

March 10, 2026

OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS

St. Clair County Special Board Meeting



SPECIAL COUNTY BOARD MEETING – MARCH 10, 2026

1. Invocation
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Call to Order
4. Roll Call by Tom Holbrook, County Clerk; Present – 25; Present; Absent – 3
Absent – Mr. Dinges, Mr. Easterley and Mr. Meile (The Chairman noted that Mr. Dinges, Mr. Easterley and Mr. Meile are excused.)
5. Public Participation- Allen Huelsmann – Breese, IL – Expressed concern about the CSX railroad that runs from St. Louis originally to Cincinnati which has been closed for 11 years from St. Louis to about Clay County, Illinois. He noted that Clinton County only receives about \$124,000 in real estate taxes while St. Clair County receives over \$500,000. He believes that they should be paying more taxes and wondering how to go about it but has been told that the State sets these rates. Chairman Kern said they do and I normally don't debate. Chairman Kern said we have a yard here in St. Clair County, so it isn't just a right-of-way. Chairman Kern said I suggest you contact the State or ICC or the Department of Revenue. Mr. Huelsmann asked if we had any phone numbers to get ahold of them as they are very hard to get ahold of. Chairman Kern said if you leave your name I will try to find a number.
6. Committee Reports
 - a. Finance Committee:
 1. Discussion and Approval of 2026 St. Clair County Fair Contracts

Discussion: Chairman Kern said we are bringing the County Fair back after a 12-year hiatus. Chairman Kern said tonight we are announcing that we have featured artists for a concert on Friday night who will be performing in our new racetrack. Chairman Kern said we will have a concert Thursday night which we are teasing everything but don't have a commitment yet. Chairman Kern said Saturday night will be the first race on the new racetrack. Chairman Kern said additionally at the County Fair we are going to bring back Miss St. Clair so we will have a Miss St. Clair pageant. Chairman Kern said we are going to have all of the usual inside the exposition hall exhibits which will include agricultural, we will have some musical talent, we will display lawnmowers and tractors and everything that we have done at the County Fair we are going to have rides, we will have corn dogs and lemonade, beer and many other things at the County Fair. Chairman Kern said the committee is very active but there is nobody left from the old fair committee, so we are all starting brand new so anyone that wants to attend the next fair meeting is Tuesday the 24th at 10:00 a.m. in the conference room. Chairman Kern said the purpose today is that we have to start signing contracts. Chairman Kern said sign contracts for rides, stage, acts, and other things associated with the fair. Chairman Kern said I am asking for authorization to sign up to \$360,000 worth of contracts for the fair. Chairman Kern said the goal of the fair is not to just break even but to make money, seed money for next year. Chairman Kern said we already have \$250,000 in St. Clair County bank account from sponsorships. Chairman Kern said we are moving in the right direction. Chairman Kern said we will make money off selling the tickets for the concerts. Chairman Kern said I have to sign a ride contract for \$60,000 but if they make

\$60,000 then we pay zero and anything above \$60,000 we get a cut of so this is all designed to try to make money at the County Fair and if the weather treats us right we will have enough money that next year we will be able to put a County Fair on and keep going. Chairman Kern asked if anyone had any questions.

Mr. Vernier said you have 75% of the money of the \$360,000. Chairman Kern said right. Mr. Vernier said \$250,000 so really you only need \$110,000. Chairman Kern said we have 3,900 seats and we would have the ticket sales that would help for the cost of the entertainers.

Mr. Cockrell said what did we budget, was it a quarter of a million that we budgeted for Fair St. Clair this year in the general budget. Chairman Kern said we didn't have a budget so what we have done is bring in revenue and we are going to have to create the budget with revenues Chairman Kern said the Fairgrounds budget might be that, but we will not be taking from the Fairgrounds. Chairman Kern said this is going to be a separate fund and maybe next year be an enterprise fund but right now people are writing their checks to St. Clair County. Mr. Cockrell said my question is procedurally do we need to amend the budget for \$360,000 to allow you to enter into these contracts. Chairman Kern said I don't believe so and Jackie doesn't believe so. Chairman Kern said I would be happy to do that but the way this works is that you have to sign contracts. Mr. Gomric said we don't know what the budget is going to be. Mr. Gomric said we can make this adjustment afterwards. Mr. Cockrell said this board should authorize you under the guise of having to do it right now to authorize to spend up to \$360,000 for Fair St. Clair that way it can exceed the \$20,000 - \$25,000 no bid requirement. Chairman Kern said that is the motion. Mr. Cockrell said I just wanted to make sure I'm clarifying that because I understand you have to bid rides, bid vendors and bid everything else. Chairman Kern said professional services, the ride person is the ride person. Mr. Cockrell said I mean bid entering a contract with them under a no bid situation for professional services like you would an engineer. Chairman Kern said right.

Mr. Reeb said is there going to be ongoing racing besides the fair or is that going to happen next year. Chairman Kern said the first race will happen the Saturday night of the fair and I think soon we will have a contract on who our promoter is and who operates the track, but at the fair there may be two or three races. Chairman Kern said the race at the fair will mark the beginning of the race season and then the intent is that they will be a race in August, maybe two in September and maybe one in October.

Mr. Gomric said could we get the dates. Chairman Kern said it's July 30th – August 1st and our intent is although we're not advertising as part of the County Fair that Sunday will be a Family Day from 12:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. and they won't have to pay to get into the Fairgrounds since the exposition hall will be closed by then. Chairman Kern said they could park inside which we will not allow until Sunday as parking will all be outside. Chairman Kern said part of the contracts we are going to sign is for a parking consultant.

Mr. Dawson said going forward is the intent that the first weekend of August would be the date. Chairman Kern said it is the last weekend in July that has been the traditional fair is held that weekend. Chairman Kern said there was no intent to cause any rub with Mascoutah. Chairman Kern said I'm sensitive to that and we didn't want to compete with anything and it has always been our weekend. Chairman Kern said the Fair Committee can attest that when we met we were told that it wasn't that weekend. Chairman Kern said it shouldn't be an issue going forward.

Mr. Henning said I think it is a great idea, are we going to have someone who is the single point of contact for security or whoever you want to manage it. Chairman Kern said the Sheriff has agreed to run the security and we've already had a meeting with State Police, Belleville Police. Mr. Henning said we want that to be as safe as we are in this room right now. Chairman Kern said it has to be and that's really number one and we are listening to them on road closures and how much we charge for entrance and where entrance locations will be. Chairman Kern said security is going to be with us hand in hand every step.

Mr. Cockrell said how many contracts are we talking about. Chairman Kern said I think it will be Thursday night at least two to three acts for entertainment, Friday night will have two acts and the third we don't need a contract with because it is the Shriners band and Saturday we will have the race that contract will be brought here for the racetrack promoter. Chairman Kern said we will have marketing contract, but then we have the stage contract, the sound contract. Chairman Kern said we have to provide catering and a limousine for our entertainer. Chairman Kern said the rides is one contract. Chairman Kern said this is the reason for that to not exceed and the contracts are rolling in and we need them committed.

Ms. Gruberman asked if the construction on 159 will be done by then. Chairman Kern said I hope so they are out there actually working so fingers crossed.

M. Crawford made a motion to authorize Chairman Kern to sign up to \$360,000 worth of contracts for the fair.

K. Dawson – seconded

M/C - RC - Unanimous

- 7. Comments by the Chairman- None
- 8. Adjournment

There being no further business, a motion was made by CJ Baricevic seconded by S. Tieman that the Board stand adjourned until Monday, March 30, 2026, at 7:30 p.m., for the March Meeting, and to convene in the County Board meeting Room B-564, 10 Public Square, Belleville, Illinois, when it will be the pleasure for all to attend. Motion carried unanimously.

THOMAS HOLBROOK, COUNTY CLERK AND
EX-OFFICIO CLERK OF THE COUNTY BOARD
