

MERCER COUNTY BOARD MINUTES

June 4, 2019

Board convened at 6:52 p.m.

Following the Pledge of Allegiance roll call showed the following members present: Board Members DeFrieze, Flowers, Frieden, Fullerlove, Gregg, Hare, Hawn, Moreland, and Rind. There was a quorum present.

In public comment, Bill McDonald spoke to the Board against the proposed wheel tax. He made it known that he feels there are already too many taxes being paid in the County.

Jenny Garner from the University of Illinois Extension Service was in attendance and gave the Board an update on things that that Extension Service has been doing in the past year.

Judy Redlinger was present to address the Board regarding the condition of McClure Cemetery. Due to some miscommunication, the person hired to mow the cemetery was not contacted in a timely manner. As such, the grass and weeds had overtaken the cemetery. Ms. Redlinger stated that several families were upset by the fact that their relatives' headstones weren't visible and easily accessible. Vice Chairman Fullerlove apologized for the oversight and assured Ms. Redlinger that the matter has since been resolved.

George Howard addressed the Board as Director of the Veterans Assistance Commission (VAC). Vice Chairman Fullerlove asked how much of the VAC budget is used for assisting veterans and how much is used for salaries, etc. George stated that the majority of the VAC budget (84%) goes toward his and his assistant's salaries, which he stated was comparable to every other County office. Board Member DeFrieze asked if money was available if a veteran stopped in and asked for assistance. George explained that he doesn't write checks in his office. He further explained that there are procedures in place wherein veterans seeking assistance have to provide access to their bank account(s) so the VAC can verify the need for assistance. Vice Chairman Fullerlove tasked Board Member DeFrieze with reporting on the full organization of the VAC (telling who appoints the VAC chairman and other board members, who makes the decision to hire assistants, etc.) at the July meeting.

Motion to approve the consent agenda by Board Member DeFrieze seconded by Board Member Hawn was approved by vote of the Board.

Bev Lower discussed the formation of the Tax Cycle Committee and reported when the meetings would be held. The Tax Cycle Committee will consist of the Treasurer, the County Clerk, the Supervisor of Assessments, and members of the Board of Review. She requested that two members of the Board volunteer to also sit on the committee. Board Members Fullerlove and Moreland volunteered to sit on the committee on behalf of the Board.

Sarah Bohnsack spoke regarding the County Administrator position. She stated that her firm is of the opinion that the County needs to hire a full-time administrator to help with daily operations. The Board received copies of the proposed ad/job description. Vice Chairman Fullerlove asked her what role Bohnsack & Frommelt would have, financially speaking, in the County. Sarah stated that Bohnsack & Frommelt does not intend to walk away from the County. They are more than willing to continue assisting with cash-to-accrual conversion, audit preparation, budget preparation, etc.

Sarah Bohnsack then spoke on the open Zoning Officer position. She stated that the job description had been revised to include working part-time in the Supervisor of Assessments' office. An ad will be placed in the Aledo Times Record for two weeks in hopes of attracting applicants for the Zoning position. Several Board members expressed concern over possibly losing the proposed Dollar General stores in Sherrard and Alexis due to the absence of a Zoning Officer and the delays it is causing. Sara Blaser stated that the County Clerk's Office has been inundated with phone calls and people coming in requesting zoning information. She also stated that the Supervisor of Assessments office was equally bogged down. Neither office handles zoning and both have been referring people to the Zoning Committee members for assistance. All members were in agreement that a Zoning Officer was needed as soon as possible.

Motion to approve claims by Board Member Gregg seconded by Board Member DeFrieze was approved by roll call vote of the Board – 9 ayes, 0 nays. The claims presented for payment on June 15, 2019 are as follows: General Corporate \$56,956.62, Public Health \$27,187.59, County Highway \$21,913.54, Township Motor Fuel \$100,832.37, Motor Fuel \$23,335.43, Animal Control \$260.71, Pet Population \$225.00, Law Library \$1,022.78, Liability Insurance \$10,395.81, Circuit Clerk Automation \$910.80, Recorder \$6,765.00, Probation Fees \$1,935.27, Circuit Clerk Document Storage \$77.75, Drug Crime Lab \$75.00, Assessor - GIS \$622.99, and GIS Clerk \$178.64 for a total of \$252,695.30.

Motion to approve the Resolution Appropriating Funds for Federal Participation Agreement for Section 18-00113-00-BR by Board Member Flowers seconded by Board Member Frieden was approved by vote of the Board.

Vice Chairman Fullerlove then read the proposed Ordinance to impose a County wheel tax. He then asked for any comments or questions. Board Member Hare spoke on the subject and said that he is not in favor of imposing such a tax. Board Member DeFrieze shared the same opinion. Board Member Moreland responded by saying that he is not in favor of imposing such a tax either, but there is no other way to generate money to repair the County roads. Board Member Rind reiterated that no one on the Highway Committee wants to impose the tax. He stated that is the reasoning behind the proposed 5-year time frame. He suggested that the time frame be shortened to 3 years. Discussion ensued as to how the tax would be collected and that the funds would be earmarked for road repairs only. State's Attorney Meeghan Lee spoke on the matter and said that her office was continuing to investigate the feasibility of getting a list of licensed vehicles from the Secretary of State, as well as determining how fines would be assessed, etc. Bev Lower was asked how the bills would be sent out and how they would be collected. She stated that the wheel tax would have to be a separate bill and the County would need to acquire accounts receivable software as we currently do not have such a program. The matter was tabled for further discussion.

State's Attorney Meeghan Lee addressed the Board as to the need for new members to take the online Open Meetings Act (OMA) training. She asked Clerk Blaser to send the link to the new Board members. She then stated that all County employees are required to read through and sign the Ethics Policy and she encouraged the Board members to do the same. She advised them that the signature pages could be turned in to her office or to Carla Ewing (County Ethics Officer) at the Public Health Department.

In lieu of Chairman Sarabasa's absence, the issue of a time clock was tabled until the July meeting.

Motion to adjourn to Tuesday, July 2nd at 6:30 p.m. by Board Member DeFrieze was seconded by Board Member Flowers and was approved by vote of the Board at 8:03 p.m.