with the following elected official salaries, showing a 1% increase per year:

	<b>Starting 12/1/2024</b>	<b>Starting 12/1/2025</b>	<b>Starting 12/1/2026</b>	<b>Starting 12/1/2027</b>
<b>Circuit Clerk</b>	\$100,109.00	\$101,110.09	\$102,121.19	\$103,142.40
<b>County Auditor</b>	\$93,666.00	\$94,602.66	\$95,548.69	\$96,504.17
<b>County Coroner</b>	\$93,666.00	\$94,602.66	\$95,548.69	\$96,504.17
<b>County Board Chair</b>	\$12,000.00	\$12,000.00	To be set in 2026	To be set in 2026

Board Member Farney expressed a desire for a similar study in 2026 to cover the Circuit Clerk, County Treasurer, and County Executive. Board Chair Carter stated that County Board Members should be included, and the Board Chair rate should increase; Board Members Farney and Fortado stated that other elected officials are not up for renewal at present. Director of Administration Michelle Jett was invited to join the discussion; she stated that County Administration is investigating increasing per diem rates for board members. Board Member Wilson questioned why the board must act; Board Member Farney stated that not acting will result in continuing at the current rate of ½ CPI (one half (50%) of the Consumer Price Index for all Urban Consumers for all items published by the United States Department of Labor—the April 2024 CPI is 3.4) and would result in significant wage increases for top-end earners. Board Member Rogers asked about the rate of increase for other counties; Board Member Farney stated that the data is not readily available and thus was not included in his analysis. Board Member Hanauer-Friedman asked how the increase compares to county staff; County Executive Summers stated that staff are subject to collective bargaining contracts, but 1% increases have been the norm in the past. Board Member Cowart pointed out that percentage increases heavily favor top-end earners, which are largely elected officials in the county. Board Member Michaels noted the elected officials also receive a \$6,500 stipend paid by the state. Board Chair Carter stated a preference that elected officials should all be paid at the same rate; Board Member Fortado stated that the Circuit Clerk salary is typically tied to that of the County Clerk and the Treasurer, and Board Member Hanauer-Friedman added that officials have different rolls, especially in the quantity of staff managed. Board Member Wilson expressed that the County Executive is currently underpaid. Board Member Farney moved for the adoption Resolution No. 2024-130 under Option B inserting the above salary chart; Board Member Rodriguez seconded. The motion carried by voice vote.

**STANDING COMMITTEES**

County Executive Summers noted that the Summary of Action Taken for the County Facilities Committee on May 7, 2024, was received and placed on file.

Board Member Locke offered a motion to adopt Resolution No. 105 authorizing County Executive Signature on Annual Facility Inspection Report required for M.S.4 stormwater permit with IEPA for program year April 2023 through March 2024; Board Member Straub seconded. Planning and Zoning Director John Hall was invited to join the



discussion. Director Hall explained details of M.S.4 and the IEPA reports. Board Member Fortado explained funding issue details, and Board Member Owen noted the M.S.4 compliance. Board Member Wilson stated the report is performative with no impact on the community and implored the county to do more. Board Member Farney asked the consequences of not adopting the resolution; Director Hall stated that the report is on past work and must be filed by June 1, 2024, but stated that the standards of work can be raised in the future. Board Member Fortado added that the work can be combined with ARPA drainage district projects. The motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

Board Member Lokshin offered a motion to adopt Ordinance No. 2024-4 granting a special use permit, Zoning Case 115-s-23 "Pivot Energy IL 38 LLC" PV Solar Farm including the decommissioning and site reclamation plan; Board Member Hanauer-Friedman seconded. The motion carried by unanimous roll-call vote.

Yeas: Hanauer-Friedman, Locke, Lokshin, Michaels, Owen, Rodriguez, Rogers, Sexton, Smith, Stohr, Straub, Taylor, Wilson, Cowart, Farney, Fortado, and Carter – 17

Nays: none

Board Member Owen offered a motion to adopt Ordinance No. 2024-5 granting a special use permit, Zoning Case 126-s-24 "FFP IL Community Solar, LLC, a subsidiary of Forefront Power, LLC" PV Solar Farm including the decommissioning and site reclamation plan; Board Member Farney seconded. Board Member Sexton asked why the prime farmland was going to be used for a solar farm; Director Hall was invited to join the discussion and stated that the agreement will require special pollinator seeding and confirmed the current zoning is for agriculture. Board Member Stohr asked about the effect on the neighboring veterinary clinic. Forefront Power Systems Manager Cristian Schlesinger was invited to join the discussion; he stated that Forefront Power and the veterinary clinic came to a compromise with an increased step back and special fencing around the clinic. The motion carried by unanimous roll-call vote.

Yeas: Hanauer-Friedman, Locke, Lokshin, Michaels, Owen, Rodriguez, Rogers, Sexton, Smith, Stohr, Straub, Taylor, Wilson, Cowart, Farney, Fortado, and Carter – 17

Nays: none

Board Member Taylor offered a motion to adopt Ordinance No. 2024-6 granting a special use permit, Zoning Case 127-S-24 "FFP IL Community Solar, LLC, a subsidiary of Forefront Power, LLC" PV Solar Farm including the decommissioning and site reclamation plan; Board Member Straub seconded. The motion carried by unanimous roll-call vote.

Yeas: Hanauer-Friedman, Locke, Lokshin, Michaels, Owen, Rodriguez, Rogers, Sexton, Smith, Stohr, Straub, Taylor, Wilson, Cowart, Farney, Fortado, and Carter – 17

Nays: none



County Executive Summers noted that the Summary of Action Taken for the Highway and Transportation Committee on May 9, 2024, was received and placed on file.

### **AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY**

County Executive Summers noted that the Summary of action from the Committee of the Whole (Justice and Social Services; Finance; Policy, Personnel, and Appointments) on May 14, 2024, was received and placed on file.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

Board Member Rodriguez offered a motion to approve a Recreation and Entertainment License for Araceli Gutierrez for a Spanish rodeo at the Champaign County Fairgrounds, 1302 N Coler Ave, Urbana, IL to be held June 2, 2024; Board Member Sexton seconded. The motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

Board Member Sexton offered an omnibus motion to adopt Resolutions No 2024-124 authorizing payment of claims *and* No. 2024-125 approving purchases not following purchasing policy; Board Member Locke seconded. The motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

Board Chair Carter offered a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2024-126 approving an Intergovernmental Agreement for the Champaign County Area Rural Transit System (C-CARTS) to provide transportation service to the University of Illinois Granger College of Engineering Center for Transportation (ICT); Board Member Michaels seconded. CCARTS representatives Emma Woods, Jay Rank, and Rita Morocoima-Black were invited to join the discussion. Board Member Wilson asked for more information; Ms. Woods and Mr. Rank explained the CCARTS bus route will operate between the Lincoln Square Mall in Urbana and the ICT in Rantoul, providing a benefit to University students, faculty, and staff. Ms. Woods and Mr. Rank added that the ICT route is a pilot program contracted for three months, but an extension is anticipated. Ms. Morocoima-Black added that the project will increase federal fund availability for CCARTS programs. The motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

County Executive Summers noted that there is no action to take on Resolution No. 2024-127 removing restrictions and covenants on deed for permanent parcel number 92-21-16-200-023 commonly known as 500 South Art Bartell Road, Urbana, IL 61802 (former nursing home property).

Board Chair Carter offered a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2024-128 approving the placement of a plaque by the African-American Heritage Trail Honoring James R. Burgess; Board Member Cowart seconded. Board Member Lokshin read the full text of the plaque; Board Member Wilson added additional biographical information on James R. Burgess's military service. Board Member Lokshin noted that the City of Urbana is

paying for the plaque and its installation. The motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

### **OTHER BUSINESS**

Board Member Rodriguez offered a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2024-129 censuring Champaign County Auditor George P. Danos for failure to serve as an independent watchdog of county taxpayers and conduct unbecoming an elected official; Board Member Farney seconded. Board Member Rodriguez provided background of the investigations into the acts and behavior of Auditor Danos and because he is an elected official, censure is the only recompense afforded the Board; she added that employees of the Auditor's Office are neither protected by collective bargaining contracts nor County Human Resources, so the censure is also a signal of support to the employees, particularly since Auditor Danos' recent actions disrupting an AFSCME meeting with employees, as previously mentioned during Board Member Communications. Board Member Stohr read a statement critical of Auditor Danos but noted that the State's Attorney's Office has taken no action against Auditor Danos, and he concluded by asking Auditor Danos, County Executive Summers, and staff to reconcile the differences between the two fiscal forecast reports by the June 11, 2024, Committee of the Whole meeting and that the County Board and Auditor Danos come to an amicable solution.

Board Member Stohr moved to table the resolution until such time as criminal or civil charges of malfeasance is brought with sufficient evidence; Board Member Cowart seconded. Director Jett was invited to join the discussion. Board Member Lokshin stated her disbelief that Auditor Danos would act in good faith to reconcile; Board Member Straub stated that the allegations in the resolution are very serious. Board Member Wilson questioned the legality of censuring an elected official; Director Jett and Board Member Locke stated that the censure resolution language, but not the allegations contained therein, were vetted by State's Attorney Civil Division Chief Matt Banach. Board Member Farney cited recent examples in the state of county boards censuring elected officials. The motion to table the resolution failed by voice vote.

Board Member Rogers noted the county board rules and added that the board can take further action against Auditor Danos. Board Member Wilson asked if there was any statutory requirement that the Auditor access Munis software; Board Member Farney stated the statutory definition of the office does not specifically cite accessing financial software, but commonsense would say that is a necessary part of the job; Board Member Michaels stated that the job cannot adequately be done without accessing Munis. Board Member Cowart recommended pursuing Auditor Danos with criminal charges. Board Member Wilson asked about the delayed 2018-2019 audit; Board Member Fortado stated that the audit was resolved and subsequent audits have been timely, the issue at hand with the 2018-2019 audit delay is the negative effect it had on the County's ability to conduct business and that the Board was not informed by Auditor Danos, but instead learned about it from the Regional Planning Commission and that Auditor Danos has since taken no responsibility for that failure. Board Member Wilson noted an additional technical failure of duties, that Auditor Danos issues monthly reports

to the Board but not the statutorily required quarterly reports. Board Member Farney stated that approving the censure would not only serve as a penalty for past offences by Auditor Danos but also set an example to prevent future abuses in any elected official's office. Board Member Farney called the question, requesting a roll-call vote on the resolution. The motion carried by roll-call vote.

Yeas: Hanauer-Friedman, Locke, Lokshin, Michaels, Owen, Rodriguez, Rogers, Sexton, Smith, Stohr, Straub, Taylor, Wilson, Farney, and Fortado – 17  
Nays: Cowart – 1

County Executive Summers noted the Decennial Committee Reports to the County Board from the Tolono Fire Protection District, Tolono Park District, the Philo Public Library District, and the Joint Hensley Township and Road District have been received and placed on file and are available for viewing on the County's website.

### **ADJOURN**

County Executive Summers adjourned the meeting at 11:42 PM.



---

Aaron Ammons, Champaign County Clerk  
and ex-Officio Clerk of the Champaign County Board  
Champaign County, Illinois