

**Richland County Board  
November 13, 2025**

**Convene**

Travis Paddock called the meeting of the Richland County Board to order at 7:00pm on November 13, 2025, in the Jail Meeting Room. The meeting was proclaimed open, the Pledge of Allegiance recited, and prayer was led by Joel Harrison. Attendance: Dennis Graves, Present; Cindy Given, Present; Morgan Henton, Present; Travis Paddock, Present; Steve Schonert, Present; Alexis McFarland, Present; Brian VanBlaricum, Present.

Mr. Schonert requested a moment of remembrance for the passing of Mrs. Margaret King, who served on the 708 committee for many years.

**Changes/Approval of Agenda**

Cindy Given made a motion to approve the agenda. Steve Schonert seconded the motion. Motion carried.

**Information, Correspondence, Upcoming Meetings**

911 will meet Wednesday, December 10<sup>th</sup> at 9 o'clock am at the Olney Fire Department.  
708 Wednesday, November 19<sup>th</sup> at 12 o'clock pm in the courthouse.

**Open**

Karen Winkles spoke about her concerns related to the Open Meetings Act. She has three areas of concern: executive session entering, purpose to enter executive session, and closed session minutes.

**Motion/Vote - Consent Agenda**

Cindy Given made a motion to approve all items under the consent agenda. Alexis McFarland seconded the motion. Items approved were the minutes from October 9, 2025, for County Board, November 6, 2025, for Road and Bridge meeting, September 16, 2025, for 911 ETSB meeting; the county officer reports; Culvert aid petition from Preston Township; Salary adjustment for Supervisor of Assessments; Change order #5 for EJ Water Phase #82 Job #22700; Pay order #6 for EJ Water Phase #82 in the amount of \$88,445.15 County Trustee Resolution Quit Claim Deeds for 06-34-404-049, 11-03-409-010, 02-27-306-010, 11-03-121-009, 11-03-125-008; Approval of Pat Burke to the 708 Mental Health Committee.

**Motion/Vote - Finance Committee**

Steve Schonert discussed the claims totaling \$113,996.15 county and \$735,653.81 non-county. Mr. Schonert then made a motion to approve the claims. Alexis McFarland seconded the motion. The roll call was as follows; Brian VanBlaricum, yes; Dennis Graves, yes; Alexis McFarland, yes; Cindy Given, yes; Morgan Henton, yes; Steve Schonert, yes; Travis Paddock, yes. Motion carried.

Steve Schonert made a motion to add \$25,000 expenditure to the Public Safety fund for Noble-Wakefield Fire for an additional vehicle. Dennis Graves seconded the motion. The roll call was as follows; Brian VanBlaricum, yes; Dennis Graves, yes; Alexis McFarland, yes; Cindy Given, yes; Morgan Henton, yes; Steve Schonert, yes; Travis Paddock, yes. Motion carried.

Steve Schonert discussed adding funds to purchase an additional Sheriff's office squad car for the third SRO. Sheriff Hires stated that it is in his budget for an additional squad but not one for an additional SRO. If the third SRO is hired, the department would be one vehicle short. Sheriff Hires believes he will be able to find a used Tahoe from the same place the last one was purchased from. Morgan Henton asked if the board needed to wait until the contract was approved for the third SRO. Mr. Schonert stated that the finance committee is going to suggest approving the contract for the additional SRO. Mr. Schonert made a motion to approve the adjustment of the additional \$50,000 for the purchase of a squad car. Ms. Given seconded the motion. The roll call was as follows; Brian VanBlaricum, yes; Dennis Graves, yes; Alexis McFarland, yes; Cindy Given, yes; Morgan Henton, yes; Steve Schonert, yes; Travis Paddock, yes. Motion carried.

Mr. Schonert then discussed the adjustment of revenue for the SRO revenue to the budget from \$234,000 to \$229,000. No vote needed. Just a change in estimates.

Mr. Schonert stated the Finance Committee looked at all the tax levies and not wanting to have to have a truth in taxation, the 708 funding is the only one the committee feels can be reduced. Would like to add the \$75,000 to the general fund to help support ROSC since it is a one-time funding to get the program going. Steve Schonert made a motion to add \$75,000 to fund 01-24. Alexis McFarland seconded the motion. Pat Burke spoke about funding for the mental health in this community. Lauren McClain also spoke about the mental health crisis in Richland County. She thanked Steve Schonert for all the help he has been on the 708 board. Carol Potter also spoke about children with disabilities. She stated that private schools do not receive the funding that the public schools receive and she is grateful for the 708 board. The roll call was as follows; Brian VanBlaricum, yes; Dennis Graves, yes; Alexis McFarland, yes; Cindy Given, yes; Morgan Henton, yes; Steve Schonert, yes; Travis Paddock, yes. Motion carried.

Mr. Schonert discussed additional cost of Health Insurance in fund 01-26 of \$8,700. Mr. Schonert also discussed the sales tax revenue, stating we do not know what the revenue will be. The new deficit to county general is \$294,117k and \$28,672 deficit for public safety for the 2026 Budget. That includes a \$250,000 contingency fund. Mr. Schonert discussed possibly adding \$5000 once a new judge is seated.

Circuit Clerk Zach Holder was in attendance and discussed the need for an additional employee in his office. He has had 4 employees in the past and currently only has 3. He would like to start looking for an additional employee at the start of the year. Mr. Holder

would like to have \$175,000 for his budget instead of the current \$137,000. Mr. Schonert asked if he was required to always have someone in the courtroom. Mr. Holder stated that they really needed to always have someone in the courtroom. State's Attorney Chelsey Clark also stated that it is very helpful to have someone in the courtroom from the Circuit Clerk's office. Mr. Schonert asked if he could hold off until the first quarter is over in February/March. Mr. Holder stated that he prefers to start the process in January. Mr. Schonert would like to wait until FY2025 is over, then we could make an adjustment out of the contingency fund in December.

Mr. Schonert would like to make the final decisions at the Special End of Year Claims meeting.

Mr. Schonert discussed Blank's Insurance Cyber Security Insurance. The amount this year is \$6,634 for the year. Mr. Schonert made a motion to approve the quote for cyber security insurance. Mr. VanBlaricum seconded the motion.

Lauren McClain asked the board if that policy went out for bid. Mr. Schonert stated that it would be a good idea to put that out for bids next year. Morgan Henton asked if it would be possible to go out for bid this year. There was discussion that there would not be enough time this year, with only two weeks left in the fiscal year. The roll call was as follows; Brian VanBlaricum, yes; Dennis Graves, yes; Alexis McFarland, yes; Cindy Given, yes; Morgan Henton, yes; Steve Schonert, yes; Travis Paddock, yes. Motion carried.

Mr. Schonert discussed and made a motion to approve the proposed Tax Levy of \$3,249,620, which is a 4.79% increase over last year. Dennis Graves seconded the motion. The roll call was as follows; Brian VanBlaricum, yes; Dennis Graves, yes; Alexis McFarland, yes; Cindy Given, yes; Morgan Henton, yes; Steve Schonert, yes; Travis Paddock, yes. Motion carried.

### **Sheriff's Report**

Sheriff Hires discussed the contract with Richland County Unit District #1 for a third SRO officer. One would receive 100% funding from the school and would be at the schools 100% of the time, the second would be at 80% and the third SRO officer would be at 85% funding for the first three years then down to 80% funding. Sheriff Hires discussed the need to add an additional deputy if this contract is agreed upon. The contract is good for three years. Steve Schonert made a motion to approve the SRO contract with the Richland County Community Unit District #1. Morgan seconded the motion. Motion carried.

### **State's Attorney Report**

Nothing to report

### **Animal Control**

Andrea Edwards stated that there were some dogs on hold pending a court case. Andrea also stated that a few items at the old animal control facility were auctioned off online. Steve Schonert stated that he spoke to Alan Barker with the City of Olney about a couple

portable sheds at the old facility. Mr. Barker stated that the county can terminate the lease and turn the facility back over to the City of Olney.

Mr. Schonert made a motion to terminate the lease as of today, for the old animal control facility on Mack Avenue. Cindy Given seconded the motion. Morgan Henton asked about selling the portable building. Steve Schonert stated that he did not feel it would be worth it. Sheriff Hires stated that it could be moved but did not know at what expense. Mr. Schonert stated that we are still paying for utilities on the buildings.

Andrea Edwards stated that if anyone has any extra hay or straw, that she knows a lot of people in need.

### **Highway Business**

Dan Colwell discussed the St. Marie Road, stating that the shoulders are so low, they will need to add volume before the project starts. They took bids for spreading shoulder stone and received pricing for hauling. Received two bids, Ambraw Asphalt was the low bid of \$56,650 to haul, spread and shape 3200 tons of crushed asphalt millings. Brian VanBlaricum made a motion to accept Ambraw Asphalt's bid. Cindy Given seconded the motion. Motion carried.

### **Board Committee Reports**

#### **IT.**

Corey McDonald stated that the county website usage has been down from last month. He stated that he continues to try to make the website user friendly by being able to search for key words and listing county ordinances. Corey has asked for a quote on a whole courthouse generator.

### **New Business**

Steve Schonert discussed having a public hearing for zoning changes in the county about cannabis establishments in unincorporated areas. Mr. Schonert discussed setting the date for the public hearing for November 25, 2025, at 6pm and final claims meeting at 7pm.

### **Executive Session**

Steve Schonert made the motion to enter Executive Session to discuss Labor Union Negotiation status. Cindy Given seconded the motion. The roll call was as follows; Brian VanBlaricum, yes; Dennis Graves, yes; Alexis McFarland, yes; Cindy Given, yes; Morgan Henton, yes; Steve Schonert, yes; Travis Paddock, yes. Motion carried. The Richland County Board entered Executive Session at 8:27 pm.

Morgan Henton made a motion to exit Executive Session. Cindy Given seconded the motion. The board entered regular session at 8:41 pm.

### **Adjournment**

Brian VanBlaricum made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Cindy Given seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 8:41 PM.

Amanda Troyer  
County Clerk

Travis Paddock  
County Board Chairman