

Richland County Board
December 12, 2024

Convene

Dennis Graves called the meeting of the Richland County Board to order at 7:00pm on December 12, 2024, at the Jail Meeting Room. The meeting was proclaimed open, the Pledge of Allegiance recited, and a Silent Prayer was offered. Attendance: Dennis Graves, Present; Cindy Given, Present; Morgan Henton, Present; Brian VanBlaricum, Present; Travis Paddock, Present; Steve Schonert, Present; Alexis McFarland, Present.

Before the reorganization of the Board, Dennis Graves thanked the County Board members and employees of Richland County for their help over the past three years. He could not have been Chairman without their help.

Re-Organization of Board

Dennis Graves turned the meeting over to the County Clerk's office representative, Mary Beth Coan, to conduct the reorganization portion of the meeting.

Motion/Vote

Dennis Graves made a motion to nominate Travis Paddock as Chairman; Brian VanBlaricum seconded the motion. Steve Schonert made a motion to nominate Morgan Henton as Chairman; Brian VanBlaricum seconded the motion.

A ballot vote was taken by all seven board members. Sheriff Andy Hires collected the votes and read the results – five votes for Travis Paddock: two votes for Morgan Henton. It was decided to table the board committee appointments until the next board meeting. Committees will remain the same; Travis Paddock will review.

Newly appointed County Board Chairman, Travis Paddock, welcomed all members and guests.

Changes to Agenda

Item 15B under New Business regarding the Resolution in Support of Richland County Agriculture was moved to 6B under Open.

8C Approval of 2025 Tax Levy, under Finance, will be addressed at the December 30, 2024 meeting.

6A RCDC Update, was removed from the Agenda.

Motion was made by Dennis Graves to approve all changes to the agenda; Brian VanBlaricum seconded the motion.

Information, Correspondence, Upcoming Meetings

Corey asked to be notified of meeting dates and times to add to the County website.

Open - New Business Motion/Vote

Joel Gardner of the Richland County Farm Bureau was present along with several Farm Bureau members supporting the resolution presented to the County Board acknowledging agriculture within our County. County Board members expressed their appreciation of the Farm Bureau and the work that they do. Motion was made by Cindy Given to approve the resolution in support of Richland County Agriculture. Alexis McFarland seconded. Motion carried.

Motion/Vote - Consent Agenda

Cindy Given made a motion to approve all items under the consent agenda. Dennis Graves seconded the motion. Items approved were the minutes of November 14 and 26, 2024, for County Board, December 5, 2024, for Road and Bridge meeting, and 911 ETSB minutes from September 25, 2025 meeting; the county officer reports; Ironsides Bar, LLC and Richland County Country Club liquor license; Culvert Aid Petition from Denver Township; 2025 Holiday Schedule; 2025 Richland County Board Meeting dates; Appointment of Thomas Grogan to a 3-year term as trustee to Christy Fire Protection District Board; County trustee resolution quit claim deeds.

Motion/Vote - Finance Committee

Steve Schonert discussed the claims. All claims were approved with one exception regarding a squad car listed under "ARPA Funds" in Old Business. Steve Schonert discussed the Truth and Taxation Hearing from December 9, 2024. Only two individuals attended but had good discussion among those present. Greg Amerman was present at the County Board meeting and still does not agree with raising taxes. The 2025 Levy will be discussed at the December 30, 2024 meeting.

Sheriff's Report

Sheriff Andy Hires stated that a 2021 Chevy Tahoe was purchased with ARPA funds. Shop with a Hometown Hero was held this week. Good Participation from all local emergency personnel. Sixty-two children shopped; Pacific Cycle provided a bicycle for each child.

State's Attorney's Report

Chelsey thanked the board for the furniture purchased for her office. Chelsey announced Mary Beth Welch-Collins as the new assistant State's Attorney. Facebook page is a work in progress.

Animal Control

Cindy Given stated that rabies vaccines were required in Richland County. Still waiting on kennels at the new facility. Open house for the new building is TBA once the kennels are completed.

Highway Business

Dan Colwell mentioned that there was only one on-road/off-road diesel bid received.

Board Committee Reports

IT.

Corey McDonald stated that the county website is live. If there are any changes, please let him know. Corey then discussed the ICN, Illinois Century Network, agreement as well as the CTS phone system required update. A minor upgrade will cost approximately \$5000 and run until March 2030. Brian VanBlaricum made a motion to approve the upgrades. Cindy Given seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Motion/Vote Old Business

ARPA.

Steve Schonert discussed the requests for the remaining funds from office holders. He then discussed that part of the funds will be used for the squad car for the sheriff's department. Richland County Health Office rent for 2025 and 2026 will be allocated from the existing ARPA funds. Money will also be allocated for the update on the new squad car equipment, but the amount is undetermined at this time. Health office equipment for the new location resulting in \$84,642. Steve also mentioned request list from the county offices – Emergency management, State's Attorney, Road and Bridge and County Clerk. Cindy Given made the motion to approve the purchase of the used squad car furniture for the Health Office, and the other various requests from the office holders. Brian VanBlaricum seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Steve Schonert then made a motion to approve the lease of the Arbors Center for Richland County Health Office – 3-month lease for the current location; 5 year lease for the new Main Street location. Cindy Given seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Motion/Vote New Business

Doug Tompson, Chairman of the Public Building Commission, was present to discuss the addendum to the lease with Richland County. This lease has been extended to 2044 and will cover continued improvements to the courthouse.

Steve Schonert stated that the heat has not been working on the first floor of the courthouse again and has been out for several days. Steve asked Doug how long before we say "enough" and make changes to the heating and air system at the courthouse. Doug spoke on the system currently at the courthouse. Problems have been addressed by a firm recommended by the architect. The system is already 10 years old and considered a very high-tech system. Questions raised on maintenance to heating/air filter system. An agreement is in effect with Read's Heating and Air to replace filters four times a year. It was noted that there are more than 40 filters to change at the courthouse. It was noted that it is a sophisticated system but there is no one in the area qualified to work on it. Doug stated he needs to be informed when there are issues.

Daron Harmon, Richland County Fire Chief, was present to request assistance in acquiring a squad car for the Fire Department. Daron stated that he is currently using a 2008 Expedition. It was mentioned that an assistant fire chief (Steve Gardner) was appointed in July 2024. It was overlooked that Steve would require a squad car. A quote was received from Eagleson's in Olney for a 2024 Colorado for \$45,000. Possibly check with Chicago

Motors where the Sheriff gets his department vehicles. Daron is asking for assistance from the County in purchasing the new squad car. This vehicle would also require additional equipment to facilitate the fire chief.

Steve Schonert stated that the Finance Committee will look into this request to see if it is feasible.

Executive Session

Cindy Given made the motion to enter Executive Session. Dennis Graves seconded the motion. The board exited Executive Session at 8:20 PM.

Adjournment

Cindy Given made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Dennis Graves seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 8:20 PM.

Amanda Troyer
County Clerk

Travis Paddock
County Board Chairman