

LEGISLATIVE AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
McHenry County Government Center – Administration Building
667 Ware Road
Woodstock IL 60098

MINUTES OF THURSDAY JANUARY 13, 2011

Chairman Heisler called the meeting to order at 8:33 a.m. The following Committee members were present: James Heisler, Chairman; Nick Provenzano; Ersel Schuster; Marc Munaretto; and Kathleen Bergan Schmidt. Mr. Jung arrived at 8:37a.m. Mr. Merkel was absent. Also in attendance: Peter Austin, County Administrator; John Labaj, Deputy County Administrator; Adam Lehmann, Assistant to the County Administrator; interested public and the press.

James Heisler, Chairman	
John Jung, Jr.	Pete Merkel
Marc Munaretto	Nick Provenzano
Kathleen Bergan Schmidt	Ersel Schuster

MINUTES

None.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Charlie Eldridge from Richmond Illinois, joined committee members and voiced his support of the formation of the Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs Committee. Mr. Eldridge is the current Chairman of the EDC's Transportation Committee. He stated that it will be necessary to work together to mutually assist each other in joint efforts to help the County in obtaining help with outside and regional issues.

PRESENTATION

None

NEW BUSINESS:

Committee Meeting Schedule for 2011: Chairman Heisler asked committee members if the current proposed meeting schedule to meet the 2nd and 4th Thursday of each month, at 8:30a.m. will work for them. After discussion it was decided that the regular schedule for the Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs Committee will be on the 2nd (second) and 4th (fourth) Thursday of each month at 8:30a.m.

Discussion on Committee Responsibilities: Committee members entered into a discussion regarding the responsibilities of this committee. The focus of this committee for the first year will cover a handful of broad areas. The program will evolve as the Federal, State and local legislative program is developed. The County is currently in its final year on the contract with the Federal Lobbyist. It was questioned whether they were still as asset or do we need to move in another direction to further the County's Legislative program. The committee will need to focus on the State Level as well. In the past the County has kept an eye on the big bills being considered at the State level, but would now like to be more pro active with issues going on at the State level. We have a good relationship with Metro Counties and were able to keep an eye on legislation that may impact county governments. It was suggested that the committee invite our Legislators in to speak with the committee members regarding issues going on at the State Level. By inviting the Legislators to join the committee we would be able to find out what projects they are currently working on, what committees they are serving on and what their priorities are for the coming year. The County needs to be aware of what is going on, both at the State and Federal levels, so we know what important legislation we need to pay attention to. It was suggested that we explore the possibility of meeting with other Leaders in the Illinois delegation in order to let them know who McHenry County is and what our agenda is. McHenry County has been very effective in getting transportation projected elevated and we have a strong backing of the districts. This shows that McHenry County has its act together and is not afraid to confront issues and is therefore in a position to address the additional Illinois delegates. Committee members stated they would like to see the structure of the legislative process, both at the Federal and State levels. The County also needs to be up front, as a team player with the Municipalities in order to get together on joint issues. A big portion of this committee's job will be outreach to other groups in the County. Committee members may have to attend Township or Municipal meeting to change the culture of suspicion. It will be necessary to change this culture as the third anchor to this process with the local governments and how to interact with each other on chief issues. Transportation, Development, Water, Stormwater Management, need good interaction between the groups. There is definitely room for improvement. With the hiring of a new Emergency Management Director this Spring it gives the County the opportunity to create a different relationship than there has been in the past. Dial a ride offers

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another area for joining together in dialogue on joint issues. It may be necessary to get added to agendas at local meetings to provide updates to inform them what is going on at the County. It will be necessary to pay attention to what is being brought before a committee or County Board that may involve a municipality or township. This is a good way to inform them of the joint issues. This would be an outreach similar to what the Sheriff does with the surrounding police departments. The County may be able to create mutual agreements that work in favor of the public. In the past there has been frustration on how to foster more agreements to work together. Area groups need to understand the whats and whys of a County Board position. Communication is a big issue both with the residents and legislators. The committee would like this group to be a part of the communications liaisons for the County.

This group will be involved in the redistricting of the County. The County is exploring different technology to complete the modeling. This will be different from in the past because with the evolving of technology, we will now be able to look at different scenarios to create the new districts. Ms. Schmidt noted she still feels that there should be single member districts. It is still a few months out before the County receives the census numbers. With this comes a higher level of accuracy. Hopefully, the process will begin sometime in April 2011. Mr. Austin reported that a meeting has been scheduled for tomorrow to meet with a group that will be presenting their redistricting software. Ethnicity has never been an issue in the past, but, the State's Attorney's office has been requested to provide an opinion on this issue.

Review of FY12 Federal Legislative Program (Briefing Sheets and Overviews): Committee members reviewed the draft of issues to pursue with our Federal delegation. This process is how the County pursued these issues in the past. The committee needs to move forward with an understanding that it needs to be flexible. Two weeks from today our lobbyist will join the County to discuss changes in the legislative process. They need to discuss how the legislators can walk the line of no earmarks but still lead towards obtaining the goals of the County. For the moment we are moving ahead with the "old" rules and will be forwarding our requests to the County's Federal delegates. This year's appropriations request include Stormwater Strategic Protection Plan-Comprehensive Watershed Plans, Ground Water/Stormwater Protection Program – Water Resources Development Act of 2007, East McHenry Bypass from Illinois Route 31 to Richmond-Waukegan Corridor, Randall Road Widening, Public Safety Communication and Educational C.L.I.M.M.B.: Capacity for Learning In Multiple Modes and Bridges. In the past the County has been able to obtain funding for the Groundwater Protection Plan and now we are asking for funding to get more stormwater funds. This builds on the County's Hazard Mitigation Plan. Transportation funding is being requested for Miller Road and the extension of Randall Road. There is a request for technology funding for communications in the Sheriff's Department. Our requests could be a problem is they should eliminate earmarks, though this has not been ruled out at this time. Rich Carter from Congressman Manzullo's office discussed this at a meeting last night. He stated that the only way to protect local funding is through earmarks and the County could lose a lot of local project funding. Everyone is looking for a new tool, especially for transportation funding. At this time we are unsure of what the rules are so we will try to allow for some direction by our local representatives. We do not want to leave these issues up to the Federal bureaucrats. The Legislators are proud to put their names on good projects so we need understand how to present these. The projects the County is requesting we are required to produce letters of support from various legislative entities in order to show support for a project.

Committee members voiced concern about groups like CMAP and McCOG that have County liaisons where they support and promote legislation and the County is unaware of what is being supported until after the fact. We need to make sure we are all on the same page. Committee members were told they need to review the Policy Statement and to then hold our liaisons to these measures and standards. Committee members noted that for some of these groups the liaison member should come from this committee. It was noted that the County Board Chairman is our representative for McCog. It was suggested that we have the McCog Director attend a committee meeting to inform this committee how McCog is formed and how do they chose their sub committees. It was suggested that the County Board Chairman attend these meetings as well since he is the chief lobbyist for the County.

Update on State Legislative Activities: Committee members entered into a discussion on the State Legislative Activities. The County will be more active in keeping track of the bills. On Monday the 24th at the Metro County meeting they will kick off the legislative season. We will be able to find out what other Counties are working on and upcoming issues. Lists come out early in the session so it will be necessary to check these bills that may impact the County. Committee members were provided a copy of the Lake County programs. Something similar

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could be created for McHenry County. One issue the County is interested in is the publication of Assessments. This would relieve the Counties from having to publish their assessments in the newspapers.

County Communication Programs: Mr. Lehmann informed committee members that part of his work has been on the communication program for the County. How information from the County has increased tremendously. He will be working with intergovernmental work with the Sheriff. 194 new State Law changes have passed. Mr. Lehmann will change this into a communications piece to present to the public. E-news letter is one way for communication, but they are reviewing additional ways to increase the communications as well in order to engage the public more. He is looking to find ways to use the electronic media to get this information out to the public. Committee members noted that it is important to get the public to opt in to use the electronic media, instead of the mail. Mr. Lehmann stated they started with a few hundred hits to our e-News distribution list and this has now increased to 1300. So far the site is growing by voluntary subscription, which has been a slow process. It was suggested that the townships and municipalities be contacted to include our county information. The challenge is to get these numbers higher.

Committee members were requested to review and think about the suggested Committee description. The whole County Board should be involved with this process. The description, when approved, would be included in the County Board rules. They were requested to think about what they want to say in the rules regarding this committee.

Committee members were informed that the Management Services Committee will be reviewing and updating the County Board rules. If the committee members would like to see any changes, please notify Ms. Schuster.

The next committee meeting will be in two weeks from today, January 27th at 8:30a.m.

OLD BUSINESS

None

EXECUTIVE SESSION: None.

REPORTS TO COMMITTEE:

None.

ADJOURNMENT:

Noting no further business, Ms. Schmidt made a motion, seconded by Ms. Schuster to adjourn the meeting at 9:50 a.m.

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RECOMMENDED FOR BOARD/COMMITTEE ACTION:

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