

Minutes of the Legislative Subcommittee

The Legislative Subcommittee of the McLean County Board met on Monday, July 2, 2018 at 3:00 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, Randy Martin, George Gordon

Members Absent: George Wendt

Other Board Members Present: Members Erickson, Wollrab and Metsker

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 3:02 p.m. and declared a quorum.

Mr. Soeldner presented the minutes from the March 26, 2018 meeting for review and approval.

Motion by Caisley/Segobiano to approve the minutes of the March 26, 2018 meeting.
Motion Carried.

Chairman Soeldner presented for action a request to approve a Resolution Authorizing Electoral Authorities in McLean County to Submit a Public Question regarding a state-wide property tax increase. Mr. Soeldner stated that a group from the Federal Reserve Bank in Chicago feel a possible solution to the pension problem is to enact a new state-wide 1% property tax. He stated he had several issues with this proposal including that part of our pension problem started in Springfield and did not feel asking the taxpayers to fix this was right and that the State of Illinois has a history of starting with a low percentage but increasing it. Mr. Segobiano stated that he was not in favor of a property tax increase. Mr. Soeldner stated that he wanted the voters in the County to have a voice against this. Mr. Gordon stated that he is also worried about legislators increasing the percentage, but also concerned they will use it for other things and not to solve the pension problem. Mr. Gordon said the pension problem is a real one and wanted wording to be tighter. Mr. Murphy said that he could support putting this on the ballot and he would vote no to the question and would expect most voters to do the

same. Mr. Caisley provided history regarding property taxes in Illinois and stated that taxes are assessed differently in Cook County and then downstate which would be an issue for all of the other counties in the State but Cook County. Mr. Segobiano stated he felt property taxes should be levied by local government. He also stated that we need to be clear about the pensions we are talking about as there are several pensions affected by this. Ms. Wollrab asked if this question would come before the full board. Mr. Soeldner stated this would go to Executive Committee and then full board. Mr. Martin asked if all 102 counties were considering asking this question or just us. Mr. Soeldner stated this would just be for McLean County. Mr. Murphy stated he did not want to endorse additional property tax and did not want this to sound like we are endorsing additional property taxes, but feel this question should go to the people. Mr. Segobiano asked if our State Legislators has been consulted. Mr. Soeldner stated that in the past the legislators have been in favor of fewer property taxes. Mr. Gordon asked how much a 1% property tax increase would help with the pension plan obligations. Mr. Caisley stated the Chicago Tribune reported it would eliminate the underfunding of the pension systems in 40 years. Mr. Murphy stated we have no way to keep Legislators from taking this money and using it for something else or increasing the percentage. He said this is way for citizens to say they do not want more taxes going to Springfield. Mr. Gordon asked if we vote against it, does it stop it here. Ms. Woods confirmed it would stop here. Mr. Segobiano said he felt the Committee should not pass it. Mr. Murphy stated this does not say we are going to impose a new tax on the citizens of McLean County, but gives citizens the chance to say to the Legislators in Springfield they do not want more taxes. Mr. Caisley stated we work hard to keep taxes for the County the same. Mr. Segobiano stated that he was not sure what the other 101 counties contemplating doing. Mr. Murphy stated he was not sure what other counties are doing, but want to put this question to our constituents to know what they want to do. Mr. Segobiano called for question.

Motion by Segobiano/Murphy to recommend approval of a Resolution Authorizing Electoral Authorities in McLean County to Submit a Public Question regarding a state-wide 1% property tax increase. "Should the Illinois General Assembly enact a new property tax to pay the Illinois pension obligation?"

Roll Call Vote with Yes votes by Murphy, Caisley, Gordon and Soeldner and No votes from Martin and Segobiano.

Motion Carried 4/2

Chairman Soeldner presented for action a request to approve a Resolution Authorizing Electoral Authorities in McLean County to Submit a Public Question regarding term limits for political office. Mr. Soeldner read the question that would be posed to voters "Should members of the Illinois General Assembly and State wide elected officials be subjected to term limits?" Mr. Soeldner stated there has been talk on both sides of this issue and felt it was time for the voters to speak out about this issue. Mr. Martin asked them to define term limits. Mr. Soeldner stated there are no specified term or who it affects. He stated the question is to see how citizens feel about term limits. Mr. Segobiano stated he would be voting no on this because he felt it was the right of the

people to vote for whomever they want for however long they want. Mr. Caisley asked that "ed" be removed from the word subject. Committee agreed. Mr. Murphy stated he understood Mr. Segobiano's point, but felt voters are told who they can vote for and provided examples of re-districting. He stated that we are asking people if there should be term limits not voting on whether there should be term limits. He said that to put these questions on the ballot is not an endorsement of the topic, just giving people the chance to express their opinion. Mr. Segobiano stated that redistricting will always be done by the party in power that will give them the most benefit. He stated he had read an article that indicated there are 17 lobbyist to 1 legislator and felt that was where the power was. Mr. Caisley stated that political scientists studied term limits and power of lobbyist and staff of the legislative committees get enhanced. Mr. Gordon asked if there was discussion about this topic in the general assembly. Mr. Soeldner stated that he was not aware of any action being contemplated. Mr. Gordon stated he did not feel legislators would be in support of term limits, so felt the point of this was to allow people to vent their frustration. He stated that other studies have found that people on the national level have low opinion of congress as a whole but they think their representative is good. Mr. Soeldner stated that in other instances members have stated they would like to poll the citizens to see how they felt about an issue and provided example of changing the time of the County Board meetings. Mr. Murphy stated that we are not talking about whether we should or shouldn't have term limits we are asking should the people be allowed to speak. He stated that if lobbyist got more power from term limits then we would already have term limits. He stated that lobbyist are against because once we have support of politician they want to keep that. Mr. Segobiano stated that no place for little guy in politics as money decides things. The question was called.

Motion by Martin/Murphy to recommend approval of a resolution Authorizing Electoral Authorities in McLean County to Submit a Public Question regarding term limits for political office "Should members of the Illinois general assembly and State-wide elected officials be subject to term limits?"

Roll Call vote with yes votes by Murphy, Martin, Caisley and Soeldner and No votes by Segobiano and Gordon

Motion Carried 4/2

Chairman Soeldner presented for action a request to approve Resolution Authorizing Electoral Authorities in McLean County to Submit a Public Question regarding consolidation of Election Authorities. Mr. Soeldner read the suggested language "Should the Bloomington Election Commission be consolidated with the County Clerk's office to be more efficient and less confusing to voters of Bloomington?" Mr. Segobiano stated he felt we have too much language in the resolution. Mr. Gordon indicated he was going to make a motion to that effect as the wording after the word "Office" is not necessary. Mr. Murphy stated he would like to keep wording "to be more efficient." Mr. Murphy said his constituents would be confused as to whether they should vote on this or not because they do not live in Bloomington. Mr. Gordon stated that part of the debate is whether it will make it more efficient and feel that is part of the discussion that

would occur and should not be part of the wording of the question. Mr. Soeldner stated that he felt there would be discussion on this, but wanted to make sure voters are educated on this.

Motion by Gordon/Segobiano to amend to read "Should the Bloomington Election Commission be consolidated with the County Clerk's Office?"
Roll Call Vote – all members present voted yes
Motion Carried.

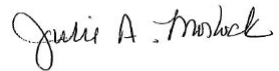
Chairman Soeldner asked if there was discussion on the motion as amended. Mr. Caisley stated this was not a good idea because when you put two questions before the voters that are essentially the same, one could be voted up and the other is voted down which would be inconsistent and not resolve the issue. He stated he also did not feel he had a right to determine what the City of Bloomington voters do and should wait to see what the citizens of Bloomington decide. Mr. Gordon stated he would vote no on this because he feels there should be an option to put countywide elections into the hands of an independent commission. Mr. Segobiano stated they tried putting two things on the ballot before and it was voted down because there were two options. Mr. Soeldner stated this is non-binding just getting an opinion and people in the County care about this because it would make it more efficient and to make it less confusing. Mr. Segobiano provided an example of a citizen being made when they were sent to Bloomington Election Commission from the County Clerk's. Mr. Gordon stated that if we put this non-binding question none the ballot at same time that a binding referendum goes on ballot that would be confusing. Mr. Murphy stated he would not be in favor of putting both on but hoped that by the time we get to full board we might know if there were enough names on the petition to put the binding referendum on the ballot. So the non-binding referendum could be voted down at the full board. Ms. Wollrab asked about the binding resolution and how it read. Mr. Soeldner confirmed that it was to dissolve the Bloomington Election Commission. Ms. Wollrab asked if there was a coordinating resolution that would move it in with the Clerk's office or a County wide election commission. She asked what the timeline would be to roll it into a county wide office. Mr. Knapp stated he wrote a memo a couple of years ago and if the referendum should pass to dissolve the Bloomington Election Commission, there is language in the statute whereby the Bloomington Election Commission would have to deliver their books to the County Clerk's office almost immediately. He stated that to create a countywide election commission there would need to be two votes, one vote to dissolve Bloomington Election Commission and then a second vote either at the same time or a later time to create the county wide election commission. Mr. Gordon stated that our non-binding question might be more specific than the petition for a binding question. Mr. Gordon asked the deadline for the County Board to adopt this non-binding resolution. Ms. Woods stated that August 20th is the deadline which is the day before August board meeting. Mr. Segobiano called for the question.

Motion by Segobiano/Caisley to recommend approval of Amended Resolution Authorizing Electoral Authorities in McLean County to Submit a Public Question regarding consolidation of Election Authorities.

Roll Call Vote with Yes votes by Murphy, Martin, Segobiano and Soeldner
and No Votes by Caisley and Gordon
Motion Carried 4/2

Chairman Soeldner asked if there was any further business for the Committee to consider; hearing none, he adjourned the meeting at 3:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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

Ms. Julie Morlock
Recording Secretary