



## **DON GRAY**

### **SANGAMON COUNTY CLERK**

200 SOUTH NINTH STREET – 1<sup>st</sup> FLOOR

SPRINGFIELD, IL 62701

PHONE: (217)753-6700/FAX: (217)535-3233

WEBSITE: [countyclerk.sangamonil.gov](http://countyclerk.sangamonil.gov)

## **MINUTES**

### **SANGAMON COUNTY BOARD**

**JANUARY 13, 2026**

The Sangamon County Board met in Reconvened Adjourned September Session on January 13, 2026 in the Sangamon County Board Chambers. Chairman Van Meter called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm. Ms. Douglas-Williams gave the Invocation and Mr. Krell led the County Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

## **ROLL CALL**

Chairman Van Meter asked the County Clerk to call the roll. There were 29 Present – 0 Absent.

Chairman Van Meter had the County Board sing Happy Birthday to County Clerk Gray.

## **PROCLAMATIONS**

There were no proclamations.

## **HEARTLAND HOUSED PRESENTATION**

Josh Sabo, Executive Director of Heartland Housed addressed the Board. Heartland Housed was established at the end of their strategic planning process to figure out how to better address homelessness as a community. One of the findings was that as a community, they lacked infrastructure in the form of a backbone organization. They really didn't have an organization that was taking the lead on setting strategy. At the conclusion of the strategic plan, Heartland Housed was developed to be the backbone organization for the community. They are a few years into that effort. What is before them, is a 2025 year in review that talks about some of the things that have taken place. It also talks about some of the challenges and also what they want to accomplish this year. Mr. Sabo then presented a powerpoint presentation.

The first slide shows the growth in positive exits from the homelessness system. They go back to 2019 which is a good measure of where they were before the community began to strategically work together. In 2019, their system was able to help 94 people exit homelessness. Some of that was due to

Supportive Housing programs and some to helping people get income and go out and find a home on their own.

Toward the end of 2022, one of the things the strategic plan clearly identified, was the community was severely lacking the ability to help people exit the system. They had shelter and needs for shelter that were growing and growing. As a community, they didn't create exits so people could leave shelter and begin to rebuild their lives from the stability of housing. In the years since then, that has been the overarching focus of their organization – how do they create more positive exits to the homelessness system? There are two key programs that do that. Both of them pair case management with rental subsidy. There are case managers that work with families and individuals helping them to increase their income, access benefits, health care and other things they need to rebuild their lives.

They have seen steady growth in 2023. That was the year the State of Illinois created a program called Home Illinois. They saw funding into the community begin to increase. In the two years since, they have built a system that is more effective. In 2025, that was the first year they surpassed 400 people that were helped to exit homelessness and re-enter permanent housing whether through a program or employment. When they look at the strategic plan, it tells them as a community they need to be somewhere around 765 each year in terms of number of people they're helping to exit the system. Even though they are seeing improvement, they still have a significant ways to go.

When they were here last year, one of the things they said they were hoping to achieve is what's called Quality Data. Community Solutions is an organization that works with communities across the country. This year, their community became the eleventh in the country to reach Quality Data for all single person households. Their team was able to go to Denver for the annual conference and was able to learn from other communities. It was a great opportunity for them to figure out how to keep moving forward. Reaching the Quality Data status as a community doesn't mean a whole lot unless they're using that data.

He wants them to know that when they go to their website at [heartlandhoused.org](http://heartlandhoused.org), under the tab title "What We Do" is a dashboard called the "Built for Zero Community Dashboard". It has several different metrics on it, but one of the metrics is monthly inflow and outflow into their systems. They are looking at how many people became homeless on a monthly basis and how many exited the system. Back in 2024, they can see that there were eight months where outflow was more than inflow meaning more people exited homelessness than became homeless. They are moving in the right direction. To reach their goals, they need to keep that progress moving forward.

Another project for 2025, was the 100-day veteran challenge. This challenge was an opportunity for them to work alongside veteran partners throughout the community. They set a goal and then figure out how they can use that 100-day learning experience to reshape their system. Their group set the goal of helping twenty veterans exit homelessness and enter housing. Over those 100 days, they were able to help 18 veterans. They didn't quite reach their goal but they are proud with what they accomplished. Some of the best things that came out of the challenge, were being able to pull together more partners more intentionally. Now, when they meet each month, they have more partners around the table. They were also able to improve what they call the "by names" list. As they work to reduce homelessness, they want to work beyond numbers to know people by their name. They have a list of names of veterans who are experiencing homelessness, and as those partners are getting together they are

working on each of those names and figuring out what they need. They are beginning to work at that level to help people exit homelessness.

During that process, they created a cross-agency referral training which helps organizations know what other organizations do and also how to help the people they're working with access services those programs offer. They also mapped all the services. This is part of the education of making sure all the partners know who they can go to for help. As they move forward with the goal to reach function zero, they anticipate that veterans may be one of the first populations they try to get to that metric.

Another key area of growth this year, was Street Outreach. Their team was able to receive grants to hire two full-time and two part-time Street Outreach staff for the first time. This means they have staff who are devoted to working with people who are unsheltered and on the streets. They work with them to try and figure out how they can access care and shelter. It has also helped them become more responsive to community needs and concerns. They've developed an app called HCOC Connect. Previously it was only available for iphone users, but within the next 30 days they will be releasing the Android version as well. The app allows business and community members to say "Hey, I saw a person and would love for somebody to reach out to them and see if they can offer services". It also shares the location with their staff so they can connect and make sure they are on their outreach By Names list.

They also worked on a more formal protocol for the community as encampments arise. Getting partners they can pull together to work with people and encampments and help them move out as quickly as possible. That was a big effort they undertook this year with the goal of connecting people to services so they can exit homelessness.

There are also some challenges. The population of people experiencing homelessness in Sangamon County is projected to continue growing. When they looked back ten years at their local data, they saw steady growth in the number of people touching their system each year. The Strategic Plan said they can expect that number to grow by 155 households each year and that has held pretty true. In 2019, there were a little over 1200 people touching the system and in 2025 that number was up to 1,772 people. That's a 40% increase from 2019. They are seeing more people needing services in the community but fortunately they are seeing those services growing at the same time.

Another dynamic they have struggled with is the fact that housing continues to get more expensive. Since 2019, they have seen a 48% increase in fair market rental rates. The more expensive housing gets, directly correlates with rates of homelessness around the country. Where rental rates are higher, homelessness rates are higher. This is something they watch closely and do whatever they can to try and increase the availability of affordable units.

As they've built their Street Outreach team, it has helped them get a better understanding of people who are unsheltered or living outside in the community. That list is currently 72 individuals. That may not mean they are sleeping outside every single night. They may go to shelter or stay with friends or family for a period of time. It means there are 72 people that their outreach staff are working with regularly who are not using shelter and are unhoused. As they are working with those individuals, it often reveals other gaps and needs in the community particularly around mental health. They find that folks who are dealing with the most complex challenges are most likely not able to stay in shelter. What they are trying to do when they're working with people in the streets, is figure out what they can

access safely and also to make sure they are on their coordinated entry list and they are getting prioritized for housing like folks in other programs.

Physical health care is often a challenge. They have found that a lot of services in the community are appointment based. If someone is active in addiction or having a mental health issue and someone tells them the way to access services is to come to a particular building at a set time and day, that is not necessarily the best way to get people to access care. Trying to figure out how to break down those barriers and get people access to care, is what the Street Outreach team is doing.

They are now at the halfway point in their strategic plan. They've invited the consultants that helped develop the plan to come back and let them know how they are doing. They want them to tweak the work they are doing as they continue to make progress on that plan. They anticipate the report will be ready the first quarter of this year and something they will share with the community.

Connected to the Street Outreach conversation, they are thinking a lot about what they are calling "complex care". How do they pull together their federally qualified health centers in their hospital systems and other partners to work together for folks who are dealing with a lot of different challenges in their lives and need not just housing but a lot of different services to come together at the same time to help them achieve the goals they want to achieve. That is a focus for this year; how do they build out the complex care ecosystem in their community.

They are also currently working on a youth homelessness needs assessment and strategy. This started about eight months ago when they did a survey of youth experiencing homelessness through a series of focus groups and talking to service providers in the community. They are working to identify the needs that youth are facing. Youth homelessness is complex. The federal government itself has two different definitions for what youth homelessness is. There are different funding pots for all of that and all kinds of challenges associated with youth homelessness. They are working as a community to figure out how to pull together and have a more defined strategy to make sure the youth in this community have a safe and stable place to stay each night. They feel they have built a great foundation for Street Outreach but they have a lot of work to do to build upon that foundation. That remains a goal for this year.

They know there are changes coming for people that access SNAP and other benefits. They want to make sure they are doing everything they can to help those in their programs or those exiting homelessness get connected to employment opportunities. That has been identified through their strategic plan check-in as an area where they need to grow and figure out how to do better.

Part of the plan also includes, increasing housing opportunities and reducing the number of people entering homelessness. They still have a gap from where they are, to help people leave shelter more quickly and begin to rebuild their lives from the context of safe and stable housing. As a community, they want to do a better job of connecting with families and individuals before they become homeless. They have a lot of great programs in the community that work together closely around homelessness prevention but they all have different requirements. Because of this, they have a lot of individuals and families that fall through the cracks and then have to access shelter. A program they are working on is called the Heartland Flexible Housing Pool. Sangamon County was among the first to make a commitment to this effort in their last fiscal year budget. Last year they gave presentations to

churches, faith communities, businesses and hospitals. This was the key tool or key opportunity they presented to those entities so they would invest in the system.

They get Federal and State funding that pairs case management with rental subsidy. They have been very fortunate that the funding has grown. There is also a special allocation that will be coming from the state. However, the reality is, the state funds are not going to be increasing exponentially. They are probably as high as they will ever be. Federal funding is shifting. They anticipate it going down. In order to reach their goals, they have to create their own ability to invest in programs that work and help people exit homelessness. This is what the Flexible Housing Pool is designed to do. It's designed to help them identify deficiencies in the system. For example, the State might fund a case manager with an organization but not give them enough money for rental subsidy to help fill that caseload for that case manager. With the Flexible Housing Pool, they can find out where those deficiencies are in the system and make strategic investments and organizations so they can house people at a lower cost to the community. In 2025, they had over \$300,000 dollars donated to the Flexible Housing Pool.

On the prevention side, they've developed the Heartland Housing Helpline. When people call (217) 803-5235, they get referred to homelessness prevention programs throughout the state. They also try to help people navigate getting connected to Community Resources or other programs for which they are eligible. Sometimes they work with folks who are not eligible for any programs in the community. With the Housing Problem Flexible Fund, it will allow them to have some access to resources so when people hit a crisis, they can provide some support once every two years.

Those are two of the ways they are hoping to continue building on the success. If they're successful here, they'll see that number drop from 1,772. There should be fewer people touching their shelters in the system. On the prevention side, that is some of the best money the community can spend because they are helping families avoid the trauma of homelessness all together. They are stopping the disruption that causes people to struggle with employment, or getting their kids to school. Those are two programs they are really excited about. Much of the information is contained in the reports that were handed out and will also be in the news section of their website tomorrow.  
[www.Heartlandhoused.org](http://www.Heartlandhoused.org).

Mr. Sabo said he'd welcome any questions.

Mr. Madonia wanted to know how many families are currently homeless and do they get priority placement for permanent housing. Mr. Sabo said they have programs that are catered specifically to families. Funding that comes in for those programs is only used for families. MERCY Communities is the only housing provider for permanent supportive and rapid rehousing. They also have shelter and transitional housing programs in the community. Their primary shelter is Contact Ministries and they serve both families and single women. At any given time, they will have upwards of 30 women in shelter. Often, the families are pretty quickly moved into the transitional housing program that can serve around ten households. If someone is in shelter or in transitional housing, they still consider that homeless by HUD's definition. Mercy Communities Transitional Housing Program serves eight households and inner-city Mission serves anywhere from 10 to 15. At any given point, there could be upwards of 30 families that are in transitional programs in the community. Through Street Outreach, they've identified families using their cars to avoid going to shelters.

Mr. Madonia questioned how they find these families. Mr. Sabo said the street outreach workers are tuned into certain things. They are looking for different indicators when they are out on nights and weekends. The app is also an opportunity for community members to reach out and let them know about situations and make referrals. It's probably been one of the most effective opportunities to connect with them. From there they try and figure out what they are willing to do. Sometimes they may not be willing to go to a shelter. They then establish a safety plan. They try and see if they can stay with a friend or family member until they figure something else out. Heartland Housed then starts reaching out to all those transitional housing programs to see if there are any openings. The quicker they can help families exit those transitional housing opportunities ensures there is a room available for the next family in need.

Mr. Madonia told Mr. Sabo to keep up the great work and thanked him for all he's doing for the community.

Chairman VanMeter said Mr. Madonia's question goes to the heart of one of the puzzles that he knows Mr. Sabo has been wrestling with. Some places specialize in mothers with children while others specialize in single men. Getting the available beds to match that is always an issue. He wondered if they are getting better at that. Mr. Sabo agreed that it is a challenge. He said that during the pandemic, more organizations and funding allowed them to start using hotels. They found that to be a successful route, particularly for families, because it gave them flexibility. They now have more hotel-based programs than they have ever had before and that has been a game-changer in terms of flexibility.

Mr. Hall said he's known Mr. Sabo for over 20 years since his ministry in New Berlin and appreciates his friendship. He is very proud of him. He's seen how Mr. Sabo and his employees address people that many would ignore. He's appreciative of the work they do.

Mr. Cahnman said it seems like they're doing a great job. He said the statistics show from 2019 to 2025 the number of people exiting homelessness went from 94 to 409 but he wondered if Mr. Sabo also has the annual numbers as to how many people entered homelessness. Mr. Sabo said in the presentation, it was the slide where they talked about 1,772 in 2025 versus 1,245 in 2019. Mr. Cahnman asked if the number of people entering homelessness is going up at the same level or is it less. Mr. Sabo said when they look at the number of folks their programs are helping to exit, it's keeping pace/a little bit higher than the number of new people reaching their system. Along with that, they have people that resolve their homelessness on their own. People may come and shelter for a month during that time and then may connect with family and stay with them.

Mr. Cahnman said that the 1,772 exiting homelessness, doesn't necessarily mean that all of those people have found permanent housing but that they're just not using the homelessness services anymore. Mr. Sabo said that is the total number of unique individuals that touched their system over the course of a year. Next week they'll do their annual point-in-time count where they go out on one night and count every person who is sleeping outside. At the same time, they will count every person in the emergency shelter and transitional housing programs. In a given night in Sangamon County, there are roughly 385 people who are in their shelters, transitional housing programs or potentially on the street.

Mr. Cahnman also asked if Helping Hands shelter had ever exceeded capacity. Mr. Sabo was glad Mr. Cahnman brought that up. He said there was a recent Facebook post talking about Helping Hands

being at capacity. They have a normal capacity during the year based on number of beds they have. They recently put up a post saying they had exceeded that capacity. In the winter, they have used cots to expand beyond that. Since the inception of that shelter, they have not had a night where they had to turn people away due to not having shelter space and that remains true. Mr. Cahnman asked what the maximum number of people is they've ever had at Helping Hands. Mr. Sabo said it has gotten as high as 170. The maximum capacity number is around 180.

Chairman VanMeter said the app really works and they want to encourage the community to use it. He also asked if Sangamon County's VAC was involved in the Veterans Challenge Coalition. Mr. Sabo said they were. Chairman VanMeter said that was great to hear because they have some powerful funding tools to use. He also asked how many staff Heartland Housed has. Josh said they just hired a new individual earlier this week, so they are up to seven full-time staff. The organization also supports a housing navigator and they have a database administrator. So they support nine full-time positions, through the organization. The Chairman asked if they pay rent where their offices are. Mr. Sabo said YES. The Chairman thought maybe they could find some space for them in the new Community Services Building they're planning that is currently where the Public Health Building is now. He thanked Mr. Sabo for his work and time.

#### **MINUTES**

A motion was made by Mr. Madonia, seconded by Mr. DelGiorno, for approval of the Minutes of the December 9, 2025 meeting. A voice vote was unanimous.

MOTION CARRIED  
MINUTES ADOPTED

#### **CORRESPONDENCE**

A motion was made by Mr. DelGiorno, seconded by Mr. Madonia, to place correspondence on file with the clerk. A voice vote was unanimous.

#### **RESOLUTION 1**

1. Resolution approving a grant application for Community Resources from the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity for the LIHEAP program in the amount of \$1,463,606.

A motion was made by Mr. Madonia, seconded by Mr. DelGiorno to place Resolution 1 before the Board. Chairman Van Meter asked County Clerk Gray to call the roll. Upon the roll call vote, there were 28 Yeas – 0 Nays. Resolution 1 was adopted.

MOTION CARRIED  
RESOLUTION ADOPTED

#### **RESOLUTION 2**

2. 2025-021 Cathy I. Schwartz, 11396 State Route 125, Pleasant Plains – Granting a Rezoning and Variances. County Board Member Tom Fraase, District #1.

A motion was made by Mr. Fraase, seconded by Mr. Madonia, to place Resolution 2 before the Board. The Chairman noted that they are entering the zoning portion of the meeting and it is the Board's policy to ask if there are members of the audience who wish to speak in opposition or in support of the proposed rezoning and variances. There were none. A motion was made by Mr. Mendenhall to waive the reading of the professional staff's report. There were no objections. A voice vote was unanimous for the adoption of Resolution 2.

MOTIONS CARRIED  
RESOLUTION ADOPTED

### **RESOLUTION 3**

3. 2025-020 David P. Ginder, 7750 Cardinal Hill Road, Rochester -- Granting a Rezoning and Variances. County Board Member Jeffrey Thomas, District #4.

A motion was made by Mr. Thomas, seconded by Mr. Mendenhall, to place Resolution 3 before the Board. There were no members of the audience who wished to speak in opposition or in support of the proposed rezoning and variances. A motion was made by Mr. Mendenhall to waive the reading of the professional staff's report. There were no objections. A voice vote was unanimous for the adoption of Resolution 3.

MOTIONS CARRIED  
RESOLUTION ADOPTED

### **RESOLUTION 4**

4. An Ordinance Approving and Authorizing the Execution and Delivery of an Intergovernmental Agreement between County of Sangamon and Village of Jerome Related to Building and Property Code Inspections, Permitting, and Violations.

A motion was made by Mr. Ayers, seconded by Ms. Deppe, to place Resolution 4 before the Board. Mr. Madonia moved that the roll call vote for Resolution 1 stand as the roll call vote for Resolution 4. A voice vote was unanimous.

MOTIONS CARRIED  
RESOLUTION ADOPTED

### **WAIVER OF TEN-DAY FILING PERIOD**

A motion was made by Mr. Madonia, seconded by Mr. DelGiorno, to waive the ten-day filing period. A voice vote was unanimous.

MOTION CARRIED  
TEN-DAY FILING PERIOD WAIVED

### **RESOLUTIONS 5 - 17**

5. Resolution approving the procurement of goods and/or services for Information Systems from CloudSAFE for a period of 3 years for the purpose of monthly iSeries cloud backups in the amount of \$36,180.

A motion was made by Ms. Deppe, seconded by Mr. Davsko, to place Resolution 5 before the Board. A motion was made by Mr. DelGiorno, seconded by Mr. Madonia, to consolidate Resolutions 6 -17 with Resolution 5. Chairman Van Meter asked County Clerk Gray to read Resolutions 6 - 17.

6. Resolution approving the procurement of goods and/or services for Information Systems from Tyler Technologies Inc. for the purpose of renewing the annual financial software maintenance in the amount of \$85,961.60.
7. Resolution authorizing the County Administrator to negotiate and enter into an agreement with Midwest Industrial Contractors Corporation Inc. for the performance of demolition work in the amount of \$80,000.
8. Resolution authorizing an agreement between Sangamon County and The Farnsworth Group for the remodeling of the State's Attorney Office in an amount not to exceed \$50,750.
9. Resolution authorizing an agreement between Sangamon County and Jennings Painting for the remodeling of the Seventh Floor Courtrooms in the Sangamon County Courthouse in the amount of \$217,780.
10. Resolution approving the procurement of goods and/or services for the Public Health Department from WAND 17 for the purpose of providing Narcan advertising services in the amount of \$50,000.
11. Resolution approving a grant application for the Public Health Department from the Illinois Department of Public Health for the Vaccines Access Program – Sangamon in the amount of \$50,000.
12. Resolution approving the procurement of goods and/or services for the State's Attorney's Office from Morrow Brothers Ford Inc for the purpose of purchasing a new 2024 Ford Edge in the amount of \$36,300.
13. Resolution approving a grant application for the State's Attorney's Office from the Illinois Attorney General's Office for the Violent Crimes Victim Assistance program in the amount of \$42,500.
14. Resolution approving the procurement of goods and/or services for the Recorder's Office from Fidlar Technologies for the purpose of maintaining records databases and various search databases in the amount of \$133,200.
15. Resolution approving a grant application for the Springfield-Sangamon County Regional Planning Commission from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in the amount of \$1,500,000.

16. Resolution approving a grant application for Community Resources from the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity for the Community Service Block Grant program in the amount of \$569,641.
17. Resolution approving the procurement of goods and/or services for the Finance Miscellaneous Department from Heartland Housed for the purpose of providing flexible housing support in the amount of \$50,000.

On the motion to consolidate, a voice vote was unanimous.

Mr. Cahnman had a question about Resolution 12. He wondered if the purchase of the 2024 Ford Edge is to replace a vehicle the State's Attorney's office has now or is it something in addition to what they have. Assistant State's Attorney Benoit said this is to replace the pick-up they gave to Buildings and Grounds. Mr. Cahnman also noted that it was purchased from a dealer in Greenfield, IL. He questioned why they don't buy locally. Mr. McFadden noted they buy off the state bid which is the cheapest option.

Mr. Cahnman also had a question about Resolution 17. He wondered for what the \$50,000 to Heartland Housed was to be used. Chairman VanMeter stated this is for the Flexible Housing fund the Board seed funded last year and they have now raised an additional \$300,000 primarily from the religious community. This is a fund Heartland Housed uses for emergency situations. It's a fund without strict criteria and has no restriction on its uses.

Mr. Madonia moved that the roll call vote for Resolution 1 stand as the roll call vote for Resolutions 5 - 17, as consolidated. A voice vote was unanimous.

MOTIONS CARRIED  
RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED

#### **OLD BUSINESS**

No Old Business.

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

Mr. Cahnman had a question for Sheriff Crouch. He stated he has been hearing a lot of radio commercials she's had on the air that say Paid for by the Authority of Sangamon County. He thinks they authorized that in a resolution passed a couple years ago which also states the ads could be put on the air up to 63 days before an election. He asked Sheriff Crouch if she could give him an accounting of the amount of taxpayer money that was spent on the radio commercials, billboards and other advertising. Sheriff Crouch said for radio advertising after November of 2025 they have spent \$6152. The billboard costs were all incurred prior to November 2025. Mr. Cahnman also noticed on the Sheriff's purchase report there is an item for Comcast Cable. He asked if that was for TV Ads. She said it was not. It was probably for inmate TV.

Sheriff Crouch also wanted to point out to Mr. Cahnman that in the email he sent her, he asked about promotion expenses for prescription drug drop-off. She said they generally partner with Public Health, but for this event, no Sangamon County funds were used for any of it. Also, the free rides on

New Year's Eve event, they did not do a promotion for that. They only used County funds for the Sheriff's App, a job fair and a Drive Sober campaign over New Years.

#### A. Appointments

Appointment of Steven Ponder to the Building Code of Appeals for a term expiring November, 2026.

Appointment of Greg Stumpf to the Board of Health for a term expiring September, 2028.

Appointment of Todd Ballenger, as Hearing Clerk for a term expiring December, 2027.

Appointment of Daryl Spelman to the Divernon Fire Protection District, filling the Unexpired Term of Brian Spelman, for a term expiring May, 2026.

A motion was made by Mr. Madonia, seconded by Mr. DelGiorno, for approval of the appointments. A voice vote was unanimous.

MOTION CARRIED

APPOINTMENTS ADOPTED

The nominations for appointment in February were also submitted.

#### B. Emergency/Procurement Notifications

There were no procurement or grant notifications.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

They have 10 people signed up to speak and each person is allowed four minutes to speak.

Dr. Kathleen Campbell addressed the board. She is President of Citizens Against Heartland Greenwashing Projects. She lives in Glenarm as a retired professor emeritus and is a distinguished scholar from SIU School of Medicine. She first thanked the Board for sponsoring the December data center public forum. She also wanted to thank Trustin Harrison for meeting with her colleague and her to explain the permit approval process and answering their many questions.

Tonight she wanted to speak about the health impacts of data centers, particularly the pollution now called "digital smog". On November 5, 2025 the Harvard Business Review published a review article consolidating the information from multiple studies. The article talks about the facilities creating air pollution, including fine particulate matter, resulting in significant respiratory-related health consequences that are estimated to cost up to \$20 billion per year in the United States in 2028. These pollutants include PM2.5 and nitrogen oxides (NOx), often called "silent killers". The article states the air pollutants can penetrate deep into the lungs and are linked to a variety of health outcomes, such as asthma, lung cancer, heart attacks even premature deaths. They're recognized as the second-highest risk factor for non-communicable diseases. Air pollutants like PM2.5 are considered "non-threshold", meaning there is no safe level and any increase poses a health risk. The pollutants can also travel

hundreds of miles with the wind, raising air pollutant concentrations in communities far from the emission source.

Some state agencies have begun conducting health impact assessments of data centers' on-site diesel generators to inform them of emission limits. Residents near a large AI data center in Memphis, TN have raised strong concerns about air pollution and health risks. She does not see that their current permitting process has emission limits nor do they include health impact assessments. They need to proactively integrate public health impacts into the design and deployment of AI – an approach called "health-informed AI". She urges them not to approve this project until these needed tools are actualized and the pollution guidelines are fully developed so they can protect their public health.

She pointed out that at no time during the public hearing in December did CyrusOne or the Springfield Growth Alliance mention these public health risks. She added that new regulations and legislation are in the works and urges them to wait.

As the next speaker approached the Board, Chairman VanMeter mentioned that they are getting second opinions on some of the information they gathered for the public hearing.

Ryan McCrady next addressed the Board. Mr. McCrady is President of the Sangamon County Growth Alliance. He wanted to thank the County Board for the process they put forward to have an open public discussion about CyrusOne's plans to construct a data center in Sangamon County. He thinks they can see the difference in how the process is going here compared to other communities that are also exploring data center options.

He said this project would represent a \$500 million dollar investment in the community. CyrusOne has turned in a letter of intent with the local Building and Construction Trades Council to use local labor to construct and maintain that facility. The investment in local workers will create an exceptional economic impact into the community as those workers live here, will spend money here, support local businesses, send their kids to local schools and go to the churches here.

Although CyrusOne is new to Sangamon County, they are not new to Illinois and they are not new to the industry. CyrusOne has been around for over 25 years and been involved with data centers around the country and globally. They have a tremendous amount of experience. Many data center companies right now are startups that are exploring opportunities. The good news for Sangamon County is they are dealing with an experienced organization that's looking at doing the data center here in Springfield and Sangamon County.

He knows the cost to provide public services to their constituents and taxpayers goes up every single day. When they look at the part of Sangamon County where the project will be located, they'll see that part of the County has not seen enormous increases in property values. They need to determine how much taxes each person in the community pays. It could be a simple mathematical equation of cost for services divided by the units that determine how much tax you pay and those are units of property value or equalized assessed valuation. If they can't find a way to increase the denominator of that equation, the cost to provide services is going to continue to increase. One of the ways they offset that is through economic development opportunities across the County. This is what the project represents right now. The properties at this site, pay about \$20,000 a year in property taxes and the estimate from the

Sangamon County Supervisor of Assessments is over \$6,000,000 a year in property taxes on the same acreage. This represents an opportunity to affect the equation in a positive way.

He thanked the Board for allowing him the opportunity to speak to them and added that the Growth Alliance is available to answer questions from them or any of their constituents at any time.

Jeff Scott was the next speaker. He was not present.

Ethan Manning was the fourth speaker signed up to speak. He is focused more on the financial end of the project. Something he was thinking about is what if CyrusOne decides to change ownership. Who is CyrusOne? On the Sangamon County website it says they are a company based out of Texas worth about 15 billion dollars that has been in business since the early 2000's. He would disagree somewhat. They were purchased in 2022 by a company called KKR. If they follow the money, they'll end up in a skyscraper in Manhattan. KKR is possibly one of the biggest private equity companies on the planet.

He says Private Equity is an insidious level above large faceless corporations. While corporations have profits first, they still have to tend to their products and services while maintaining their bottom lines. Big Tech is an example of this. Private Equity, on the other hand, typically uses a model of takeovers and borrowed debt to buy up companies. They work in short-term windows typically three to five years. If the company is not successful, they look to dissolve the company through finding another buyer, chopping the company up by liquidation, or simply seeking bankruptcy protection.

KKR, which owns CyrusOne has a portfolio of companies valued at over 600 billion dollars. Its portfolio includes; energy, health care, food, publishing, entertainment and web based companies as well as IP rights. Oliver Stone's character of Gordon Gekko was influenced by the then CEO of KKR. The book, Barbarians at the Gate, was written about KKR's ruthless takeover of RJR Nabisco. Recently, the book Plunderers, was written about Private Equity firms and highlights KKR. He then read a quote from the book.

If CyrusOne changes hands, if it's dissolved, or if it falls under typical private equity, will they honor their commitments to land usage and environmental pollution? All private equity cares about is the bottom dollar. He urges them to vote NO to this. He doesn't want to end up like Loudoun County. He thinks there will be other areas where they are looking to build as well. He thanked the Board.

Donald Hanrahan addressed the Board next. He and others have conducted a lot of research on what other communities have done with respect to Data Centers and they have come up with a draft of a proposed data center ordinance that they forwarded to Trustin Harrison for board consideration. Copies have also been sent by certified mail to CyrusOne and its local counsel. Given USPS realities, they probably won't receive it until this weekend.

They reached out to other communities and did a lot of reading and discovered that some had drafted noise ordinances only to be frustrated with the discovery that the most offensive, emitted sounds from the data center were not covered because the frequency is different than typical industrial noise which is much lower. It covers different frequency bands and exposure creates difficulties with human health and sleep. Because of its low frequency, this sound also travels through things and travels farther than higher frequency sound. There was one data center where the community prevailed and they passed an ordinance with noise regulations but didn't do the right frequencies. The company spent

tens of millions of dollars to build remediation for the sounds it was making and it didn't work. Some experts came in and said they were looking at the wrong bandwidth of noises. They said they should have modified their fan housings and fans.

Their ordinance covers approximately five pages. It's longer than the current ordinance and contains sound and vibration provisions, adds site requirements for energy, water, light buffers, landscaping and other provisions not or inadequately addressed in the current ordinance. They urge the Board to reconsider its current ordinance, which has no effective provisions at all for noise except when the proposed center is directly adjacent to a residence. It effectively green lights these things throughout the county wherever they can conceive of a grid connection. Residential properties, businesses, livestock operations, kennels, the impairment of ability to subdivide adjacent farmland and use it – all this and more are at stake. Whether it's CyrusOne or the next one.

The state legislature is going to take up Data Center issues. They need guard rails in place now not two years from now. Construction jobs that build a machine that takes away jobs is a loser proposition to him. The state legislature exempting mega projects from the touted tax benefits, freezing property tax values at the pre-build level is pending in the legislature right now with wide bipartisan support. He said to not count on their big revenues and thanked the Board.

Erin Kirkpatrick next addressed the Board. She said they are not different from other communities. CyrusOne touts fast modular construction on their site. They all want local labor utilized but this distracts from jobs that will be lost from the AI it will house. CyrusOne has already changed hands three times in those years operating. Data Center companies have had their taxes re-evaluated at the state level to pay less or even force repayment.

From Harvard on Leadership, they discussed different types of challenges. Adaptive challenges force them to build new capacities. They demand they go beyond what they currently know how to do and have associated uncertainty and questions around loss. There is an adage that people resist change. She thinks that's not really true. People love change when they know it's a good thing. People aren't stupid. What people resist is not change per se, but the losses that sometimes accompany change.

Leadership requires a deep respect for the pains of change. They have to understand what they are asking of people when they ask them to change. Data Centers pose an adaptive challenge. They must go beyond what they have done before and there will be trade-offs. They must have the humility to recognize the effects of data centers are not something they fully understand. Leadership requires communicating about what they are asking the community to give up in exchange for proposed data center dollars. She's concerned they are so focused on short-term economic gain, that they aren't performing an adequate long-term risk-benefit analysis.

This year, seventy percent of the increase in electric rates across the nation were due to data centers. The growing demand for AI is projected to push the total annual Public Health burden of US data centers up to more than 20 billion annually in 2028 or approximately 600,000 asthma symptom cases and 1,300 premature deaths. She said to remember the decibel scale is logarithmic not linear, which means 60 decibels is twice as loud as fifty.

They are now subsidizing, through their electric bills and physical and mental health, some of the largest companies on the planet as they promised them diminishing tax breadcrumbs. Do they want

more freedoms for individuals or more freedom for corporations? Their current lack of tax regulations is granting corporate freedom. The time is now to update their zoning around data centers. Reading the proposed zoning updates taught her how much more she had to learn.

She calls on them to do the work on the front end. She wants them to learn from other counties, just like theirs before they are burned like they were. With their current level of transparency, they don't know where the other centers are scouting. She urges them to take some real time to review and strongly consider the proposed zoning changes and pass updated regulations. They need to look at the zoning changes Mr. Hanrahan discussed and help limit the negative changes and consequences associated with these proposed projects.

Mr. Cahnman had a question for legal counsel. He wondered if they could pass the revised zoning ordinance that Mr. Hanrahan proposed and if it would affect the current CyrusOne application. Mr. Benoit said this fits into the discussion he had on the question of the moratorium. Right now they have a zoning ordinance that controls this. CyrusOne and everybody has a right to rely on the existing ordinance. At the point in time, where a resolution is at the committee level and is amended, then they would no longer have the right to rely on the old ordinance. Whether they already have vested rights, depends on how much money, time and effort they have already spent on this. Case law he has researched shows every case is a case-by-case determination.

Mr. Cahnman stated it may not be effective with the CyrusOne application but they could pass it and it would be applicable to any future data center applications for zoning relief. Mr. Benoit said he thought that was correct.

Anne Logue spoke next. There is a rapid escalation of data centers and they are happening all over the country and affecting many communities that aren't prepared for them. There are about 36 communities that have blocked these initiatives. She quotes the Illinois Power Agency, Illinois Commerce Commission and the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency saying "Hyperscale data centers are driving Illinois power needs to unsustainable highs." According to their recent report, data centers are poised to set their climate on a fast forward course to an unsustainable climate being used to justify the prolonged use of fossil fuels locking in a future of elevated emissions and escalated temperatures. Data will show that carbon and global temperatures rise lockstep. Data centers are primary fuel for carbon emissions.

Data shows that global temperatures rise as carbon levels rise, requiring data centers to provide their own clean energy and storage to protect local citizens from respiratory disease, cancer and escalating utility bills. What is their strategy when more data centers come knocking at their door. How will they protect their farmland? What is the MISO strategy when data center growth exceeds supply and utility rates rise?

Many measures are beginning to take hold where heavy concentrations of hyperscale data centers already exist. Changes to the zoning and permitting process are powerful tools for responsible data center construction. Harrisburg, VA removed data center status by-right to development, to require special use permits which redirect proposals through public hearings and discretionary reviews instead of waiting to engage the public as it did here at the end of the process. Community Benefit Agreements are a positive means to balance out the public harm these centers create.

As of December 16, 2025, Chandler, AZ city council unanimously rejected a zoning request for a 10-acre data center despite the promise of a closed-loop cooling system. This is the same suburb that had a five level structure for a 169-watt data center built. They built it in 170 days thanks to their massively, modular, pre-fab, construction using pre-built blocks to reduce on-site work that directly affects our labor here. Chandler, AZ has learned from the experience that these companies are not our friends. They are international corporations who are billions of dollars in debt with AI expansion in mind. It is not just about one data center. It's how they set a precedent for any data center asking to build in the community. She thanked the Board.

The next person signed up to speak was Ken Pacha. He was not present.

Bradd Hout with CyrusOne spoke next. He first wanted to extend his gratitude to the community members there today and to the county leaders and agencies that continue to engage with their team. He particularly wanted to thank the County for the amazing job they've done facilitating public dialogue. At CyrusOne they make it a priority to fully engage with communities considering their project and to be open and transparent with the people who live in the places where they invest. The County's work in facilitating this is greatly appreciated. He also thanked everyone who has come out and offered their viewpoints and participated in this process.

This year CyrusOne celebrates 25 years in business, having been formed at the start of the new millennium. In 25 years, they have weathered a tech stock bubble, a global financial crisis, an unprecedented pandemic and wave after wave of geopolitical issues. Through all of this, the demand and viability of their facilities has remained steady and unchanged. Technology has evolved rapidly over the past 25 years, but facilities they built in the early 2000's, continue to operate and succeed today. This is because they are a company that builds for longevity. They don't chase trends or build based on a bubble. They build for long term with infrastructure capable of meeting dynamic and changing customer demand.

Their commitment to invest \$500 million dollars in Sangamon County is about their company's future and the future of the community. The investment means 100 million in tax revenue over the next 20 years, hundreds of jobs for local labor workforce and a new permanent workforce with long-term career advancement opportunities. Within CyrusOne, he can point to several instances where an employee has entered the company at entry-level and progressed over several years to a leadership or executive role. Throughout the wave of change that has affected their company, they remain a group of people proud of the work and the role they serve within the national and global economies.

As highlighted at the public forum in December, this is a project that is responsibly designed with respect to water usage, lighting, noise and landscape design. The power infrastructure to serve this project is adjacent to the site today and their commitment to pay for line extensions helps protect the existing rate payers from socialized costs. The regional grid operator, MISO, has confirmed that capacity is available to serve the project today and won't create rolling blackouts and brownouts.

Their electric bills they pay to the rural electric convenience cooperative, their leadership has made it clear this project is beneficial for their members and will allow them to reduce the amount of transmission costs passed on to their customers. Through thoughtful site selection and planning, they are working to create a project where the costs are not socialized but the benefits are.

As demonstrate over the past several weeks, Sangamon County is a place with thoughtful residents, strong leaders and a talented workforce that stands ready to deliver. They'll help diversify the local economy and tax base. In doing so, will help support hundreds of local families for years to come. CyrusOne is a company run by people that are proud of what they do. Proud of the role in the national and global economy and proud of the positive impact they have on their communities in which they operate.

In the coming weeks, they will work to finalize their initial stakeholder engagement efforts and present plans for approval. As mentioned at the meeting in December, they want to be a good neighbor. They want to be a good corporate citizen and will do everything to demonstrate this to them as they have done in dozens of other communities over the past 25 years. He thanked the Board for their time.

The last person to speak was Aaron Gurnsey. He is the President of the Central IL Building and Construction Trades Council. He's also the Business Manager for the Plumbers and Steamfitters Local 137 and a resident of Sangamon County. He previously addressed the Board at the public hearing as a proponent of the CyrusOne data center and their position as organized labor is still in favor of this project.

He does respect the concerns for this project and it does show the citizens of Sangamon County do care about what goes on around them. He's glad the County Board takes all of that into consideration. He represents the skilled workers in Sangamon County and it has made him realize that they and their families really do love nice things. They love their public schools, sports teams, parks, libraries and their beautiful public spaces for gatherings and spaces for their kids to play. These families love feeling safe with the protection of police and fire departments. All these wonderful things are funded by property taxes. CyrusOne is ready to pay their share of property taxes for these things to the tune of \$6,000,000. Schools get funded, road districts improve and Sangamon County has a place for 500 men and women to build a facility and spend the hard-earned money in the community because of a labor agreement that ensures local workers are on this project. As a reminder, CyrusOne will put 100 people to work in full-time, well-paid, highly skilled positions upon completion of the construction portion and the operations begin.

The skilled men and women who will build this facility train right here in Sangamon County. To operate the facility, the men and women will train in Sangamon County. To those students who see a pathway to a great career, this may not include college. The high school trades programs at local schools, teach and sustain a pre-apprenticeship training program. Lincoln Land Community College has their pre-apprenticeship training programs. These skilled trades people come to local union halls to enter their apprenticeship programs to hone their skills and become the workforce that makes Central Illinois the place where Midwest work ethic becomes a reality.

In conclusion, they all like nice things. Progress and change are what brings the public those nice things. He urges them to support local because when they don't, there won't be a local to support. He thanked them for their time.

**REPORTS OF COUNTY OFFICIALS, REPORTS OF SPECIAL COMMITTEES, REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES, COMMITTEE REPORTS ON CLAIMS**

A motion was made by Mr. DelGiorno, seconded by Mr. Madonia, to put reports on file with the County Clerk. A voice vote was unanimous.

MOTION CARRIED  
REPORTS FILED

Mr. Hall said he appreciated everyone going over to the Convention Center and hearing everybody. He thought it was very disrespectful for people to leave during the meeting before other people spoke. He thought it was nice this evening to have people who spoke before not leave tonight. That is a good way to treat each other. He's talking about the conduct of leaving and there are people in the back of the room. To say they are a union or trades and labor guy and they have to get home when there are also farmers in the back who have cattle and are up early in the morning as well. He's just saying please have some respect.

**RECESS**

A motion was made by Mr. Madonia, seconded by Mr. DelGiorno, to recess the meeting to February 10, 2026. A voice vote was unanimous.

MOTION CARRIED  
MEETING RECESSED

**Don Gray**  
**Sangamon County Clerk**