

CHAMPAIGN COUNTY BOARD
COMMITTEE MINUTES

POLICY, PERSONNEL, & APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE

Wednesday, August 5, 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, Kevin Hunt, Greg Knott, Brendan McGinty, Alan Nudo, Jonathan Schroeder, C. Pius Weibel

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

OTHERS PRESENT: Kat Bork (Administrative Secretary), Deb Busey (County Administrator), Tony Fabri (Auditor), Ralph Langenheim (County Board Member), Steve Moser (County Board Member), Michael Richards (County Board Member), Amanda Tucker (HR Generalist), Barbara Wysocki (County Board Member)

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Betz called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Bork called the roll. Ammons, Betz, Gladney, Hunt, Knott, McGinty, Nudo, Schroeder, and Weibel were present at the time of the roll call, establishing the presence of a quorum.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA/ADDENDUM

Betz stated his intention to address agenda item 10 first before the teleconference.

MOTION by Ammons to approve the agenda; seconded by Knott. **Motion carried with all ayes.**

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION by Ammons to approve the Policy, Personnel, & Appointments Committee minutes of June 3, 2009; June 9, 2009 – Recorder Public Hearing minutes; June 9, 2009 – Coroner Public Hearing minutes; and the June 10, 2009 – Auditor Public Hearing minutes; seconded by Gladney. **Motion carried with all ayes.**

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Public participation commenced following the teleconference. Tony Fabri distributed two documents and wanted to address the additional comments made tonight about an elected versus an appointed Auditor. He pointed out the committee heard from two Illinois counties who choose to not have an elected Auditor, while seventeen others have chosen an elected Auditor. He suggested that DeKalb County and Lake County are not typically used in comparisons to Champaign County because their situations are very different. Fabri wanted to express to the County Board the benefit of having an elected Auditor who receives his authority directly from the voters. This authority places the Auditor on an even keel with other elected officials. He spoke about the possible differences in flowcharts should the Auditor become appointed and how it would affect the Auditor's authority. He spoke about the amount of hours worked by the employees in the Auditor's Office in response to the idea of outsourcing the Auditor's Office. He estimated the Auditor's Office employees worked over 11,000 hours total per year and 338 of those hours were uncompensated because the employees are salaried. He compared the outside auditor's fees to perform an audit of the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) to the number of hours worked by the staff in the Auditor's Office. Fabri emphasized that the CAFR is put together by the Chief Deputy Auditor Carol Wadleigh and he performs the analysis of those financial statements. Fabri does not see anything wrong with going to the media, as he has done, because the media represents the people and he views going to the media as his responsibility.

Schroeder had some questions and asked if Fabri would stay so they could be asked at the appropriate time under the agenda item about the Auditor position. Fabri agreed to stay.

TELECONFERENCE WITH LAKE COUNTY & DEKALB COUNTY RE: APPOINTED AUDITOR

Nudo explained the committee will be talking to administrative professionals from Lake County and DeKalb County, two counties in same size range as Champaign County that decided to not have an elected County Auditor. He asked these individuals to speak about why having an appointed Auditor is advantageous and encouraged the committee to ask questions.

Busey teleconferenced in Gary Gordman, Lake County Finance Director; Barry Burton, Lake County Administrator; and Ray Bockman, DeKalb County Administrator. Betz explained the Policy Committee was discussing some elected offices, including the County Auditor, to consider placing an advisory question on the ballot about whether to have the offices elected or appointed. He asked the other County Administrators for their thoughts on the subject.

Bockman explained DeKalb County put a proposition on the ballot to abolish the Auditor in 1991. DeKalb County has an appointed Finance Director and this position has sufficiently served the county's needs. The question to abolish the office of County Auditor was on the same ballot as two candidates for the office. Since abolishing the Auditor passed, the election of an Auditor was a moot point. Betz asked if the Finance Director drafted the county budget. Bockman stated the Finance Director drafted the budget and Bockman is responsible for presenting an administrative budget recommendation to the County Board. All of the accounts payable, accounts receivables, payroll, and personnel work is done through the central administrative office overseen by the Finance Director.

Burton stated the Lake County Auditor was abolished in 1978 and he has worked under both elected and appointed Auditors. Gordman, as the Lake County Director of Finance & Administrative Services, oversees the accounts payables and receivables under one central function. Lake County has a Comptroller who would be comparable to the County Auditor. The Comptroller looks at all the financials and performs audits of the departments' finances including reviewing their cash practices. Lake County has had tremendous cooperation amongst its departments and the Comptroller in tightening up financial practices and audit reporting mechanisms. Betz inquired how many staff the Comptroller had. Gordman answered three staff and two accounts payable clerks report to the Comptroller. The Comptroller's staff performs the annual audit, keeps the official records of the county's financial system, and works with the external auditor to prepare the annual report. The Lake County elected officials and departments heads have welcomed the Comptroller's staff to come in and help the offices look at procedures to maintain the appropriate checks and balances. Betz asked about the length of the Comptroller's contract. Burton said it is an appointed position and the individual does not have a contract, but cause would have to be demonstrated to terminate the Comptroller.

Weibel asked who appointed the Comptroller and the Finance Director. Burton explained the Comptroller was appointed by the Finance Director and the Finance Director was appointed by the County Administrator with confirmation by the County Board. Gordman stated the Comptroller has been at Lake County longer than either himself or Burton. Betz asked about DeKalb's situation. Bockman described the hiring process. It includes a regional or national search, screening of candidates by the County Administrator, and interviews by a committee or ad hoc committee of County Board members and the Administrator.

Betz asked if the Comptroller was required to be a CPA. Gordman stated the Lake County Comptroller is a well qualified CPA who has served on national boards for GASB and GFOA. If this person was replaced, he would certainly look for a candidate who is a CPA.

Nudo asked about the qualifications considered during the Auditor/Comptroller hiring process. Burton said Lake County would conduct a national search for a replacement Comptroller through the GFOA and other professional associations. The county might use a selection firm because it is a highly skilled position. Betz inquired about the involvement County Board members have in the selection process. Burton answered the County Board is involved in selecting a Finance Director, but not the Comptroller. Typically a committee is involved in the process and the County Administrator makes a recommendation to the County Board, who confirms the selection. The County Board could be involved in the hiring process. Bockman stated DeKalb County's method depends on the department and how interested Board members are when the position becomes vacant. DeKalb County uses the team approach and includes any highly interested Board members in the selection of department heads.

Betz asked for the counties' populations and number of employees. Burton replied that Lake County has a population of about 710,000 and the county has 3,000 employees. Bockman said DeKalb County has a population of 107,000 and the county has 520 employees.

Knott asked the other County Administrators whether they thought having an elected Auditor or Comptroller would have a positive impact or make any difference. Bockman thought having an elected Auditor would prohibit the county's ability to get a better applicant pool from casting a wider net. With the elective process, the applicant pool is limited to local residents who are willing put up

with the rigors of fundraising and running for public office. DeKalb County feels the Auditor/Comptroller is a skilled position and a larger candidate pool is preferred. Burton described how, in his experience working under an elected Auditor, the elected official simply performs the statutory role and there was no ability to integrate all the county's financial functions. Gordman found the question difficult to answer because Lake County has a Budget Manager, Comptroller, and Finance Director who work together as a team to address budget issues. He noted the non-elected Finance Department has been welcomed into elected offices of both political parties to perform the internal audit.

McGinty inquired about outsourced or external auditing. Gordman stated Lake County has internal auditing functions and employs an outside auditing firm for the annual audit. Bockman confirmed DeKalb County also contracts with an external auditing firm on an annual basis.

Betz asked about the total personnel and other costs of the other counties' finance divisions. Gordman explained Lake County has a department of 125 employees, including janitors, construction, the print shop, and the purchasing agents. The budget and comptroller functions are handled by nine people. He noted an Auditor would not perform the budget function for the County Board. The three accountants and comptroller positions total \$350,000 in salary and benefits expenses. Bockman stated DeKalb has a Finance Office consisting of seven employees with a budget of about \$650,000. Schroeder inquired about the salary range for the Auditor/Comptroller. Bockman thought his deputy is paid around \$115,000. Burton explained the position would fall in Lake County's Grade 17 and the salary range for that grade is \$78,000 to \$110,000.

Wysocki inquired about the independence the Auditor has in relation to the County Administrator in other counties. Gordman thought there was no question that the Comptroller would report to those above the County Administrator if she thought there was something inappropriate happening. He felt the county has a professional staff and independence was not an issue. Concerns could be reported to the external auditor or the Finance Committee. He noted the county had launched a fraud hotline for financial issues, which goes to the State's Attorney. Bockman agreed the position would report issues of concern. He noted that Illinois has proven that being elected to public office does not equate to ethical behavior.

Ammons asked about the difference between the Auditor versus Comptroller and the turnover process for both. Gordman verified the Lake County Comptroller is an employee who undergoes an annual performance evaluation with goals and objectives. The employee remains unless the person is terminated for cause. This type of situation has not arisen.

Betz questioned if the Comptroller or Auditor ever went to the media to talk about issues. Gordman explained the issues are brought to the department or the County Board because the Board addressed the issues, not the media. The Comptroller could try any avenue she felt was needed.

Betz thanked the administrators from Lake and DeKalb Counties for taking the time to speak with the committee.

RECORDER OF DEEDS

Summation of Results of Public Hearing

Betz referred to the minutes from the hearings. He stated the policy-making issue was not addressed in any of the three presentations. From what he could see, the Recorder, Coroner, and Auditor are administrative offices that carry out strictly statutory duties and do not make public policy. The question about policy-making was pointedly asked by various members but it was never answered by any of the elected officials. Most of the public participation was in favor of keeping an elected Recorder of Deeds and Betz could not recall a lot of folks asking for abolishment of the office.

Chair's Recommendation: Do Not Place on Ballot/Maintain as Elected

Betz's recommendation was to not place the question of an elected Recorder of Deeds on the ballot because he saw no particular groundswell demanding the ballot question.

Committee Recommendation to County Board

MOTION by Knott that the Recorder of Deeds position not be placed on the ballot in concurrence with the Chair's recommendation; seconded by McGinty.

Busey asked if the motion was to present this to the County Board to establish a record that the determination was made. Knott thought the full County Board should weigh in on the issue.

Wysocki asked if anyone investigated how a combined County Clerk/Recorder arrangement works, such as DeKalb County uses. Betz did not know. Busey noted that DeKalb County's population was recently under the size where the combined County Clerk/Recorder is the required structure. She did not think a vote on whether to maintain the joint office was statutorily required when this has historically been the structure. Betz said Champaign County could legally combine the County Clerk and Recorder offices. Betz ordered a roll call vote.

Motion carried with a vote of 9 to 0. Ammons, Betz, Gladney, Hunt, Knott, McGinty, Nudo, Schroeder, and Weibel voted in favor of the motion.

CORONER

Summation of Results of Public Hearing

Betz found the Coroner's hearing very interesting. He stated the Coroner did not answer the repeated question about the Coroner's policy-making role, though other information was supplied. Betz noted neither the Recorder nor Coroner makes policy. His concern was about the antiquated Coroner system that has been eliminated by other counties when they adopt a Medical Examiner system. He noted the Medical Examiner issue is not before the committee and it is not in the scope of what the committee was chartered to do. Betz concluded after hearing the evidence that a lot of people would love to see a true Medical Examiner, but it is not before the committee.

Chair's Recommendation: Do Not Place on Ballot/Maintain as Elected

The voters are very used to voting for these offices, so Betz recommended leaving the Coroner as an elected office.

Committee Recommendation to County Board

MOTION by Knott that the Coroner position not be placed on the ballot in concurrence with the Chair's recommendation; seconded by McGinty.

Ammons said she did not attend the hearings, but she read the minutes and materials. A sense of independence was mentioned by each office and Ammons supported all three offices maintaining their elected status, regardless of who presently holds the office, because independence is the foundation of each.

Ammons asked if Knott would accept a friendly amendment to consider maintaining both the Coroner and Auditor positions as elected in the same motion. Knott declined, stating he preferred that each independent office have an independent question. Betz stated Knott did not have to concur if the amendment receives a second. The amendment was seconded by Gladney.

Schroeder respectfully asked that the motions be kept separate for each office in order to enable Schroeder to ask the Auditor some questions, as he indicated that he wanted to do during public participation. Knott believed the Auditor question should be put to the voters. During the conversations with the Lake County and DeKalb County staff, he noticed those counties have departments that do more than just audit. Those finance departments offer to help other departments improve their procedures. The Recorder and Coroner serve the public face-to-face, while the Auditor is part of a financial control system that should bring integrity, experience, and skill to continually approve the process. He liked that the non-elected office in other counties had a non-bipartisan view of assisting other offices to improve their controls instead of a historical adversarial relationship between the Auditor and other. Knott stated the integrity of the County's finances could be greatly strengthened with someone who brought vision about how to improve and streamline the process. He expressed there had some good County Auditors, but the County could upgrade the position to require the person be a CPA or a certified internal auditor. Knott supported strengthening the internal controls due to the amount of revenues, employees, and size of the budget. He felt the position could bring increased integrity to the County's financial system.

Langenheim asked what was meant by integrity. Knott explained that his definition of integrity is a way to express how the County can further strength the financial systems. He meant that systems integrity could be improved. He complimented the employees in the Auditor's Office, especially Carol Wadleigh for turning out a great report.

Betz pointed out that Busey as the County Administrator works with departments on the budget preparation and gathers their input on processes. He felt the financial control was a function the County Administrator preformed. Knott observed the County's systems have become more complex over a 20-year period with increased regulatory requirements, number of employees, and the budget amount. Those considerations alone justify at least giving the position a look and consider what works well in other counties.

Nudo called for a point of order to delineate between the amendment discussion and the Auditor discussion. Betz ordered a roll call vote.

Motion to amend the original motion failed with a vote of 3 to 6. Ammons, Betz, and Gladney voted in favor of the motion. Hunt, Knott, McGinty, Nudo, Schroeder, and Weibel voted against the motion.

Ammons said her initial motion to combine the last two questions was similar to Knott's. She suggested the County Board could determine it should have a qualified Medical Examiner and the same argument could be used for any of the three offices. She did not understand why the Auditor's Office was considered separately when the office is still receiving awards. She could not see the reasoning for keeping two offices and discarding one.

In response to Ammons's question, Nudo replied that in his mind the County Board was made aware through the *News-Gazette* of a lack of participation by the Auditor. This proved to him that the job in its current form is superfluous. The Auditor's Office has a capable staff that do the work. The County does not have the kind of qualified person necessary for the position that Lake County and DeKalb County have. The Recorder and Coroner are elected positions that can be learned on the job. A number of qualifications fit with an auditing position, such as an understanding of accrual accounting and other financial expertise. Nudo has received emails from attorneys and engineers praising the improvements made by the Recorder in her office. He has heard from people about the wonderful job the Coroner's Office does and how user friendly it is. The Auditor does not generally face the public day-to-day like the other two elected positions do. He noted that he has visited the Auditor's Office three times during normal business hours since the *News-Gazette* exposé and Fabri was not in his office. Nudo said this was not about the person; it is about the greater degree of function the County can get from this position.

Betz asked if the committee members were prepared to vote on the Coroner issue and ordered a roll call vote.

Motion carried with a vote of 9 to 0. Ammons, Betz, Gladney, Hunt, Knott, McGinty, Nudo, Schroeder, and Weibel voted in favor of the motion.

Weibel exited the meeting at 8:13 p.m.

AUDITOR

Summation of Results of Public Hearing

Betz summarized the public hearing and speakers, some of whom supported the elected office's need for independence. Others thought the Auditor should be an appointed position. The policy-making issue was not addressed by the Auditor.

Chair's Recommendation: Do Not Place on Ballot/Maintain as Elected

Betz's recommendation was to not place the question of the Auditor position on the ballot. Betz based his recommendation on the material from the hearings and his feeling that the Auditor's Office has been one of long-standing controversy. Betz described how former County Auditor Laurel

Prussing drove everyone crazy by going to the press. He stated Geri Parr also brought issues before the County Board and the press. It was good for the public to know about these issues. Betz stated Michael Frerichs exposed some problems at the Nursing Home and so did Fabri, infuriating some people. The single most valuable function of the Auditor's Office is that it makes the County Board accountable in a way that will never be achieved with a hired Comptroller. Betz said an appointed Auditor would mean the local media will never know about the financial problems because it will all be hidden deeply in the papers.

Weibel re-entered the meeting at 8:17 p.m.

Betz stated an elected Auditor is not statutorily the same thing as an appointed Auditor or Comptroller. He felt an Auditor is supposed to be a political office and addressed why politics is not a bad word. He objected to the question of an elected Auditor going before the voters. He thought it would be a disservice based on the perceived problems with the current Auditor.

Committee Recommendation to County Board

MOTION by Gladney to adopt the Chair's recommendation to keep the Auditor's Office as an elected position and not place it on the ballot; seconded by Ammons.

Schroeder asked Fabri about some of the points he made in the public hearing on June 10th according to the minutes. He congratulated Fabri for being big enough to admit when he was wrong about moving the payroll position out of the Auditor's Office. Both Fabri and Frerichs fought against having the payroll function removed from the Auditor's Office and this has been a good endeavor as decided by the County Board. Schroeder was puzzled by Fabri's comments that successful accounting systems increase the risk of committing fraud and requested an explanation. Fabri said if solid internal controls were in place, then the risk to a person thinking of committing fraud increases. For example, the Auditor's Office uses pre-printed checks so any missing checks are noticed. Schroeder asked about the required continuing education for Auditors. Fabri said a County Auditor has several different options for continuing education credits, such as private companies and the GFOA. The Illinois County Auditors Association meets twice a year and offers educational programming. He hosted last year's conference in Champaign County and lined up the educational components. Fabri confirmed he has completed the required 20 hours each year. Schroeder asked about the comments Fabri made at the hearing regarding the Champaign-Urbana Public Health District's internal audit that revealed a misuse of company credit cards by the Administrator. He asked if Fabri was referring to the CUPHD Comptroller who caught the misuse and did not have anywhere to go with the information. Fabri said that was correct, but he was hesitant to talk about that situation because all he knew about CUPHD is what he read in the newspaper and he certainly knows that not everything in the newspaper is true. Schroeder asked for clarification about Fabri's comments regarding the Nursing Home and Board members' reactions. Fabri explained he was talking about the memo he issued to the County Board in the summer of 2007 about the contract nursing costs. He claimed to be attacked throughout his election campaign for issuing this memo. His opponent sent a press release stating Fabri was creating a fake budget crisis. Fabri felt there was "push back" from County Board members who thought he was inaccurately reporting on the Nursing Home. Schroeder's recollection was not that Fabri was told to go away (as Fabri stated at the hearing) and the County Board was already well aware of the contract nursing problem before Fabri sent the memo. Schroeder thought the issue may have been that

Fabri was going after the Nursing Home administration when the County Board has autonomy over the Nursing Home.

Ammons called for a point of order because the motion is not about an individual, but about the office and its statutory responsibilities. Betz understand Ammons's point, but he wanted to give Schroeder the same leeway he has given everyone else this evening. He thought Schroeder was entitled to have his questions answered. Betz noted that Ammons could always bring a motion to say that Chair is wrong and it would not hurt his feelings.

Fabri responded to Schroeder that people see things differently and he remembered a lot of committee and Board meetings. Ammons interrupted to readdress her point of order. She did not want the committee to get into the Nursing Home's historical woes during a discussion about whether the Auditor should be an elected or appointed position. Betz told Ammons the proper motion would be to move to overrule the Chair.

MOTION by Ammons to overrule the Chair. **Motion failed due to the lack of a second.**

Fabri continued that after he sent a memo to the County Board there were meetings where the argument was made that contract nursing was not a problem or did not need to be addressed by the County Board. He was frustrated that the County Board members were not putting the screws to the Nursing Home about contract nursing and was glad when Mike Scavatto wanted to address contract nursing. He felt he needed to get public pressure on the County Board. Fabri felt a TV news story that ran as a result of his press release did not accurately show what he had said. His point was that he was raising an issue early on that he knew was not popular with the County Board. He feels very comfortable with standing up for what he thinks is right because he does not work for the County Board.

Moser remarked that Laurel Prussing did one thing right by hiring Carol Wadleigh because Wadleigh has been the watchdog in the office for three different elected Auditors. He recalled a past meeting when the Echo retirement plan for elected officials was discussed and the lack of information he could get from the Auditor on the ramifications of the proposal. This might not have happened with an appointed Auditor. Moser wondered at the lack of accounting and financial background of elected Auditors because the person occupying the position should be CPA. While a lot has been caught by the office, it has not been caught by the elected Auditor.

Fabri said he completely agreed with Moser's opinion about Carol Wadleigh, who has over 25 years of experience. He also wanted to address some comments made by Board members earlier. The Auditor's Office, particularly Carol Wadleigh, works with departments on a daily basis. The federal stimulus money coming in through the Regional Planning Commission includes a new set of regulations and the Auditor's Office is working with other offices to ensure they are getting as much of the stimulus money as possible. He recalled when he came to the Board over a year ago with a proposal to update how the County purchases from co-ops. Fabri wanted to emphasize how the relationships between departments are not always adversarial. Campaign season brings out the adversarial nature of the job, but the bigger story is the daily functions of the office working with departments and vendors. Fabri stated the office is constantly looking at ways the departments operate and how they can be improved. He noted that Carol Wadleigh is a CPA and there are two other non-CPA accountants in the office. He agreed another accountant would be good, but he also thought

someone with a legal background is good and he brings this to the office. He thought the accountants in the office are able to do such a good job because of the independence of an elected office.

McGinty felt tonight's teleconference was useful in providing a second point of view. He appreciated the viewpoints expressed at the hearings. The standout points were that an appointed Auditor could be a skilled position and have a broader pool of candidates. He does not believe a political background necessarily means independence, as Fabri mentioned how campaign season can affect relationships and this is not ideal for an Auditor's Office. McGinty believed in keeping the issues of personality separate from the position, though he acknowledge it was difficult to do because of the published article. The public is aware what is happening and he believed it was embarrassing to the County. McGinty gave Fabri an opportunity during the public hearing to directly answer why he has not been in the office and he did not answer. McGinty agreed that having a truly independent, professionally qualified, elected auditor is the ideal situation. When looking at whether it is possible to have independence and professionalism in appointed positions, he thinks of Busey and other County employees who handle issues professionally and non-politically every day. In his personal opinion, McGinty disagreed with some of the things Fabri takes credit for because they are a result of the way the office operates. He understands Carol Wadleigh is very valuable and maybe should be considered for an appointed Auditor. The contract nursing costs issue was raised and being worked on by the Nursing Home Administrator before Fabri was the Auditor. This issue of trying to control those costs was routinely addressed at the Finance Committee meetings, so for Fabri to take credit as the person who brought it up was questionable. McGinty believed all three elected positions were separate. In the particular case of the Auditor, the County Board should let the people decide because the public is so aware of what is happening and there are enough questions regarding what is the best path to take.

Ammons stated that all of the discussion to this point has spoken directly about the current Auditor, as if he was going to be the Auditor forever. She felt taking away the right of the people to elect the Auditor was a mistake especially for young people. Ammons spoke about how she is usually out of her office due to the nature of her business. She has not heard an argument relative to the actual office and its responsibility to the citizens, instead the Board has heard about Fabri's flaws. While all of that may be true, the voters should have the option to vote for an Auditor. Ammons stated many people believe the County Board should have some training and she agreed members should plug into professional organizations that provide support for elected officials. She did not think it was the County Board's responsibility to take away the people's right to vote for their Auditor because of what Fabri has done in the office.

Nudo offered to take a crack at Ammons's selective listening. Ammons interrupted with a point of order. She thought Nudo was out of order and she wanted the members to speak to the Chair only and not to other Board members or their positions. Nudo apologized. Nudo stated there have been very strong opinions about the Auditor position, not Fabri himself, and those are sometimes overlooked. He remarked there are 102 counties in Illinois and 85 of those counties do not have elected Auditors. There is a lot of power and money involved in the election process and the representatives from Coroner and Auditor associations attended the public hearing to protect those positions. The state statute has no qualifications for the Auditor position and only allows for the Auditor's removal through malfeasance. Counties with populations larger than 75,000 have the option to choose between having an appointed or elected Auditor and that is what he is trying to offer. Nudo did not understand the magical aura surrounding an elected position. An appointed Auditor's would have an at-will contract instead of an election every four years. Regarding the political cronyism in

both political parties with the elected positions, Nudo said there has been two hand-offs to high powered individuals within the party in-between elections with the Auditor's position. He asked if this thwarts the will of the public and if such actions were the intent of the election process. The committee heard from two counties that have finance officers working as team with departments to solve problems. He did not think press releases and whistle-blowing situations develop teamwork. Nudo would rather have a qualified professional who was at-will and doing the job rather than an elected official. Elected officials are running for office two out of four years, and he did not see where efficiency in government fit into that picture.

Gladney wanted all three offices to remain elected positions to have more direct accountability to the voters. There is a mechanism in place for voters to hold a referendum every four years to judge the job an official is doing. The public hearing presentations and teleconference convinced Gladney that it is good to have the accountability and independence of elected offices. He would not support going to the extreme where every County position is elected, but he did not want the Board to start whittling down the number of people who are directly answerable to the voters. The election process allows everyone to participate and he did not want to take away this type of participatory government. Some people might argue that putting the question on the ballot is letting the people decide, but while that is true, it can be argued that the County Board members are elected to make those types of decisions.

Fabri wanted to address comments made by Board members. He did not answer the question posed by McGinty at the public hearing because this was about the office, not him. Fabri commented that not everything printed in the newspaper is true and the *News-Gazette* article was not an accurate depiction of how the Auditor's Office is run or how he is doing his job. He has not wanted to address the issue directly because there are times he is not in the office. He is out meeting with constituents and County Board members or working outside of the office. Fabri said he saw no message that Nudo had been in the office trying to see him. There is a difference between playing gotcha and trying to meet with someone who was unavailable. Fabri said the job he does as County Auditor should not be judged on what is read in the newspaper, how many phone calls he makes from his desk phone, or how often he is at his desk at any given moment. His job should be judged by the statutory requirements and the independent analysis of people who review his work. Fabri said he has followed every item of the statute. He said that he contributes a lot to the CAFR and was proud of the certificate of excellence it has received every year he has been Auditor. Fabri stated he was proud of the job he has done as Auditor. While there are complaints about what state statute does not require, maybe the state legislators knew what they were doing when they set up the statute. He suggested that the state legislators wrote the statute to make sure a County Board could not remove an Auditor just because they wish the other guy had won the election. He felt the voters should judge the job he is doing, not the County Board. He asked the Board members if they would be here tonight if the other guy had won any of the three offices.

Ammons called question.

Betz asked if Fabri was finished with his statement. Fabri continued to speak about how he has never heard about the elected auditor lobby. The Madison County Auditor, Rick Faccin, attended the public hearing because he believes an elected Auditor is important for county government and so does Fabri. He wished that if Board members were going trash someone's character that they would trash Fabri's, not Faccin's.

Betz stated Hunt had been waiting patiently without a chance to speak and he was going to let Hunt speak. Ammons called for a point of order because Roberts Rules does not allow for discussion to continue after the question had been called. Betz said their rules say every committee member gets the opportunity to speak at least once. Weibel called for a point of order that Roberts Rules say anyone trying to call a question must be recognized by the Chair and Ammons was not recognized. Betz called for a vote on calling the question. A voice vote was indeterminate and Betz ordered a roll call vote. Ammons, Knott, and McGinty voted in favor of calling the question. Betz, Gladney, Hunt, Nudo, Schroeder, and Weibel voted against calling the question. Betz recognized Hunt.

Hunt said he was not sure if he would vote in favor of changing the Auditor to an appointed position, but he was not opposed to putting it on the ballot to let the voters decide. In response to Fabri's comment, Hunt did believe this issue would be debated even if the other person had won the election because this issue was raised before the election.

Wysocki wished the hearings could have been forums to enable the three officials to know what other ways exist to deal with the offices' functions other than the status quo. She did not hear that at the hearings, instead there was a lot of turf protecting and endorsements. She was looking for something a little more creative and innovative about Champaign County government. Wysocki was impressed by the team approach in developing county finances implemented by other counties. She remarked that Busey has been a one person operation in putting the budget together with extensive consulting with every department. While Busey's performance has been impeccable, Wysocki did not know if that could continue with the change to a single County Administrator. She asked if Busey envisioned collaboration with key finance people in the County or did she think staff will be pulled to help with the process. She asked if the Auditor's role fit into this at all. Busey explained the budget preparation is very much a team building exercise. It takes the cooperation, efforts, and assistance of every single department. Building the budget is a different function than operating the daily accounting system and auditing accounts receivable as they go through the process of being paid, which is the function of the Auditor's Office. There is a possibility that all of those financial functions could operate in team environment. Busey works closely with Carol Wadleigh now. She sees the pros and cons to both sides, but she is not an elected official or a policy-maker. She thought there were strong merits to an elected Auditor position because she has seen the autonomy Wadleigh has is dealing with the individual departments and mandating certain things from elected officials. Busey also sees how there could be a far more cooperative effort with regard to the overall management of all the County's finances that is not necessarily enhanced when there is a political officials running that function. Whatever way the County Board goes, Champaign County government will move forward in a positive way and this is the Board's and the voters' decision to make. Wysocki was glad to hear Busey talk about team building with departments in regard to the budget. There are some tough decisions being made and the departments are handling it well and the team building approach has paid off tremendously. Wysocki thought the tax cycle group is the best kept secret in Champaign County. The key department heads and personnel involved in the tax cycle meet regularly throughout the year and have done a remarkable job improving the tax cycle. They are committed to getting tax bills out and revenue collected on time. Wysocki has sat in on the tax cycle group meetings and the departments clearly understand that they have to work together to make it happen. She thought if there could be more examples of this management approach then the County would be better off.

Weibel said there was risk in a democracy that the person elected is not the one you like or the person who will do a good job. The beauty of a democracy is that people can evolve. He has heard

praise for Laurel Prussing as County Auditor and she did not have accounting degree. Moser stated Prussing had a graduate degree in economics. Weibel said there have been many examples of appointed officials who have not turned out to be very good. Weibel liked the current Auditor's Office because, although he has clashed with employees, when he left the employees were not sweating about losing their jobs. Regarding Fabri's job performance, Weibel asked what has not been done. The outside auditor has indicated everything is fine and it has remained an award-winning office. For those reasons, Weibel felt this should be kept as an elected office. The people will have their voice in 2010 if they do not like the current occupant.

Moser stated he was asked by a lot of his constituents why a county in dire financial straits does not use the Auditor's \$86,000 salary to hire a qualified person to run the Auditor's Office. He acknowledged there have been many elected officials in the County who have not been the best in the last 20 years. In some cases, those officials are still in office. Moser remarked he would have been bankrupt 25 years ago if he ran his business the way government runs. He thought it should be a prerogative of the County Board to remove an unqualified person from office. If the Board wanted to change anything, they had to get rid of the political nonsense and get competent people in the departments because the County is paying salaries that would attract competent people instead of having offices handed off from one political person to another.

Langenheim asked if Moser was intending to suggest that the elected officials are incompetent because they spend all of their time getting elected and the people who elected them are incapable of selecting those officials. Moser said if someone was not capable of administering an office then one should get the kind of personnel needed to get the job done on a daily basis. He thought this has been done in a lot of County departments, certainly in the Auditor's Office. But in too many cases they have put people in positions they had no business occupying. Sometimes political hand-offs work and sometimes they do not, but it is bad government.

Fabri said his salary was one of incorrect things in the newspaper and the \$86,000 figure was inflated by \$10,000. Knott remarked the Auditor also receives a stipend, which Fabri denied.

Betz said a lot of interesting discussion had occurred and he had earned the right to make concluding remarks. He stated that everyone who came to testify at the public hearings had their own agenda. He said the Lake County Republicans abolished the Auditor's Office because the Auditor was a Democrat. He spoke about political hand-offs that he has seen in offices. Betz thinks there are advantages to an elected official, such as independence. He compared an appointed position to the comptrollers in banks throughout the country, the University of Illinois, CUPHD, and state government who do not blow the whistle because of the danger of losing their jobs. Betz stated this issue is more important than Fabri. Even though he considers Fabri a friend, he was embarrassed by the job performance he read about in the *News-Gazette*. The people Fabri has to answer to are the 186,000 in Champaign County and the voters will have the opportunity in 2010 if Fabri decides to run. The arguments for professionalism are absolutely compelling for the Coroner's Office. Betz could not think of a job where clear cut professionalism would be more desired. He thought the current Coroner is the best the County has ever had, though he is not a medical examiner. Most states got rid of Coroners decades ago and have adopted a medical examination system because cause of death is primarily a medical question. He reiterated that the three elected offices examined have no policy-making functions. Betz felt the system of an elected Auditor has worked well for the County and did not believe the question should be put on the ballot.

McGinty asked what would happen if the vote passes. Betz said if the motion was defeated it could be taken to the Board or someone could move forwarding this to the Board with the recommendation that the Auditor question be placed on the ballot. McGinty asked how anyone would take a defeated motion to the County Board. Betz said there was a right to a minority report. Knott asked for clarification on what the motion was recommending. Gladney said a yes vote would be to follow the recommendation of the Chair and not place the question on the ballot. Betz ordered a roll call vote.

Motion defeated in a vote of 4 to 5. Ammons, Betz, Gladney, and Weibel voted in favor of the motion. Hunt, Knott, McGinty, Nudo, and Schroeder voted against the motion.

MOTION by McGinty to place the question of abolishing the elected Auditor position on the ballot for the FY2010 General Election; seconded by Nudo. **Motion carried with a vote of 5 to 4.** Hunt, Knott, McGinty, Nudo, and Schroeder voted in favor of the motion. Ammons, Betz, Gladney, and Weibel voted against the motion.

APPOINTMENTS/REAPPOINTMENTS

Forest Preserve District Board

MOTION by Weibel to appoint Delmar Banner to the Conrad & Fisher Mutual Drainage District, Paul Berbaum to the Drainage District #2 Town of Scott, Larry Ehmen to the Drainage District #10 Town of Ogden, Charles Breen, Jr. to the Foundation Head Drainage District, Edward Feeney to the Kankakee Drainage District, Rick Wolken to the Longbranch Mutual Drainage District, John Nelson to the Nelson-Moore-Fairfield Drainage District, Gerald Henry to the Okaw Drainage District, Leonard Stocks to the Owl Creek Drainage District, Douglas Reinhart to the Pesotum Consolidated Drainage District, Gary Reynolds to the Prairie Creek Drainage District, Kevin Wolken to the Raup Drainage District, Reggie Peters to the Salt Fork Drainage District, Steve Day to the Sangamon & Drummer Drainage District, Mervyn Olson to the Silver Creek Drainage District, Glen Lafenhagen to the South Fork Drainage District, Lloyde Esry to the St. Joseph #3 Drainage District, Dale Busboom to the St. Joseph #4 Drainage District, Charles Prather to the St. Joseph #5 Drainage District and the St. Joseph #6 Drainage District, Max Franks to the Union Drainage District #1 of Philo & Crittenden, Ed Decker to the Union Drainage District #1 of Philo & Urbana, Dan Mills to the Union Drainage District #2 of St. Joseph & Ogden, Ralph Allen to the Union Drainage District #3 of South Homer & Sidney, Lynn Huls to the Union Drainage District of Stanton & Ogden Townships, Donald Maxwell to the Upper Embarras River Basin Drainage District, Charles Steffey to the Willow Branch Drainage District, and Francis Lafenhagen to the Wrisk Drainage District for terms commencing September 1, 2009 and ending August 31, 2012. The motion was seconded by Knott. **Motion carried with all ayes.**

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Vacant Positions Listing

The vacant positions listing was provided for information only. Ammons asked if the hiring freeze was applicable to all departments. Busey answered the County Board approved a hiring freeze for all General Corporate Fund departments. The Finance Committee will be receiving requests to fill some positions that have been held vacant for three months as required by the resolution.

Update on Annual Employee Recognition Event

No action was taken.

COUNTY CLERK

MOTION by Knott to receive and place on file the County Clerk's Semi-Annual Fees Report for May 2009 and the Monthly Fees Report for June 2009; seconded by Nudo. **Motion carried with all ayes.**

LEGISLATIVE REPORT

There was no legislative report.

CHAIR'S REPORT

Results of County Board Member Survey of July 23, 2009 and County Board Structure

Betz indicted the survey generated lots of interesting comments and asked if the committee wanted to direct anything as a result.

MOTION by Nudo to take the committee of the whole structure as trial basis for a period of three months beginning in September with the provision that the rules would be ongoing; second by McGinty.

Knott offered a friendly amendment and asked Busey to draft what Nudo stated and bring it back to the August County Board meeting because the dates make a huge difference. The committee discussed when to hold meetings and what business would be discussed at each meeting. The committee agreed more information was needed and moved this item to the September agenda.

The motion was withdrawn by Nudo and McGinty.

Where to From Here

Betz was concerned with the committee of the whole idea because holding hearings in various locations throughout Champaign County will be a challenge. McGinty suggested they could get public input and relay it to the committees, as long as some representative group is out there collecting information. Knott recommend regrouping next month and making recommendations then. Betz directed this be added to the September agenda.

OTHER BUSINESS

Resolution Expressing Gratitude to Clock & Bell Tower Citizens Committee and Lincoln Exhibit Committee

MOTION by Knott to approve the Resolution Expressing Gratitude to Clock & Bell Tower Citizens Committee and Lincoln Exhibit Committee; seconded by Nudo.

Wysocki invited the County Board members to the dedication on Saturday, August 29th for the Clock & Bell Tower and Lincoln Exhibit. The County Board will receive the Liataunds' donation at the August Board meeting.

Motion carried with all ayes.

Resolution to Support Protest Against AmerenIP Rate Request

MOTION by Weibel to forward consideration of Ameren rate intervention to the Finance Committee in October; seconded by Ammons.

Weibel explained the City of Champaign is organizing a protest of AmerenIP's latest request for another rate increase. He estimated it would cost \$2,000 to participate in the intervention. He recommended bringing this issue to the Finance Committee in October to see if the County has any money to offer.

The voice vote was unclear, so Betz ordered a roll call.

Motion carried a vote of 7 to 2. Ammons, Betz, Gladney, Hunt, McGinty, Nudo, and Weibel voted in favor of the motion. Knott and Schroeder voted against the motion.

DESIGNATION OF ITEMS TO BE PLACED ON COUNTY BOARD CONSENT AGENDA

Betz designated agenda items 10A through BB for the consent agenda.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:55 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.