

Approved 7/29/20
MINUTES
Ways and Means Committee
June 24, 2020
@ 2:00 P.M.

MEMBERS PRESENT:	Steven Rieker – Chairman; Sharon Williams – Vice Chairman; Jennifer Groves Allison, James Fennell, Rachel Reliford, William Watkins, Jr.
MEMBERS ABSENT:	Phillip Salzer
STAFF PRESENT:	Scott Sorrel - County Administrator; Shauna Musselman – Assistant County Administrator; Jennie Cordis Boswell - State's Attorney's Office; Betty Duncan, Rob Reneau – County Board Members; Randy Brunner –Chief Financial Officer; Gretchen Pearsall – Director of Strategic Communications; Jessica Thomas – County Auditor; Rachael Parker, Mike Deluhery – County Clerk; Beth Crider – Regional Office of Education; Dave Ryan – Supervisor of Assessments; Nicole Bjerke - Treasurer
OTHERS PRESENT:	

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Rieker at 2:00 p.m.

A motion to suspend the Rules was made by Ms. Groves Allison and seconded by Ms. Williams. The motion carried unanimously (6-0) via roll call vote.

Approval of Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes of May 27, 2020 was made by Mr. Watkins and seconded by Ms. Reliford. The motion carried unanimously (6-0) via roll call vote.

Informational Items/Reports/Other Minutes/Updates

County Auditor

Mr. Rieker noted the report identifies expenditures for US Bank Debt Obligation Certificates in the amount of just over \$2 million. Mr. Brunner provided a brief summary of the various interest and principle bonds payments, those being Peoria Riverfront Museum bonds, Heddington Oaks bonds, Wilhelm Road Bridge bonds, the Criminal Justice System, and the Energy Project Phase 2.

County Clerk

➤ **Collections and Transactions Report**

Ms. Parker advised that revenues are rebounding well from the initial impact of the pandemic, adding that property tax redemptions for June are currently up \$14,000.00. She stated that does not anticipate any issues with maintaining the projected budget for 2020.

Peoria County Election Commission

Mr. Bride advised that the Commission is currently working on changes required based upon legislation recently passed by the State. He stated that the foremost purpose of the legislation is to encourage the increase of vote-by-mail, and requires the Commission to mail approximately 70,000 applications to vote on August 1, 2020. He also advised that staff is anticipating and putting into place procedures and equipment to handle the expected increase in vote-by-mail ballots, adding that 40,000 to 50,000 vote-by-mail ballots are anticipated to be mailed out and returned. He stated that RFPs for the creation of ballot packets and the equipment to handle the process for returned ballots have gone out.

Mr. Bride advised that alternative means of training election judges are being explored, including online training, and looking into an improved tracking system for ballots.

Ms. Williams asked if an educational component is being considered for the vote-by-mail process and also asked if the number of polling places will be reduced. Mr. Bride advised that a vote-by-mail educational and outreach program is being initiated, including a component for voters who have not considered vote-by-mail. He stated that there are currently 57 polling locations for the November 2020 election, with a secondary plan that would reduce that number to 38 in the event some polling locations would close. He remarked that the Election Commission is restricted by statute in limiting polling locations.

Finance

Mr. Brunner advised the Final Audit report is nearing completion and stated that the external auditors will provide a presentation of findings at the July meeting of the committee.

Regional Office of Education (ROE)

Ms. Crider advised that a new guidance packet has been distributed by the Illinois State Board of Education, mandating masks, social distancing, and temperature checks and/or certification of health. She stated that an increase in school-wide cleaning and disinfection is also required. She noted that remote learning will continue to be an option. She advised that Peoria Public Schools will update their plans to adhere to state guidelines, emphasizing that although district plans will not be uniform they will attempt to complement each other.

Ms. Groves Allison asked for suggestions as to how County Board Members can complement or support district educators. Ms. Crider welcomed any support in positive messaging, stressing that the ROE is attempting to do the best possible decisions within the mandated guidance regulations.

Supervisor of Assessments/Board of Review

- Tax Cycle

Mr. Ryan advised that a rolling 5-week furlough for employees has begun, with two employees currently in the office. He noted that the office will not be fully staffed until July 27, 2020. He stated that statutory functions will continue to be performed and expressed concern that some non-statutory functions would be challenging to maintain. Mr. Rieker stressed that it is imperative to resolve a method to deliver on obligated and contracted services such as garbage fee related collections or actions.

Mr. Ryan advised that senior or disabled individuals who filed exemptions in 2019 are not required to refile this year. He advised that the practice that Peoria County began in March has been signed by the Governor into state law, and all Illinois counties now have the process ability. He also noted that the Department of Revenue has waived the notarization requirement for new filers.

Treasurer

Ms. Bjerke advised that the first property tax installment was due June 9, 2020. She stated that the first distribution was approximately \$9 million lower than 2019, with Peoria County share being approximately \$917,000.00 lower than last year. She remarked that the July distribution should come in much higher than 2019.

Ms. Bjerke advised that many constituents paid both installments simultaneously. She stated that 3,149 individuals and commercial entities took advantage of the half-payment option.

Ms. Bjerke provided a summary of the process complications related to garbage fees attached to property tax bills, and requested direction on how to deliver the best service to taxpayers as well as determine the future of the Intergovernmental Agreement with the City of Peoria. Mr. Rieker asked that the pertinent offices meet with the State's Attorney's Office and the County Administrator to determine a path forward to ensure compliance with all matters.

Veteran's Assistance Commission

No report. No questions or comments from committee.

Resolution

- **Monthly Delinquent Taxes**

A motion to approve was made by Mr. Fennell and seconded by Ms. Reliford. The motion to approve carried unanimously (6-0) via roll call vote.

Committee Action

- **Review of Executive Session Minutes**

A motion to accept the recommendation of the State's Attorney's Office was made by Mr. Watkins and seconded by Ms. Williams. Ms. Cordis Boswell advised that it is the State's Attorney's Office recommendation that all previously held executive session minutes continue to be held closed as the need for confidentiality still exists, and to destroy executive session audio recordings more than two years old, except those that relate to pending litigation. The motion carried unanimously (6-0) via roll call vote.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned by Chairman Rieker at 2:57 p.m.

Recorded and Transcribed by: Jan Kleffman