

Proceedings of the Special Meeting
Clark County November 30, 2021

The special meeting of the County Board met November 30, 2021 at 7:00 P.M. and was called to Order by Chairman Rex Goble. County Clerk Laura Lee led the pledge of allegiance. Bill Brown led the meeting with a prayer.

ROLL CALL	8:00 A.M.
Rex Goble	District #1
Brandon Burkybile	District #2
Jim Bolin	District #3
Randal Stephens	District #4
Susan Guinnip	District #5
Todd Kuhn	District #6
Mike Parsons	District #7

Board member Jim Bolin spoke to the board about ICOPS Union negotiations. Bolin said that with the help of Sheriff Bill Brown, negotiations were smooth and simple. It is the same as the last three-year contract except the increases are 3 percent for year one and two and 3.25 percent for the last year. Todd Kuhn asked if there was any change of health insurance. Jim said they did up the life insurance for all employees, but that was prior to negotiations. Sheriff Bill Brown also stated that the only change was adding a ballistic vest to be issued to our correction officers. Jim Bolin and Chairman Rex Goble agreed that our people need to be protected as well.

Motion by Jim Bolin and second by Mike Parsons to approve the ICOPS contract. The Chairman put the question and upon the roll being taken all members present voted "aye". Whereupon the Chairman declared the motion adopted.

Ben Lueken gave an ambulance presentation to the county board. Ben asked Chairman Goble and President Murphy to call this meeting to discuss the ambulance situation. Lueken started a little less than 30 days ago pulling together the numbers and talking to individuals on each side. He found that there was some difference of opinions on how this should look. He thought everyone should talk openly about it so that he would not waste the county's money in preparing financials that were meaningless. A discussion is needed to determine what this is going to look like and what it is going to take to make this happen. Combining the 2 entities on a full-time basis you are going to end up, as it stands, without any increases, approximately a \$380,000 short fall. That would be staffing 2 full time locations. The two locations would be in Casey and Marshall, then using some volunteers / first responders in West Union, Westfield and small villages. Clearly this is not going to work by combining the 2 of them together, without a real-estate tax increase or a sales tax referendum. To go total full time with the main locations in Marshall and Casey, employing 10 people full time in Marshall and increasing the employees from a projected eight to ten for the county, brings the \$380,000 shortfall. Marshall Fire is looking to increase their levy about 30 percent for the ambulance and this would decrease the shortfall by approximately \$80,000 to \$100,000. Lueken stated that if you really want to have full time ambulance service with Marshall contracting their services from the County, we are going to have to look at some other ways to cover this. As Ben understands now, the safety tax is going for the jail and is roughly a million dollars in revenue. It is currently a 1% tax. Chairman Goble suggested an increase of ½ % for a total of 1.5% public safety tax. Lueken said with ½ % tax we would be able to cover our shortfalls, be able to staff 2 entities full time and be able to do a part time/ first responder basis for the outlying areas. Ben says if that is the direction, he does not want to waste tax payer dollars and put together something that is meaningless. At this point Marshall is about \$140,000 short before their levy increase. With the new system the county is about \$240,000

short. Ben says that is where they stand tonight and would like to have some open discussion between the two boards. To make this happen, the Boards need to be united. Member Burkybile asked if that was just based off the levies only and Lueken stated that it includes billed income also. Burkybile asked if we have been collecting more since we are using a collection agency? Clerk Lee asked Chief Deputy Treasurer Kim Kannmacher if she knew if collections were up. Kannmacher said they have been about the same. Kim said it seems that there has been a little bit of an increase with refusal payments. She said we have gotten more money in and she thinks that has a lot to do with all the stimulus money people are getting. They can handle refusal bills better than what we have had in the past. Those are starting to slow down now. Board member Randy Stephens asked Ben Lueken if there was an administrator in the head count in his numbers. Lueken said he does have one administrator and roughly 20 total employees. Chairman Goble asked what the salary of the administrator is. Goble looked up the EMS Coordinator's salaries for the State of Illinois and the average is \$50,384 per year, and we would fall more in the \$45,000 per year. Ben estimated \$50,000 to \$60,000 per previous conversations. Chairman Goble found all his information on zip recruiter. The highest paid in Illinois is \$109,000 and the lowest \$17,000. In our area we would fall in medium range of \$45,000 to \$50,000. Board member Mike Parsons said that does not seem like much. They could also complete runs and increase their income. Jason Wimbley said that they would make more than a coordinator at that rate. Chairman Rex Goble printed off a job description. This was from Hancock County, Louisiana. This was the only one he could find online with that job description with qualifications of what they were looking for was a minimum qualification of a College degree credited 4 year college or University with 6 years' experience in emergency medical service field and 4 years of that of administrative experiences, or someone with a high school diploma or GED and 10 years' experience in emergency medical service field, 5 of which would have been administrative management and be a registered EMT Basic or higher on national registry and State Board of Health registry to qualify. Goble said that everything that he was reading said what you would possibly get for a position like this would either be an EMT or Paramedic. A lot of times, an emergency room RN that is retiring or burnt out might take a position like this. Ben Lueken said that Directors in our area and 4 or 5 counties out are \$50,000 to \$60,000, with \$50,000 on the low end. Ben said the problem is, and he thinks the guys that are here today working in that industry will tell you, that there is so much competition that they are jumping ship to go for a higher rate and not having to travel very far to get that. Lueken said you will have to be competitive with your pay. When the County Board met with Lueken in August, medics were making roughly \$50,000 per year and EMT's approximately \$35,000 and his numbers are based upon these for going to full time staff. Goble talked to a person that runs a Trans Care in Terre Haute, they told Rex that we could not afford them. Goble asked how much they earn and he was told over \$90,000 to be a coordinator over there. They do a lot more and they go to Indianapolis and lobby. Board member Jim Bolin asked what about tax levy for the rest of the county. Lueken reported that just the counties portion will be about \$300,000. Todd Kuhn stated that we would not be able to run a full-time staff anyway. Bolin said not without increasing the levy. Lueken said that is what they found in August is that you would not be able to go full time. You could do it for about 5 or 6 years, but you would eat up your reserves. Burkybile said you would still have to have living quarters. Mike Parsons said the thing that concerns him is that the ½% tax is passed, and we have a full-time ambulance, that is the cheapest it is ever going to be to start and our cost is going to go up every year. The question is how long will the ½% tax cover the service and how long before we have to go back to the taxpayers for another ½%? Bolin asked if they thought a levy would be better. Parsons said he did not know what the options are. Mike Parsons said we want this so bad, with that comes the same dilemma that we are in now. How are we going to keep help? Everyone around us can't keep help. If we go full-time, we have not solved any problems We are still going to struggle. Randy Stephens asked about a new sales tax referendum. What are we going to do if it doesn't get passed? Clerk Lee said it is not just a majority vote, but must pass with a 2/3rds majority. Susan Guinnip commented that from her notes she took from previous meetings, basically we are going to have a short fall whether we go full time or try to contract out. Parsons said we won't know what the contract would be until we bid it out. Guinnip said either way, we would need to increase for

either of those 2 options to at least \$200,000. Lueken said that if we went full time just with the County, and leave Marshall alone you would be about \$243,000 short. Todd Kuhn asked Marshall Fire what your opinion would be if we would not happen to go with you? Marshall Fire District President Mike Murphy said that it would be a dilemma. Marshall Fire wants Clark County to lead the way. One of Marshall Fire's concerns is getting the help. Even if Marshall Fire had the money to pay, what would happen if they would lose 2 of their people, they would not be able to find anybody to fill those positions. We can't pay enough. It all goes back to money. Administrator, George Macey is at \$60,000 right now. When Marshall hired George, they put ads out. It was not like a whole lot of people wanted that position. He does not know what would happen right now if they needed to fill that position. Susan Guinnip asked if Marshall Fire had a preference for combining the two services or contracting out? Murphy stated that Marshall is full time right now, but as it stands, it is not sustainable. John Hasten said he thinks the goal is to have an ambulance building in Marshall. He does not want to contract out and have people drive from Paris, to get all the way down to West Union. People die in that case. Parsons says he thinks there should be an ambulance in Martinsville, Casey and Marshall. Susan replied that she thought that would be part of the contract that we would have an ambulance in all those locations. Mike Parsons said a "contract service is not all trouble free". Mike said Jasper County has issues right now. Jim Bolin said if you put a contract ambulance in Martinsville, Casey and Marshall, you would not be able to afford it. Parsons said we would not know until we bid it out. John Hasten said that you could bid it out and take the lowest possible bid, and 3 years later, they are going to up it and you are going to have to raise taxes to get the next contract or go thru the whole bid out process again and disrupt everything. Jim Bolin asked what the pros and cons of levy versus sales tax. Chairman Goble thought that we could sell the sales tax better than the levy. Susan Guinnip said that the sales tax would also include people coming off the interstate. Goble said that over 50 percent of the sales tax money is out of the county. Ben Lueken stated that the biggest distraction is for local businesses, which could potentially be harmed. People might go 30 miles away to buy a product with a lower sales tax. Goble did check surrounding counties, if we went a full percent, with the exception of Edgar County; we would be below or evened up with everyone around us. Mike Murphy feels like on the increased safety tax, the people still have a bad taste in their mouth from the safety tax put on for the jail. He thinks it might be a hard sale. Goble does not care either way. He was just looking at what would be the easiest to sell. Ben Lueken said it has been more difficult to pass a sales tax referendum in the post Covid atmosphere. Some southern Illinois counties currently have no ambulance service due to a referendum not passing and are counting on neighboring counties for service. Jim Bolin asked if they both had to be voted on. The levy does not have to be voted on. Guinnip asked when a truth in taxation needs to be done. Clerk Lee said it is 5 percent. Lee's concern is that we have already adopted our budget. Her concern is how it would affect this year. Lee would have to check on how it is done. Mike Parsons voiced his concern about being on a county board that at some point down the road, just like the Health Department, there has been a number of things voted on in the past that has not really been good for the County. Parsons does not want to be on a county board that 10 years down the road financially, we look back and we are like other counties that have belly flopped and the ambulance services have taken us down. We have enough stuff dragging us anyway. Susan said that in reality, Ben said the only way that does not have the potential of happening is to not have an ambulance service. The other 2 main options are to contract out or to go with Marshall. This still puts us at a risk. Jason Wimbley commented that people in the county want an ambulance service. When they call 911, they want an ambulance. Just like the Fire Department and Sheriff's Office, when they call, they want service. They are tax payers regardless. How would you feel if somebody never showed up? Todd Kuhn's concern is he does not want to go without an ambulance service. Randy Stephens said there is an alternative to raising taxes; we can cut something out that is already levied. There might be something now that we are spending money on that is not as important as having an ambulance service. Jason Wimbley invited everyone to ride along on an ambulance run. Rex Goble asked Ben Lueken what he set the salaries at. Ben replied \$24 per hour which is \$4 over the average in the area and \$15 for EMT's which is \$1 over the average. Randy Stephens said needing an

ambulance service is going to have to be promoted really well or it will not pass. Rex Goble commented that what the board is hearing from Ben is that we want to make sure we are on the same page as what they are on, so we are all going the same direction. Ben said we are all here to make a game plan to see if you are going to do full time in Casey and Marshall, you are looking at about 20 employees plus a director. Marshall is currently at 8 employees plus a director. Ben thinks you lose control if you go to contracting out. Horizon Health said they were interested. Their issue was they are not going to bid it like they did Edgar County, because in Edgar County they can direct patients to Horizon Health. Half of Clark County would go to Sara Bush and half the county would go to Terre Haute. Horizon Health is going to want to make money on those runs. They openly said that their CEO and CFO said they cannot make a comparison to what Edgar County has. With not having a hospital in the County, Ben thinks that will be an issue with whomever the County contracts with. If you contract with Marshall, you will be able to regain control. It will be difficult to staff 20 people in the county for some time. Kyle Hutson stated that Mattoon wanted to privatize their ambulance service and the court ruled that this could only be done with the consent of the union. Susan asked that when a group like the ambulance unionizes, would the county have any say in that to whether or not they can even form a union. Susan was told that they file a petition with the State. The county would not have any say in them joining the union. Amanda Landrus with Marshall Ambulance voiced her concerns regarding the ambulance service. She said a doctor in Marshall instructed her to form a union because of the insurance issue. She said her board took care of that and she likes her board. Amanda also voiced concerns about pay rates. She is a new and does not make what Ben has suggested. She would stay with Marshall as full time at a lower rate instead of going elsewhere at a higher rate because she has family and friends here. Amanda also commented that in order to transport across state lines and to bring back a patient, you need to have a dual state license or national license, which Marshall Ambulance does not have. Susan Guinnip asked, "What do we need to decide tonight to figure this out?" Rex Goble said his thinking is that Marshall needs to decide if they want to contract us? That is the direction that we would go. Susan said so; we need to decide if we want to go full time with Marshall or contract out or no ambulance? Parsons stated that he would really like to see the County to bid out the service, just to have that number, not just guess on cost. Goble said he talked to Crawford County and to do just our side, not Marshall, was over \$550,000. This was Crawford County's actual bid. John Hasten told the board that the next step is to set deadlines, answers taken, votes taken for answers, then look at finances on where you are going. Jim Bolin agrees and we also need to have the finances in place. The County has 1.1 million dollars in the bank that would help fluff us for a year. Hasten said if you are willing to spend down reserves, and go full time to see how it works, maybe we can work together. Ben did factor in for new equipment into the proposal. You will need new equipment later. Rex said that there would be a committee with a board of 3 from Clark County and 3 from Marshall. This way there would be representation from both sides. The administrator is responsible to them and to us. Ben Lueken suggested to try to get a referendum on the ballot for the upcoming General Primary, if that is the way the Board wants to go. Marshall Fire, (the three of us) are going to get together in the next few weeks to decide what we need to accomplish here. Marshall Ambulance's next meeting is the 2nd Tuesday of December. Ben said there are 4 ways to go: you can leave as is and run out of money. The county would have some reserves and last longer. The second option is to contract with Marshall and either increase sales tax or real estate taxes. The third option is to leave Marshall alone and let them do their own real estate tax increase and go full time with the county. The fourth option is to have a private contract and you do risk the loss of control. Bolin asked if Horizon can give us a quote so we know what a quote is.

Motion by Mike Parsons and second by Brandon Burkybile to approve One Day and Mileage Claims. The Chairman put the question and upon the roll being taken all members present voted "aye". Whereupon the Chairman declared the motion adopted.

Motion by Susan Guinnip and second by Brandon Burkybile that the meeting be adjourned until

December 17, 2021 at 8 a.m. for the Regular Board Meeting. The Chairman put the question and upon the roll being taken all members present voted "aye". Whereupon the Chairman declared the motion adopted. The meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

IN ATTENDANCE: Kim Kannmacher – Treasure Office; Lisa Richey – Supervisor of Assessments Office; Ben Lueken – Dimond Financial; John Hasten – Marshall Fire; Karl Ellshoff – Marshall Fire; Mike Murphy – Marshall Fire; Amanda Landrus – Marshall Ambulance; Kevin Morecraft – Marshall Ambulance; Jacob Featherston – CCAS – Casey; Verna Reynolds – CCAS – Casey; Jason Wimbley- Clark County Ambulance; Kyle Hutson – State’s Attorney;