



Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

Lee County, Illinois

Thursday, March 13, 2025, 11:00 AM

Old Lee County Courthouse, Third Floor Boardroom, 112 E 2nd St, Dixon, IL 61021

This meeting can be viewed in its entirety on YouTube using the web address below
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Op3JF8ZmWNq>

I. Call to Order

Meeting was called to order at 11:00 a.m., by Chair Bob Olson.

- II. Committee Member Roll Call: Chair Bob Olson, Vice Chair Tom Kitson, Jack Skrogstad, Mike Koppien, Mike Zeman, Jim Schielein, Tom Wilson, Nancy Naylor, Dean Freil
Bob Olson, Tom Kitson, Jack Skrogstad, Mike Koppien, Mike Zeman, Jim Schielein, Tom Wilson, Nancy Naylor, and Dean Freil all attended in person.

Also present: Keane Hudson (Board Member), Charley Boonstra (State's Attorney), Jeremy Englund (Administrator) Alice Henkel (Zoning Administrator), Nancy Petersen (County Clerk and Recorder), and Becky Brenner (Board Secretary) all attended in person.

III. Public Attendees

Melanie Willstead attended the meeting to give an update on the funding for the Village of Harmon tornado siren. Mike Mudge (Rock River Energy Services, Co.) attended via Zoom to weigh in on the Electrical Aggregation discussion.

Items that were discussed during the meeting that were not on the agenda:

- Alice Henkel reported that in February she attended Powergen International 2025 in Dallas, Texas. The event brought together over 8,000 industry professionals including power utility companies, hardware vendors, and equipment manufacturers. The event focused on the evolving landscape of energy generation demand growth, grid resilience, and innovative technologies shaping the future of the power sector. Highlights from the event included a renewed interest in traditional power sources like natural gas and nuclear, the significant energy demands driven by AI, advancements in hydrogen and energy storage technologies, and the rise of grid edge solutions. The committee recognized that the use of small modular nuclear reactors is about 8 to 10 years away from implementation, and that Illinois currently has a moratorium on new nuclear projects. The conference also addressed the increasing use of AI in grid management which is raising concerns about potential job displacement and cybersecurity risks.
- Melanie Willstead provided an update on the efforts to address the Harmon Township tornado warning system. She contacted the individual that installed the City of Amboy's warning system and received a cost estimate of roughly \$1,500. This cost, however, did not include the actual siren that may need to be

replaced and relocated. A meeting is planned after May 1st., with the installer, Chief Dickison from Amboy Fire, and a representative from Braniff Communications (the siren company) to assess the situation. Melanie emphasized the Township's commitment to public safety, regardless of cost, and noted the difficulty in determining financial responsibility due to the Township's small size. The Public Safety Committee suggested that Lee County EMA Director, Kevin Lalley, be contacted to seek out potential grant ideas.

- Tom Wilson reported that a section of the courthouse retaining wall collapsed in December. The remaining portions of the wall are also showing signs of failure. Engineering studies, including a topographical map and structural design of the area, are being done at an estimated cost of \$68,000. The plan is to create a stepped wall system with improved drainage and landscaping. Given the urgency and potential for further collapse, the project is being expedited, and potential cost-sharing options are being pursued with the City of Dixon and the State.
- Jim Schielein reported that due to changes brought about by the Safety Act, Judge Ackert has requested the purchase of a fingerprinting scanner for the New Courts Building at a cost of \$14,500. There is also an annual maintenance fee of \$2,500. Previously, individuals that were arrested were fingerprinted at the jail. Now that the process has changed, some individuals are required to get fingerprinted prior to an appearance, which in many cases is not being done, prolonging the process and hindering tracking and identification. Because this topic was not on the Finance Committee's agenda, the members, in favor of the purchase, requested that the topic be discussed in Executive Committee and passed to the March County Board agenda, with funding to be allocated from ARPA funds that had previously been transferred to the Capital Fund.

IV. Approval of the Minutes from the Previous Meeting - (February 13, 2025)

Minutes from the February 13, 2025, Executive Committee Meeting were approved as presented without modification.

V. Reports from Committee Chairs

All committee chairs took the opportunity to report items discussed and motioned forward during their committee meetings.

VI. Monthly Sheriff's Office Report Detailing Events Within the Department - Information Only

Clay Whelan asked that his report from Public Safety be added to the Executive Committee agenda so Board Members would be up to speed on the events happening at the Sheriff's Office.

VII. Administrator Report

Jeremy Englund reported that Susan Gillespie, was hired as the new Human Resource Coordinator and will be starting on Monday, March 31st.

VIII. Unfinished Business

There were no items under Unfinished Business.

IX. New Business

A. *Zoning Department Restructure*

Jeremy Englund explained that the County is looking to restructure the Zoning Department due to increased workload and the recent resignation of the Deputy Zoning Administrator. Instead of replacing the deputy, they are interested in adding a Building Administrator position. This new role will handle building permits, inspections, and related tasks, while the Zoning Administrator will focus on zoning hearings, land management, and flood plain management. The estimated restructuring cost would be an additional \$10,000 annually, deemed necessary to improve efficiency and service delivery. The change coincides with the state's mandate for counties to implement building codes by year's end, and the county's receipt of a BRIC grant to support this process. The grant will fund labor, technology upgrades (including new zoning software to replace existing Excel spreadsheets), and public education. The board believes this restructuring will streamline operations and better equip the county to manage its growing zoning needs. No action was needed from the Committee on this topic.

B. *Pro-Ag Resolution*

The committee discussed a pro-agriculture resolution proposed by the Lee County Farm Bureau. While the committee was united in their support of agriculture, some board members expressed concerns about the resolution's potential implications for future development decisions, particularly regarding solar projects, given the state's classification of solar as an agricultural use. There was also discussion about the resolution's lack of "bite" or enforcement power. The resolution is part of a broader Farm Bureau effort to address misconceptions about farmland ownership and to advocate for agriculture amidst proposed state legislation deemed unfavorable to the industry.

Motion to move the Pro-Ag Resolution to the Executive Committee for inclusion on the March County Board agenda. **Moved** by Jim Schielein. **Second** by Nancy Naylor. **Roll call vote**: Olson - Yes, Kitson - Yes, Skrogstad - Yes, Koppien - Yes, Zeman - Yes, Schielein Yes, Wilson - Yes, Naylor - Yes, Freil - Yes. **Motion** passed unanimously.

C. *Lee County Electrical Aggregation Contract*

Mike Mudge and the committee discussed the upcoming expiration of the County's electrical aggregation contract, which currently provides residents with a rate of 7.45 cents per kilowatt-hour. The latest bids show a potential increase of 27%, with rates rising to around 9 cents or more. The board considered several options, including locking in a higher rate with a potential grant, but ultimately decided to let the current contract expire in August, with residents returning to ComEd rates. This decision was driven by the volatility of

the energy market and the desire to avoid locking residents into a potentially higher rate. The County will monitor ComEd rates and market conditions, with the possibility of negotiating a new aggregation contract in the future if favorable rates become available. They acknowledged that ComEd rates are also expected to increase, but felt it was best to allow residents to choose their electricity provider for the time being.

X. Appointment(s)

- A. *Reappointment of Craig Buhrow to the Lee County Zoning Board of Appeals*
Motion to move the resolution to Reappoint Craig Buhrow to the Lee County Zoning Board of Appeals to the March County Board agenda. **Moved** by Tom Wilson. **Second** by Dean Freil. **Motion** passed unanimously by voice vote.
- B. *Reappointment of Norris Tucker Jr. as a Commissioner to the Lee County Housing Authority*
Motion to move the resolution to Reappoint Norris Tuck Jr. as a Commissioner to the Lee County Housing Authority to the March County Board agenda. **Moved** by Tom Kitson. **Second** by Mike Koppien. **Motion** passed unanimously by voice vote.

XI. Raffle Report(s)

There were no raffle reports on the agenda to put on file.

XII. Review of Per Diem Report for County Board Approval - February Meetings for April Payout

This item was for information only.

XIII. Executive Session

- A. *5 ILCS 120/2 (c)(1)*
Motion to enter into Executive Session at 12:09 p.m., for the purpose of discussing 5 ILCS 120/2 (c)(1). **Moved** by Tom Wilson. **Second** by Tom Kitson.
Roll call going into Executive Session: Bob Olson, Tom Kitson, Jack Skrogstad, Mike Koppien, Mike Zeman, Jim Schielein, Tom Wilson, Nancy Naylor, and Dean Freil.
Also present: Keane Hudson, Charley Boonstra and Jeremy Englund.
The committee moved to the Chairman's Conference Room for privacy and the meeting started at 12:12 p.m.
Roll call back in open session: Bob Olson, Tom Kitson, Jack Skrogstad, Mike Koppien, Mike Zeman, Tom Wilson, Nancy Naylor, and Dean Freil.
Also present: Keane Hudson, Charley Boonstra, Jeremy Englund, Nancy Petersen, and Becky Brenner.
Back in open session at 12:21 p.m.

XIV. March 20, 2025, County Board Agenda Items

- A. Call to Order
- B. Pledge of Allegiance
- C. Invocation
- D. Roll Call
- E. Board Chair Announcements
- F. Approval of Board Minutes: February 20, 2025, County Board Meeting
- G. Joseph E. Meyer Resolution(s) - None
- H. Zoning and Planning
 - 1. Petitions Going To the Zoning Board of Appeals - 2 Petition
 - a. Petition No. 25-P-1639 by Mound Hill Road North Solar, LLC, as lessee of certain real property identified as PIN 16-07-05-300-005, in Palmyra Township, Lee County.
 - b. Petition No. 25-P-1640 by Mound Hill Road South Solar, LLC, as lessee of certain real property identified as PIN 16-07-05-300-006 and 16-07-08-100-004, in Palmyra Township.
 - 2. Petitions Going To the Planning Commission: No Petitions
 - 3. Petitions Coming From the Zoning Board of Appeals: 1 Petition
 - a. Resolution for Petition No. 25-P-1638 by Craig A. and Christine Kessel, as owners of certain real property identified as PIN 02-15-19-200-004 and commonly known as 859 Morgan Road, Amboy, Illinois, in Amboy Township.
 - 4. Petitions Coming From the Planning Commission: 1 Petition
 - a. Petition No. 25-PC-78 by the Lee County Zoning Administrator, was filed in which Petitioner seeks to amend the text of Title 10: ZONING REGULATIONS of the Lee County Code of Ordinances to replace Zoning Board of Appeals with Zoning Hearing
- I. Administrator Monthly Update and Board Member Comments
- J. Public Comments:
- K. County Organization Presentations/Updates
 - 1. Lucas Pauley - Visit Lee County - Quarterly Report and Updates
 - 2. Arnold Vegter - Township Officials of IL Legislative Chairman
- L. Reports of Committee
- M. Unfinished Business
 - 1. Ordinance: Petition No. 25-PC-77 by the LC Engineer. Petitioner seeks to amend the text of Title 11: SUBDIVISION, FLOOD CONTROL & STORM WATER MGMT, Chapter 4: STORM WATER MGMT, of the LC Code of Ord. (held over)
- N. New Business
 - 1. Certificate of Authority - Salt Purchase
 - 2. County Engineer Salary Appropriation Resolution
 - 3. Revisions to the Zoning and Building Permit Fees Resolution
 - 4. Lee County Electrical Aggregation Contract

5. Opioid Funding - PHLC (Partnership for a Healthy Lee County/Connected Communities)
6. Pro-Ag Resolution

****Two (2) items were added to the March County Board agenda during the meeting:**

- Purchase of a Fingerprint Scanner for the New Courts Building
- Contract Engineering for the Old Courthouse Retaining Wall

- O. Appointment(s)
 1. Reappointment of Craig Buhrow to the Lee County Zoning Board of Appeals
 2. Reappointment of Norris Tucker Jr. as a Commissioner to the Lee County Housing Authority
- P. Executive Session
- Q. Approval of County Officer's Reports/Quarterly Treasurer's Report
- R. Roll Call Approval of Monthly Revenue Reports, Claims Paid, Claims Paid in Vacation, and Payroll Paid
- S. Approval of Board Member Mileage and Per Diem
- T. Adjournment - County Board Meeting Agenda

- XV. Motion to Approve the Proposed County Board Agenda
Motion to approve the Proposed County Board Agenda. **Moved** by Nancy Naylor. **Second** by Tom Wilson. **Motion** passed unanimously by voice vote.

- XVI. Adjournment - Executive Committee Meeting
Motion to adjourn at 12:27 p.m. **Moved** by Tom Wilson. **Second** by Tom Kitson. **Motion** passed unanimously by voice vote.

The next Executive Committee Meeting is scheduled for
11:00 a.m., Thursday, April 17, 2025

Respectfully submitted by:
Becky Brenner – Board Secretary