

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

MINUTES OF THURSDAY JANUARY 27, 2011

Chairman Heisler called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. The following Committee members were present: James Heisler, Chairman; Nick Provenzano; Ersel Schuster; John Jung, Jr. and Kathleen Bergan Schmidt. Pete Merkel and Marc Munaretto were absent. Also in attendance: Ken Koehler, Chairman, McHenry County Board; Peter Austin, County Administrator; Pam Cumpata, McHenry County EDC President; Undersheriff Andy Zinke and Angela Wood-Zuzevich, Sheriff's Department; Julie Courtney, Workforce Network; Joe Korpalski, County Engineer; Cassandra McKinney, Water Resource Manager; Adam Lehmann, Assistant to the County Administrator; and the press.

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

MINUTES

Committee members reviewed the committee minutes from January 13, 2011. Ms. Schmidt made a motion, seconded by Mr. Jung to recommend approval of the above minutes as presented. The motion carried with all members present voting aye on a voice vote.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

PRESENTATION

None

NEW BUSINESS:

Resolution Authorizing Adoption of a Federal Legislative Program for FFY2012: Mr. Austin informed committee members that Trent Lehman, from Ferguson Group, our Federal Lobbyists has joined committee members on a conference call this morning to discuss McHenry County's Federal Legislative Program. Committee members were informed that the Republican's have stated they would not be submitting funding requests in the normal fashion. The Democrats have not submitted a similar pledge. President Obama has stated that he would not sign any bill that includes any earmarks. This creates a challenge on how to request Federal Funding for local projects. Senator Durbin has stated that he will continue to accept earmarks as there is going to be a lot of give and take on all issues. There will be a challenge to find different ways to obtain funding, possibly through grants and discretionary programs and it will be necessary to look beyond earmarks. It will be important to present the priorities for the districts. This will be a highly competitive process. Mr. Lehman stated he is unsure if the earmark moratorium will affect the Transportation and Water Resources projects. We will work with the traditional methods, but will need to understand that the issues may change for both Transportation and Water Resources. The rest of the programs may be grant focused. Every avenue possible will be pursued for Federal Funding. Committee members were informed the proposed Legislative Program has been included in today's packet and has also been placed on the County Board agenda for consideration. There are representatives for each request here today to provide background on the specific requests.

Mr. Joe Korpalski, County Engineer, joined committee members to provide background on the transportation program. The Division of Transportation has put in two requests. McHenry County has been very appreciative of the past federal funding received for road improvements within the County. The Federal Transportation Bill has expired. There have been some continuing resolutions passed, but, this does not look good for this year. The County is requesting \$1,000,000 in the Transportations appropriations bill to add capacity to Randall Road from Ackman Road to County Line Road by adding one additional through lanes in each direction, a continuous flow intersection at the Algonquin Road intersection, adequate turn lanes at other intersections, and bicycle and pedestrian improvements as needed to support future bus transit services. The other project is for Miller Road to build a highway bypass by adding capacity to Charles J. Miller Road, River Road and Chapel Hill Road from the intersection of Illinois Route 31 east to River Road, then north on River Road and Chapel Hill Road through the Illinois Route 120 intersection to the Richmond-Waukegan Highway Corridor just north of Lincoln Road.

This project will add one additional through lane in each direction, adequate turn lanes at other intersections, and bicycle and pedestrian improvements as needed. Both of these projects are included in the Legislative Plan from McCog as well. The Committee Members asked Mr. Korpalski about the National Environmental Protection Agency (NEPA) changes noted in the policy statement, he noted that State Professionals have difficulty navigating through the process so it takes a very long time to get a project through the system. The Resource Agency review process seems to be the issue. We have pushed on some of the issues but it remains to be a very burdensome process. Any issue could delay a project for years increasing the cost of a project. This has been an issue for any entity dealing with transportation projects. The Legislators need to take a serious look at the process to change some of the mechanisms required to obtain funding, this would be helpful for many agencies that feel the same. Time is money and these delays are very costly. Washington DC will be debating these issues during the Highway Bill discussions and there is a push by many on this issue. Committee members thanked Mr. Korpalski for his information.

Ms. McKinney joined committee members to provide information on the requests being made for Water Resources. Committee members were informed that for the past several years we have had success in obtaining grants for Water Resources. This year our requests will focus on Stormwater projects. The request was prepared by the former Stormwater Engineer. McHenry County is seeking \$550,000 for Stormwater Management to complete comprehensive watershed and flood mitigation plans for the Lower Nippersink Creek Watershed and the Upper Fox River Watershed. These plans will identify current flooding problems and recommend a plan of action to remedy those problems. The plans will also address the potential for programmatic solutions as well as site specific in the ground solutions. Both watersheds have experienced flood damage along with degraded water quality and habitat due to urbanization and agricultural activity. Development pressure is increasing in both watersheds with the potential to exacerbate the current flooding, water quality and other problems while also negatively impacting natural resources. Each plan would identify flooding problems, in the ground solutions for current problems and best management practices to prevent future problems. The second request is for an amendment in the Water Resources Development Act authorizing \$20,000,000 in assistance under authority provided by the Corps of Engineers in Section 219 of the Water Resources Development Act of 2007. The County needs to accelerate the implementation of the County's Groundwater/Stormwater Protection Program, which uniquely seeks to address stormwater drainage and detention, flood plain management, soil erosion and sedimentation control, stream and wetland protection and groundwater resources in a single program. This item has been requested many times. This is a strong request and was one of the projects former Representative Bean was interested in, but, because the Hazard Mitigation Plan was not completed, the request was denied. Now all the pieces are in place in order to move the plan forward. The Water Resources Development Act is supposed to be reauthorized every two years, but hasn't been visited in a couple of years. Committee members thanked Ms. McKinney for the information.

Ms. Courtney, Workforce Network and Ms. Cumpata, McHenry County EDC President joined committee members to provide information regarding the next request. Ms. Courtney reminded committee members that the office has received two awards from Representative Bean's office. They provided a history of the past programs. They are putting in a request for \$400,000 in the Labor-HHS-Education appropriations bill, Department of Education, Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE), or the Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, Training and Employment Services to fund the Educational C.L.I.M.M.B. Initiative. This initiative will provide the county's workforce with proven career ladders and increase degree attainment by expanding the capacity at McHenry County College. This would be accomplished by developing additional instructional programs in high demand occupations, provide flexible programming that includes preparatory bridge curricula, non-credit pilot programs and additional certificate/degree opportunities and supply necessary student support services with flexible scheduling models. The target population will include adult learners and career changers who need new and high-demand skills both to climb emerging career ladders and meet employer needs. Possible programs include STEM Curriculum expansion, Public Health Administration, Nurse Assistant Education, Phlebotomy, Medical billing and coding and Medical Assistant programs. Some of these courses can be completed within 16-20 weeks instead of years. Most programs are not completed in a regular classroom instruction program. Committee members were informed that there is a shortage of personnel to do some of the above work and there is a demand for these types of jobs. Permanent jobs are being offered to people directly involved in these programs. Ms. Courtney informed committee members that these programs work and they teach the needed skills to get these individuals back to work. She stated that they would like to get more people involved with these programs. 73 individuals have been involved in the programs for the past two years, though Ms. Courtney stated that it was probably closer to four years, as it takes a lot of time to get a program up and running.

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This program was created through the Department of Labor and once a program is funded, it takes about a year to get the funding. Committee members thanked Ms. Cumpata and Ms. Courtney for the information.

Undersheriff Zinke and Angela Wood-Zuzevich joined committee members to provide information on the request for \$300,000 for federal technology funds. This would allow the Sheriff's Department to manage activities associated with public safety and criminal justice services. The acquired technology would allow for an expansion of scope to what the Sheriff's Office is able to do now in such areas as warrant service and management, ability to electronically file search warrants and criminal complaints, and the ability to share data between applications and across departments in "real time" (i.e. integrated data access). The Sheriff's Office is specifically asking for (AFIS (Integrated Automated Fingerprint Identification Systems Technology) as well as warrant management system technology. The technology would allow for information sharing, identify subjects using a mobile identification technology and provide access to a nation-wide fingerprint identification system. This allows for real-time, inter-departmental tracking of data as well as access to a national finger print database as a means to increase public safety and limit civil liability during law enforcement activities. Committee members asked if this system could help with the finger print process for liquor licenses. They were informed that with this technology, the applications could be endless and the department would be able to share the technology and resources. Committee members thanked Ms. Woods-Zuzevich and Undersheriff Zinke for the information.

Mr. Jung made a motion, seconded by Ms. Schmidt to recommend approval of the Resolution authorizing adoption of a Federal Legislative program for FFY2012. The motion carried with all members present voting aye on a voice vote.

Ms. Courtney informed committee members that since the recession began in 2008, the phone at the facility has been very busy and there has been no parking available. They have served 28,565 residents. This includes individuals not applying for unemployment benefits. She questioned where people would go to get help for employment and training needs if these services had not been offered. The Workforce of Metro Counties has three pages of reauthorizations so they need help to educate why these programs are needed. We need an educated workforce. With the elimination of jobs just announced by Abbott Labs, there will be a lot of local residents affected. Most of the individuals will go to the home office for services. The current "Workforce" Act expired in 2003. It is hopeful that this gets reauthorized in the House. This would be a great bipartisan project so the program stays relevant.

Committee members were informed that the Resolution will be on the next County Board Agenda for consideration. There will be a lot of work needed to submit these requests. Letters of support will be needed for the projects. We will need to make sure the projects are supported by a broad based group. Representatives are planning on visiting Washington DC on March 2nd and 3rd. This will allow the County to work with Legislators and to visit agencies in order to get to know their staff in order to move ahead with these requests.

Update on State Legislative Activities: Committee members were informed that the State Appellate Court has reversed a decision on the Capital Bill as it was not addressed in the correct format. This hurts the County because road funds would have been received under this bill. If not reversed, it hurts projects that would have put a lot of people back to work. This was stopped with a single subject clause which allowed for review of each subject separately. This hurts both the County and the State of Illinois.

Committee members were presented with a list of membership for Metro Counties. This includes 14 of the largest counties in Illinois. A roster with the names of the County Board Chairman, Presidents or Managers were included as well as the by-laws of the group. A copy of the Legislative Review Process for Metro Counties was provided. This list provides reasons to support or oppose legislation. The lobbyist for Metro Counties follows bills in Springfield and provides the group with feedback on the bills.

County Board Chairman, Ken Koehler stated that Lake County is proposing a Fox Water Public Safety Fee. This is an actual sticker tax as most people who use the Fox Waterway are not residents of either Lake or McHenry Counties. Lake and McHenry County combined are spending nearly a million dollars to provide waterway safety.

Mr. Austin provided committee members with highlight from a meeting he attended with the Collar County Chairs on Monday. Members from Lake, Kane, Will, DuPage and McHenry County were involved in a core piece of an RTA discussion on how appointments are made to the RTA Boards and how these appointments are handled.

Approved 02 24 11

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The Counties would like to retain the authority for the appointments but additional communications are needed with the General Assembly on this issue. Committee members were informed that the appointment of the new Metra Director is expected soon.

Mr. Austin noted that this committee can support issues such as these and when additional issues are brought forward. This is part of the reason this committee was put together. Special Meetings can and will be called when issues arise. Information will be pushed to the committee members as it is received. It was stated that the Counties need to work together on the joint issues that arise.

Toni Preckwinkle, Cook County Chairman attended the Metro Counties meeting. This was the first time a Cook County Chair attended a Metro Counties meeting in several years. A list of the Metro Counties Officer's were reviewed with the committee members. A new Chaiman was needed for Metro Counties as Suzi Schmidt is now a Legislator. Kankakee has indicated they would like to join the group. Some of the larger Counties not involved are the Champaign, Sagamon and Rock Island Counties. During the recently completed "lame duck" session in Springfield, some of the big issues for discussion were the Income Tax increase and the Representative Franks Constitutional Amendment related to pensions. This would require a super majority vote. Representative Franks would like to cap pension benefits to \$106,000. This has already passed for new employees but this would change to include current employees as well. Representative Cross would like to allow employees to choose whether they want to remain in the current pension program or chose a defined contribution retirement program. Toni Preckwinkle is interested in charity care as it relates to healthcare. She wants clarification as Cook County, in her opinion, is currently the destination to get care. It was stated that 1/3 of the budget for Cook County goes to healthcare.

DuPage County is concerned that 55% of the tickets processed are mailed in so they are unable to collect additional fees. Some fees are only attached to those with court appearances. It is felt that it is overly burdensome on those who want to fight their tickets in court. If the fees were attached to every ticket, ticket fees could be spread more evenly across the board and could possibly even reduce these fees. They are trying to lower the costs of appearing in Court.

Questions have been brought forward regarding the E-911 surcharge that is scheduled to sunset in 24 months. This fee has been charged since 1992 and if this goes away that would leave a large department unfunded.

In Kane County there is a big issue going on as the Circuit Clerk feels she can hire whatever staff she wants. Kane County states the County Board is in charge of the budget. The Circuit Clerk hired a number of unapproved staff and then ran out of funding. They are looking at legislation remedies for this situation.

Lake County is proposing doing away with the requirement of publishing of assessments in the newspaper. This is a big expense item and an antiquated way to publish this list. Lake County would like to see Counties have the right to publish this on-line. McHenry County spent \$298,000 in 2010 for this required publication. The press and communications industry would like to keep this requirement as it stands. Lake County

is also asking for clarification on elected officials salaries and if they could be tied to the CPI. McHenry County has already been doing this for the past couple of years.

It has been requested that the group look into arbitration and their awards. The Public Safety Unions have been given arbitration awards that are viewed by some as out of control and more than what local governments can pay. They would like to tie these awards to what the government unit can afford to pay.

Tazewell County is looking for permissive action on whether a Board of Review Members can be appointed without consideration of the political party.

Will and Lake County want legislation to regulate cell towers.

Winnebago County wants discussion on the probation costs and the payment gap between what is owed by the State.

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The next Metro County meeting is scheduled for March 30th in Springfield. A mid-session update with a description of the issues and a recap will be provided so the whole board will be aware of the issues. Kip Kolkmeier will provide electronic packets of all bills filed affecting counties and updates will be received about every two weeks. The updates will include the bill number, sponsor, synopsis of the issue and the position taken on the issue. There will be a note of highlights with questions of what we want to support. Last year the big issue was pensions. This year it is charity care and arbitration costs.

OLD BUSINESS

None

EXECUTIVE SESSION: None.

REPORTS TO COMMITTEE:

None.

ADJOURNMENT:

Noting no further business, Ms. Schuster made a motion, seconded by Mr. Jung to adjourn the meeting at 10:22 a.m.

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RECOMMENDED FOR BOARD/COMMITTEE ACTION:

Resolution Authorizing Adoption of a Federal Legislative Program for FFY2012

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