

CHAMPAIGN COUNTY BOARD
COMMITTEE MINUTES

POLICY, PERSONNEL, & APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE

Wednesday, June 3, 2009

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

7:00 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Carol Ammons, Tom Betz (Chair), Matthew Gladney, Greg Knott, Brendan McGinty, Alan Nudo, Jonathan Schroeder, C. Pius Weibel

MEMBERS ABSENT: Kevin Hunt

OTHERS PRESENT: Kat Bork (Administrative Secretary), Deb Busey (County Administrator of Finance & HR Management), Alan Kurtz (County Board Member), Steve Moser (County Board Member), Amanda Tucker (HR Generalist), John Dimit, Lesa Lammle, Tommy Lockman, Del Ryan, Becky Ryherd, Lin Warfel

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Betz called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Bork called the roll. Ammons, Betz, Gladney, Knott, McGinty, Nudo, Schroeder, and Weibel were present at the time of the roll call, establishing the presence of a quorum. Betz stated Hunt's absence was excused because he had notified the Chair prior to the meeting.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA/ADDENDUM

MOTION by Gladney to approve the agenda with the change to move item 10B to the beginning; seconded by Nudo. **Motion carried with all ayes.**

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION by Knott to approve the Policy, Personnel, & Appointments Committee minutes of May 6, 2009; seconded by Ammons. **Motion carried with all ayes.**

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Tommy Lockman, a Champaign Unit 4 School Board member, spoke in support of the 1% school facilities sales tax and asked the County Board commit the entire 1% to schools. He described the differences between the November election, where the tax referendum failed to pass, and the April election, where it did pass. Lockman stated the voters supported a 1% tax in the April election and the

Unit 4 School District is committed to abating all property taxes allowable by law. The school board has passed three resolutions supporting this commitment. The school board plans to pay the outstanding \$15 million construction debt in Unit 4, rebuild and expand Booker T. Washington School to satisfy the consent decree by adding seats north of University Avenue, and add a wing to Garden Hills School. The school board also plans to build an elementary school in the southern portion of the district on donated land in Savoy that will allow the space to renovate existing elementary schools, including making the buildings more energy efficient. Other plans include purchasing land for a new high school and provide a funding mechanism for the district's long-range capital improvement plan that is on a pay-as-you-go basis. Lockman concluded that elected officials do not always know exactly what the people want, but in this case, the majority of the voting public told the County Board exactly what they wanted by approving a 1% sales tax in April. He asked the committee to approve the full 1% sales tax.

Lin Warfel, a retired Unit 7 School Board member who works on school funding with the Farm Bureau, thanked the committee for the attention given to this issue. He spoke about the history of school funding through property taxes, deferred maintenance, and new school buildings that could be needed. Warfel described living on a centennial farm and investing money in property taxes and in his five children who attended local schools. He believed Illinois does not receive a passing grade when measuring the quality of education compared to the level of wealth in the state. He indicated one part of doing better for education includes providing comfortable, pleasant school buildings. Warfel indicated the sales tax was an opportunity to change the structure of how schools are funded that will have a huge impact on the quality of school buildings in Illinois. He supported setting the sales tax at the 1% rate to have the full impact on schools and reduce property taxes.

Becky Ryherd, a Mahomet-Seymour #3 School Board member, voiced her support for the 1% sales tax for schools. She believed the public spoke in favor of a 1% sales tax for schools. She described the repairs needed to the school building in her local district.

Ammons exited the meeting at 7:16 p.m.

Ryherd stated the revenue from the sales tax will help the district pay its debt, as well as help with building maintenance and upkeep. Ryherd emphasized that the property tax abatement part of this proposal is what caught the public's attention. She hoped the committee would support the 1% school facilities sales tax.

Del Ryan, a retired teacher and administrator in Rantoul and the Mahomet-Seymour District, described the campaign to pass the school facilities sales tax.

Ammons returned to the meeting at 7:18 p.m.

Ryan told how campaign funds were raised through the teachers' unions, trade unions, and local realtors. He felt Champaign County will lead the effort with the five counties who have passed the issue and passing anything less than a 1% tax would shortchange children in the future.

Lesa Lammle, Fisher Unit #1 School District President, concurred with other comments made about the school facilities sales tax and read an email she sent to County Board members encouraging them to vote in favor of the sales tax. The school district she represents has gone on record with their

intention to abate property taxes if the 1% tax is enacted. Lammle hoped the County Board would vote in favor of the full 1% tax.

John Dimit, President of the Urbana School Board, reaffirmed that the Urbana School District is committed to property tax abatement if the full 1% tax is approved. He stated the first \$1 million received from the sales tax would be pledged towards property tax abatement as long as the school district has property taxes that it can abate. Dimit said that would last until 2019 when the district's debt would be fully amortized. The types of projects the district will carry out are listed on its website in a report from its facilities committee. The priorities include taking care of the early childhood center, elementary schools not equal to the flagship elementary school, and issues in the middle and high schools. The Urbana School Board conducted an energy audit on the middle school, which determined the school is an energy hog. The energy audit concluded that with an investment of roughly \$882,000 the school could save better than \$130,000 on utility bills at the middle school each year without using it in the summer. Dimit explained the Urbana School Board would only provide property tax abatement if the full 1% tax is approved because school district has \$30 million worth of projects currently identified. He stated the tax needs to be in place for the long-term. Dimit was aware there is all kinds of money available for school construction in the federal stimulus package and the state capital bill. However, a school needs matching funds to obtain those grant dollars and he felt the sales tax revenue was the only way Champaign County schools would be able to pledge matching grant funds. He emphasized the school districts need the cash flow from the sales tax to provide, pledge, and contract with the federal and state governments. He spoke about the importance of schools' curb appeal when industries consider locating in the community. Dimit stated employment opportunities in the community are lost because potential employers are not happy with the appearance of Champaign County schools. He encouraged the committee to support the full 1% sales tax.

APPOINTMENTS/REAPPOINTMENTS

Forest Preserve District Board

MOTION by Weibel to appoint Christopher White to the Forest Preserve District Board for a term commencing July 1, 2009 and ending June 30, 2014; seconded by Knott.

Weibel described how Dr. White is imminently qualified to serve on the Forest Preserve District Board with a background in park issues. He is also an avid outdoorsman.

Motion carried with all ayes.

County Board of Health

MOTION by Weibel to appoint Prashanth Gowda and Mark Huls to the Champaign County Board of Health for terms commencing July 1, 2009 and ending June 30, 2012; seconded by Knott.

Motion carried with all ayes.

Developmental Disabilities Board

MOTION by Weibel to appoint Michael Smith to the Developmental Disabilities Board for a term commencing July 1, 2009 and ending June 30, 2012; seconded by Ammons. **Motion carried with all ayes.**

Locust Grove Cemetery Association, Prairie View Cemetery Association, and Stearns Cemetery Association

MOTION by Weibel for an omnibus motion to appoint John Mumma and Robert Rice to the Locust Grove Cemetery Association; Edward Fiscus, Phillip Van Ness, and Craig Wise to the Prairie View Cemetery Association; and R. Charles Bensyl to the Stearns Cemetery Association for terms commencing July 1, 2009 and ending June 30, 2015; seconded by Schroeder. **Motion carried with all ayes.**

Weibel explained the appointment of Donald Hughey to the Sangamon Valley Fire Protection District will be placed on the June County Board agenda because the legal question over his eligibility has been resolved. This appointment was approved by the committee in May.

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT
Vacant Positions Listing

The vacant positions listing was provided for information only.

Prevailing Wage Ordinance

The updated prevailing wage information for June 2009 was distributed. Busey asked for the June information to be attached to ordinance, as it was not available prior to this week. She noted two date corrections in the ordinance.

MOTION by Knott to approve the Prevailing Wage Ordinance; seconded by Ammons.
Motion carried with all ayes.

Recommendation for Amendment of Ordinance No. 837

Busey explained the amendments to Ordinance No. 837 establishing the single Administrator system were developed following recent discussions in setting up the single Administrator system. It became clear in discussions that the County Board's intention was for the County Administrator to conduct the County Board's appointed officials' annual performance evaluations. The ordinance was amended to reflect this intention.

MOTION by McGinty to approve the recommendation to amend Ordinance No. 837; seconded by Schroeder.

Nudo commented that it was appropriate in light of the reform issues to take the politics out of appointed officials' performance reviews. He supported the change because the County Administrator works with the appointed officials on a daily basis. Weibel noted that County Board members will still be able to provide input for the evaluation process. The County will save money on per diems with this change because the Performance Appraisal Committees will not meet. Betz and Knott also supported the change.

Gladney exited the meeting at 8:15 p.m.

Motion carried with all ayes.

Recommendation of Amendments to Champaign County Personnel Policy

Busey explained the Personnel Policy required amendment following the previous action. The most substantive changes were highlighted in yellow and Busey volunteered to review each change in detail.

Gladney re-entered the meeting at 8:18 p.m.

MOTION by Knott to approve the recommendation to amend the Champaign County Personnel Policy; seconded by McGinty. **Motion carried with all ayes.**

Request for Waiver of 2009 Performance Appraisals of Appointed Officials

Busey requested a waiver of the requirement in 2009 for the annual appointed officials' performance appraisals because of the transitional period to a single County Administrator system.

MOTION by Ammons to approve a waiver of the requirement for 2009 performance appraisals of appointed officials; seconded by Knott. **Motion carried with all ayes.**

LEGISLATIVE REPORT

There was no legislative report.

CHAIR'S REPORT

Cancellation of July Committee Meeting

MOTION by Schroeder to cancel the July committee meeting; seconded Ammons. **Motion carried with all ayes.**

Betz stated the County Board will act as a committee of the whole at the July meeting and he wanted the Policy Committee to have a form for the Board to evaluate how business was conducted as a committee of the whole. He suggested they consider whether there was enough time to conduct business and have discussion when the standing committees have not met in advance of the Board meeting. He asked the committee's permission to work with Busey to develop 5-6 questions to evaluate the committee of the whole process and compile feedback. There was no objection from the committee. Nudo, Betz, and Busey would develop a feedback form to evaluate the July meeting.

OTHER BUSINESS

Proclamation Supporting the Census 2010 Complete County Committee

MOTION by Ammons to approve the Proclamation Supporting the Census 2010 Complete County Committee; seconded by Schroeder. **Motion carried with all ayes.**

School Facilities Sales Tax

MOTION by McGinty to approve the School Facilities 1% Sales Tax Ordinance; seconded by Nudo.

Weibel distributed copies of resolutions passed by school districts concerning the 1% sales tax. He noted corrections to the printed resolutions from 2009. Weibel also distributed a document prepared by Regional Superintendent Jane Quinlan about the school districts' plans to spend the sales tax revenue. Weibel described communications he has received from school board members in support of the 1% tax and communications from members of the public who were against the tax or supported setting a lower rate.

Nudo spoke about the history of the school facilities sales tax referendum. He attended one of the superintendents' planning meetings where a candid discussion about passing the referendum took place. One of the proposals at the planning meeting was to have property tax abatement on existing bonds. The reduction in property taxes was supported by the school districts and a factor why the referendum ultimately passed. He spoke about meeting with the Farm Bureau, Chamber of Commerce, and local legislators to fix some of the flaws in the initial legislation. Nudo pointed out that the only chance to retire existing bonds is now, but the sales tax will continue forever. The lack of a sunset clause means the property tax abatement is essential to start the tax off right. Unfortunately, the legislation was not changed this year. Nudo emphasized how critical it was that the County Board look at what was promised to voters during the campaign versus the ordinance that is now before the Board. Nudo asked Quinlan to perform a comparison of the promises made prior to the April election and the resolutions the schools districts have since passed. He supported passing the ordinance at tonight's meeting and recommended every County Board member reviews it before the Board meeting to ascertain that there is no difference between the campaign promises and the school boards' actual resolutions regarding the tax. This is to ensure the school boards keep their promises to the voters. He noted the Urbana School resolution matched the promises made to the voters, but the Heritage School resolution differed from their campaign promise to abate existing long-term debt with one-third of the sales tax revenue and reduce property taxes. Nudo challenged the school districts to review their resolutions to make certain they are giving voters what they promised.

McGinty shared Nudo's concern to make sure the campaign promises are kept in the resolutions passed by schools districts after the election. He supported setting the tax at the full 1%.

Knott stated the campaign was about a 1% tax, which will give Champaign County the highest sales tax rate in Central Illinois. He was concerned that citizens would not see their property taxes reduced due to the rate of property tax growth. The way the legislation was written means the County Board has no recourse for accountability after the tax rate is approved although people will blame the County Board for the tax. He appreciates the school districts going on record and has trust in the school board members to be accountable in using the taxpayers' money in the future.

Gladney was initially trepidatious about this referendum being placed on the April ballot after it failed in November. However, his district's constituents voted for this referendum. He thought it was important to pass the tax for the benefit of schools and applauded Nudo for raising concerns about delivering promises to the voters.

Schroeder was concerned the sales tax was an example of passing the buck, though he would vote to pass it at the committee. The bill's structure mandated the County Board put the referendum on the ballot after it was passed by 51% of the school districts. On the issue of setting the tax rate, the County Board is rubberstamping the 1% rate listed on the ballot. The school boards desired this tax and he was afraid it may change the amount of school aid the districts receive from the state. The tax revenue will help his school district greatly, but he was concerned about losing the tax base because Illinois has not been friendly to business. Schroeder spoke about the good school buildings in districts where plants and businesses generate a good tax base. He closed by stating he would vote for the 1% to go to the County Board.

Moser voiced the same concerns as Nudo because of the promises made when the County-Wide Public Safety Sales Tax was passed. The first draft of the Public Safety Sales Tax resolution promised to sunset the tax after the Courthouse was built. Now the County is now dependent on using that sales tax revenue to pay for a lot of expenses related to its public safety buildings. The current bill scares him because the school facilities sales tax has no sunset clause. There is no way to dictate to the successive schools boards and superintendents what they will do with money. Moser said the legislation was too vague, but he would vote for it at the full Board meeting. He wanted to see Illinois consolidate its school districts into unit districts. He acknowledged the sales tax would be a benefit to farmland owners more so than homeowners

Betz said he voted against the school facilities sales tax in November and April. He was appalled with the decision to place a second referendum on the ballot in April after the majority of citizens voted against it in November, but he was aware that politics belongs to those who show up. Betz thought the timing of the referendum creates long-term trust problems because spring elections have massively lower voter turnouts. In his opinion, this is a dreadfully regressive tax, but the voters supported it and he will give them what they asked for. Betz described the history of the County-Wide Public Safety Sales Tax and how future school boards could become dependent on the sales tax. Betz ordered a roll call vote.

Motion carried with a vote of 8 to 0. Ammons, Betz, Gladney, Knott, McGinty, Nudo, Schroeder, and Weibel voted in favor of the motion.

Contract for County Administrator

MOTION by McGinty to approve the employment agreement with Deb Busey as County Administrator; seconded by Knott. **Motion carried with all ayes.**

Plan for Study of Elected vs. Appointed Officials

The agendas for public hearings on June 9th and 10th concerning the Recorder, Coroner, and Auditor were distributed to the committee. Knott asked for the public hearings to be videotaped by the County Clerk's Office and placed on website so any absent Board members or public can view them. Schroeder asked if public hearings will be held at other locations in the community. Betz stated these hearings are the first step and the questions of where to potentially hold other hearings will be determined later by the committee.

Recommendation to Waive County Board Rule for July County Board Agenda

MOTION by Schroeder to approve the recommendation to waive County Board Rule 12-F(3) for the July 2009 County Board Meeting; seconded by Knott. **Motion carried with all ayes.**

Ammons exited the meeting at 8:27 p.m.

DESIGNATION OF ITEMS TO BE PLACED ON COUNTY BOARD CONSENT AGENDA

Betz designated agenda items 6A-F, 7B-E, 10A & E for the consent agenda.

Nudo stated the point he was making to the school boards was to get some response to the various large discrepancies from what was promised to the voters to what was actually written in the school boards' resolutions. He was prepared to make a motion to defer the school facilities tax ordinance if a response is not received by the June County Board meeting. Betz said the correct way is to make a motion to reconsider original motion or make a formal request that County Board Chair ask the school boards to respond. Nudo noted the school board members had previously left the meeting and he did not want to pull the rug out from under them. Knott commented the school boards would have a couple of weeks to address the discrepancies Nudo raised before the County Board meeting. Weibel agreed to make a request to the school boards. McGinty asked for Weibel to have the schools address the discrepancies in writing to be more efficient. It was the consensus of the committee for Weibel and Nudo to work together on gathering a written explanation of why changes were made differing from the campaign promises or to have the schools revert back to their original promises.

Moser thought Busey will get some questions about her thoughts as County Administrator on the reorganization of Administrative Services. He wanted her to be prepared because the Republican Caucus wants any changes to be revenue neutral. Busey explained the FY2010 budget instruction to all General Corporate Fund departments is to cut 6% from their budgets, so revenue neutral will be insufficient. She will have to find a way to cut 6% from the Administrative Services and County Board budgets. She is not in a position to talk to employees or make changes until her contract is approved.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting was 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.