Committee of the Whole  
Meeting  
June 24, 2014  

Minutes  

Members Present  
Mr. Bossert, Mr. Byrne, Mr. Snipes, Mr. Hess, Mr. Skutt, Mr. Whitis, Mr. Washington, Mr. Enz, Mr. Mulcahy, Mr. Tripp, Mr. James, Mr. Vickery, Ms. Polk, Mr. Reid, Mr. Hildebrand, Mr. Flett, Mr. Liehr, Mr. Wheeler, Mr. McConnell, Mr. Einfeldt, Mr. Stauffenberg, Ms. Webber, Mr. Tholen, and Mr. Sirois  

Members Absent  
Mr. LaGesse, Mr. Olthoff, Mr. Dodge, and Mr. Howard  

1. Call to Order  
The meeting was called to order by the Chairman, Mr. Bossert, at 6:00 p.m. Quorum present.  

2. Public Comment  
• Brady Bertrand commented on deputy staffing.  

3. Courthouse Presentation  
• DLR Group  
Mr. Bossert stated that a year ago, after the conclusion of the Blue Ribbon Commission, who was tasked with the job of reviewing the courthouse situation and making a recommendation to the county board, the recommendation involved moving ahead with plans to remodel and construct a facility that would meet our needs in the county with regards to our judicial system and our public safety system. A year ago in May this board voted to employ the DLR Group as a consulting group to work with the county to evaluate and assess the needs of the county and to bring a plan back to the board. Tonight we are going to get a full update on that planning process, review it, and get any questions that the board may have answered. In the packet that was handed out tonight there is a good portion of the materials that will be in the final report. With us tonight is Jake Davis and Penny Ramsey with the DLR Group, along with Alex Granchalek with the William Blair & Co., a bond consulting firm that was engaged to help analyze sales tax revenue.  

Ms. Ramsey stated that tonight they will start by talking about the survey results, then go to a financial analysis, followed by the design study and the public safety solution. A PowerPoint presentation on the above items was shown to the board.  

Ms. Ramsey stated that in April they contacted 400 residents in Kankakee County. There is a +/- 5% margin of error when they talk about the results. In the survey they made sure that they talked to patrons county-wide. A lot of people said that there were great parks and rivers in Kankakee County, it was a quiet/peaceful/friendly community, and it had a good school system. Some of the area’s shortcomings were a need to bring in businesses and jobs; the crime and gang activity; and the need to reduce taxes. They don’t see crime and gang activity on a lot on surveys so she thinks that the public safety solution is very important and one that needs to be considered.
Ms. Ramsey stated they asked people what their highest ranked service was and the survey showed that there is a lot of support for public safety, including police and fire protection. They also ranked recreational programs and services as very high. Public schools were up in the 60% range but county government was down on the list at 32%.

Ms. Ramsey stated that they asked people if they were likely or very likely to be supportive of a variety of bond issue elections in November. A lot of people said that they would be supportive of community recreational programs and higher education facilities because education is a very important part of this community. The Courthouse scored above 50%, which is a positive.

Ms. Ramsey stated that they asked what the courthouse means to them and 147 respondents said that it was a historical and beautiful building. The challenges of the facility were also known and the most important challenge was the lack of handicap access. 72% of the people said that they understood that the courthouse required improvements. They asked the people what the top challenges of the courthouse were that they wanted to see fixed and number one was fixing the ADA access. Number 2 was making sure that inmates and the public didn’t mix, number 3 was a larger, indoor security checkpoint, and number 4 was consolidating all county offices into one facility to lessen travel for the public. Three-fourths of the respondents wanted a new or renovated courthouse to remain on the square.

Ms. Ramsey stated that they asked how much sales tax people would be willing to support in order to renovate or build new for the courthouse. There was not a large difference between 1 ¼ percent sales tax and the ¾ percent sales tax so if the county can go for a 1 percent sales tax they believe that would be the most popular decision to make.

Ms. Ramsey stated that the survey results summary shows that the respondents understand the challenges, especially the ADA issues, and they want to keep it on the existing site but they are a little cautious on raising taxes to support it.

Mr. Liehr asked if the breakdown of where the respondents lived was based on population.

Ms. Ramsey stated that they surveyed registered, frequent voters so they did an analysis of where the registered voters were and they made sure that they had a cross section for the entire community. The breakdown is scientifically valid.

Mr. Wheeler stated that he wanted to make sure that this was a statistically valid number to represent the overall feelings of all the registered, frequent voters in the County.

Ms. Ramsey stated that it was.

- **William Blair & Company**

Mr. Bossert stated that it seemed like the possibility of a sales tax referendum would be much more palatable to the board and public as opposed to a property tax question.
Sales tax would have the added advantage of giving the county some flexibility with public safety operations as well as addressing facility needs. Mr. Granchalek is here to talk about some analysis that they did on the potential revenue that the county might see to help support this effort as well as operations.

Mr. Granchalek stated that his specialty is public finance. Their task was to look at the feasibility of a sales tax for the county for this and to see, if that was something that the county and population choose to do, what would that produce and how that money would be used. State law allows the county to enact up to a 1% sales tax with permission of the population. If approved, the tax is imposed in one-quarter increments. That 1% public safety sales tax does not lay on top of all goods sold in the county. Exemptions to it are auto sales other than service; food sales to be consumed off premises; and prescriptions, non-prescription medicines, drugs, and medical supplies. The tax cannot exceed 1%. They looked at the existing sales tax remittances from the state and backed out the items that are exempt. The estimated tax generated by the 1% increase would be $7.7 million. They believe that is fairly accurate, maybe somewhat conservative. They would expect the courthouse and county facility improvements to be $6.2 million annually which is a debt service for a 30-year issue and that would leave $1.5 million for public safety personnel and operations.

Mr. Bossert stated that the document titled “Kankakee County Sales Tax Projections” has the analysis that went into these numbers.

Mr. Wheeler asked if that is statutorily how the pie is sliced.

Mr. Granchalek stated that it is not.

Mr. Stauffenberg stated that one reason that he really favors a sales tax versus a property tax is because it is not all on the backs of the 113,000 people who live in this county. It is also on visitors that come here for various reasons.

Mr. Snipes stated that the tax becomes more sharing especially with all the tourism that we have. There was a sales tax that was proposed in another county and it passed but they gave something back to the people. They gave them a $500 rebate on their property tax in order to get the sales tax approved. What would be the feasibility of doing that?

Mr. Granchalek stated that he can’t speak to the county’s flexibility in terms of property tax rebates.

Mr. Bossert stated that that is an idea that they can certainly discuss if it gets to that point.

Mr. Bossert stated that in the handout he included in the back a fair amount of information that he gleaned from the Department of Revenue’s website. There are 40 counties that currently have a public safety sales tax. Also, in that handout he was pointing out the broad range of municipalities that have added to their sales tax rates in
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their own community. It is certainly not a new idea as an avenue to support local

government over and above what property tax payers can bear.

Mr. Enz asked if the $7.7 million would be expected the first year.

Mr. Granchalek stated that it would be expected the first full year.

Mr. Enz stated that those figures come to $180 million for the courthouse which is a

larger number than he had expected.

Mr. Bossert stated that there is a lot of interest on a given amount of principle over 30

years.

Mr. Enz stated that interest is way down right now.

Mr. Wheeler asked if the previous year’s sales tax number included the sales tax

sharing agreement numbers.

Mr. Bossert stated that they pulled those numbers out.

Mr. Skutt asked if those funds from the sales tax would be mandated to be used only for

public safety. Could it be used for any type of savings for the county so we would not

get in this position again?

Mr. Granchalek stated that to the best of his knowledge the sales tax itself has to go to

public safety uses. He thinks it could go into an account for public safety capital to be

used for future needs.

Mr. Skutt asked if it could be part of the question so it would be mandated so it can’t all

be spent immediately.

Mr. Bossert stated that the question is cast in stone in terms of how the question is

worded on the ballot.

Mr. Skutt asked if the county can mandate it in its bylaws.

Mr. Bossert stated that they could establish some financial policy that sets aside funds

for reserves. Actually, they have done that already but unfortunately their situation is

such that they have not been able to set money aside in additional reserves.

Mr. Davis reviewed the design process that they have gone through. They were asked
to take a comprehensive look at the judicial functions in the county along with all the

other facilities. KIMME & Associates did a comprehensive needs assessment study

which is a part of tonight’s handout. The amount of raw space needed came to

102,000 sq. ft. and then they put in extra space needed for corridors, exterior walls, etc.

so the total of the study was about 133,000 sq. ft., which is roughly three to four times

what is contained within the existing courthouse. They also engaged a historic

renovation consultant to look in detail at the historic courthouse and one of the realities
that comes with that is that if that building is to be used and maintained as part of this campus there are some significant issues, with the ADA issues at the top of the list. It also has issues with HVAC, infrastructure, etc. so there is a substantial cost that is embodied in renovating it. They looked at five different options but chose the second option to recommend which looks at building a new judicial center at approximately 133,000 sq. ft. and then restoring and renovating the existing courthouse to be used for county administrative functions, as well as using the Annex Building. This option strikes the balance in terms of taking best advantage of the cost of renovating the existing facilities and keeping them in use but at the same time consolidating functions in one location. Option one looked at leaving the courthouse renovated but vacant. Another option looked at doing a smaller judicial center with backfilling the existing historic courthouse with judicial functions but essentially splitting the judicial function into two pieces and doing nothing for county administration. They also looked at two other costly options, one being a new justice center and new county administration facility on the existing site and another option looked at building on a completely new site. The option that they recommend is building a new judicial center on the existing site and backfilling the historic courthouse and the annex building with the functions that are currently in the administration building at 189 E. Court Street. In this option, Merchant Street would be vacated across the lot where the new facility would be built. Designs and preliminary diagrams were shown to the board with the PowerPoint presentation. The design shown is by no means a final design. It is an idea of what a facility could begin to look like. The total project cost is around $113,000,000.

Mr. Bossert stated that early on in the Blue Ribbon Commission process a lower number was discussed and that was the disadvantage of talking about a number before they really had an idea of a design in-hand. Although, looking at this analysis we were probably not that far off as far as new construction. This analysis is a larger building than they were using at the time of the Blue Ribbon Commission. Renovation of the courthouse is probably where they missed thinking that $10 million would do it. Probably twice that much would be needed to preserve, renovate, and remodel the existing courthouse. There is also a lot of contingency and soft cost in this number. There is a lot of future growth built into this plan which would be a debatable item if we had to scale back to fit within a budget.

Mr. Davis stated that he thinks that there is room to work and he thinks that is an important detail. There are a lot of unknowns at this point because this is not a final design. It is an informed design concept but there are opportunities to reduce the cost in a smart and careful way. They wanted to show a scenario that is realistic and based on a lot of past experience.

Mr. Snipes applauded them for taking on the task and he does not think that they are unreasonable. He just read in the paper that Will County built a courthouse in 1967 and right now they have run out of space. He would rather put enough room for growth in it now than to have to come back to the taxpayers again at a later time because we have run out of room, given the fact that in 2015 the Illiana is going to come and in 2016 the airport is going to come. Does his plan cut off the street?
Mr. Davis stated that that is the concept in this plan. They would vacate Merchant Street, just in the block between Harrison and Indiana. They feel that doing that is necessary to fit it on the site given the size of the facility.

Mr. Snipes stated that he would agree.

Mr. Enz stated that this number is a lot bigger than he thought it was going to be. Could they do two floors first and then later put on the third floor? Or could they put footings in to add a floor at a future date?

Mr. Davis stated that he thinks that there are a number of possibilities. Trying to build vertically in a building in terms of an addition is probably a less efficient way to build additions. It would probably be better to build out instead of up. He doesn’t think that additional floors that the program needs, that are outlined here, could be built in less space. There are additional county-owned parking lots in the blocks surrounding this facility. They are not proposing some sort of structured parking deck which is something that could be considered. He is sure that there are ways to make this building less costly. Some of contingency money may not be needed so that would reduce the project cost.

Mr. Bossert stated that the board is not here to decide the details and how they get to that building but we need to understand the scope of a building that addresses a judicial function. It is a massive building compared to what we have now. If anyone has visited a recently built courthouse, such as in Kendall County, they will see and understand that compared to what we have now the space required is very large.

Mr. Washington stated that the coloration of the courthouse is important to maintain in the new building. Have they investigated the kind of material that would be used and how close will the color be to the original courthouse?

Mr. Davis stated that they agree that that is an important issue. The wall surface would be a similar tone if not an identical tone to the historic courthouse, possibly made of pre-cast concrete panels.

Mr. Whitis thanked them for all the time that they put into this. He asked him to explain to the board the proposed use of the existing courthouse because one of his first questions a year ago was “Why do we need to incorporate all of the county functions into the campus? Why not make the project smaller and not build such a big building?”

Mr. Davis stated that the county has a building that is on the National Register of Historic Places. It is a building that in all likelihood needs to be maintained and to maintain it and use it for whatever function is a significant cost. They made an assessment that there needed to be some value in the idea of spending the money to upgrade the courthouse. There is a lot of investigation that probably still needs to be done in terms of how that building would be used. They felt that backfilling that facility with county functions was in service to the notion of consolidated customer service. People could park once and go into a building through a single screened entrance and take care of all the business that they need to.
Mr. Wheeler asked about the difference in glass compared to poured concrete.

Mr. Davis stated that glass systems vary quite a bit. In some areas the glass may be more expensive than poured concrete, maybe $5 to $10 more a sq. ft. He is hesitant to say that this is the design. It is a vision of what could be. Those types of things can be calibrated.

Mr. Wheeler asked if the renovating of the existing courthouse has to be done now or could it be done in phases.

Mr. Davis stated that from a cost efficiency standpoint it is most efficient for it to be done all at one time. Does it have to be done that way? No. Is there significant cost savings over the life of a $113 million project? Probably not.

Mr. Mulcahy asked if we own this building. Do we know what it is worth? Is the Health Department going to be incorporated into the new complex?

Mr. Bossert stated that we own it. He is not sure what it is worth. There was some thought into getting it appraised but that has not been done yet. The Health Department and 911 was not included because their facility is a good solid recently renovated building.

Mr. Reid asked if everyone would move to the new complex.

Mr. Bossert stated that all of the judicial functions would move into it – Circuit Clerk, State’s Attorney, Probation, Public Defender, and Jury Commission. He doesn’t know if everything from this building will fit into the complex. Animal Control, Health, 911, and Highway would not come into the new complex. Advantages to consolidating to one complex would be that maintenance issues in this building would certainly diminish and with new buildings there would hopefully not be the large maintenance issues we have now. There would be better energy efficiencies in a new campus. Also, the convenience and safety for the public would be another advantage.

Mr. McConnell stated that he appreciates all the work that has gone into this. Over the years in the construction business, he has found that every time that you “value engineer” it comes back to bite you. He has seen it happen time and time again.

Mr. Skutt stated that he understands that there will be energy efficiencies out of a new building but has there been operational estimate done as far as the increase in staff and security needs.

Mr. Davis stated that it was not in the purview of this particular study so they did not look at that. He would tend to agree that those are real elements. One of the things that can be done is that they can look at it from an energy efficiency standpoint and from a lifecycle point of view, if that is something that the board is interested in.

Mr. Skutt stated that he is just making sure that if they build something that they can maintain it and operate it.
Mr. Bossert stated that that is a very valid point and when they get to the point where they are really looking at plans that would certainly be part of the discussion.

Mr. Washington asked how many courtrooms are in the proposed design.

Mr. Davis stated that there are 11 total courtrooms.

Mr. Washington stated that he wonders if that is enough with our growing population.

Mr. Bossert stated that when they get to that point they will have to review that. We don’t want to end up in Will County.

Mr. Snipes stated that he would like to have a copy of this put out to the press so the public can see the pictures. Are there any dollars reserved for the esthetic restoration of the current courthouse?

Mr. Bossert stated that there is $15 million dollars for renovating the courthouse.

Mr. Washington stated that he was here when there was deterioration of the spindles of the courthouse and they were trying to find someone who could reproduce those spindles and they couldn’t so they had to be made out of cast concrete. That is a problem that they will run into with the renovation.

Mr. Davis stated that they recognize that fact and agree with this comments. They might be able to find an authentic way to recreate some of the elements but technology has advanced to the point where there are other ways to do things.

Mr. Bossert stated that tonight they have attempted to bring together a design solution that our team has brought to us that addresses deficiencies in our facilities and give us a plan to look ahead. Our solution tonight solves a lot challenges that we are facing. It improves public convenience by consolidating facilities, improves public safety in the facilities, and reduces our maintenance and energy budgets. We can meet our ADA requirements by addressing this plan as well as the Supreme Court Standards. We can give ourselves room for growth in the future and it gives us the ability to accommodate our public safety budget as well as all of the related judicial functions. A public safety sales tax solution can give us some flexibility to address all of those needs. A public safety sales tax would allow us to get contributions from out-of-town visitors.

Mr. Whitis asked what our priority is. $1.5 million is not going to help much when you add up all the needs relating to the deputy force, probation, state’s attorney, courts, and public defender. He understands the courthouse situation but he thinks our biggest issue, if we are going to after a public safety tax, is the public safety related needs instead of spending the majority of it on the courthouse at this time. He thinks the courthouse needs to be pushed down the road right now.

Mr. Wheeler stated that he agrees with everything that Mr. Whitis said. He thinks that everyone here knows how much he has been involved with getting the word out about the courthouse. He believes the project is essential but he thinks that it comes down to
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timing and trust in order to have this accepted by the people of this county. He thinks that we need to take a hard look at how we slice that pie. We have a jail to pay off. We need to look at the bond rating we have with the current debt that we have. We can prioritize these things and still accomplish everything that we need to accomplish. If we take care of the debt that we have, build for the future, and take care of all the public safety departments that we have, he thinks that would be a more judicious stewardship of the finances of this county going forward and he thinks that is something that the public would actually get behind.

Mr. Reid asked if they pushed the courthouse project five years down the road how much will it cost then.

Mr. Davis stated that he would say that a 2.5% increase per year is not unrealistic in a globally inflationary market.

Mr. Skutt asked how it would affect us if we did it five years from now with a better bond rating.

Mr. Bossert stated obviously a better bond rating would help although we never live in a static interest rate environment.

Mr. Skutt asked if this will reduce our maintenance and energy budget overall.

Mr. Bossert stated that the thought is that this building uses a lot of energy. Certainly on a maintenance side we think we could save on maintenance issues.

Mr. McConnell asked if any of this money would allow us to get back the people who have been laid off. He agrees that $1.5 million is not enough to solve our problems.

4. Public Safety Sales Tax Referendum

Mr. Bossert stated that that is why we are here today. The analysis of that number was to demonstrate that there is sufficient funds in a projected sales tax number that would take care of a project. It is up to us to decide if we want to spend that much or if we want to spend anything right now and yet go for a public safety tax that could restore the health of the county and get our functions stabilized. He thinks that we need to get ourselves stabilized and this is an opportunity to do that if the public would help us get to that point to get back to a positive reserve balance in our funds and give ourselves an opportunity to rebuild our budgets in those areas where we have had to cut dramatically and we could do that fairly quickly. Once that is done then we can size up exactly how much is coming in and we would have a better handle on those numbers on the sales tax revenue then we could see if there is an ability to build a construction project into our budget once we get back to a healthier balance.

Mr. McConnell stated that we lay-off a maintenance employee that was making our repairs and now pay a company $125/hr. to make those repairs.

Mr. Bossert stated that there are examples of that all over the county. We have laid off to the point where it is painful everywhere.
Mr. Stauffenberg stated that he received a call today from the real estate community and the gentleman that called has helped several communities pass referendums but his caveat was that something has to be given back to the residents, like Mr. Snipes mentioned, such as concessions in property taxes. The real estate community would get behind us if we would look at doing something like that.

Mr. Mulcahy stated that the Attorney General has been looking at this strongly and he wonders how they would react to pushing the courthouse project down the road a ways.

Mr. Bossert stated that that is an appropriate question. They have been attempting to get the Attorney General representative here. They had hoped tonight but schedules are hard to arrange.

Mr. Boyd stated that he has been in regular contact with the Attorney General’s office over the course of the last several months. They are now on the third assistant attorney general who is assisting us. He has been advised that on July 1 a new assistant attorney general will be hired and will be assigned our file. When that occurs he will be meeting with that person. As for the Attorney General’s reaction to pushing this off for a time period, the Attorney General has asked us to take this issue seriously and the Attorney General is pleased that the County has done that. They are pleased in the manner in which this board and the county in general has responded to the complaints that led to the investigation. They have been very patient with us in having a plan for what we can address and what is our long term solution. He believes that if our plan appears solid they will support the way in which we go forward. If it appears that we are kicking the can down the road without any real goal or desire to address their concerns then they will not be as supportive and understanding of the actions we take. They have not given us a deadline. The pressure is never going to be fully off until we are able to fully address the issues. The Attorney General anticipates that once we have addressed the needs of the courthouse we will address the other issues if there are any in our other facilities, including this building. They have felt that the greatest complaint from the general public has been access to the court services and we are striving to do everything that we can and they understand that. If we are pushing this off for 2 years, 5 years, 10 years and there is a reasonable sustainable basis for doing that they won’t be happy but nobody is going to jail.

Mr. Enz asked what the urgency was on doing this sales tax referendum. He knows that the school districts are possibly planning on asking for money.

Mr. Bossert stated that the schools already filed.

Mr. Granchalek stated that the latest report that he got today is that there is still room on the ballot.

Mr. Bossert stated that he thinks that there is a limit per governmental body as to how many questions they put on. The state is up to six, with a seventh pending.

Mr. Enz stated that maybe some incentive to accept ours should be considered. He has a feeling that it is going to be hard to get a 2% increase.
Mr. Bossert stated that he doesn’t disagree. He does not want to say anything negative about the schools effort. They are under pressures, as well.

Mr. Enz stated that the schools have held off for several years.

Mr. Bossert stated that they held off last year when we were still in the midst of our sales tax sourcing issue. The fear was that any discussion of a local increase in sales tax would chase off the sales tax sourcing companies. He talked with schools superintendents about their plans. Schools were head strong that they wanted to run a question as they are under tremendous pressure to maintain school budget and we are too.

Mr. McConnell asked if the team has any expertise in getting the referendum passed.

Mr. Bossert stated that when they selected the DLR Group they selected them in part because they had a plan as to how they could help a county move through an election process.

Ms. Ramsey stated that they have a long history of working with communities across the country to help pass referendums. They do it by educating about the challenges and the need which a lot of people in the community are already aware of. They need to hit it very hard with what the challenges are, how we are going to fix them, and continue constant communication about how the solution affects them. They use a lot of answers that were on the survey in their messaging. They will put together a messaging calendar for the next several months and they will help educate the public.

Mr. Bossert stated that some of the top responses to questions was the support the community gives to public safety. That is a very crucial issue here for us right now.

Mr. Liehr stated that he is hearing that they work principally in the area of courthouse facilities. Obviously, as they hear the board’s discussion, we are equally concerned about the public safety aspect because many of us do feel that that is going to be a more successful way of winning public support. Does their expertise include some of those public safety approaches as opposed to courthouse approaches?

Mr. Davis stated that they do. He has actually spent the majority of his career working on law enforcement facilities.

Mr. Liehr stated that he thinks that instead of facilities the county’s focus is going to be law enforcement services.

Mr. Bossert stated that the question is “Can we structure a message to the public that incorporates both?” In the short run, emphasizing budgetary needs but in the long run trying to address our facility needs, as well.

Ms. Ramsey stated that they would absolutely do that. That is one of the reasons that they came up with this public safety solution. They heard from the community that it was so important and they knew that there were some issues and some personnel
challenges so they wanted to address those head-on and they felt that if they gave something back to the community, as was mentioned tonight, they would be more supportive so they would want to have public safety as one of their key messages.

Mr. Wheeler stated when the assistant attorney general came here she talked about making accommodations. There had to be an ability to make an accommodation. Some of those accommodations we have already met, such as the restrooms, and we are down to the things that cost a lot. In his opinion, an accommodation would be an accessible courtroom to help us establish that bridge between what is economically possible to cover our current expenses and what is viable for the future and a good plan towards getting to where we have to go.

Mr. Mulcahy stated that he spoke with people from the Blue Ribbon Commission and they want to emphasize the consequence and our need to get the information to the voter what the consequence of a "no" vote could be.

Mr. Snipes stated that this is not a county issue only; it is a community issue. This is a great opportunity for government and the people to partner together for progress. The courthouse is not our courthouse; it is the community’s courthouse.

Mr. Einfeldt asked if we are stuck with a 1% sales tax increase.

Mr. Bossert stated they by law we cannot exceed 1% on a public safety sales tax.

Mr. Einfeldt asked if there was an avenue to increase it more.

Mr. Bossert stated that there is also a public facility sales tax which is tied to a specific project and a specific dollar amount. He believes it would sunset.

Mr. Granchalek stated that they are less common.

Mr. Einfeldt stated that he agreed that there are a lot of people paying a whole lot of ridiculous real estate taxes. If you could rebate some money back to the residents he thinks that would help a lot.

Mr. James asked where they are going to go with this. What is the time table?

Mr. Bossert stated that the window would be to get a county resolution passed by mid-August. We can do it now and put it on the July county board meeting agenda and move ahead.

Mr. James stated that he thinks that we need to straighten out how much is going to public safety and how much is going to structures. He is not so sure we are sold on a new structure yet.

Mr. Granchalek stated that the only portion that goes on the ballot is the sales tax portion. The subsequent use is not included on the ballot.
Mr. Bossert stated that in his view the advantage of a sales tax question is that they have the flexibility that this will help us with budgetary issues as well as long-term facility issues. We can raise the money and then come back and backfill the details of what is going to be done with it. Asking the public for sales tax increase for public safety gives us the quickest way to heal our budget and address the many issues that we have. He does not disagree that property taxes are a bad word and they are doing all that they can to avoid that and perhaps they can come up with a way to abate some of our debt payments that are built into our county budget. If we have sufficient funds to address public safety there are certain debt payments that are built into our general fund and maybe that is a way to address a reduction in property taxes. We need to get that money in hand to address our budgetary issues first.

Mr. James asked what percentage the schools are asking for.

Mr. Bossert stated that they are also asking for a 1%. It is collected the same way the public safety sales tax would be and distributed back to the school districts based on student population.

Mr. James stated that his recommendation is that they go for a ¾% increase. If the public is going to endorse anything they may endorse a ¾% instead of 1%.

Mr. Vickery asked if the referendum would pass in November what would the timeframe as they went down the various steps, through the bond sale, the construction phase, etc.

Mr. Granchalek stated that the referendum would pass in November, the results would be sent to the state, it would be imposed July 1, and receipts would start two to three months after that. Bonds would not be issued until the county was ready to build.

Mr. Vickery stated that it is quite a time lag.

Mr. Bossert stated that there would be a period of time that money could be saved.

Mr. Vickery stated that that is his point. Once the receipts are coming in it is quite a time lag before construction begins and actually having bond payments. That would bring us income that is not encumbered until the bonds are sold and bond payments begin. Economists say that sometime in the future we will see increases in rates so if we decide to push this down the road it may not be a good thing to do from an interest rate standpoint.

Mr. McConnell asked what needed to be done right now to get this thing moving. Do we need a motion?

Mr. Bossert stated that they are not waiting for any more design discussion to allow them to move ahead, if we want to move ahead with a referendum. If the committee wants to put it on the ballot he thinks the appropriate motion would be to move to direct the county clerk to place a question on the ballot for a public safety sales tax.
Mr. McConnell made a motion to ask the County Clerk to place a question on the ballot for a 1% public safety sales tax and Mr. Tripp seconded it.

**Discussion**
Mr. Whitis asked if it going to be determined in the future what that 1% increase is going to go towards.

Mr. Bossert stated that they not locking in any allocation.

Mr. Wheeler asked if there is any way to tie in with this motion and lock in the verbiage so the public understands that the only thing that can be done with this is public safety. He thinks it would help in the messaging to the public.

Ms. Ramsey stated that that will definitely be part of their messaging throughout the entire campaign.

Mr. Wheeler stated that he would like it to be part of this resolution if that is appropriate.

Mr. Bossert stated that he thinks that it is a given that the only purpose of that money is for public safety and that is how the ballot question is worded. It is very specific in the statute.

Mr. Boyd stated that they do not determine the language except for the amount of increase so if it is a 1% increase that is the only language that we will be placing in the question. The statute sets forth the exact language that is to be used in a public safety referendum. You cannot add or subtract from it.

Mr. Bossert stated that the statute is in everybody’s packet. It states “to pay for public safety purposes shall the County of Kankakee be authorized to impose an increase on its share of local sales taxes by 1%. That is the question.

Mr. Wheeler asked if we could do something to reinforce that ballot question by saying that we have also made it impossible for this to be used for anything else.

Ms. Ramsey stated that that is one of the key messages that they will hammer home. Individuals need to see a message at least seven times throughout a campaign for it to start to stick so that will on all of the messages that they hit home with.

Mr. James stated that he still thinks that they should be taking a look at a ¾% instead of 1%.

Mr. Enz stated that Mr. James is starting to convince him.

Ms. Ramsey stated the on the survey the difference between ¾% sales tax and a 1% was not a significant amount. They would recommend that the county goes with 1%.

Mr. Boyd stated that today’s action is similar to the action of any other committee that they serve on in that this is a recommendation to the county board to be voted on at the
July meeting. For those who have reservations and concerns that perhaps it should be something other than 1%, they will have until the board meeting to address those concerns and meet with the other board members.

Mr. Whitis stated that the two key percentages on the survey were public safety which was #1 and the county was at the bottom so we need to do everything possible to make the people understand that this is what this money is going to be used for. Our past track record is not that good.

Original motion carried with a roll call vote of 23 ayes and 1 nay. Voting aye were Mr. Bossert, Mr. Byrne, Mr. Snipes, Mr. Hess, Mr. Skutt, Mr. Whitis, Mr. Washington, Mr. Enz, Mr. Mulcahy, Mr. Tripp, Mr. Vickery, Ms. Polk, Mr. Reid, Mr. Hildebrand, Mr. Flett, Mr. Liehr, Mr. Wheeler, Mr. McConnell, Mr. Einfeldt, Mr. Stauffenberg, Ms. Webber, Mr. Tholen, and Mr. Sirois. Voting nay was Mr. James.

Mr. Bossert stated that we will address this further at the full county board meeting. We should recognize and thank our DLR team. We certainly are not setting aside a plan and even though we may be delaying the building project we cannot delay it forever. We need to be thinking through how this fits into our overall financial plan. We will continue to work on the plan.

**Home Rule Referendum**

Mr. Bossert stated that in today’s packet is some discussion of home rule and the interaction of that with the county executive form of government which is one question that could appear on a ballot. If the committee wants to pursue that discussion we can do so.

Mr. Byrne stated that he moves to shelve the home rule resolution. He thinks the public trust is not there. We will hard enough time with the sales tax.

The consensus of the committee was that they agreed with Mr. Byrne.

Mr. Stauffenberg stated that the real estate community that was in support of trying to help us if we would help them in property tax is totally against home rule and they would not be willing to help us if we did that.

Mr. Bossert stated that the question might be whether to put another question on the ballot that gives people a choice.

5. Other Business

6. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:20 p.m. was made by Mr. Reid and was seconded by Mr. Liehr. Motion carried.

Mike Bossert, Chairman
Joanne Langlois, Executive Coordinator