

CHAIRMAN'S ADVISORY LEGISLATIVE FORUM (CALF)
McHenry County Government – Administration Building
667 Ware Road
Woodstock IL 60098

MINUTES OF MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 2008

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Koehler at 3:05 p.m. The following members were present: Chairman Koehler; Sue Draffkorn; John Hammerand; Tina Hill; Marc Munaretto; Lyn Orphal; Virginia Peschke, Nick Provenzano; Dan Shea; Barbara Wheeler; and Mary Lou Zierer. Also in attendance: Peter Austin, County Administrator, John W. Labaj, Deputy County Administrator; Ralph Sarbaugh, Associate County Administrator-Finance; Mary McCann and John Jung, Jr. – County Board Members; Cindy Kozlowski, Budget Analyst; Bob Ivetic, Human Resources; Barry Valentine, EMA; Pam Palmer, Auditor; Pat McNulty, Health Department; Matt Hansel, Planning & Development; Gene Lowery and Angela Wood-Zuzevich, Sheriff's Department; Cathy Link, Purchasing; John Hadley, Facilities Management; Lou Bianchi, State's Attorney; Bob Yearian, Valley-Hi; Mark Cook, Public Defender; Julie Courtney, Workforce Network; Lou Czarny, Court Administration; Donna Mayberry, Assessments; interested public; and the press.

Sue Draffkorn	John Hammerand
Tina Hill	Marc Munaretto
Lyn Orphal	Virginia Peschke
Nick Provenzano	Dan Shea
Barbara Wheeler	Mary Lou Zierer
Kenneth D. Koehler, Chairman	

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: None

NEW BUSINESS:

FY 2008/2009 Supplemental Budget Requests: Chairman Koehler welcomed attendees, noting that the purpose of today's meeting is to review and discuss supplement FY 08/09 budget requests. He stated that this has been a tough year for government adding that the Stock Market dropped by 700 points after the proposed bailout plan was not approved. He commented that McHenry County is doing better than most but asked that these issues be kept in mind during today's discussions. Mr. Austin then addressed the meeting and provided a summary of the budget process and how supplemental requests were prioritized. He noted that although there were many good and worthy requests, the County does not have the resources to consider many of those items at this time. He asked that members take a tentative approach to such requests until the economic "cloud" has passed. He stated it has been determined that funding for supplemental requests cannot exceed \$500,000 at this time. To meet growing gas needs, \$140,000 was taken off the top and set aside along with \$45,000 to meet the mandated new responsibilities for the case management system in the State's Attorney's office. Mr. Shea questioned how other unfunded mandates were being funded, such as membership dues. Mr. Austin responded that departments have included many of these items in their budgets. Mr. Provenzano noted that in the past supplemental requests fell within three categories (personnel, contractual and capital). Mr. Sarbaugh noted that prioritization was done by departments and by funds with most recommended supplementals are personnel requests. Mr. Munaretto commented that the County Board made administration responsible for prioritizing supplementals and no formal vote is required today, only discussion and consensus. Mr. Shea questioned if revenue is down are there any plans to reduce the workforce. Mr. Austin stated all issues and concerns are being looked at and there may be the need for some hiring freezes at some point. Mr. Hammerand questioned why a new Solid Waste Manager position in the Health Department was being recommended. Mr. Austin stated that this position is not new to the County as it has been in other departments and its role has dwindled. It was agreed that the County would be better served by elevating the position and moving it to the Health Department. Mr. Hammerand also questioned the purchase of computer equipment and suggested that the County consider purchasing used computer equipment as the cost would be reduced significantly. Mr. Austin responded that the County makes an effort to get the best price when purchasing such equipment and noted that the computer equipment being requested for Animal Control will be used in vehicles to allow for tickets to be processed in the vehicle. Ms. Zierer raised concerns that the budget process has changed and does not currently allow each committee to review and prioritize their supplemental requests. She asked why the process was changed. Mr. Austin responded that in the last few years the process has changed and there are different levels of review. He noted that all items are given to each committee and they have the opportunity to discuss items after which they make their recommendation. He noted the challenge to keep a balance and stated that during the process staff does welcome a meeting with any chairman to discuss their concerns. When administration meets to discuss requests they have the opportunity to measure all requests as a whole and balance these together. Ms. Wheeler asked what happened to the request for a stormwater engineer and planner. Mr. Austin responded that the Stormwater Engineer position is not being recommended at this point and the planner position was an upgrade. He stated these requests could possibly be handled and considered once a new Planning and Development Director is hired and pointed out staff was aware of the recommendation but chose not to move forward at this time after considering the costs of not having the position filled. Mr. Hansel commented that by filling this position the costs to Baxter and Woodman would be reduced. Chairman Koehler stated that the fact is that funds were not available and we fully understand the difficulty and challenge during this unpredictable economic time. He stated that it is our intention to review the budget again in 3 months to see if anything more can be done. Ms. Hill asked that the budget process be revisited with each committee being allowed input for supplemental prioritization. Mr. Sarbaugh stated that we do work closely with each department as each department knows what items are necessary and what can be considered at a later time. In an effort to make staff aware, departments are asked to submit anything they may need or want at the beginning to the process. Ms. Hill stated she would like the opportunity to discuss these requests at the committee level. Mr. Austin stated that many hours are spent meeting with all departments and this would be impossible to do with each committee. He stated that supplementals are brought forward to each committee. Chairman Koehler stated that at the very least committee chairs should be in on the discussions when budget meetings take place. Mr. Munaretto stated that he has recommended the budget process begin in May instead of June to allow for more time to

discuss and consider requests. He noted it was at the County Board's direction that supplemental requests would be prioritized by Administration since they are in a better position to match requests to funds available and look at the whole picture. He stated the system should not be dismantled at this time. Ms. Wheeler asked that the position requests from Planning and Development be kept open for discussion. Ms. Zierer added that board members must be able to explain decisions to constituents and that committee chairs should at least be invited to sit in on meetings with department heads. Mr. Sarbaugh reminded members that when they review the budgets at their committees, we do not have the exact amount available for funding of supplementals and it was only during the last few days that available funds for supplementals were determined. He then reviewed what supplemental requests were recommended at this time. During discussion, it was noted that when equipment is needed for a new position, the budget for that department is reviewed to see if there are any available funds. A pilot program in the Sheriff's department will use vehicles already in service and a study has indicated that the program will generate at least \$42,000 in fines, Mr. Austin stated that the program will be reviewed and should show a savings in overtime hours, as currently an off-duty officer is called to serve eviction notices. Under Sheriff Lowery pointed out that eviction notices have increased significantly causing a 90 day delay in scheduling the notice and the new process server position should help address this issue. Mr. Sarbaugh also noted that the ammunition costs have increased for the Sheriff and these costs will also be revisited during the year. Mr. Austin reported that wages are another piece of the puzzle that needs to be addressed. He stated that the County has averaged a 4% increase over the last few years. This year the recommended increase has been reduced to 3%. Chairman Koehler asked if members had any problem with the recommended 3%. Ms. Orphal stated she supported 3% and it is a lot more that most are offering at this point – noting that "something is better than nothing." Mr. Sarbaugh pointed out that the Workforce Network has been struggling to keep operating and future funding for this department is unpredictable. He stated to keep them operating, it is the recommended that their employee benefits costs be funded from IMRF and Social Security funds until grant funding is determined. Mr. Austin stated that future support for this program is unknown. Mr. Hammerand questioned if it was appropriate to use IMRF and SS funds for this program. Mr. Austin stated he was confident it was but would ask for a State's Attorney's opinion. Ms. Zierer questioned vehicle storage and Undersheriff responded that an effort is being made to try to keep vehicles longer and vehicles no longer in use as a squad car are being reused in other departments.

Mr. Sarbaugh next reviewed supplement requests for Special Funds, noting these are of no cost to the General Fund. He pointed out that no personnel requests for Valley-Hi have been included at this point. A meeting is scheduled with the new Administrator (Bob Yearian) to go through the various requests to see if some can be combined. It was noted that the increase in Medicare beds has also impacted therapy services and medication needs. These costs are reimbursed by Medicare and when those funds are received they must be recorded as revenue.

In summary, Mr. Austin stated that this is not the final step in the budget process, but is very important. Staff and committees will continue to work through the concerns and work towards approval of a final budget in November. He asked for continued support through the remainder of the process. Chairman Koehler emphasized that the budget will be revisited on a quarterly basis and if possible adjustments will be made if necessary and appropriate. Currently, there is no need to go into reserves and budgets are not being cut. He thanked everyone for their support and understanding.

Ms. Palmer addressed the members noting she was fully aware and understood the current economic conditions. She stated she has done some research in how to reduce spending. Some recommendations include job freezing policies, car pooling, employee buy-outs, implementing a four day work week, employee referral programs, etc. She stated she had several ideas that may be helpful. She pointed out how her department needs an extra staff person that has been supplemental request for the past couple of years. She asked that if the opportunity comes she would like her department to be considered for this extra help.

Ms. Wheeler commented that cost cutting efforts can begin with the implementation of a vehicle policy which is currently being discussed by the Management Services Committee.

Ms. McCann noted that the Stormwater Manager deserves more attention to funding and asked that this be kept in mind. Mr. Hansel stated that staff is currently looking at possible changes to stormwater fees.

Noting no further discussion, Ms. Hill made a motion, seconded by Ms. Orphal, to move the FY 08/09 supplement requests forward to the Finance & Audit Committee. The motion carried with all members present voting aye on a voice vote.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Mr. Shea motioned, seconded by Mr. Hammerand, to adjourn the meeting at 4:40 p.m. The motion carried with a unanimous voice vote.

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RECOMMENDED FOR BOARD ACTION:

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