

Kayci Heil

White County Clerk & Recorder

**MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC HEARING FOR THE WHITE COUNTY  
TRUTH IN TAXATION  
NOVEMBER 19, 2025**

The White County Board convened at the White County Courthouse in the City of Carmi, State of Illinois, on Wednesday the 19th day of November, at 6:45 p.m. and was called to order by Chairman Cassie Pigg.

Chairman Cassie Pigg led the meeting in the pledge of allegiance.

On Roll Call, the following Board members responded as being present, which represented a quorum: Clint Spencer, Amanda Cannon, David South, Ken Usery and Cassie Pigg were all present.

Chairman Pigg stated that the purpose of the public hearing was a truth in taxation hearing and that the Board was wanting input from the public. She informed the audience that this is not something that they have taken lightly or glossed over, and they completely understand everyone's concerns and they value your input.

Mr. Harmon with Bellwether Advantage LLC presented the audience with a slide show presentation. That presentation is attached to these minutes. Mr. Harmon explained that most of the expenses in White County are going to the public safety and criminal justice system. That is likely 70% that is spent on that. This affects White County heavily because of the safety act during police reform in Illinois. It has caused a lot of revenue in the public safety and criminal justice system to be reduced while increasing the requirements of those departments and causing more labor dollars. The County's equalized assessed value has increased by 44% over four years. He then explained what the equalized assessed value is. Mr. Harmon explained that the county has done what it could to hold the tax rate down. They also pay taxes in this county and are on both sides of this argument. Mr. Harmon explained that the highway levy qualifies the highway department for motor fuel tax and if they do not make their minimum amount for the property tax levy, the tax that's paid at the pump for motor fuel tax, you qualify for less of that and then you lose outside funding as well as funding for the highway department. The county's portion of the tax bill ranges from 10%-50%. The increase is an 18.2% increase on the 10% of the county's portion of the tax bill.

Mr. South asked to back up a couple of slides and Mr. Harmon explained to him on the slide is a rough estimate of what your taxes would raise.

Adam Willis, asked if there was a shortfall in the budget or a gap that the county is trying to cover. Chairman Pigg stated that where the County is at right now is we have had a significant loss in revenue, and we have essentially no other way to bring that back in, so to continue to have operations going the way they are now, this is where we are at. Mr. Willis asked that this is to capture the outside monies. Chairman Pigg explained that with this levy it gives us a balanced budget. If we were not to approve this then we would have cut \$400,000.00 from the budget. Mrs. Cannon said that they sliced into everything department wise and that some departments took large cuts.

Mr. South stated that inflation is a big problem for everyone.

Bryan Harms, told the Board that his house increased 100% over one year. He stated that most people live in this County because of the low cost of living. He wanted to know if this is the answer.

Randy Graves addressed the board and wanted it to explain to him how if we lost money due to the safety act then it cost the department more to run now do to the act. Mr. Harmon stated that there is additional training expenses and just more in general for the departments to run. He also had questions about the last board meeting and what happened with the solar. He also asked about the Illinois FOP contract and the raise for the employees.

Kelly Ackerman wanted to know what happened with the revenues from the solar farms and cannabis. It was explained that the solar money is only captured through the property tax revenue and if our rate is low, then the County captures less money.

Tiffany James asked if the solar farm was being taxed off what they made. Mr. Baxley said it was charged per kilowatt. Mr. Baxley said last year we had 12,060,000 coming in from two of the solar farms and this year we are going to have 25,000,008. The total for 2025 is a good bring in for \$40 million.

Denton Weiss, stated that if the people of Illinois do the right thing and get Pritzker out of there and somebody wises up and repels the Safety Act. Will this be revisited?

The Board explained that we would have more revenue coming in and that we tap every grant that we can and try to find any available funding that we can use. Mrs. Cannon stated that offices are using restricted funds to buy office supplies. Mrs. Fulkerson, Circuit Clerk, stated that with the pretrial fairness act, she lost a quarter of a million dollars in just bond money last year.

Josh Harms, he stated that he was a residential buyer and the housing market has been at a peak for the last 3 years and now it is going down. He told the board that if the people in the County keep getting taxed then they are going to start moving out of the County. He wanted to know where the cap was at or when does it stopped. Chairman Pigg explained that unfortunately that this is the environment that we are in and we tried to stop that and for the past three years we have tried everything to keep it down. Mr. Harms stated he would love to be on a board that

could help bring people to the County. Mr. Harms and Mrs. Cannon went on to talk about some of the homes that have been selling in White County and how that is affecting the EAV.

Mr. Willis asked if we could make up gap with the sales tax. The Board stated that they have discussed this and it would have to go on a ballot. They discussed that even if we put the ballot, it would not be here in time to help with the current problem and then it would have to get passed to take into effect.

Mr. South said that the last time we did that it failed miserably. Mr. Allen, Ambulance Director, said that when he came on in 2014, they tried to get it passed and it did not. They tried to do it again down the road and it almost passed but did not.

Drew Marshall, asked if there was a way to increase the taxes on the solar or cannabis. The Board told him that they are taxing them as much as the State will allow. It is taken out of the County's hands. Mrs. James asked if we could raise the fines on the ordinances to help with this problem.

Ranelle Hubele, she wanted to say that she appreciated the presentation. She had concerns about how the ad was written and ran on the paper. Chairman Pigg stated it is 18.2% is the amount on the tax levy and not on the tax bill. Mr. Harmon said that he agrees that he agrees that he doesn't like the language, but this is the way the state requires it.

Mike Rowe, stated that the chart would have been helpful to have ran with the paper. Chairman Pigg stated that the best outcome from this meeting was to get the knowledge out about how the amount works on the tax levy. Mr. Rowe asked about the projected income and if this is what is projected for what the County needs. Chairman Pigg stated that this is what is needed to break us even.

Richard asked if this meeting was being held properly. He told the Board that there are certain requirements that it must have when published on the website. He also asked about the cuts and said that the graph looks weird. He asked did anyone heard anything about cuts that could be made. Clerk Fulkerson told him about people and services. He mentioned that everyone needs to get more involved.

Jeff Nix, asked about the sales tax and said to keep getting it on the ballot and have a town wide meeting to explain what is going on.

Mr. Allen asked if there was a way to make a sunset clause and it goes away if the sales tax passes. They vote only on the 25-26 year and they cannot change that.

Mr. Baxley explained some examples of what the tax rate could be and that the tax rate would be potentially still lower than the 2023 tax rate.

Sharon Pollard, suggested that the Board just base it on what you need and it might pass.

Chairman Pigg asked for a motion to adjourn. Mrs. Cannon made the motion to adjourn, seconded by Mr. South. Vote by acclamation.

