

STEPHENSON COUNTY BOARD MEETING
6:30 PM - DECEMBER 9, 2009
Stephenson County Board Room

The Stephenson County Board met in the County Boardroom on Wednesday December 9, 2009. Chairman Blum called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Mr. Newton gave the Invocation and Mr. Gilmour led the Pledge of Allegiance. The Clerk called the roll. Members present; Samuel Newton, Bennie Brown, Jeffrey Mikkelsen, Debra Devine, Sheila Hooper, Todd McKenna, Peter Willging, Donald Parker, John Blum, Vicki Hooper, James Graham, Alvin Wire, Thomas Gilmour, Lynn Koch, Brenda Boynton, Salvatore Detente, and Forrest Senn. Members absent; Charles Hilton, Linda Dotson, Jim Kuhlmeier, Andrew Kuhlemeier and George Kinney. Seventeen members present. Five members absent

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA: Mr. McKenna made a motion to approve the agenda with the addition of "Information from Standing Committees". Second by Mr. Willging. The Chair called for a voice vote on the motion. *Motion to approve the agenda as amended carried unanimously.*

APPROVAL OF THE NOVEMBER 30, 2009 MEETING MINUTES: Mr. McKenna made a motion to approve the minutes of the November 30, 2009 meeting as received. Second by Mr. Detente. The Chair called for a voice vote on the motion. *Motion to approve the minutes of the November 30, 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 Report for November; 187 New Cases, 255 Cases Closed, Income \$3,631.10

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.*

PRESENTATION: None

OLD BUSINESS: None

SHERIFF'S REPORT: Sheriff Snyders reported that due to the weather conditions they had parked their Crown Victoria squads and used their four-wheel drive vehicles to respond to calls. The Department is planning how to deal with the reduction in staff. The layoffs are expected to take effect on December 19th. The Sheriff is working with Highland College on a third deputy for patrol on campus.

HIGHWAY REPORT: Mr. Koch made a motion to approve Resolution #09-12-1715 HD 09-33; Section 10-00000-00-GM County Maintenance. Second by Ms. Boynton. The Chair called for a voice vote on the motion. *Motion to approve Resolution #09-12-1715 HD 09-33 carried unanimously.* Mr. Koch reported that Cedarville Blacktop was opened last week and the removal of the underground tanks at the old Highway Department has been completed.

ZONING REPORT: No report

PECATONICA PRAIRIE PATH/JANE ADDAMS TRAIL: No report

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT REPORT: No report

9-1-1 REPORT: Mr. Groves reported the final copy of the CAD contract should be ready for the next ETSB meeting. The total cost for the project as the contract stands is \$750,555. Matt Rose will serve on two sub-committees for the re-write of SB 725 and the County ETSB will be represented at every meeting. FOIA policies have been drafted for compliance with the Freedom of Information Act changes. Matt Rose will be appointed the ETSB FOIA officer when the online training becomes available.

HEALTH DEPARTMENT REPORT: Mr. Beintema reported there have been 26 positive hospitalized H1N1 cases and several hundred positive A influenza cases in Stephenson County since Spring. The Health Department has completed 18 school based and 5 public based clinics in the County along with 14 days of appointments. Food scores for the month of November and the Animal Control report were distributed.

NURSING CENTER REPORT: No report

PROBATION DEPARTMENT REPORT: No report

STATE'S ATTORNEY REPORT: States Attorney Vogt reported the recent retirement of Jan Shenberger. She has been with the County for 17 years.

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

- We are barely a week into the new budget year, but our financial oversight duties continue. The budget was again a main topic of discussion at the Department Head meeting held two days ago. We all understand the situation and agree that it will take a great deal of cooperation and teamwork to keep our county government fiscally sound while maintaining services.
- The Finance Committee on Monday night also agreed to work with a higher level of diligence and communication between committee chairmen, committee members, and department heads to insure every expense is budgeted for, absolutely needed, and efficiently purchased. Policies are being developed right now to insure we maintain very diligent oversight in a consistent manner across all budgets and departments. We intend to approach these challenges as a team and do not intend that any of our policies be viewed as punitive.
- As we all know, the current budget has required we reduce staff in a number of departments. This is a very painful process for everyone involved, especially the valued employee that is losing their job. Due to this manpower reduction, especially in the Sheriff's Office, we are currently engaged in impact bargaining with the representative unions. This bargaining is required and includes issues of impact on both the furloughed employee and those that remain on the job. In addition, we are open to consider any proposal from the unions that may reduce the level of required furloughs. These meetings are continuing and I have no information for your consideration at this time.
- Over the last six weeks we have been working with the Finance Committee and Department Heads to update and improve the accounting of all grants. In addition, we need to insure all financial accounts in the name of any county entity are specifically carried on the general ledger. These requests were generated out of our latest financial audit. This should be added to each Committee's oversight responsibilities.
- Last month this board approved placing a referendum on the February 2, 2010 ballot requesting an increase in the public safety sales tax rate of 0.5%. I have formed a small management committee to put together information for use by our voters to make an informed decision in this matter when they go to the polls. We have met once and have formulated an outline of the work that needs to be done and will meet again this Friday. Passing such a referendum is usually difficult, but as we all know this new revenue is needed to sustain our public safety services, especially law enforcement and corrections. You will be asked to actively participate in the process. What each of you say and do in this regard will be watched and interpreted by the voters.
- NIDA has been very active over the last month through their committee structure:
 - The Targeted Marketing Committee has developed a data base for all wind power component manufacturers and is reaching out to more than 300 companies inviting them to our region.
 - The Infrastructure Committee has been charged with developing a comprehensive public transportation system for the County that will integrate with the City of Freeport. They will work through the required process as developed by RTAC and IDOT. It is expected that this process could take as much as a year to complete.
 - The Workforce Development Committee is in the process of surveying the needs of all employers in the County to best determine how to meet those needs.
 - The Business Retention Committee is utilizing a BRE program developed for communities by Commonwealth Edison to better organize our efforts to expand local business.
 - NIDA has also generated a very active CEDS Committee, Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, which involves all of our villages in the county. This committee is not

only a requirement of the RC&D structure, but is intended to identify, coordinate, and assist in funding needed capital improvement projects across county.

- NIDA also announced last week that the Nuestro Queso cheese plant has begun production in the former Kent Cheese facility in Kent. They are currently employing 40 people as they install and grow their production lines. They intend to grow the business in a very short time to a multi-shift operation. I am meeting with the owner next week to get an update on their plans. NIDA provided valuable assistance in helping the new owner overcome a number of issues involving the property in Kent. In addition, we were able to direct Brownfield grant funds into the project in order to clear the way on any environmental concerns that could have prevented the financing of the project.
- Work continues on the BioCat project for the Mill Race Industrial Park. The company formally announced last month their intentions to build here in Stephenson County. As they work with DCEO and IFA on state funding, they have now launched a public equity campaign to raise the last \$7 million of required capital. NIDA has had meetings with Senator Durbin's office in an effort to gain federal attention for this project.
- Two other large projects in the county are being worked and public decisions are expected soon.
- Highland Community College received a grant recently to develop a regional resource center for wind and biofuels. This is another step in creating the renewable energy corridor that will facilitate economic development.
- There was no LWIB meeting this month. We are currently working on the 6-month performance evaluation of the LWIB Manager.
- I attended the USEPA Brownfield Conference last month. Attendance is a requirement of our brownfield grant and was paid for from the grant. I attended (15) individual conferences covering a number of topics appropriate to Stephenson County. In addition to identifying solutions to environmental issues and locating funding to pay for cleanup, I was able to increase our network of alliances with USEPA, IEPA, as well as a number of counties and cities from our region that also attended. We are meeting with our Project Management Team tomorrow morning to begin the process of identifying potential cleanup sites here in Stephenson County for the next round of grant funding.
- The next UCCI conference is scheduled for February 24 and 25, 2010 in Springfield. This conference will also include a legislative reception where we will meet with our representatives and discuss current legislative issues. Please include this conference in your calendar if possible.
- The new FOIA and OMA requirements go into effect on January 1, 2010. We are still waiting for direction from the State as to training, certification, process, and procedures. We are taking the lead on this issue within our department head meetings to develop a consistent and timely system to meet these new requirements.
- Lastly, as we approach the New Year, I would like to emphasize that we have worked hard over the last year to continue to build a better place to live and work here in Stephenson County. We have many challenges, but one of our best resources is a positive attitude. We are builders. We are not at our best when we individually or collectively try to tear down anyone or anything that contributes to better opportunity and equality. Each month I report to you about issues and progress that are mainly positive. Keeping up with these issues and participating in all aspects of the process is time consuming and sometimes complicated. I thank many of you for your participation and insight on all of these issues. I hope we come back next year with a renewed sense of energy and dedication to continue the business of the people. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Noted arrival of Mr. Hilton during Chairman's report.

APPOINTMENTS: Chairman Blum presented the appointment of Peter Alber to the CEDS Committee. Mr. Koch made a motion to approve the appointment. Second by Mr. Gilmour. The Chair called for a voice vote on the motion. *Motion to approve the appointment of Peter Alber to the CEDS Committee carried unanimously.*

Action Items from Standing Committee

Finance: Mr. Graham reported that during the budget process, it was suggested that the County Board should reduce the mileage reimbursement rate to \$.25. The Finance Committee recommends a two-tier mileage reimbursement standard: Effective December 1, 2009 County Board members would be reimbursed \$.25 per mile and everyone else would continue to receive the IRS business mileage rate. Mr. Graham reported an Ordinance would be drafted to reflect this change and presented at next month’s County Board Meeting. It was further noted that per diems would be paid for County Board and Standing Committee meetings only.

Public Property: The County Administrator explained a budget problem with the transfer of \$72,000, from the Public Safety Fund to the General Fund, to finance security at the front door of the Courthouse. The County Board authorized the fund transfer, but the Sheriff had not included these funds in his budget proposal, so the transferred \$72,000 was never actually appropriated. Mr. Mulnix suggests leaving the funds in the Public Safety Fund and having the payroll system allocate each payroll amount between the General Fund and the Public Safety Fund. Mr. Senn made a motion that the payroll system be used to split the front-door security funding between these two budgets. Second by Mr. Mikkelsen. The Chair called for a voice vote on the motion. *Motion to approve the payroll system is used to split the front-door security funding between these two budgets carried unanimously.*

Information Items from Standing Committees

Administration: Ms. S. Hooper reported the Committee will be discussing different forms of county government to include the county executive form and the county board chairman being elected at large.

Court Services: Ms. V. Hooper reported the Committee has reviewed the outstanding fines and fees. The delinquent fines go back to 1989. The Circuit Clerk estimated around 25% of these would be collectable. A breakdown of the delinquent fines and fees was distributed.

Nursing Center: Mr. Détente reported the tax anticipation warrants for the Nursing Center are on the back burner.

Discussion was held on mileage reimbursement for Board Members that attend non-paid meetings. It was noted this matter will be reviewed further at next month’s Finance Committee meeting.

CLAIMS

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|------------------------|----|------------|
| Finance & Procurement | \$ | 620,904.78 |
| Administration | \$ | 44,748.34 |
| Public Works | \$ | 192,216.37 |
| Nursing Center | \$ | 209,099.79 |
| Public Property | \$ | 30,856.45 |
| Court Services | \$ | 21,302.36 |
| Public Safety | \$ | 63,819.69 |
| Planning & Development | \$ | 90.21 |
| 9-1-1 | \$ | 57,369.12 |

Mr. Graham made a motion to approve the claims as received. Second by Mr. Koch. The Chair called for a roll call vote on the motion. Members voting aye: Graham, Wire, Gilmour, Koch, Boynton, Détente, Senn, Newton, Brown, Hilton, Mikkelsen, Devine, S. Hooper, McKenna, Willging, Parker, V. Hooper and Blum. Eighteen ayes. *Motion to approve the claims as received carried unanimously.*

Mileage & Per Diems – Subject to review by Finance Chairman

Blum 5 days, 0 miles-Boynton 4 days, 88 miles-Brown 5 days, 12 miles-Detente 7 days, 95 miles-Devine 3 days, 22 miles-Dotson 0 days, 0 miles-Gilmour 5 days, 170 miles-Graham 5 days, 22 miles-Hilton 5 days, 12 miles-S Hooper 4 days, 0 miles-V Hooper 4 days, 0 miles-Kinney 5 days, 46 miles-Koch 3 days, 72 miles-A Kuhlemeier 0 days, 0 miles-J Kuhlmeier 0 days, 0 miles-McKenna 4 days, 16 miles-Mikkelsen 4 days, 0 miles-Newton 4 days, 54 miles-Parker 3 days, 12 miles-Senn 5 days, 42 miles- Willging 3 days, 12 miles-Wire 3 days, 114 miles. Mr. Graham made a motion to approve the mileage & per diems as received. Second by Mr. Brown. The Chair called for a voice vote on the motion. *Motion to approve the mileage & per diems as received carried unanimously.*

Noted arrival of Mr. A. Kuhlemeier

OTHER BUSINESS: Mr. Wire asked what the additional dollars would be used for if the Public Safety Sales Tax referendum passes. It was stated the funds can only be used for public safety purposes and would be mainly to rebuild the Sheriff's Department.

Mr. Graham addressed his displeasure with some of the negative comments on the blogs. He stated that during the budgetary process no one from the general public or the Board had any other ideas or suggestions on how to deal with the financial crisis.

MEMBERS OF THE AUDIENCE: None

EXECUTIVE SESSION: No executive session needed

ADJOURN UNTIL 6:30 P.M. WEDNESDAY JANUARY 13, 2010:

Mr. Mikkelsen made a motion to adjourn until 6:30 on Wednesday January 13, 2010. Second by Mr. Detente. The Chair called for a voice vote on the motion. *Motion to adjourn carried unanimously at 7:41 p.m.*

*Mr. Newton will be responsible for the Invocation
Mr. A. Kuhlemeier will lead the Pledge*