

CHAMPAIGN COUNTY BOARD
COMMITTEE MINUTES

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Thursday, September 10, 2009

**Lyle Shields Meeting Room, Brookens Administrative Center
1776 E. Washington St., Urbana**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Thomas Betz, Chris Doenitz, Brad Jones, Brendan McGinty (Chair), Steve Moser, Steve O'Connor, Michael Richards, Giraldo Rosales, Barbara Wysocki

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

OTHERS PRESENT: Carol Ammons (County Board Member), Kat Bork (Administrative Secretary), Deb Busey (County Administrator), Tony Fabri (Auditor), John Hall (Planning & Zoning Director), Roger Holland (Court Administrator), Alan Nudo (County Board Member), Dan Welch (Treasurer), C. Pius Weibel (County Board Chair), Fred Wilkinson (Chief Deputy Circuit Clerk)

CALL TO ORDER

Vice-Chair Rosales called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Bork called the roll. Betz, Doenitz, Jones, McGinty, Moser, O'Connor, Richards, Rosales, and Wysocki were present at the time of roll call, establishing the presence of a quorum.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA/ADDENDUM

MOTION by Betz to approve the agenda; seconded by Wysocki. **Motion carried with all ayes.**

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION by Betz to approve the Finance Committee minutes of August 6, 2009; seconded by Wysocki. **Motion carried with all ayes.**

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Sarah Anderson, a County employee for eight years and an AFSCME union steward, said employees are willing to take furlough days and cut down on hours so they do not have to see their co-workers struggling to provide food and housing for their families. She said it saddens and disgusts her to see the County Administrator receive a salary increase of \$25,000 when her fellow

co-workers will be standing in an unemployment line with their children and mortgage payments. Anderson said other employees have to take on a laid off employees' duties with no potential for a salary increase anytime in the near future. She asked how accepting a raise of that amount at this crucial time was warranted. She acknowledged duties will be added to Busey's busy schedule when Denny Inman leaves and asked what the difference was between Busey's situation and hers. Anderson wonders if history would repeat itself by the County Administrator keeping all of her staff and finding a raise for them after contract negotiations are complete. The AFSCME workers demand equality of sacrifice when it comes to personnel cuts. If there is money in other departments' budgets, it needs to be distributed to prevent families from wondering how they will live. Anderson stated the AFSCME workers are accounted for at all times with the \$250,000 Kronos system implemented a couple of years ago and did not think the same could be said about the "big title people". Anderson has observed that the Court Administrator was stripped of his supervisory duties due to unexplained, inappropriate actions. The Court Administrator's title and duties on paper justify his salary, but she claimed the Court Administrator does not perform half of the duties on paper. She suggested researching why the Court Administrator was hired in the first place and if those needs still exist to determine if the position is necessary. According to the Court Administrator, he attended every JANO meeting and training session yet he cannot print out a calendar. Anderson stated the Court Administrator creates an unreceptive work environment, intimidates employees, and sits most of the day in offices waiting for certain judges to get out of court so he could follow them around. The Court Administrator's salary justifies nearly three employees' salaries. Anderson's new supervisor could do her job and she is paid significantly less than the Court Administrator while taking on most of his supervisory and administrative duties without any consideration for a raise or position upgrade. Anderson said it looks like if an employee is high in the departmental structure and duties are increased then the employee gets a raise; if an employee is high in the departmental structure and more than 50% of duties are removed then the employee's salary stays the same; and if an employee is low in the departmental structure and given most of the duties of a higher level position then the employee should just be happy to have a job. Anderson was sure there is fat to be trimmed from every department budget, but focusing on the hourly paid employees is not the answer. She suggested the committee take a long hard look at the ineffective and unaccounted for people and the County Board. She reminded the committee that the employees are taxpayers and will not forget who stood with the County employees as a whole. She hoped by voicing their opinions this evening the past does not repeat itself with repercussions.

Joan Wiegel, a Circuit Court employee for eighteen years and an AFSCME union steward, spoke about the layoffs proposed by the County Administrator. She understood the County was in a budget crisis and the economic outlook is bleak, however, she believed the layoffs were unfairly passed without looking at every obvious alternative. For example, the County Administrator has agreed to an approximate \$23,000 per year salary increase. Wiegel understood Busey became the sole Administrator and has taken on additional duties. She stated employees are foregoing their raises and upgrades as a part of the County budget. Wiegel said it was shameful that the County Administrator was accepting this raise rather than forgoing it until the economy bounces back. Wiegel remarked another well-kept secret and solution to the disorganization in the current courts system is the Court Administrator, who makes \$80,000/year. This amount equals the salary of two or more employees. Wiegel stated the Court Administrator receives this salary for doing nothing. She stated the Court Administrator has been unethically protected by the Presiding Judge and the

County Administrator. She came to the Finance Committee last year and spoke about allegations against the Court Administrator concerning female Circuit Court employees. Wiegel compared Champaign County government to corrupt Chicago politics. The Court Administrator has been accused of sexual harassment, had the majority of his supervisory duties taken away pursuant to those allegations, and created a hostile work environment, yet his job description and position in the organizational chart has not changed. She claimed the diagram illustrating the organizational structure of the court system presented in the budget document does not represent the actual state of operations. She stated Judge Difanis sent a memo on November 12, 2008 removing Roger Holland as the Court Clerks' supervisor. She questioned why his salary and job title were not changed to reflect the decrease in his responsibilities. Wiegel claimed the County Board and County Administrator allowed the Court Administrator to continue in his capacity because he is one of the good old boys. She said the Court Administrator walks around the Courthouse with a baseball bat and spends ¾ of his time sitting in the recording room waiting for the Presiding Judge to come out of court in order to sit in the judge's office. She stated the County Board and County Administrator ignored pleas from hard-working employees to keep their jobs. The little people who make the County run are losing their jobs and Wiegel asked the committee what they are going to give up. She said the County Board has ineffectively investigated the corrupt politics of County government which contributed to the budget crisis. Wiegel thanked the Board members who did listen.

Angela Lusk, a Circuit Court employee, reiterated what the other speakers said and encouraged Board members to listen to the employees. She stated a large amount of managers are not earning their keep. Lusk felt it was sad that some people, including elected officials, who only work 10-15 hours per week, still get paid. She said AFSCME would make sure to bring this up during the campaigns. The union was not trying to bully the County Board, because a great deal of County management was not earning their paychecks. She challenged the County Board to sit with employees and see what they do all day. She invited them to come into court and see that she earns her paycheck. Lusk suggested the County Board look into early retirement for employees and other ways to make cuts, as well as asking and emailing the employees. She offered to put a list together to look over the figures with the Board members to see where cuts could be made. She commended a lot of the department heads for doing a good job in quickly cutting 6% from their budgets. She thought if the department heads asked their employees then they could work together to get their budget back in order. Lusk stated that during contract negotiations the Board members have their arms crossed and claim they have no money. She thought the employees just want their fellow employees to be able to work. Lusk wanted the County Board to stand up for the employees because they vote, their families vote, and they will go knocking on doors.

BUDGET AMENDMENTS/TRANSFERS

Budget Amendment #09-00078

MOTION by Betz to recommend to the County Board approval of Budget Amendment #09-00078 from Fund 075 Regional Planning Commission – Department 728 Safe Routes to School-Even Year for increased appropriations of \$1,000 for the Stationary and Printing line, \$10,000 for the Professional Services line, \$500 for the Computer Services line, \$10,000 for the Legal Notices, Advertising line, and \$4,000 for the Contributions and Grants line with increased revenue of \$25,500 from the DOT-FHWA-Highway Planning line; seconded by Richards. **Motion carried with all ayes.**

Budget Amendment #09-00079

MOTION by Betz to recommend to the County Board approval of Budget Amendment #09-00079 from Fund 075 Regional Planning Commission – Department 023 729 IDOT Traffic Signal Retiming for increased appropriations of \$23,000 for the Regular Full-Time Employees line, \$1,000 for the Temporary Salaries & Wages line, \$100 for the Office Supplies line, \$200 for the Postage, UPS, Federal Express line, \$100 for the Gasoline & Oil line, \$300 for the Job-Required Travel Expense line, \$100 for the Telephone Service line, \$200 for the Photocopy Services line, and \$25,000 for the Contributions & Grants line; seconded by Moser.

Richards asked what intersections would be affected. Busey stated it would include the intersections of Bradley Avenue/Market Street, Bradley Avenue/Neil Street, Bradley Avenue/Randolph Street, Bradley Avenue/State Street, Mattis Avenue/Kirby Avenue, Mattis Avenue/Interstate Drive, Mattis Avenue/Olympian Drive, Windsor Avenue/Prospect Avenue, Windsor Drive/Galena Drive, Windsor Avenue/Mattis Avenue, and Windsor Avenue/Duncan Drive. In Urbana it would include intersections of Goodwin Avenue/Green Street, Lincoln Avenue/Windsor Avenue, Lincoln Avenue/Florida Avenue, Lincoln Avenue/Pennsylvania Avenue, Lincoln Avenue/Green Street, Lincoln Avenue/Springfield Avenue, Lincoln Avenue/Bradley Avenue, Main Street/Broadway Avenue, and Main Street/Race Street. On the University of Illinois campus the affected intersections are Kirby Avenue/Fourth Street, Kirby Avenue/First Street, Kirby Avenue/Oak Street, Sixth Street/Gregory Avenue, and Sixth Street/Armory Avenue. O'Connor thought this was the best money they will have ever spent on such a worthwhile project.

Motion carried with all ayes.

Budget Transfer #09-00006

MOTION by Betz to recommend to the County Board approval of Budget Transfer #09-00006 in Fund 080 General Corporate – Department 141 State's Attorney Support Enforcement for a transfer of \$5,500 to the Furnishing, Office Equipment line from the Temporary Salaries & Wages line; seconded by Moser.

Moser exited the meeting at 7:21 p.m.

Richards asked for an explanation of the transfer. Busey stated the State's Attorney's Office is transferring money already appropriated in its budget from a Personnel line to a Non-Personnel line to allow for the file storage system move to the new location.

Motion carried all ayes.

Moser re-entered the meeting at 7:22 p.m.

Budget Amendment #09-00081

MOTION by Betz to recommend to the County Board approval of Budget Amendment #09-00081 from Fund 090 Mental Health – Department 053 Mental Health Board for increased

appropriations of \$7,438 for the Professional Services line with no increased revenue; seconded by Richards.

Busey noted the agenda had a typo and the budget amendment was for the Mental Health Fund. Ammons asked why the PLL expenditure was being increased and was concerned that the County Board has not seen any effectiveness yet from the grant program. She thought there should be an explanation before this is approved by the committee because a lot of money has already been allotted to PLL. There was no one present from the Mental Health Board, so Giraldo said the question would be taken up at a later time.

Motion carried with all ayes.

Budget Amendment #09-00080

MOTION by Jones to recommend to the County Board approval of Budget Amendment #09-00080 from Fund 080 General Corporate – Department 071 Public Properties for increased appropriations of \$21,000 for the Main St. Jail Repair-Maintenance line with no increased revenue; seconded by McGinty. **Motion carried with all ayes.**

REQUEST FOR WAIVER OF HIRING FREEZE
Circuit Clerk – Legal Clerk

MOTION by McGinty to approve a waiver of the hiring freeze; seconded by Richards.

Betz requested a roll call vote and asked why the County Board passed a hiring freeze if they were not going to abide by it. Busey stated Wilkinson was present to represent the Circuit Clerk if the committee wanted an explanation. She noted the Circuit Clerk's Office has one position that will remain permanently vacant in the budget cuts. Wilkinson stated the Circuit Clerk's Office has pledged to hold a position vacant through the end of FY2010. The new vacancy was caused by the retirement of a 15-year employee on August 28th. Wilkinson said the problem is most of the work in the Circuit Clerk's Office is time sensitive. The two areas that are not time sensitive are processing court files after they have gone through the system and waiting on the public. With one less employee, the Circuit Clerk could hold bond money rather than converting it into County revenue. The Circuit Clerk's Office formerly had seven windows open (six for the public and one for attorneys); this has been cut to six windows and Wilkinson said the wait time is his biggest concern.

Betz asked for the average wait because he has never waited more than five minutes in that line. Wilkinson said it varies and sometimes the wait time can be 20 minutes.

Wysocki asked about ways within the office to cover the position without hiring another employee. She suggested bringing someone over to the window during busy periods. Wilkinson said no one could be taken off the phones or filing.

Betz understands Wilkinson's concerns because he uses the office as an attorney, but if the County Board is going to be serious about the budget then people will have to wait in line a little

longer unless they increase revenue. Wilkinson said the Circuit Clerk's Office's problem is that very few people are happy to be there in the first place. The customers' temperament has a direct impact on office morale.

Busey reminded the committee that the hiring freeze is two-tiered, first a position is held vacant for three months, and then the office must receive the committee's approval to fill the position. The Finance Committee is being asked to waive the three-month vacancy requirement. If the committee does not approve the waiver, they may want to make a decision about whether the position can be filled in three months.

MOTION by Betz to amend the motion to allow the Circuit Clerk to fill a Legal Clerk position after the position is held vacant for three months; seconded by Richards. **Motion carried with a vote of 5 to 4.** Betz, McGinty, Richards, Rosales, and Wysocki voted in favor of the motion. Doenitz, Jones, Moser, and O'Connor voted against the motion.

Motion as amended carried with a vote of 5 to 4. Betz, McGinty, Richards, Rosales, and Wysocki voted in favor of the motion. Doenitz, Jones, Moser, and O'Connor voted against the motion.

CIRCUIT COURT/CIRCUIT CLERK

Request for Fee Increase to Court Automation Fund Fee

MOTION by O'Connor to approve an increase to the Court Automation Fee from \$5 to \$10, effective December 1, 2009; seconded by Betz.

Betz said he would vote in favor of the increase even though he did not like doing it. He felt having a court system is a common good and it should be paid for by everyone, not just those who use the court system. McGinty appreciated the use of county comparables in the report. It was useful to see where Champaign County's fees stood next to other counties. Wysocki asked how high the fee could go. Busey said the fee can be increased up to \$15. Betz stated the overall court fees are very high and this fee is comparable.

Motion carried with all ayes.

COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

General Corporate Fund FY2009 Revenue/Expenditure Projection Report

Busey distributed her reports to the committee. Busey explained the County received \$610,000 in state reimbursement last week. The deficit in state reimbursement will still be about \$280,000. Most of other revenue lines are declining at the same levels that have been projected. She provided a separate sheet to view this year's quarterly reports to the last eight years for the Quarter Cent Sales Tax. The County has never seen a decrease of this revenue three quarters in a row. To date, the Quarter Cent revenue is lower than it has been since 2005. On the expenditure side, the GCF is spending less than what is budgeted in almost every category. Busey noted the \$1 million is the budget amendment that was approved last month. That money will not be spent this year because it was spent a couple years ago when it was loaned to the Nursing Home. This will

make the bottom line look better on the FY2009 budget. The projected budget is actually about \$270,673 in the black. On a \$32 million budget, the County is basically balanced. One good thing is the current FY2009 expenditure projection is right where it needs to be for expenditure in FY2010.

General Corporate Fund Budget Change Report

The budget change report was provided.

Wysocki inquired about the possibility of more state reimbursements between now and the end of the year. Busey said no, all other state-shared revenues are received in a timely basis.

MOTION by McGinty to receive and place on file the County Administrator's reports on the General Corporate Fund; seconded by Wysocki.

Moser asked if there was any way Busey could compare when school tax started to a year ago. Busey said the information she has reflects through June, so it is the first two quarters of the calendar year. She has no way of knowing until October what the July revenue will look like. Moser asked if she would have enough information to change the budget if the situation gets better. Busey stated the FY2010 revenues are budgeted as flat against where they were in July and they are slightly worse today. She would be reluctant to project more growth.

Motion carried with all ayes.

Update on status of FY2010 Budget

Busey explained there has been a couple changes to the FY2010 budget; the first being the increased use of the CHIPS program by the Sheriff's Office. It is a collaborative solution being implemented by the criminal justice system. This has enabled the Sheriff to increase his revenue estimate for next year from \$70,000 to \$160,000. She stated CHIPS is the home incarceration program for offenders and the defendant pay to be on the program. The other change is the criminal justice system is looking at a contract with a law firm called Harris and Harris to collect the obligations owed to the criminal justice system. An initial assessment of what is owed to Champaign County going back to 1990 was estimated in the range of \$44-\$47 million. This is an inflated number and a lot of it would be uncollectable. Harris and Harris would work with the courts software vendor to implement programming to work with the County. Harris and Harris estimated they can collect \$600,000 for each of the next three years. This information has been reviewed with the Presiding Judge, Circuit Clerk, Sheriff, and State's Attorney. They agreed it would be reasonable to budget \$200,000 in additional operating revenue in FY2010 because it is sustainable over at least a three-year period. It was recommended that anything collected above that amount be treated as one-time revenue to rebuild the General Corporate Fund balance and towards the severely underfunded capital facilities improvements. The Sheriff has figured out through savings in this year's budget how to purchase three squad cars. By doing so, he was to cut that expenditure from FY2010. This amounts to \$60,000 in savings. This puts the FY2010 budget at a deficit of \$350,000. Busey provided a list of the positions that have been eliminated by department heads in the initial 6% cuts. The total layoffs are 11.5 positions, 7 of which are in Court

Services/JDC where there was a significant funding cut from the state. The judiciary made the decision to take the JDC from a 35-bed facility to a 25-bed facility. This allowed for a commiserate cut in staffing. Busey pointed out that of the layoffs, only one is an AFSCME position out of the total 24 positions cut.

Jones thought someone was hired last year to collect fees. Busey explained the State's Attorney added a paralegal position over two years ago to collect unpaid fees and fines. This position will still be used to its fullest capacity in focusing on current collections. The paralegal also sends a letter to every individual who will be turned over to Harris and Harris if the debt is not paid in 30 days.

Nudo asked whether the court fees and fines debts were reported to the three credit bureaus on delinquency. Busey answered they were not. Nudo asked if any law prohibited the County from doing so. By reporting debt to credit bureaus, it could prevent the debtors from making big purchases and could be a way to encourage people to pay what is owed. Betz said it would also subject all of those debts to the Fair Debt Collection Law and he advised caution. Betz said that he has had numerous cases in which he has personally taken his clients' money and paid their fees and fines at the Circuit Clerk's Office, only to have that office take up to two years to record the money. This has caused letters to be issued demanding payment even though the client has posted payment at the Circuit Clerk's Office. Nudo said there was a real problem if that was endemic of the whole system. He thought this was terrific way to go after people on a long-term basis and he thought the County should check into it. Busey said it would be an issue for the criminal justice system office holders, not the County Board, and suggested Nudo share his idea with the Circuit Clerk and State's Attorney.

Busey asked for a closed session to continue discussing the impact of the remaining FY2010 deficit.

MOTION by Betz to enter to closed session pursuant to 5 ILCS 120/2(c)2 to consider collective negotiating matters between Champaign County and its employees or their representatives. He further moved the following individuals remain present: County elected officials, County Administrator, and the Recording Secretary. The motion was seconded by Wysocki. **Motion carried with a vote of 9 to 0.** Betz, Doenitz, Jones, McGinty, Moser, O'Connor, Richards, Rosales, and Wysocki voted in favor of the motion. The committee entered into closed session at 7:55 p.m. The committee resumed open session at 8:21 p.m.

Nudo said he did not believe the figure of \$44-\$47 million owed the criminal justice system was true when he saw it in the newspaper this week. After talking to Welch and Betz, he thinks the County truly has an endemic problem that needs to be solved. He would like to know what the County Board can do to improve this revenue collection because the judges and the Circuit Clerk's Office responsible for the collection do not appear to see the priority in it. Nudo said if people know they do not have to pay fines and fees, then there is an endemic problem in the community. He thought it was more serious than just hiring a firm to collect unpaid fees. He thought reporting to the credit bureau is an effective method for getting people to pay fees. Busey believed the criminal justice system also recognizes what Nudo said and they have made steps in the last twelve months towards correcting a problem that has probably evolved over the last decade. A more

proactive approach is being taken towards collecting Public Defender's fees. Judge Difanis is reviewing outstanding bonds and a number of other different issues that need to be collected, including money that needs to be appropriated out of a Circuit Clerk collection account to where it belongs. The criminal justice system is aware and taking steps towards correcting it. Busey emphasized they do not know how legitimate the estimates provided by Harris and Harris actually are. Nudo would like to see numbers from 2004 onward to see how many collections they have recognized. Betz said sometimes people are not paying because they are incarcerated. This county has one of highest rates of incarceration in the country. Nudo wanted to see some actual numbers to find out how much revenue should be generated and how much is actually being collected.

Rosales called for a point of order and closed the discussion.

NURSING HOME

Financial Report on the Nursing Home

MOTION by Wysocki to receive and place on file the Nursing Home September 2009 financial report; seconded by Jones. **Motion carried with all ayes.**

TREASURER

Monthly Report

Welch distributed his report to the committee. Welch stated the second due date for real estate taxes was September 1st. The collections are 95% collected, right about where they should be. He was concerned about GCF cash flow. It is stable because they are in tax collection and distribution season. After payroll and accounts payable, the GCF balance was at \$2.5 million. He and Busey have started to talk about in what order to pay back the \$3.3 million in loans. He thinks the GCF needs to have a cash balance of at least \$3 million at year's end to carry itself through March into the next tax season.

MOTION by Betz to receive and place on file the Treasurer's August 2009 monthly report; seconded by Wysocki. **Motion carried with all ayes.**

Resolutions Authorizing the County Board Chair to Assign a Mobile Home Tax Sale Certificate of Purchase for Permanent Parcel Number 09-011-0011, Permanent Parcel Number 23-042-0017, Permanent Parcel Number 30-059-0012, & Resolution Authorizing the County Board Chair to Execute a Deed of Conveyance, Permanent Parcel No. 21-34-34-305-014

Welch explained these properties were auctioned at the tax sale and are strips of ground, not actual homes.

MOTION by Betz for an omnibus motion to approve the Resolution Authorizing the County Board Chair to Assign a Mobile Home Tax Sale Certificate of Purchase for Permanent Parcel Number 09-011-0011, Resolution Authorizing the County Board Chair to Assign a Mobile Home Tax Sale Certificate of Purchase for Permanent Parcel Number 23-042-0017, Resolution Authorizing the County Board Chair to Assign a Mobile Home Tax Sale Certificate of Purchase for Permanent Parcel Number 30-059-0012, and Resolution Authorizing the County Board Chair to

Execute a Deed of Conveyance, Permanent Parcel No. 21-34-34-305-014; seconded by O'Connor.
Motion carried with all ayes.

AUDITOR

Purchases Not Following Purchasing Policy

The list of purchases not following the Purchasing Policy was provided for information. All the items on the list were FY2008 expenditures paid in FY2009.

Monthly Reports July and August 2009

MOTION by Betz to receive and place on file the Auditor's July and August 2009 monthly reports; seconded by Moser. **Motion carried with all ayes.**

CHAIR'S REPORT

There was no Chair's report. Rosales thanked Wysocki for chairing the meetings when he and McGinty were unavailable.

OTHER BUSINESS

Semi-Annual Review of Closed Session Minutes

Busey said the recommendation from the State's Attorney's Office was for all the minutes to remain closed.

MOTION by Betz for all closed session minutes to remain closed; seconded by Moser.
Motion carried with all ayes.

APPROVAL OF CLOSED SESSION MINUTES

MOTION by Betz to approve the Finance Committee closed session minutes of August 6, 2009; seconded by Wysocki. **Motion carried with all ayes.**

DESIGNATION OF ITEMS TO BE PLACED ON COUNTY BOARD CONSENT AGENDA

Rosales designated agenda items 6A-E, 8A, and 11 B-E for the consent agenda.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 8:33 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kat Bork
Administrative Secretary

Secy's note: The minutes reflect the order of the agenda and may not necessarily reflect the order of business conducted at the meeting.