

Minutes of the Legislative Subcommittee

The Legislative Subcommittee of the McLean County Board met on Monday, March 26, 2018 at 5:00 p.m. in Room 400, Government Center, 115 E. Washington Street, Bloomington, Illinois.

Members Present: Chairman Jim Soeldner, Members Paul Segobiano, William Caisley, Scott Murphy, George Wendt, George Gordon (remote attendance)

Members Absent: Randy Martin

Other Board Members Present: Chairman John McIntyre, Member Susan Schafer

Staff Present: Mr. Don Knapp, Assistant County Administrator; Mr. Eric Schmitt, Administrative Services Director, Ms. Julie Morlock, Recording Secretary

Department Heads/
Elected Officials
Present: None

Others Present: None

Chairman Soeldner called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. and declared a quorum. Chairman Soeldner stated that member George Gordon had requested to attend by remote attendance per the McLean County Board Rules. He asked the members if there was any objection to the request. Hearing none, he approved Mr. Gordon's request and declared that Mr. Gordon was in attendance and connected to the meeting via telephone conference.

Mr. Soeldner presented the minutes from the February 28, 2018 meeting for review and approval

Motion by Caisley/Segobiano to approve the minutes of the February 28, 2018 meeting.
Motion Carried.

Chairman Soeldner indicated that Mr. Taylor Anderson was here to provide an update on Bills in the legislature and turned the floor over to him.

Mr. Anderson indicated that just over 3,000 Bills were introduced and they are actively tracking about 125 of those. He stated that sometimes Amendments can change a Bill so that it becomes something that watch. Mr. Anderson indicated that the Legislative program McLean County submitted captured the important issues. He went over items

listed in the program, Bills that could affect those items, and status of those Bills including the following:

- Reduction in local revenue. He stated there is a Bill that in the Senate Committee that would reduce several million from PPRT. He indicated the State continues to take small amounts from different areas and when you add them up it is a large total amount that the local governments are asked to cover. He mentioned that another issue is the 2% fee for collecting sales tax revenue. He indicated they have gathered from different discussions that it does not take the entire 2% to process those payments and are working to have that amount reduced. He stated there are two Bills that seek to reduce that amount to 1%.
- Juvenile Court Hearings and length of time juvenile can be detained before a hearing. He indicated Cook County started this 24 hour requirement and proponents of this idea are not ready to compromise on this Bill yet. He stated that while processes could be improved, they are trying to get proponents to understand that what works for one county does not work for all counties. He stated that there are a couple of Bills that have been introduced to try to compromise on this issue. He stated that a plus side is that until a Bill is passed the current laws remain in effect.
- Transportation Infrastructure Construction Program and capital investment program. Mr. Anderson indicated there is talk of the need for a capital bill but he does not see a Bill happening until next year after the general election as the major question is how to pay for it. He suggested that the County work on a list of projects to be full-filled with a capital bill, so that when a capital bill is introduced our list will be ready for consideration.
- Solar Energy and Facilities and Agricultural Mitigation Act. Mr. Anderson indicated that there are bills in both the Senate and the House on this issue but neither have had hearings at the Committee level yet. He stated that he was not too concerned about these as the Farm Bureau is working hard on these. He stated that bills are looking to add solar farms to the mitigation law that was produced for wind farms. He stated there is a Bill that the Farm Bureau and Assessors are supporting that would change how property taxes are valued on solar which would define how property taxes are defined.
- Court Fines/Fees. Mr. Anderson stated that Task force the Supreme Court convened to look at how the Court assess fines and fees. The Task Force felt that the system was regressive, overly complicated and burdensome. They are working with legislative to streamline system, and limit the number of fines and fees you have to pay to use the Courts. He stated their concern is that when you reduce the fees there is less money to operate the Court. He stated that the Bills are very complex and they are studying it and discussing it to make sure all parties understand how this might affect funding and security at the County Court level.
- FOIA requests. He stated they have not seen as many Bills on this topic this year. He stated he understands issues with companies using FOIA for a profit which is not intended purpose of FOIA, but have to be careful with this one as you can't lump all "for-profit" companies together as the press falls under that category and they should be able to FOIA information. He stated that there are

loop holes with this and they are working to close those loop holes. He stated there are other groups who would have an interest in this and indicated he would work with them on legislation.

- Court Probation Funding – He stated this is always an issue. He Stated that the Supreme Court has been very good in the last few years to ask for 100% reimbursement. He stated that he felt they would ask for that again, but was not sure if that would happen this year.
- Mental/Behavioral Health Funding. Mr. Anderson stated this is a national issue. He stated that this was an issue in Illinois before the budget impasse. He stated that this issue is not going away. He stated that the local levels have been making up the difference. Mr. Anderson indicated this is being brought to the forefront by several groups.
- Hazardous waste. Mr. Anderson stated that this issue was put on a back burner when the State dealt with electronic waste. He thinks this will come back up soon but cautioned that pharmaceutical recycling may come in front of this because of the national opioid epidemic. He stated that he could see similar legislation as passed for tires where there is an upfront fee paid to help with the disposal costs.

Mr. Anderson stated that if there were questions on these or other issues, he would be happy to try to answer them or provide information he had.

Chairman Soeldner opened by asking Mr. Anderson about recent movement of regional airports to expand their tax base. Mr. Anderson indicated that he has seen the Bill but he has not talked with the supporter of the Bill yet. He stated that there was some push back initially and it has not moved much yet. He stated that he would talk with the Rep. Hoffman and he would also see where the two airports in Cook County weigh in on the topic.

Mr. Segobiano thanked him for coming and asked him if he felt that opinions of non-major players in Springfield sway outcomes. Mr. Anderson stated that they definitely do. He stated that he felt the leaders base many of their decisions on support or lack of support from their caucus. He provided an example of an issue they did not go to the leaders with but rather discussed with others on the Committee and leaders listened to them when determination was made.

Mr. Caisley stated that on Juvenile Court hearings he hoped that they would make clear that before a juvenile is detained they are evaluated by an intake officer, so it is not as if no one is looking at the case before a hearing. He stated that having hearings in 24 hours can cause a lot of issues with having people on duty and opening facilities. Mr. Anderson stated that both Bills that are being worked on as a compromise they would update the screening processes to the most current best practices and help reduce the number of juveniles that are detained.

Mr. Caisley stated that he felt it was a bad move to reduce the number of cases that are being filed in the circuit court and the municipalities that are processing the ordinance

violations and taking the fees for the easy cases and sending harder ones to our court system needs to be limited. Mr. Anderson indicated that the State receives money from the fines and fees at Circuit Court so he did not feel there was strong support to move to municipal adjudication.

Mr. Caisley stated that the State and the Counties save money when we have probation services and pointed out the amounts saved when we do not incarcerate. He stated that it is better for the individuals as well. Mr. Caisley indicated that he felt fines were ok but the fees were too much and did not always relate to the offense. Mr. Anderson stated that was part of the reason for the task force, but that we needed to make sure that when they look at restructure they take into account services provided by the Courts and operational expenses to make sure those are covered.

Mr. Segobiano asked if there was discussion to regulate the number of local government units. Mr. Anderson indicated that there are discussions about consolidations and there are Bills that are working on this process, but figure if there are no consolidations in the next year or two they may revisit the current Bill.

Mr. McIntyre indicated that the state needs to realize they cannot continue to syphon off funds from the local level as it is affecting how we provide services. He also pointed out that something needs to be done about Medicaid payment delay. He stated that we submit requests but they are not paid for in a timely manner and it is unclear what they are covering when they are paid. Mr. Anderson indicated he would follow up on this.

Mr. McIntyre also discussed organizing counties with similar interests and asked Mr. Anderson if he felt that would be a good idea. Mr. Anderson discussed the current organizations, but indicated that not all of them always agree on what needs to be done, but the best way to get things done is to speak with a unified voice. He stated that with the Illinois Co. Board Association they try to keep in mind that all counties should receive the same level of treatment. He stated that not all counties have the same issues but the issues they do have are important to them. Mr. Anderson stated that in the end it would depend on how they wanted to set up a new organization as to how or if it would work. Mr. Segobiano asked how well that works when everyone has different issues. Mr. Anderson indicated that it does pose some complications but he has seen groups come together and get things done even when it is not something that is high level in their area.

Mr. Caisley asked if municipal league template would work for counties as it is working for them with local adjudication as they are getting the money on the simple cases and sending harder ones to County to pay for. Mr. Anderson indicated there were issues with that template as well and did not feel it was a good template for Counties. He said that Counties are spread out and that poses different issues. He said that there are regional groups within Counties that might get along and then some do not as their issues differ.

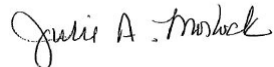
Mr. McIntyre thanked Mr. Anderson for coming this evening.

Mr. Soeldner indicated that they would like to ask the local legislators to come and discuss issues with them and asked Mr. Anderson to attend. Mr. Anderson suggested a breakfast and indicated that would give them the summer to put something together for right before session.

Ms. Schafer stated that a budget would affect these issues and if he felt we would have a budget this year. Mr. Anderson stated there was talk of a 6 month or short term budget that would get us past the election in November.

Chairman Soeldner thanked Mr. Anderson for coming and asked if there was any further business for the Committee to consider; hearing none, he disconnected remote attendance with Mr. George Gordon and then he adjourned the meeting at 6:24 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Julie A. Morlock".

Ms. Julie Morlock
Recording Secretary