

WILL COUNTY BOARD **COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MINUTES**

Immediately following the Forest Preserve Meeting, but not prior to 9:45 a.m.

Will County Office Building – County Board Room
302 North Chicago Street
Joliet, IL 60432
November 12, 2009

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Moustis called the meeting to order at 11:50 a.m.

ROLL CALL

Present were Members: Adamic, Anderson, Deutsche, Singer, L. Smith, Weigel, Dralle, Wisniewski, Kusta, Maher, Traynere, Goodson, B. Smith, Gould, May, Rozak, Konicki, Seiler, Brooks, Stewart, Winfrey, Babich, Wilhelmi and Moustis.

Absent were Members: Bilotta, Riley, and Blackburn.

Also Present: B. Friefeld.

Present from State's Attorney's Office: M. Tatroe; M. Manning.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

No minutes were presented for approval.

OLD BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS

Proposed 2010 Budget

Mr. Moustis indicated we will look at what we feel is the final draft. He recognized the County Executive; his office has put a tremendous amount of time and resources in preparing the budget. This has been a very difficult year. He commended the County Executive in all his efforts to bring us a balanced budget while using as little of the cash reserves.

Mr. Walsh stated this has been a very long and drawn out process. Over the last 6 months we have worked diligently to present a budget. Every elected official and department head has worked cooperatively to make very difficult decisions. Thank you to the employees who have had to make difficult decisions to take voluntary furlough and severance packages. He expressed sincere appreciation to Melissa Johannsen,

Paul Rafac and Karen Hennessey for their work on this budget. Thank you to Mr. Kusta and the finance committee who have also done a remarkable job. We will not allow critical county services to be jeopardized. We ask for your commitment as elected officials, department heads and employees to work with us to effectively manage this budget in the upcoming year.

Mr. Kusta indicated time and again we as elected officials are charged with the duty to make difficult decisions. We are making decisions that will affect us for years to come. Revenue is down - expenses are up and we need to make ends meet. For the last 4 to 6 months the county has been developing its 2010 budget. Paul Rafac, Melissa Johannsen and many others have spent countless hours trying to budget the many needs of the county against the limited supply of revenue. Today before us is a lean balanced budget ready for comment. While we listen to those comments I ask that you leave politics at the door and look at the big picture; it is in the big picture that you can raise your head high and be proud that as a county board we are doing the right thing. We are providing all core services while protecting the taxpayers from unnecessary expense. It would be easy to fund everyone for everything and make the taxpayer foot the bill. But we were not elected to make easy decisions. Like our forefathers, we were elected to stand up and hold the line. This budget does just that; it holds the line. In the news, we hear about the federal government, State of Illinois, City of Chicago and surrounding counties facing huge budget deficits and massive layoffs, but nothing about Will County. That is due to our past and present leadership following strict fiscally conservative policies.

Mr. Wisniewski arrived at this juncture.

Mr. Rafac indicated this was a collaborative process that started with department requests; the second phase is the County Executive's recommendation, which happened almost 2 months ago. The final phase is County Board approving the budget next week. This is still a living document; there will be some adjustments made. On the revenue side, property tax revenue is up about 5% from in the past; other categories are up 3%. The areas that declined are intergovernmental revenue and interest. The major change is we moved \$2.4 million from the detention levy to the corporate fund; we lost a Supreme Court decision which disallows a separate line item so we had to shift revenue into the overall corporate levy. We are solving the problem by using sales tax or other revenue to pay for debt service. Cash reserves was \$44.5 million at the close of business on Tuesday; \$5.3 million will be transferred before the end of the month to

debt service for obligations for next year; that will drop our fund balance to about \$35.8 million. Last year we used \$31 million in cash to get through the first 6 months of the year since property taxes come in May and June. That is not a lot of flexibility using additional cash reserves. Workers' compensation is \$1.9 million greater than what we budgeted. The 2010 will be a tight budget and 2011 will be even tighter. The major declines are \$4.8 million in the Sunny Hill IGT accounting change. Collectively it is a \$13.2 million decline.

Mr. Singer arrived at this juncture.

Mr. Brooks and Mr. Babich left at this juncture.

Mr. Rafac commented on the major expense categories. Salaries are flat compared to last year; there is an increase on the benefit side; the other increase is the pension payment and health insurance. The \$2.4 million was eliminated in overtime; there is no overtime in this budget in the corporate fund. There is a \$2.3 million increase for transfer out for the detention debt service, \$600,000 for benefits paid out and a \$500,000 increase in contingency. We need some increased flexibility with a budget this tight. We increased \$400,000 for sick and severance costs; this budget does not include any payments for other post employment costs. There is an unfunded amount of \$8.6 million due by the end of 2010. There is also no funding for cola for any non-bargaining employee; there are no corporate vehicles. In corporate, we had 36 people who took severance – at least half of these people will be replaced. There are two critical areas – IT Support and the position in the County Clerk's office for the real estate tax system where positions will overlap. There are 41 management and 14 union taking furlough; those 69 people result in about \$115,000 savings. The deadline has been extended to November 13.

Mr. Adamic stated this is a painful year for the budget; while no one likes to say no – do more with less, that will probably be the case for this year and next. We are asking for everyone's cooperation and for the county board to support this.

Mr. Gould indicated he had received an inquiry from the Will County Extension Service; we gave them \$50,000 last year and they have expressed concern if we have no allocation at all for them the University of Illinois will remove all funding. They are asking for something so they can show the University of Illinois.

Mr. Moustis commented this is an issue better addressed down the line. Everyone would like to give them some type of funding; there is a reasonable possibility down the line we will find some funding for them. He would rather address this later such as May or June. We need to have some commitment by the end of the state fiscal year.

Mr. Gould expressed concern that he does not want to see them lose the funding from the University of Illinois because their local county has not kept them in their budget.

Mrs. May stated at a meeting last night with University of Illinois Extension Service it was discussed that if we do not put something to show county would give them something they could not wait until May; they understand they have to start grant writing and fund raising.

Mr. Maher indicated he had asked Mr. Friefeld look at the regulations to see if county does not financially support them they will go away. He has been impressed with the work between county board and the County Executive. He does not think in our current fiscal status we should take that on.

Mr. Moustis stated he had been advised we gave them \$25,000 and that check will be cut on December 1.

Mr. Rafac indicated their fiscal year goes through June 30, 2010; the check we are approving now funds them through June 30, 2010. The question is July 1, 2010.

Mr. Moustis commented we also match funds to United Way. Any member can specify that money to the University of Illinois Extension Service; you have the ability to direct your contribution to United Way.

Mrs. Rozak asked if all overtime was pulled for the entire county or only specific offices.

Mr. Rafac answered there was no overtime allocated in the corporate budget at all. That does not mean department heads or elected officials cannot spend money but it has to come out of their salary budget.

Mrs. Deutsche and Mrs. Winfrey left at this juncture.

Mr. Moustis commented given the choices he believes the least impact is to eliminate overtime; that is the right decision. He asked everyone to be prepared; we are passing a budget at the next meeting. If you need any clarification or if you have any questions, contact Melissa Johannsen. Hopefully we can move this on and get into the next difficult segment, which is the management of that budget.

Other Business

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Mr. Kusta, second by Mr. Maher, to adjourn the meeting at 12:45 p.m. All in favor.

MOTION CARRIES.