

DON GRAY**SANGAMON COUNTY CLERK**

SANGAMON COUNTY COMPLEX

200 SOUTH NINTH STREET - ROOM 101

SPRINGFIELD, IL 62701

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

WEBSITE: countyclerk.sangamonil.gov**MINUTES****SANGAMON COUNTY BOARD
SPECIAL MEETING****MAY 25, 2023**

The Sangamon County Board met in Special Session on May 25, 2023 in the County Board Chambers. Chairman Van Meter called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. Mr. Stumpf gave the Invocation and Mr. Fraase led the County Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Chairman Van Meter asked County Clerk Gray to call the roll. There were 24 Present – 5 Absent. Mr. Bunch, Mr. DelGiorno, Mr. Madonia, Mr. Preckwinkle and Ms. Williams were excused.

PROCLAMATIONS

Ms. Fulgenzi presented a Proclamation declaring the month of May 2023 as Proactive Mental Health Awareness Month in Sangamon County. Diana Knaebe, System Administrator with Memorial Behavioral Health, accepted the Proclamation.

CORRESPONDENCE

A motion was made by Mr. O'Neill, seconded by Mr. Fraase, to place any Correspondence on file with the County Clerk. A voice vote was unanimous.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chairman Van Meter asked for unanimous consent of the board to allow speakers present for the public comment portion of the meeting to speak in advance of the board's business. There were no objections.

Becky Nevill, 1836 Groth Street, Springfield, addressed the County Board. Ms. Nevill and her husband own a small business in the area where the new homeless shelter is planned to be placed. They found out about it on May 8th from a flyer that was given to some of the neighbors. The flyer stated there was a public hearing on May 10th, which was two days away, pertaining to the homeless shelter being placed and attached to the Juvenile Detention Center at 2201 S. Dirksen Parkway. At that meeting, they were instructed that this was going to happen and their comments, concerns and questions were not met. Since that meeting, they have spoken to several of their neighbors who knew nothing about the shelter. The first dated material she was able to find regarding the project was from November 2022. That is six months of planning without any of the neighborhood being informed. Her objective tonight is to ask the County Board to table the vote on the shelter for one month. This month, the community is asking for a public hearing with all County Board members, the City of Springfield Police Chief, the Sangamon County Sheriff, the Mayor, the Alderpersons of Springfield, and the community. They want their questions answered. Safety is their number one priority. They are very concerned as a community and nobody can answer her questions. She asked the members to find it in their hearts to vote to table this for a month so the community can get their concerns and questions heard and answered. She thanked them for their time.

Cindy Gentile, 2141 Shale Street, Springfield, addressed the County Board next. She lives about 100 feet from where they want to put the shelter. She has two grandchildren that live with her who are ages three and seven. She worked at Springfield Electric for 10 years, which is very close to where the current shelter is. After work, when it was dark, they would be walked to their cars because of people walking up to them wanting money. She thought they were trying to make the east side better, and now they want to put a homeless shelter with 145 men in with the juveniles. She doesn't understand how homeless men can be in the same shelter with juveniles. She is also concerned that their resources, such as the bread line, are downtown. She is worried that people coming in off the interstate are going to be coming down Dirksen Parkway and see these people walking around. She doesn't think they are bad people, but doesn't feel this a good spot for them.

Cassandra Metz, 504 N. Milton, Springfield, addressed the County Board to speak on the CO₂ pipeline safety issues and the moratorium vote. Ms. Metz read an excerpt from an NPR article on CO₂ pipelines describing what happened after a carbon dioxide pipeline ruptured. This included more than 200 people having to evacuate and at least 45 hospitalized. She is asking the County Board to vote to extend the moratorium to allow for more consideration of safety and cost effectiveness. Sustainable Springfield, a local 501(c) (3) environmental organization with many constituents in Sangamon County, strongly opposes CO₂ pipelines for multiple reasons. The primary reasons being

safety and cost. According to a 2022 report by the Congressional Research Service, CO₂ pipelines pose a public safety risk as demonstrated by the 2020 CO₂ pipeline rupture in Satartia, Mississippi, which led to a local evacuation and caused 45 people to be hospitalized. Carbon sequestration is of dire importance over the coming decades. They must also remember that many other approaches do not necessitate the need for pipelines such as enhanced weathering, agroforestry, and blue carbon. They exist and are ready for the market. They believe the money required to implement the Navigator pipeline, which is \$3.2 billion, could be put to a better proactive use, developing more sustainable and renewable energy to reduce carbon emissions. She commented that any endorsement of support for this type of pipeline anytime in the next several years by the board would be an endorsement of sacrificing their community as a risky and dangerous experiment.

Sean Collins, residing at 1917 Groth Street, Springfield, addressed the County Board. He has lived there for two to three years now. He thinks the biggest problem is not the homeless shelter itself, but that they feel blindsided by the project. They just had one or two days before the one meeting which was informing them this was going to happen. At the meeting, they were told by Helping Hands that people had gone around house to house and had received the "ok" for the project. He and his wife decided to do their due diligence and went around to the surrounding neighborhoods asking the owners if they heard about the project and if they approved. He stated that nobody had. They spoke with probably 90-100 people about it. They circulated a petition and have close to 80 signatures of residents that oppose it. He does understand the board has been looking for a spot since 2013 and recognizes this is a difficult thing to place in any community. Everyone will always have concerns. He feels, with homeless people, they bring an increase in crime, vagrancy and loitering. It is not scary for him, but for his wife and two daughters it is scary to go to the County Market and have someone hanging around outside the door. They are dealing with that issue now with a man. If another 150 men are brought into their area, that will compound the existing problem. The most important thing he would like is information. He thinks tabling the resolution would give them time to get their questions and concerns answered. He believes there may be misinformation out there that they are hearing and would like more time to discuss the issue and obtain more accurate information.

Mr. Cahnman asked Mr. Collins how many people did not sign the petition. Mr. Collins stated 80 people did sign it, and around 10 people approached did not sign. Twenty of the signatures came from a change.org petition.

Deborah Nevill-Warren, residing at 1611 N. 28th Street, addressed the County Board. Ms. Becky Nevill is her sister-in-law and Becky and her brother own a business on the east side of Springfield. Ms. Deborah Nevill-Warren was a social worker for Contact Ministries and Springfield Center for Independent Living for several years and then started her own business helping people file for disability for social security. For over twenty-two years, she has helped people with Social Security and other disabilities. What they are concerned about is the fact that many homeless people are mentally ill. She is not against a homeless shelter in Springfield, but feels many of the services

they need are downtown. Springfield Center for Independent Living is on South Grand, There is the Breadline, doctor's offices, grocery stores, medical facilities, and psychiatrists offices that are all downtown. There are many vacant buildings downtown where the services are that could be utilized. She is concerned that these services are not available on the east side and will result in issues affecting their area.

RESOLUTION 1

1. Resolution approving the lease agreement between Sangamon County and Helping Hands of Springfield.

A motion was made by Mr. Stumpf, seconded by Ms. Fulgenzi, to place Resolution 1 on the floor. A motion was made by Ms. Small, seconded by Ms. Douglas-Williams, to table Resolutions 1 – 4 for thirty days. Mr. Cahnman asked legal counsel if it is possible to table a resolution for a certain number of days. His understanding is when you table a resolution it takes an extraordinary majority to take it from the table; otherwise, it lays on the table. Legal Counsel Joel Benoit responded by saying it typically goes under Old Business at the next meeting and just takes a simple majority to take it off the table.

Upon a roll call vote, there were 5 Yeas – 17 Nays - 1 Present, to Table Resolutions 1 – 4. Those voting Yea were; Mr. Cahnman, Ms. Douglas-Williams, Ms. Lathan, Mr. Mendenhall and Ms. Small. Ms. Deppe voted Present. The motion to Table was denied.

Chairman Van Meter then asked if there were questions or comments about Resolution 1.

Mr. Cahnman stated one of the members of the public that spoke referenced the shelter not being open during the day. It was his understanding the homeless people would be able to stay there during the day. He was wondering if a staff member could answer some of those questions. Chairman Van Meter responded that they did not have any staff lined up to answer that question but he would be able to. He answered yes. Helping Hands would be providing services to the people that reside there 24 hours a day. That is a change from past operations at many of these facilities. Many of the services they seek will also be there. In addition, they have arranged with SMTD for regular bus service that will service that area and take residents of the shelter to where they need to go during regular working hours of SMTD. In the evening, Helping Hands has developed a bus system that will provide transportation to the shelter for those people who need a place of residence. Chairman Van Meter added that the intention of providing this facility is to give those who are loitering a place to go. He stated it is important to understand this is how Helping Hands is approaching their responsibility to the community and the neighborhood.

Ms. Lathan questioned if there was any language in the lease agreement regarding safety protocols and ongoing systems of communication with the local residents and businesses, and if that is not the case, she asked if there is a way they could make sure this is a part of the process. Chairman Van Meter stated that he could assure her, with respect to security at the facility, there have been extensive conversations between the County and Helping Hands, and the relevant provisions are included in the lease agreement. Every interaction he had with Helping Hands indicates they will be extremely willing to work with the surrounding neighborhood and be good neighbors. It is hard to put that in a contract, but the County is willing to be supportive of Helping Hands efforts to be supportive of the neighborhood.

Mr. Fraase questioned if the only public meeting held on this subject was May 10th. Chairman Van Meter said there have been many public meetings on this topic going back six months. Every County Board meeting is a public meeting, and the issue has been discussed at numerous County Board meetings. In addition to that, they had to seek zoning approval for the Helping Hands application. The zoning process is handled by the City, and requires public notice in the neighborhood and signs to be posted in the neighborhood and the facility where the proposed zoning changes will take place. Then there are a series of meetings, all of which had public notices for hearings at the Zoning Board of Appeals and at the City Council. The City Council conducted two meetings on this subject. All of the local media have carried stories about the project including three TV stations, two print media, and the news radio stations. At Ms. Small's strong urging, they did hold a public information meeting at Southeast High School for the immediate neighborhood. Mr. Bunch also took it upon himself to meet with the owners of the eight or ten homes that are adjacent to the Animal Control Facility.

Mr. Fraase then asked if it were true that the homeless would be able to intermingle with the juveniles at the facility. Chairman Van Meter explained the reason they made this proposal to Helping Hands is that the County has an interest in locating the SMART transportation system to where the Helping Hands current facility is. Before approaching Helping Hands, they first went to the two agencies in the State who regulate the Juvenile Center to determine if it was possible to wall off the unused portion of the Juvenile Center for Helping Hands purposes. Both state agencies were fully satisfied that there would be a complete separation between the Helping Hands and Juvenile Detention facilities. He added that it is also important to understand the Juvenile Facility is not a high school or a middle school. The young people who are confined at the Juvenile Detention Facility remain inside the facility. There is really no opportunity for intermingling between the two groups.

Mr. Cahnman inquired about a statement one of the speakers made referring to only men being housed at the facility. It was his understanding there would be women and maybe children as well. Chairman Van Meter stated yes, one of the happy outcomes of the partnership with the County and Helping Hands on this facility is that it will enable them to expand their mandate and provide services to men, women, and families.

Chairman Van Meter stressed that this evening's vote, which he hopes will be an advance of this project, is not a conclusion. The County wants to continue to work with the neighborhood. They understand there are questions even though there have been many public meetings, and they are happy to try to answer those. He suggested first calling the County Board office. If they are not able to provide the answers, they will connect the caller with an authoritative source for the answer.

Chairman Van Meter stated there have been issues raised about the mental instability of the homeless and substance abuse among the homeless. With all of the studies he has seen in the time they have been working on this project, surprisingly the percentages of mental instability and substance abuse, while they are greater in the homeless population, are not substantially greater than in the rest of the population, particularly with respect to substance abuse if you compare the percentages to the younger population. The major difference is they do not have a home, and the effort this community is trying to make is to stabilize them and get them back into a housing situation so they are not wandering the streets and they are not appearing to threaten people in the public right of way. He added that there was an allegation about the closeness of the schools to this proposal. The closest school to the facility is 2,500 feet. Where the shelter is now, the closest school is 500 feet.

He again stated that as more questions arise, they are happy to try to answer them. The County Board office phone number is 217-753-6650. They may not have the answer immediately, but will try to get the answer or get the individual connected with someone who has the answer.

Mr. Cahnman added that it was his understanding Helping Hands is working to place the homeless into permanent housing. Their goal is not to house these people at the homeless shelter forever, but they are working towards placing them in permanent housing. Chairman Van Meter responded that was correct. He stated if everyone were honest with themselves, they would agree that the community has done a very poor job of responding to the homeless in this community, however, they are trying to change that. They are trying to do something different that has worked in other communities. Rockford is the national model for this and they are trying to create a system that rapidly rehouses people so they do not become chronically homeless and their problems just compound. They now have a large and coordinated effort across the community to deal with this. Publicly they haven't seen the results yet, but they have only really started in the last four or five months. They have, for the first time in almost two decades, received one of the highest scores from the Housing and Urban Development on their system. They have also received an increase in funding from Housing and Urban Development in the community, which they haven't received in almost twenty years. They are making progress and the system does have considerable support to become successful as it has in Rockford.

Ms. Fulgenzi remarked that the topic of access to services, transportation, and medical care comes up frequently. She requested that Chairman Van Meter address that as well.

Chairman Van Meter stated Helping Hands has arranged with SMTD, the regular bus system in the community, to provide regular service during SMTD's operating hours every day they operate. The bus will actually go to the Helping Hand's location, pick up residents there and take them wherever they need to go. When SMTD is not operating, Helping Hands is organizing their own bus service that will focus on the clientele they serve. The County is helping with that service, but they will operate it because they are the professionals who know how to work with the community they are serving.

Ms. Douglas-Williams suggested getting everyone together so the proper information is being disseminated to all. They need to meet together to share what they claim they are trying to put out for people to hear. Chairman Van Meter responded that they had many public meetings on this issue. They had a meeting in the neighborhood on this issue. There is still evidence, after all of those meetings, that sometimes people, even though you say something, don't quite hear it. He thinks they may be better served by one-on-one answers for a while. If the one-on-one meetings don't work, they will go back and try another public meeting. One-on-one will have a better chance of answering people's questions directly. Ms. Douglas-Williams remarked that the problem is still the answer to people's questions are not going to be answered at the same time by the same person. They don't know who is actually giving out information. Something is wrong somewhere because too many people didn't have answers to their questions. She thinks it would be nice to give the people, who they represent, a platform so they can talk. Chairman Van Meter said they will try to answer people's questions one-on-one for now, and if they are not successful will hold another public meeting.

Ms. Small agreed with Ms. Douglas-Williams. She has asked to visit the facility with County Board members. She has asked several times to have a public hearing. She has not seen the signs they said were put out. She thinks they need to come together to inform the people because they have not been informed. She knows this because she walked the area and talked to the people. Chairman Van Meter stated everyone on the board acknowledges that Ms. Small worked very hard to facilitate the public meeting at Southeast High School. As he suggested to Ms. Douglas-Williams, he thinks they should try one-on-one questions and answers, and if they are still failing to satisfy everyone's questions they can look at trying another group meeting.

Ms. Fulgenzi suggested having the County's public relations staff put together a frequently asked questions piece addressing the various concerns of the community. That piece could then be made available on the County website and shared with the neighborhood. Chairman Van Meter said that was an excellent suggestion. It would directly address the issues that Ms. Small and Ms. Douglas-Williams raised because it will be in a place where the answer is clearly written for everyone.

Ms. Douglas-Williams wanted to know the time frame. How long will they do one-on-one questions and answers? She also stated if all the information is put out on the website, they should

realize that not everyone has a computer. She hopes this works because they do owe them answers, and they do work for them.

Mr. Cahnman had two suggestions. Ms. Fulgenzi already made one of his suggestions. The second was once construction is completed, but before the shelter opens, he suggests they have an open house and let the people come see the project. Staff would be available from Helping Hands and the County to answer any questions. Chairman Van Meter thought that was an excellent suggestion as well, but said they would need to take that up with Helping Hands as they are not in a position to promise that, but they will certainly promise to ask that.

Mr. Stumpf stated everything the Chairman explained he is satisfied with, but Ms. Douglas-Williams is making a very good point. In the last year, the County Board and the Chairman, and committee have made communication a lot heavier in the Animal Control area and it has worked very well. He added that communication is super important and they should agree to work hard on that.

Mr. Thomas suggested having the young woman that spoke earlier be the point-of-contact who could specifically write out all the questions they have and submit it to have all their questions answered. Chairman Van Meter responded that she is welcome to submit questions to the County Board office, but anyone else may as well. They will welcome all questions and will try to post an FAQ.

There were no other questions or comments from members of the County Board on the resolution. Upon a roll call vote there were 20 Yeas – 1 Nay – 2 Present, for the adoption of Resolution 1. Ms. Small voted Nay. Ms. Douglas-Williams and Ms. Lathan voted Present.

MOTIONS CARRIED

RESOLUTION ADOPTED

RESOLUTION 2

2. Resolution approving the contract for sale of real estate between Helping Hands of Springfield and Sangamon County.

A motion was made by Mr. Stumpf, seconded by Mr. O'Neill, to place Resolution 2 on the floor. Mr. Cahnman questioned if this was vacant land that is currently serving as a parking area. Chairman Van Meter clarified that this is the building Helping Hands is currently located in.

Upon a roll call vote, there were 20 Yeas – 1 Nays – 2 Present, for the adoption of Resolution 2. Ms. Small voted Nay. Ms. Douglas-Williams and Ms. Lathan voted Present.

MOTION CARRIED

RESOLUTION ADOPTED

RESOLUTION 3

3. Resolution approving the Relocation Agreement between Helping Hands of Springfield, Sangamon County, and Sangamon Mass Transit District.

A motion was made by Ms. Deppe, seconded by Mr. Constant, to place Resolution 3 on the floor. Upon a roll call vote, there were 20 Yeas – 1 Nays – 2 Present, for the adoption of Resolution 3. Ms. Small voted Nay. Ms. Douglas-Williams and Ms. Lathan voted Present.

MOTION CARRIED
RESOLUTION ADOPTED

RESOLUTION 4

4. Resolution authorizing the County Administrator to enter into an agreement with O’Shea Builders for construction manager’s services, advisory capacity, related to the intended renovation of Sangamon County’s building located at 2201 South Dirksen Parkway, Springfield, for Helping Hands use in an amount not to exceed \$750,000.

A motion was made by Ms. Deppe, seconded by Mr. Cahnman, to place Resolution 4 on the floor.

A motion was made by Ms. Deppe, seconded by Mr. Krell, to amend Resolution 4. The amendment is to increase the dollar amount to enter into a contract with O’Shea Builders to \$800,000. A voice vote was unanimous on the amendment.

Upon a roll call vote, there were 20 Yeas – 1 Nays – 2 Present, for the adoption of Resolution 4, as amended. Ms. Small voted Nay. Ms. Douglas-Williams and Ms. Lathan voted Present.

MOTIONS CARRIED
RESOLUTION ADOPTED

RESOLUTION 5

5. Resolution requiring that no permits or other grants of authority to construct any carbon dioxide pipeline will be issued by Sangamon County under its existing ordinance or other law prior to December 31, 2023.

A motion was made by Mr. Stumpf, seconded by Mr. Mendenhall, to place Resolution 5 on the floor.

A voice vote was unanimous for the adoption of Resolution 5.

MOTION CARRIED
RESOLUTION ADOPTED

RESOLUTION 6

6. Resolution granting a 6-month extension of the audit of the Circuit Clerk's Office.

A motion was made by Mr. Thomas, seconded by Mr. McGuire, to place Resolution 6 on the floor. Chairman Van Meter noted that this is routine. They do this almost every audit because there are so many documents to audit. A voice vote was unanimous for the adoption of Resolution 6.

MOTION CARRIED
RESOLUTION ADOPTED

OLD BUSINESS

A. Resolution 1 – Tabled 4/27/23

Resolution approving construction bids for the Sangamon South building.

A motion was made by Ms. Deppe, seconded by Mr. Thomas to take Resolution 1 from April 27, 2023 from the table. A voice vote was unanimous.

Ms. Deppe explained that this is a resolution for all the costs involved in the construction of the Coroner's Office. Chairman Van Meter thought a word of explanation was advisable. This resolution was held from the April meeting because when the bids came back they were higher than the committee expected. Ms. Deppe added that they needed some cost estimates to make sure the price was correct to accept the bids due to them being higher than expected. After receiving those estimates and additional information, it is more than acceptable to accept the bid from the low bidder R.D. Lawrence.

Chairman Van Meter added that they even asked their consultants O'Shea Builders to investigate returning to the original plan. They had a building on the green site near the Juvenile Center, but it was still about \$2 million cheaper to build at the Sangamon South Facility. Costs have escalated, particularly roofing and HVAC costs. The Coroner's Facility has many complicated HVAC requirements because of the nature of the work that they do. Ms. Deppe stated they had a very good presentation from Byron, which explained in detail the needs of the Coroner's Office.

A voice vote was unanimous for the adoption of Resolution 1.

MOTION CARRIED
RESOLUTION ADOPTED

NEW BUSINESS

There was no New Business.

REPORTS

A motion was made by Mr. Fraase, seconded by Mr. Hall, to place any reports on file with the County Clerk. A voice vote was unanimous.

RECESS

The Chairman added that another meeting would be scheduled on June 27, 2023 probably at 5:30 pm. It is important they have a quorum at the meeting. They expect to have the bids back for the Helping Hands Facility. It is very important that the bids be approved that evening in order to complete the renovation so the winter warming shelter can open on time in November.

A motion was made by Mr. Stumpf, seconded by Mr. McGuire, to recess the meeting to June 13, 2023 at 5:30 pm. A voice vote was unanimous.

MOTION CARRIED
MEETING RECESSED

Don Gray
Sangamon County Clerk