

Minutes

Members Present

Mr. Bossert, Mr. Tripp, Mr. Arseneau, Ms. McBride, Mr. Tholen, Mr. Hess, Mr. Mulcahy, Mr. Stauffenberg, Mr. Olthoff, Mr. Vickery, Mr. Whitis, and Mr. Washington

Members Absent

Mr. James, Mr. LaGesse, and Ms. Bernard

In Attendance

- **Board Members**

Mr. McConnell, Mr. Dodge, and Dr. Pagast

- **Department Heads**

Kevin Duval, Lori Gadbois, Lynn Mackin, Steve McCarty, Dick Campbell, and Bonnie Schaafsma

- **Others**

- **Media**

Dimitrios Kalantzis

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by the Chairman, Mr. Bossert, at 9:00 a.m. Quorum present.

2. Public Comment

3. Approval of Minutes – September 29, 2011

A motion to approve the minutes was made by Mr. Olthoff and seconded by Mr. Washington. Motion carried with a voice vote.

4. Presentations

5. Legislative

Mr. Bossert stated that this is veto session week and there has been a flurry of activity in Springfield. He was down there yesterday on a related matter. The big news right now is the override on the ComEd bill. It is not the position that the counties took on it; although, the mayors' association did take a positive position in support of a smart grid legislation back in the winter. The big new in regards to county government and other local government is House Bill 3828 which is a diversion of the local personal property replacement tax to be used for regional school superintendent funding. It appears that is the only matter that will be available to be voted on in this session. The word is that the Speaker of the House will not call the original bill for an override vote so this is the presented alternative which is to pull the funding out of personal property replacement tax which has local governments upset. It is not so much the amount of money involved on this matter; it is the precedent it is setting. Statewide in the last fiscal year of personal property replacement tax disbursements were \$1.4 billion. Of that, about \$9.6 million comes back to Kankakee County. The county gets about \$1 million, the municipalities as a whole get about \$1 million, all levels of school districts get about just under \$6 million, and the rest is divided up among townships, road districts, KCC, fire districts, park districts, etc. A 1% diversion out of that is not going to hurt anybody individually but to him what they are looking at is the \$1.4 billion that is going into that fund. He is sure the state leaders are looking at that saying that that is an avenue to help balance state budget. They will start moving other activity to be reimbursed out of that fund. In fact, he thinks that the legislation would also divert other things such as the stipends that go to certain elected officials. That would start coming out of this fund rather than the general appropriations. It has not gone through a full vote yet. We can try to register our unhappiness about this and yet they may have a stranglehold on us on this one if the Speaker refuses to call the override and have an up or down vote on it.

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Mr. Bossert stated that House Bill 1293 has risen again as an alarm. This is the bill that would strip local judges of the authority to appoint the county sheriff to conduct the foreclosures. Last winter it was defeated but the sponsor of the bill has now resurrected it to make another run at it in veto session. County governments and sheriff associations are all on alert to try to put a stop to this bill which affects revenue at the county level; as well as, the ability of a sheriff and of the county to have a single source of monitoring foreclosure sales. The big alarm also went out on House Bill 3793 which is a Jack Frank's initiative. Representative Frank's from McHenry County is a noted anti-local government representative. He has introduced a bill that would limit the CPI adjustment to 0 in the case of any taxing body that has a declining EAV (Assessed Valuation) that moves downward across the entire area. In that case, there would be no CPI adjustment allowed. It turns on its head the entire concept of the tax cap formula which is already limiting the ability to levy money needed to run local governments, school districts, and all the districts that are affected by this. In our case, we are looking at a tax levy coming up in December with the CPI adjustment this year being only 1.5% and new construction is a pretty modest, perhaps ½ of a percent. If the CPI gets up at some time to a higher level, you hope that is your lifeline to be able to levy a bit more money to pay for health insurance, salary adjustments, and things that have to happen in government. This would take that away from local government to do that. It is one of those measures that once it is thrown out there and it starts getting some sponsors it almost steamrolls. It brought on several co-sponsors on the bill including Lisa Dugan. We did have a conversation with her to see what the thinking was here and if there is any hope of getting her off as a sponsor.

Mr. Bossert gave an update on our county organizations. We just joined "Metro Counties of Illinois". We don't have a uniform voice in Illinois from county governments. We seem to have about three voices and we happen to belong to all three organizations. Metro Counties is the larger counties in the state out of the top 20 in population. The thinking is that the larger counties have common interest in terms of pieces of legislation. Their focus has been on legislative issues. This organization is in need of an executive director and a new lobbyist so yesterday's activity was interviewing candidates for those positions or a combination position. They have not had a presence in Springfield and hopefully that will change and they will have a one-person office open up. UCCI does spend about \$200,000 a year; Metro Counties has been doing it for about a \$130,000 to \$140,000 but there has been no overhead, staff only. With only 15 counties contributing the dues are substantially higher; although, they prorate it based on population. We are one of the small ones in that group. He thinks that it is in our interest to continue to belong to that organization. Memberships are in his administrative budget. We have also been paying into the national organization, NACO, which may be optional. The Illinois Association of County Board Members is another organization that we may want to think about. UCCI is a no-brainer because we join and it cost us money but they rebate 100% of the dues back to us because they are doing so well with their affiliated organization Property and Casualty Insurance. They generate enough money to pay all expenses and then some. They not only focus on legislation but also on board training and board programs.

Mr. Bossert stated that it appears there is not going to be an attempt this veto session to run the sales tax revenue sharing agreement legislation that we were hoping was going to be introduced in the veto session that would try to solve the issue. They will hold it over until January spring session.

6. Information Services

- **Budget Discussion**

Mr. Bossert stated that they have been allowing general fund departments in all the other committees to talk about their budget and operations. Mr. Duval is the only department in this group today that is general fund related. He wanted to give him an opportunity to review his operation and what he has been doing over the last two or three years to deal with our budget situation.

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Mr. Duval stated that he will work inside the budget allotted to him. Their mission statement is to build the most modern state-of-the-art system that they can effectively utilize given the budget constraints. He is pretty proud to say that our local county government far exceeds any other government body in the Kankakee and Iroquois County area. We probably match per dollar what Will County does percentage wise, not in total dollars. Will County is five times our size so we will never match them in potential spending but we can say that we have a network as advance as anybody and have been ahead of the curve throughout the state. Over the last three to four years, they have been one of the departments that have been cut the hardest – over a 30% cut. Their high for total budget was \$370,000 and they are down to \$256,000. They realize that is what has to be done but they have not cut performance or materials. They have actually expanded the network during that time, thanks to the Integrated Justice System along with the help of Mr. Bossert, the State's Attorney's office, and Ms. Cianci. They have been able to comfortably switch from the general fund handling the vast majority of some of the network purchases to the courts starting to fund their own systems. They still provide the labor and expertise for them but that has dramatically helped them ease the transition. Even with the 30% cut they have built things out and have upgraded. They dramatically increased the number of desktops and servers but the courts have paid for their fair share. His department is probably the second highest expenditures that the county experiences throughout the county budget. There has been a lot of working together on this which is highly unusual in the county structure in the State of Illinois. In other counties you will see each department has its own IT Department and IT Budget and at times they work at odds with each other. Over the last 10 years they have tried to avoid that at every step of the way so they can effectively utilize the general fund budget.

Mr. Duval passed out a document that details some of the work that they have done this year. It is between the courthouse and the annex. In addition to handling their regular 2200 to 2600 calls annually that they do, they have added over 200 computers, either upgrading or expanding. They have either expanded or upgraded the wireless back hauls connecting the buildings together which he is proud of. We were the first ones in government that connected their buildings together and built a countywide network. They have increased the usable bandwidth to exceed anybody in the area, government or private. Is there going to be more needed in the future? Yes, but they have a plan of action and he has discussed this heavily with Mr. Bossert. It is not a small task and not a small amount to increase bandwidth. We have enough bandwidth for existing needs. In the near future, the courthouse is probably going to need more bandwidth. He has developed a plan of action to present to them that they should be able to fund if they choose to go that route or they can wait to see if they can work in what they have already provided to them from the general fund. While he is very proud of what they have done within the budget constraints, he does ask that his budget not be cut anymore. They provide a level of expertise that the county cannot afford to hire out. They see the numbers on the things that they do have to hire out. If you take their three salaries and put them together, that is usually 40% to 50% of the hourly rate that they are charged to bring one person in on one project. They are here 8 hours a day, on call 24/7. They effectively utilize the county's dollars very well. He does appreciate that every effort was made to not cut. He was hired to work inside the budget. Anybody can come up here and say that they cannot do it unless they are given more money but that is not management.

Mr. Olthoff asked if there are any security issues with the system. Is there monitoring on the system as to what people are doing on them?

Mr. Duval stated that on a daily basis there are always some security issues such as viruses. There is monitoring but he has to be careful what he says. If it is a general fund department, he will discuss it with the department head. If it is an elected office, he can't discuss it. He would let them know that there is an issue. As far as something serious, there are no issues. Chief Raetz does out at the Sheriff's Department what Mr. Duval does here.

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Mr. Stauffenberg asked if we have a system where everyone can talk to everybody, group wise.

Mr. Duval stated that we have an email server. Certain departments can share calendars. Smart phones can be used remotely. They have the ability, if need be, to get a machine from the edge of the Treasurer's office to talk to a machine at the Coroner's office. Even though they are different networks they have networked them all together. You would have to go through them because they have the security control but it is possible. One of the reasons that they did that is because the maintenance department is automating the controls on their systems so they can be managed remotely.

Mr. Bossert stated that whenever there is a low-cost alternative Mr. Duval is right there to explain what we can do to not spend more than we need to. He has been a good consultant on a number of issues such as phone systems, etc., not just IT issues.

7. Health Department

- **Mental Health Committee**

Mr. Bossert stated that the Association of Community Mental Health Authorities of Illinois is informing us that there is a new mandate to create a local mental health advisory committee which would be appointed by the county board chairman in certain circumstances. He wasn't clear if we fell under this.

Ms. Schaafsma stated that that legislation was put into effect but it is very vague. They believe the goal of the legislation was to make sure that counties were addressing the issue of mental health. Some health departments do provide the community mental health services. Here in Kankakee, although we meet the legislation by size, under 3 million, prior to the Health Department being established there already was a community mental health agency, The Helen Wheeler for Behavioral Health, that is still in existence so that was not a function that the Health Department took up. The legislation is rather vague and their advisors in public health suggest that they probably need to consult the State's Attorney as to interpretation. She did talk with the director of the Helen Wheeler Center and there was a mental health council that consisted of members of the community but her advice is that we need to talk to the State's Attorney. It does not say who the committee should consist of other than members of the general public, it has no taxing authority, and it serves to advice and monitor mental health services. She believes that it was an effort to make sure that mental health services were addressed in counties if the Health Department was not doing it. Certainly, the Helen Wheeler Center is and has been a fine agency addressing that here in Kankakee.

Mr. Schaafsma stated that they are just about finished with their walk-in flu clinics. They have given close to 700 doses which is down from what they have done before but there has been a proliferation of private entities such as the pharmacies offering them also. She hasn't seen too many cases yet of the flu; although, the hospitals are starting to see a case here and there. She has been working on the budget and they are facing a possible deficient of \$100,000 to \$200,000 due to some cuts in some grants. They are working to do what they can do to balance their budget. Their cash flow is adequate so it is probable that they will have to meet the gap based on reserve funding. They have been in contract negotiations with ASFSME for their employee union. She believes as of two weeks ago they have come to a tentative agreement. The specifics are being worked out but they believe that they have an agreement that she thinks is fair.

Mr. Washington stated that there was a report that came out this week about the less effectiveness of the flu shot. What is her take on that?

Ms. Schaafsma stated that she read that same article but she really hasn't seen too much discussion from the CDC on that. She believes that if that is true it is still worth getting the flu shot for.

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Ms. Schaafsma stated that it seems that more and more parents are questioning the need for immunizations because instead of three or four shots they are getting five or six. In McHenry County there are over 30 cases of whooping cough in a high school which points to the need of increased boosters for adults. Immunizations given to children can wane in adulthood. The best protection to stop an outbreak is to have more people in the community immunized.

8. Pledge for Life

9. Schools

10. Veterans Assistance Commission

- **Monthly Report**

Mr. Vickery made a motion to approve the report and Mr. Whitis seconded it. Motion carried with a voice vote.

Mr. Bossert asked what it looks like we are ending up with on general assistance of the payouts.

Ms. Smietanski stated that she thinks that they are doing very good. Their budget is holding and they have had quite a few new veterans come in the last two months.

Mr. Bossert asked if they are anticipating an influx.

Ms. Smietanski stated that the general population that they are getting in is the younger vets coming back. She thinks that the more that they see coming back the more assistance that they are going to be using up.

Mr. Arseneau asked what the emergency cash is used for.

Ms. Smietanski stated that it is used for emergency housing, bus tokens, bus trips, etc.

Mr. Campbell stated that tomorrow is his last day as he is retiring.

Mr. Bossert thanked him for his service as it takes a dedicated person to see through on many of these programs and the activities that he has to deal with. The appointment of a Superintendent of a VAC falls to the Veterans Assistance Commission. Ever since Mr. Campbell announced his impending retirement they started researching the statutes and how it all works. The commission has the authority to make an appointment. It is a totally separate body; the employees of the VAC are not statutorily considered employees of the county. The county board does have budgetary oversight on the VAC in terms of jointly approving disbursements which is why they look at the report every month. The board also has a little bit of oversight on compensation for employees of the VAC. It should fit into the criteria established for the rest of the county. Beyond that, the VAC has discretion to run that agency. They will be talking to the board to see what their plans are for the future.

11. Personnel/HR Issues

12. Administrative Issues

a. Reappointments/Appointments

- Reappointment of Jerald W. Hoekstra to the Little Beaver Drainage District

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- Reappointment of Mark Guimond to the Union Drainage District

Mr. Tripp made a motion to approve the above reappointments and Mr. Stauffenberg seconded it. Motion carried with a voice vote. Motion carried with a voice vote.

- Appointment of Stephen Liehr to the Kankakee River Valley Area Airport Authority

Mr. Bossert stated that Mr. Liehr volunteered to take this appointment. It is the one that we have had trouble filling for some time. It is a two county authority – us and Will County. The Auditor General got on us about having a full board and fulfilling the functions properly. A couple months ago Steve Magruder was appointed to one of the seats and Steve Liehr would fill our allotment.

Mr. Vickery made a motion to combine and approve the appointment and Mr. Tholen seconded it. Motion carried with a voice vote.

b. Resolutions

- First Time Home Buyers Down Payment Assistance Program

Mr. Bossert stated that this is a resolution that is done annually.

Mr. Vickery made a motion to approve and Mr. Mulcahy seconded it. Motion carried with a voice vote.

- Intergovernmental Agreement with City of Kankakee Concerning Sales Tax Litigation

Mr. Bossert stated that he had hoped to have a document here that the State's Attorney's office is working on. He had asked for an intergovernmental agreement that this committee could review to execute with the City of Kankakee on assisting on the litigation matter; as well as, the legislation drafting. The City has asked if we would be willing to help. Since this discussion has started we have been willing and have offered to assist in any way that we can. It has come to the point where we need to get an agreement in place to share in some cost. He hopes the committee is all in agreement with that. He challenges anybody who doesn't think that this is a good idea.

Mr. Arseneau stated that more cities are starting to get on the litigation with Cook County and the City of Chicago. Mr. Bossert and he were at a luncheon on Monday and Mr. Bossert had talked to the Mayor of Tinley Park about this and the only reason that he decided to get in on the litigation is because he just wanted to know information. There are a lot of mayors out there that do not know what is going on. They have no education on it and are getting in on this because they think it is the right thing to do.

Mr. Bossert stated that the issue is that they are only getting one side of it. They don't understand the aspect that these are internet sales primarily in this city. There are no brick and mortar stores for the most part. They are still acting like they have a right to the particulars of the agreements and that is the point of contention right now – the language and the specifics that are inside the agreements are privileged and legally bound to nondisclosure. The RTA is taking a position that that should be open to everybody.

Mr. Bossert stated that we don't have a document today but one may be brought to the full board. He just wants a sense that the committee would support that if it is brought to the full board meeting.

Nobody opposed.

13. Information Items

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14. Old Business/New Business

Mr. Bossert reminded the committee of the Special Finance Meeting November 10 at 10:00 a.m. immediately following the Highway & Building Committee Meeting. This will be necessary to adopt the final version of a budget so we have a timeline ready for final budget adoption at the Special County Board Meeting on November 29 at 9:00.

15. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn at 9:52 was made by Mr. Olthoff and seconded by Mr. Mulcahy. Motion carried with a voice vote.

Mike Bossert, Chairman
Joanne Langlois, Executive Coordinator