

STEPHENSON COUNTY BOARD MEETING
May 12, 2010
Stephenson County Board Room

The Stephenson County Board met in the County Boardroom on Wednesday May 12, 2010. Chairman Blum called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. Mr. Hilton gave the Invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance. The Clerk called the roll. Members present; Bennie Brown, Charles Hilton, Jeffrey Mikkelsen, Debra Devine, Sheila Hooper, Todd McKenna, Peter Willging, Donald Parker, John Blum, Vicki Hooper, James Graham, Alvin Wire, J. Kuhlmeier, Thomas Gilmour, A. Kuhlemeier, Brenda Boynton, George Kinney, Salvatore Détente and Forrest Senn. Members absent: Samuel Newton, Linda Dotson and Lynn Koch. Nineteen members present. Three members absent.

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

APPROVAL OF THE APRIL 14, 2010 MEETING MINUTES: Mr. McKenna made a motion to approve the minutes of the April 14, 2010 meeting as received. Second by Mr. Willging. The Chair called for a voice vote on the motion. *Motion to approve the minutes of the April 14, 2010 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

- *Comcast Franchise Fee for quarter ending March 31, 2010 in the amount of \$5,481.98
- *Notice of request for tax exemption status from Dear Ridge Ministries located 3085 W Forest Road
- *Public Defender Report for March; 217 New Cases, 184 Cases Closed, Income \$6,488.01

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

OLD BUSINESS: No old business noted

PUBLIC COMMENT ON ACTION ITEMS: No comments

SHERIFF'S REPORT: Sheriff Snyders reported Terry Cole from Renaissance Restoration has looked at the Civil War Monument, but has not yet submitted an estimate for repairs. The Sheriff has implemented a chaplaincy program for the Law Enforcement Division. The auction will be held on May 13 at the Jail. It was noted that money raised from vehicles which were seized in drug related cases must go into his Drug Fund.

Noted arrival of Mr. Koch

HIGHWAY REPORT: Mr. Isbell reported he would like to form a committee to study the needs of Stephenson County's Highways. It will be made up of two representatives from the Highway Department, two from Municipalities, two Township Highway Commissioners, two County Board Members and four representatives from the industries. The goal is to decide the needs and wants of the industries, the costs involved to make the improvements and funding options. All recommendations would come back to the Public Works Committee and on to the full Board for approval.

ZONING REPORT: No report

PECATONICA PRAIRIE PATH/JANE ADDAMS TRAIL: No report for the Pecatonica Prairie Path. Minutes from the Jane Addams Trail Commission Meeting were distributed.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT REPORT: No report

9-1-1 REPORT: Minutes from the 9-1-1 Board meeting, claims docket, financial reports and stats were distributed.

HEALTH DEPARTMENT REPORT: Mr. Beintema reported they are beginning a teen-parent service program to help encourage and facilitate teenage parents in the graduation process. The Department is in the 8th week of the Women Out Walking Program. They will be doing a separate 12-week program with the Freeport School District. The Department is exploring a possible Teen Pregnancy Prevention Federal Grant with two other Counties. They are also submitting a State Grant proposal for Radon awareness/testing. It was noted that approximately 47% of his Grants are from the State and he is seeing about a 5 month lag in their payments. The Federal Grants are being paid within 30 days. The Health Department will co-sponsor blood pressure training for lay individuals. A handout and registration forms were distributed. They have been working on the FQHC and will be finalizing agreements with the Monroe Clinic and FHN. The Department began collecting birds for testing on May 1st. They will begin collection and testing mosquito batches in June at four various locations throughout the County. Handouts were distributed on West Nile Virus updates and the Mosquito Abatement District. The Health Department is working with the City of Freeport on a health study in the Brownsfield area. A free medication disposal will be offered at the Senior Center located in the Lincoln Mall on Saturday, June 12th from 9 am to Noon. Food Scores for the month of March were distributed. Mr. Beintema will send a corrected Animal Control Report to Board Members.

NURSING CENTER REPORT: Mr. Fortney reported on various activities planned for Nursing Home Week (May 10-14). All the beds, mattresses, night stands and TV's donated by FHN have been received.

PROBATION DEPARTMENT REPORT: Mr. Pauley reported that detention costs are staying below budget. Caseload totals were distributed.

STATE'S ATTORNEY REPORT: No report

Noted arrival of Mr. Newton

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT: Chairman Blum presented the following report

- Tonight's meeting marks the halfway point of the current fiscal year. Together with our department heads and employees we have worked to maintain our mandated services in the face of incredible economic challenges. I think you will agree that without a collaborative group of strong county leaders our situation could be worse.
- There has not been much encouraging news from the State of Illinois as of late. The reimbursements continue to lag while sales and income tax revenues are diminished by the current recession.
- To date, Stephenson County is due approximately three quarters of a million dollars in reimbursements from the State of Illinois that date back into fiscal 2009. However, I have heard that some counties have received some recent disbursements from the State that give us hope that we will receive some of ours soon. The Treasurer and States Attorney are working with the State Comptroller's Office to expedite, if possible, our schedule of reimbursements.
- It is also imperative that we keep pressure on our legislative leaders in Springfield to make good on the financial promises necessary to maintain services to our citizens. It is disappointing that the momentum of fiscal responsibility in Springfield is so strongly affected by the approaching November election.
- Recent unemployment numbers released by IDES indicate that Stephenson County ended the first quarter of 2010 with an unemployment rate of 14.4%. This is up from 11.2% in the same quarter of 2009. All of the surrounding counties have double-digit unemployment rates with Ogle County now at 17.1%. We have a lot of work to do to grow enough jobs in our county to employ the 3500 of our citizens that are looking for work.
- As you know, we adopted a budget last November that included a \$450,000 deficit. A majority of this deficit is attributed to a conscious decision not to go any deeper into layoffs for the Law Enforcement Division of the Sheriff's Department in order to retain the two specially-trained road deputies that are grant funded to promote improved road safety and in that capacity they indirectly generate ticket revenue. We also knew that the Nursing Center would be paying down some general fund debt during the year as long as Medicare/Medicaid reimbursements remained timely. They have been successful in this regard.

- Our budget is what it is, a snapshot, a target, or summary of our revenue and spending plans. The more important aspect of financial management is cash flow. The management of cash flow is a dynamic process based on the timing and quantity of revenue and expenses. We have been engaged in cash flow management since the beginning of this fiscal year. Each Department Head and Oversight Committee is keenly aware of expenditures and revenues along with the timing of each. This process is managed day by day.
- To date the departments continue to reduce their expenses against the budget. We are also working to identify or accelerate revenue sources to enhance our cash flow management. To date, we project a deficit of more than \$600,000 which is down from earlier projections because of reduced expenses and some timely revenue that came in this last month. The trends are in the right direction. If the State of Illinois starts to fulfill their financial commitments it will accelerate this positive trend.
- I have regular meetings with all of our Department Heads. The main topic at each of these meetings is obviously budget performance. The stressful financial environment we are in is greatly tempered by the flow of ideas, collaboration, and genuine commitment these men and women have to Stephenson County.
- Since late last year we have reviewed, analyzed, debated, and implemented many ideas to close the budget gap, but more importantly at this point in time, to manage our cash flow. We have obviously made some painful personnel reductions through layoffs. We have looked at further reductions in the form of a reduced work week, furlough days, elimination of overtime, and more. All of this discussion by the very nature of our organization gets out to the public and our employees. The uncertainty and dread that is generated compounds our situation by reducing morale, efficiency, and the dedication of an employee group that serves our citizens.
- The problems generated by the economy as a whole or the budget crisis in Springfield did not happen over night and they will not go away over night. However, it is time for all of us to understand that we are attacking these problems in a professional and efficient manner. The trends are starting to turn in a direction that gives us hope.
- Another Department Head meeting was held earlier this week. The discussion was serious and frank. We were looking at further cuts in spending, primarily our labor costs, to address the revenue shortfall. At the end of the day, the overwhelming consensus was to remove the burden of balancing our budget off the backs of our employees. As a team, we feel we are able to make short term adjustments and cooperative arrangements that will allow us to manage our cash flow without further draconian cuts to our already reduced employee group. We want to send a message to our employees and our citizens that Stephenson County will continue to provide quality services to the public. We want to send a message to our employees and our citizens that we are in control of our financial future and have the motivation to manage through these current challenges.
- We will continue to monitor and make the necessary adjustments to meet our financial obligations. We want to reinforce our commitment to the employees and the public that we are attacking problems with as much imagination and tenacity that the law will allow. You will be hearing of some new ideas to continue the process of making our unit of government more efficient without digging into the core of our service organization, the people that serve.
- I ask the members of this Board to support your Department Heads and your Committees in the continuous effort to improve our ability to deliver services. I ask your continued support as we strengthen our effort to grow the local economy thru increased investment and a growth of job opportunities. Be positive, be consistent, and be prepared.
- I attended our regular board meeting of the Workforce Investment Area this morning. We continue to meet our mandated standards across all five counties. This year we have invested about \$6 million of Title IB funds into retraining, education, and job placement programs throughout our region. We were informed that we can expect a 20% reduction in funding for our next fiscal year starting July 1, 2010. This is very disappointing since we are dealing with a high level of unemployment here in NW Illinois.

- We continue to develop the plan for the new round of Brownfield grants. One of our primary sites this time around will be in support of the expansion of Nuestro Queso in Kent.
- Last week there was an update meeting for the 4-Lane US20 held at Apple Canyon. Mr. Koch was able to attend on behalf of our county. In short, the project is moving along subject to pieces of available funding. We will be adding a few more miles of westbound 4-lane from the Freeport bypass in the very near term. Work continues on planning, land acquisition, engineering, and funding for sections of the Glacier Shadow Pass alignment; maybe in our lifetime.
- An informational meeting was held last week concerning the federal prison at Thomson. Representatives spoke about local impacts from such a facility. This will be a tremendous boost to our local economy. I was also relieved to hear that the feds are aware of Stephenson County and Freeport and anticipate that we will feel some positive economic impact from this proposed facility.
- NIDA continues to finalize the search for a new director. The NIDA Board met yesterday morning and authorized negotiations with one of the top candidates. As of this moment these negotiations continue. It is so very important that we again realize strong leadership in our economic development process. Opportunities need to be cultivated to continue our climb toward economic stability and growth.
- As you know, we have not provided any economic support to NIDA yet this fiscal year. A few months ago the Planning and Development Committee and the Finance Committee had approved a payment, but in view of the cash flow situation at the time we did not fund the approval and the payments were held. In view of the imminent hiring of a new Executive Director and provided the Treasurer can fund the expenditure I would like to now release the non-general fund payment to NIDA. Since this action was previously approved and budgeted for I would like your concurrence in this regard. We can discuss this later in the agenda under other business.
- While on the topic of NIDA, I wish to inform you that Cheryl Kneubuehl's brother died tragically in a home accident last evening in Arizona. As you know, Cheryl most recently served as the interim Executive Director for NIDA. Our thoughts and sympathies are with Cheryl and her family as they deal with this loss.

County Treasurer Adrienne Becker reported she expects \$209,000 in State's Attorney, Public Defender and Election Judge reimbursements from the State. She will continue to monitor the Comptroller's website to keep up to date on all future reimbursements.

APPOINTMENTS: Chairman Blum presented the following reappointments to the Fire Protection Districts

- Reappointment of William Scheider; Trustee to Cedarville Fire Protection District
- Reappointment of David Parrish; Trustee to Dakota Fire Protection District
- Reappointment of Shad Sutherland; Trustee to Davis Fire Protection District
- Reappointment of Stephen Kroeger; Trustee to Freeport Rural Fire Protection District
- Reappointment of Jack Ross; Trustee to German Valley Fire Protection District
- Reappointment of Jim Raders; Trustee to Lena Fire Protection District
- Reappointment of Kevin Finkenbinder; Trustee to Orangeville Fire Protection District
- Reappointment of Charles Laible; Trustee to Rock City Fire Protection District
- Reappointment of Alan Flack; Trustee to Shannon Fire Protection District
- Reappointment of Tony Riedel; Trustee to Winslow Fire Protection District

Mr. Willging made a motion to approve the appointments. Second by Mr. McKenna. The Chair called for a voice vote on the motion. *Motion to approve all reappointment to the Fire Protection Districts carried unanimously.*

Action Items from Standing Committees

Finance

Mr. Graham made a motion to approve resolutions for two title transfers of Surplus Properties. Second by Mr. Koch. The Chair called for a voice vote on the motion. *Motion to approve Resolution #10-05-1738 and Resolution #10-05-1739 transferring title for surplus property carried unanimously.*

Administration

- Raffles (all fees and bonding in order)
 - 1557 Cedarville Fire Department, Manager Doug Broge
 - 1558 Lena Golf Club, Manager Jim Larsh
 - 1559 Freeport Moose Family Center #162, Manager Kenneth A Kostenbader Sr
 - 1560 Tyler's Justice Center for Children, Manager Tina Steele-Lietz
 - 1561 Winslow River Days, Manager Karmen Ditzler
 - 1562 Winslow River Days, Manager Karmen Ditzler
 - 1563 Freeport Country Club, Manager Heidi Schindlbeck

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

Information from Standing Committees

Finance: Mr. Graham reported we have two free 5-day passes to this year's Autism One Conference which will be held in Chicago from May 24th through May 30th. Mr. McLeRoy has attended this Conference and says it is a good resource for families and organizations. Mr. Graham has asked him if he would like to attend again this year.

Court Services: Ms. V. Hooper commended the Committee and their Department Heads for their hard work and creativity in putting dollars into the General Fund.

CLAIMS

Finance & Procurement	\$	639,369.17
Administration	\$	34,848.70
Public Works	\$	115,399.21
Nursing Center	\$	178,332.83
Public Property	\$	23,675.58
Court Services	\$	26,162.23
Public Safety	\$	37,680.20
Planning & Development	\$	677.50
9-1-1	\$	64,306.33

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

Blum 5 days, 0 miles-Boynton 3 days, 86 miles-Brown 3 days, 8 miles-Detente 4 days, 106 miles-Devine 3 days, 16 miles-Dotson 0 days, 0 miles-Gilmour 4 days, 0 miles-Graham 5 days, 0 miles-Hilton 3 days, 8 miles-S Hooper 4 days, 0 miles-V Hooper 4 days, 0 miles-Kinney 3 days, 38 miles-Koch 3 days, 72 miles-A Kuhlemeier 3 days, 123 miles-J Kuhlmeier 4 days, 92 miles-McKenna 3 days, 12 miles-Mikkelsen 4 days, 8 miles-Newton 3 days, 6 miles-Parker 3 days, 12 miles-Senn 4 days, 56 miles-Willging 3 days, 0 miles-Wire 3 days, 118 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.*

OTHER BUSINESS: Mr. Gilmour noted the Circuit Clerk reported a \$20,000 reduction of fines and fees and feels the amnesty program influenced this reduction. Mr. Gilmour expressed his opinions on the roles and responsibilities of Board Members.

Mr. Senn voiced his concern with Mr. Kinney's editorial stating he felt the Chairman had overstepped his authority in regard to budget matters. Mr. Senn stated he was sure Mr. Kinney was in meetings when everyone was asked to think outside the box for anyway to address the budget shortfall and the 4-day work week was one of the options discussed.

Mr. A. Kuhlemeier asked that in tribute to Memorial Day, if any Board Members who served in the military would like to be recognized. The following Board Members were acknowledged: Mr. Kinney; Navy 1965-1968, Mr. Brown; Army D-day Veteran 1943-1946, Mr. Graham; Air Force 1970-1974, Mr. Parker; Air Force 1971-1975, Chairman Blum; Navy Marine Corp 1970-1976, Mr. Hilton; Army 1965-1967, Mr. Wire Army; 1961-1963. Ms. Sheila Hooper noted that her sons, her husband and her brothers had all served.

Mr. Détente suggested Mr. Gilmour contact Eric Pederman at the JS to publish his comments in the opinions section.

MEMBERS OF THE AUDIENCE: Mike King of 5003 N Dakota Road, Dakota addressed the Board. He felt the forum lacked exposure on NIDA, Millrace Crossing and Economic Development Issues. He stated his opinion, that when the County became a public developer of Economic Development, Mill Race Crossing became publicly owned. Taxpayers should be informed on all details of any possible development; what business, how the business will be conducted and the financial impact to the County as well as the impact on personal property and health values.

EXECUTIVE SESSION/ACTION OUT OF EXECUTIVE SESSION: No executive session

ADJOURN UNTIL 6:30 P.M. WEDNESDAY JUNE 9, 2010: Mr. Willging made a motion to adjourn. Second by Mr. McKenna. The Chair called for a voice vote on the motion. Motion to adjourn until 6:30 p.m. Wednesday June 9, 2010 carried unanimously at 8:09 p.m.

Mr. Newton will be responsible for the Invocation & Ms. Devine will lead the Pledge