

**STEPHENSON COUNTY BOARD MEETING**  
**6:30 PM October 14, 2009**  
**Stephenson County Board Room**

The Stephenson County Board met in the Courthouse on Wednesday October 14, 2009. Chairman Blum called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. Mr. Newton gave the Invocation and Mr. Graham led the Pledge of Allegiance. The Clerk called the roll. Members present; Samuel Newton, Bennie Brown, Charles Hilton, Jeffrey Mikkelsen, Debra Devine, Sheila Hooper, Todd McKenna, Peter Willging, Donald Parker, John Blum, Vicki Hooper, James Graham, Alvin Wire, Linda Dotson, Jim Kuhlmeier, Andrew Kuhlemeier, Lynn Koch, Brenda Boynton, George Kinney, Salvatore Detente, and Forrest Senn. Absent: Thomas Gilmour. Twenty-one members present. One member absent.

**APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA:** Mr. McKenna made a motion to approve the agenda as received. Second by Ms. Dotson. The Chair called for a voice vote on the motion. *Motion to approve the agenda as received carried unanimously.*

**APPROVAL OF THE SEPTEMBER 16, 2009 MEETING MINUTES:** Mr. McKenna made a motion to approve the minutes of the September 16, 2009 meeting as received. Second by Mr. Willging. The Chair called for a voice vote on the motion. *Motion to approve the minutes of the September 16, 2009 meeting as received carried unanimously.*

**CLAIMS ON THE CLERK'S DESK:** Ms. V. Hooper made a motion that all claims on the Clerk's desk be referred to the proper committees without reading. Second by Mr. Senn. The Chair called for a voice vote on the motion. *Motion that all claims on the Clerk's desk be referred to the proper committees without reading carried unanimously.*

**COMMUNICATIONS:** The Clerk presented the following communications;

- Public Defender Monthly Report for September; 292 new cases, 230 cases closed and income to Public Defender Fund \$2,161.02

Ms. V. Hooper made a motion to approve all communications and place on file. Second by Mr. Senn. The Chair called for a voice vote on the motion. *Motion to approve all communications and place on file carried unanimously.*

**OLD BUSINESS:** The 2008 audit was received and laid over at the September County Board Meeting, with no questions or concerns noted; Mr. Brown made a motion to accept and adopt the 2008 Audit. Second by Mr. Graham. The Chair called for a voice vote on the motion. *Motion to accept and adopt the 2008 audit carried unanimously.*

**SHERIFF'S REPORT:** No report

**HIGHWAY REPORT:** Mr. Isbell presented the following resolutions;

**HD 09-29, Resolution #09-10-1682** awarding low bid to Pearl City Elevator for Diesel Fuel.

**HD 09-30, Resolution #09-10-1683** awarding low bid to Pearl City Elevator for Gasoline.

Ms. S. Hooper made a motion to approve both resolutions as presented. Second by Mr. Koch. Discussion was held on a possible conflict for board members having interest in the Pearl City Elevator. Ms. S. Hooper made a motion to allow Mr. A. Kuhlemeier and Mr. J. Kuhlmeier to abstain from voting on these two resolutions.

Second by Ms. Boynton. The Chair called for a voice vote on the motion. *Motion that Mr. A. Kuhlemeier and Mr. J. Kuhlmeier abstain from voting on the two resolutions carried unanimously.* The Chair called for a voice vote on the motion to approve both resolutions. *Motion to approve HD 09-29, Resolution #09-10-1682 awarding low bid to Pearl City Elevator for Diesel Fuel and HD 09-30, Resolution #09-10-1683 awarding low bid to Pearl City Elevator for Gasoline carried unanimously.*

**Ordinance #O09-10-1684 HD 09-31** Ordinance for the establishment of an altered speed zone in Lancaster Township. Mr. J. Kuhlmeier made a motion to approve the ordinance as presented. Second by Mr. Koch. The Chair called for a voice vote on the motion. *Motion to approve Ordinance #O09-10-1684 HD 09-31 for the establishment of an altered speed zone in Lancaster Township carried unanimously.*

Mr. Isbell requested permission for an emergency purchase of a computer server. He has received quotes from (2) local companies and would like to purchase a Dell server from Fehr-Graham for approximately \$6,700. Mr.

J. Kuhlmeier made a motion to approve the emergency purchase. Second by Mr. Koch. The Chair called for a voice vote on the motion. *Motion to approve the emergency purchase of a computer server from Fehr-Graham for approximately \$6,700 carried unanimously.*

Mr. Isbell provided an update on current road projects.

Congratulations to Paul Rampenthal for finishing in the top 10% at the Chicago Marathon which qualifies him to run in the Boston Marathon.

**ZONING REPORT:** Mr. Groves reported the Zoning Board of Appeals had met on October 8 and approved a special use permit requested by Todd Wise for a home occupation of a lawn tractor repair shop.

**PECATONICA PRAIRIE PATH/JANE ADDAMS TRAIL:** Mr. Groves reported the Jane Addams Trail will not be closed this year during the hunting seasons. Signs will be posted along the Trail stating all hunting dates and it is being strongly recommended that trail users wear blaze orange clothing during those times.

**EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT REPORT:** No report

**9-1-1 REPORT:** Mr. Groves reported the Board had discussed the effects of possible layoffs at the Dispatch Center and options available if layoffs are imposed.

**HEALTH DEPARTMENT REPORT:** Mr. Beintema reported they are still working on the FQHC planning grant. Four positive human H1N1 cases and 11 positive A-influenza cases have been reported in our County since spring. The Health Department, along with area providers, is working on a plan to immunize the 4 high risk areas. Seasonal flu vaccination began on October 1. Vaccinations for County employees will be available on October 14 and 16. Food Scores and the Animal Control report were distributed.

**NURSING CENTER REPORT:** Mr. Fortney reported the Nursing Center is taking extreme cautions in light of the H1N1 virus. They are also exploring the possibility of offering Adult Day Care at the facility.

**PROBATION DEPARTMENT REPORT:** Mr. Pauley reported the Dependent Children's fund is under budget. Monthly statistics were distributed.

**STATE'S ATTORNEY REPORT:** State's Attorney Vogt reported Assistant State Attorney Joe Lentz has been accepted into the Capital Litigation Trial Bar of the State of Illinois.

**CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:** Chairman Blum presented the following report;

- I attended the grand opening of the EverCat biodiesel plant in Insanti, MN last week with Cheryl Kneubuehl of NIDA. This is a milestone in the progress of this new technology that will revolutionize biodiesel production. This should finally accelerate the development of the first full-scale production plant here in Stephenson County. Financing is still the remaining issue, however, with the cadre of US Senators, Congressmen, and investment bankers in attendance at the ceremony, support at all levels of government and the private sector is growing rapidly.
- I was honored to attend the dedication of the EcoGrove wind farm last month as a guest of Acciona. The turnout was impressive during the two-day event. Acciona continues to work on the next two phases of their plans and Navitas/Gamesa is working on their two projects as well. The next two years could see a tremendous expansion of renewable wind energy in our county and, as we all know, this will be some welcome relief to our local economy and our budget stress.
- The NIDA Board of Directors met yesterday morning and discussed progress. Committee reports were given and finances were reviewed. There have been some requests by some members of this board for information from NIDA. The policy on this is to request the information from your board representatives, Jim Graham and myself. Also, a number of you are serving on NIDA committees and can get information and updates through that venue. We also distribute quarterly summaries to all of you which I did last month. In addition, you can review the NIDA website for a great deal more information. The quarterly full membership meeting is scheduled for October 27, 2009.
- The Local Workforce Investment Board met Wednesday morning in Lanark. We are in the process of recertifying with the State of Illinois. This process includes financial audits, updates on all board members, and the attainment of performance goals. We look to receive recertification from the State sometime in November. We continue to invest millions of dollars in training and employment funds in the region.

- The efforts to secure passenger train service continues. Last Friday the Governor indicated that one of his preferences was the route going to Dubuque and mentioned Freeport by name. This effort continues to be highly competitive.
- The UCCI will meet in Springfield on October 23 and 24, 2009. The evening of October 23 the UCCI Leadership Academy will graduate the Class of 2009. Mr. Wire and I are honored to be part of that class. I have been asked to speak on behalf of the class during the ceremony that is being held inside the Lincoln Museum. Saturday morning the UCCI seminar will cover the new Freedom of Information Act and the Open Meetings Act. The new laws require all elected officials to attend training on these new laws and this seminar qualifies as the required training.
- Now for some budget information: As of October 12, 2009 the general fund deficit, including the negative cash flow from fiscal 2009, is now approximately \$1.4 million. This reduction from approximately \$1.7 million has come after an intense round of reviews conducted by the oversight committee chairmen and the department heads. We still have a long way to go, but progress is being made.
- There is no question that the revenue expected by Stephenson County in 2010 and beyond will be relatively flat due to the economy and the poor condition of the State's finances. Drastic changes to the way we do business will be required to maintain services at the stagnant revenue levels we are experiencing. Significant cuts are already being implemented by our governmental neighbors across the state and nation. Our situation is similar, but can be differentiated by how we respond to the challenges.
- Over the last (5) budgets years we have seen the total expenditures from the general fund grow by a total of 8% or 1.6% per year. This is very good cost control and a credit to the oversight and management of the committees and department heads. During the same period general fund revenue has gone from \$8.3 million in 2006 to \$8.4 million projected for 2010, an increase of 1.2% or less than a quarter of a percent per year. This is budgeting on a very fine line.
- During the same period the Corrections budget grew by 15%, law enforcement by 20%, state's attorney by 32%, and probation by 24%. The only way for these budgets to grow within the general fund was to cost shift from other departments supported by the general fund. The ability to shift further is now limited by the bare bones condition of the other general fund budgets.
- We have set targets for each department in order to fairly and proportionately contribute to the balanced budget required by the end of November. All departments will need to cooperate to reach this mandatory goal. No one department has the luxury of not making a significant contribution. It is encouraging that most responses from the department heads have been, "how can we help". It is disappointing to see solid management efforts replaced in some cases by political rhetoric or even comments designed to incite a public outcry that detracts from the real problems and the real solutions. We do not need self-appointed spokesmen making comments without all of the information in hand. I strongly suggest we focus professionally on the issues and solve the problems. This is why we were elected.
- It is no secret that the largest department in the general fund, more than 55%, is the Sheriff's Department. These budgets contain the men and women that patrol our county and secure the jail. Public Safety is a very high priority with this Board as indicated by our continuous and growing investment over time. We are also members of the community and will be affected by any cuts decided upon. While I want to depoliticize the budget process, I certainly do not want to dehumanize it. If cuts are made that involuntarily affect jobs, it obviously has a very negative affect on an employee and a family. This is an avenue of last resort. We will look at every option short of layoffs to mitigate our financial challenges.
- We do have options. Some are short-term and some will take time to implement. We know that the collection of fines and fees will take pressure off the general fund. We know that the capturing of jail commissary funds can take pressure off the general fund. We know that we will have to take portions of levies across the board to fill in the financial requirements of IMRF, social security, and other funds. Every levy will feel some pain including county highway, 708 Board, and more.

- I submitted a letter to the Sheriff yesterday with approximately (18) bullet points listing some ideas as to how the Sheriff's Department may bring down their budget without layoffs. We will discuss these points in detail during his budget meeting with the Finance Committee on October 27.
- We discussed ideas on further cooperation and consolidation during our monthly department head meeting at noon today. We are all engaged in the process with the same goal.
- We are all on edge. We are all concerned. We are all motivated and anxious to succeed. This will be a difficult 6 weeks, but we will see what we are capable of.

**APPOINTMENTS:** Chairman Blum presented the appointments;

- 708 Mental Health: appointment of Kay Woods
- Zoning Board of Appeals: appointment of Linda Barker
- Zoning Board of Appeals: appointment of Marty Zamudio

Ms. V. Hooper made a motion to concur with the appointments as presented. Second by Mr. Senn. The Chair called for a voice vote on the motion. *Motion to concur with the appointments as presented carried unanimously.*

**Action Items from Standing Committee**

**Finance:** Several years ago the County Board decided to move the Work Release Fee revenue from the General fund to the Probation Service fund. Currently the funds are needed more in the General Fund. Mr. Graham made a motion to move the revenue from Work Release Fees back to the General Fund. Second by Ms. V. Hooper. The Chair called for a voice vote on the motion. *Motion that revenue from Work Release Fees be returned to the General Fund carried unanimously.*

Twelve delinquent property-tax parcels were purchased at auction. Mr. Graham made a motion to approve Resolution #09-10-1685 Transferring Title of the Surplus Property to the purchasers. Second by Mr. Koch. The Chair called for a voice vote on the motion. *Motion to approve Resolution #09-10-1685 transferring the real estate property titles to purchasers at auction carried unanimously.*

**Administration:** Ms. S. Hooper presented the following raffles noting all fees have been paid and bonding is in order;

- 1531 Aquin Catholic Schools, Manager Linda K Thayer
- 1532 Aquin Catholic Elementary - PTC, Manager Kathleen McIntyre
- 1533 Freeport Radio Control Modelers, Manager Jeffrey S Burd
- 1534 Freeport Moose Family Center, Manager Gary Nesemeyer
- 1535 St John's Lutheran Women of the ELCA, Manager Karen Bremmer
- 1536 Northland Turkey Chasers, Manager Corey Nelson

Ms. S. Hooper made a motion to approve the raffles as read. Second by Ms. Dotson. The Chair called for a voice vote on the motion. *Motion to approve the raffles carried unanimously.*

**Public Works:** Copies of the proposed County Engineer's contract was distributed for the Board's review. Ms. Devine made a motion to refer the matter back to the Public Works Committee and return with recommendation to the full Board next month. Second by Mr. A. Kuhlemeier. The Chair called for a voice vote on the motion. *Motion to refer the proposed Contract for the County Engineer back to Committee carried with nay votes noted.*

**Information Items from Standing Committees**

**Finance:** Mr. Graham reviewed monthly financial reports. Mr. Mulnix distributed an updated cash flow report.

**Public Property:** Mr. Senn reported his committee continues to work on reallocating Courthouse space. They will meet again later this month.

**Administration:** Ms. S. Hooper reported the assessment changes have been published. The four administrative offices have coordinated their budgets to obtain the required reductions.

**Nursing Center:** Mr. Détente reported the cemetery project is moving forward but has proved to be a much bigger project that anticipated. Mr. Snively is resetting the stones and the Health Department along with the County Clerk's office is verifying the names of those buried at the site.

## CLAIMS

Finance & Procurement	\$	750,481.00
Administration	\$	48,127.00
Public Works	\$	306,231.65
Nursing Center	\$	158,917.06
Public Property	\$	44,658.75
Court Services	\$	24,714.09
Public Safety	\$	53,121.14
Planning & Development	\$	3,555.13
9-1-1	\$	12,155.00

Mr. Graham made a motion to approve the claims as received. Second by Mr. Detente. The Chair called for a roll call vote on the motion. Members voting aye: Graham, Wire, Dotson, J. Kuhlmeier, A. Kuhlemeier, Koch, Boynton, Kinney, Détente, Senn, Brown, Hilton, Mikkelsen, Devine, S. Hooper, McKenna, Willging, Parker, V. Hooper and Blum. Not available: Newton. Twenty ayes. *Motion to approve the claims as received carried.*

### **Mileage & Per Diems** – *Subject to review by Finance Chairman*

Blum 5 days, 0 miles-Boynton 4 days, 104 miles-Brown 4 days, 10 miles-Detente 5 days, 88 miles-Devine 3 days, 14 miles-Dotson 3 days, 109 miles-Gilmour 0 days, 0 miles-Graham 7 days, 35 miles-Hilton 4 days, 10 miles-S Hooper 5 days, 12 miles-V Hooper 5 days, 10 miles-Kinney 5 days, 62 miles-Koch 3 days, 72 miles-A Kuhlemeier 4 days, 124 miles-J Kuhlmeier 4 days, 114 miles-McKenna 2 days, 8 miles-Mikkelsen 6 days, 67 miles-Newton 6 days, 62 miles-Parker 3 days, 12 miles-Senn 3 days, 56 miles- Willging 3 days, 12 miles-Wire 4 days, 210 miles. Mr. Graham made a motion to approve the mileage & per diems as received. Second by Mr. Detente. The Chair called for a voice vote on the motion. *Motion to approve the mileage & per diems as received carried unanimously.*

**OTHER BUSINESS:** Mr. McKenna read a letter written by Joann Black complimenting the Nursing Center for their care of her mother.

Mr. Wire and Mr. Détente questioned procedures in which Committee Chairman deliver their Committee's recommendation to the full Board. State's Attorney Vogt stated he would address the issue with them outside of the meeting.

**MEMBERS OF THE AUDIENCE:** Robert Nawa, 8623 N Crossroads, Lena encouraged Board Members to continue their hard work on the budget process. He noted the Board is elected to make hard decisions and to live within the County's means. It is a difficult time but the Board needs to look ahead and address the budget concerns and the Citizens will need to live with the Board's decisions.

Mike King, 5003 N Dakota Road, Dakota requested the board consider placing a referenda at the next General Election for an increase in the Public Safety Sales Tax for revenue to fund deputy positions. He also suggested the possibility of asking Acciona for advances on property tax revenue, refunds for tax breaks, participating landowner sharing revenue and possible state legislation, if required.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION:** No executive session needed

**ADJOURN UNTIL 6:30 P.M. THURSDAY NOVEMBER 12, 2009:** Mr. McKenna made a motion to adjourn until 6:30 on Thursday November 12, 2009. Second by Mr. Brown. The Chair called for a voice vote on the motion. *Motion to adjourn carried unanimously at 8:14 p.m.*

*Mr. Newton will be responsible for the Invocation at the November 12<sup>th</sup> Meeting  
Mr. Willging will lead the Pledge*