

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
MINUTES
JULY 5, 2005**

The Economic Development Committee of the DeKalb County Board met on Monday, July 5, 2005, @ 7:00p.m. in the Legislative Center's Freedom Room. Chairman Jeff Metzger called the meeting to order. Members present were Steve Faivre, Steve Slack, Dennis Sands, Jerry Augsburger and Sally DeFauw. Ms. Fullerton was absent. Others present were Christine Johnson, Roger Hopkins and Jeff Whelan.

Chairman Metzger welcomed our new committee member, Mr. Jerry Augsburger, who took the place of Mr. Frank Van Buer.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Moved by Mr. Faivre, seconded by Ms. DeFauw, and it was carried unanimously to approve the minutes from June 2005.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Chairman Metzger said that he was removing item #5 -Workshop Update, from the agenda this evening.

Moved by Mr. Faivre, seconded by Mr. Sands, and it was carried unanimously to approve the agenda.

TREASURER'S UPDATE

Ms. Christine Johnson, DeKalb County Treasurer, gave a brief update on her department's duties. She said that she has 3 full-time staff and 3 part-time staff members that work for her. She also has 2 part-time employees that work for her during the summer months and 1 part-time employee during the winter months. She continued by saying that there has been no increase in personnel in her office in the eleven (11) years that she has been the Treasurer.

She explained that she is also the County Collector for DeKalb County per the Illinois State Statutes. As the Treasurer she is also the banker for the County. The County has a \$53 million budget and approximately 25% of that budget is derived from real estate taxes. All the revenues for the County go through her office, that is, traffic tickets, dog licenses, any health department fees, money paid to the Rehab and Nursing Center for care of a loved one, anything that comes through any county department comes to her department for deposit.

In that, they do all the banking and investment of the County's funds. Ms. Johnson further stated that, all funds that you levy for during the year are invested by her department, which amounts to \$33 million a year. She is also

responsible for the security of those funds while they are in her custody and her office takes this responsibility very seriously.

Julia Fullerton arrived @ 7:07p.m.

They have three priorities when they do their investment: the first is security. All of their deposits over \$100,000 are covered by collateral over the FDIC insurance, that the bank has pledged to the Treasurer's Department to cover our investments over the FDIC insurance. Therefore, on any given day, if a bank should fail, the County will get their FDIC insurance and then anything over and above that \$100,000. The second priority is liquidity and the third item is Yield. Over the last ten (10) years, her office has earned more than \$10 million in interest.

As the Tax Collector they mail out more than 35,000 real estate tax bills a year. This year they will collect more than \$128 million and then they distribute that money 6 times annually to more than 150 taxing bodies. They also invest funds that are in their custody for a little over 30 days. They have generated \$2.2 million in interest in a ten (10) year period also from these funds that were invested.

Some of the programs that her office offers is the Electronic Payment or Same Day Pay, where taxpayers can pay their taxes over the Internet. They began this service in 2003 and in the first year of operation they collected \$97,000 in taxes, 2nd year they collected \$228,000 and this year, so far, they have collected \$181,000.

Another program is the Payment by Credit Card. They began this service last year. The taxpayers can pay with MasterCard, Visa, Discover and American Express Accounts. They have collected about \$253,000 and this year, so far, they have collected \$184,000. By the end of this year she believes they will collect around \$400,000.

They also administer the Senior Tax Deferral Program. This program allows senior citizens who are 65 and older and who make less than \$40,000 a year, apply and have the State of Illinois pay their real estate taxes for them. Through this program the State offers the money and her office administers the money. The State pays their real estate taxes for them at the time that the tax bill comes out. The State then puts a lien on their property and charges them an interest rate. It does not have to be paid off until they sell their property or their estate is settled. They currently have about 70 people in this program and have deferred about \$100,000 at this point in time.

Chairman Metzger asked what kind of communication did her office use to promote these programs to generate interest? Ms. Johnson said that the State Treasurer's Office sent out a post card to each of the taxpayers announcing the program and her office released information to the radio, various clubs, newspapers, etc. She also said that there is an option on the back of the tax bills to pay the taxes with a Discover Credit Card too.

Mr. Augsburger asked, who pays the credit card fee? Ms. Johnson said that the taxpayer does.

The committee thanked Ms. Johnson for her very informative update.

OLD BUSINESS

Chairman Metzger said that he did send out an email today regarding the DeKalb Area Convention and Visitors Bureau (DCVB). He also mentioned that Ms. Kim Kubiak, Executive Director of the DCVB, also sent out an email today to all the Economic Development Committee members attaching her business plan and materials. He said that the committee could put this item back on the agenda for the next meeting in August or push it back another month, whatever their pleasure.

Mr. Sands said that he spoke with Ms. Kubiak today and she said that she has met with the Sycamore Chamber of Commerce twice since our last meeting and that they now have come forward with a letter of support for a countywide tourism bureau. The Sycamore Chamber said that they are willing to come to our August meeting to make a united presentation about countywide tourism, he further stated.

Ms. Fullerton suggested that in the future this committee should develop some guidelines that we could hand out to organizations that make the same type of request.

Chairman Metzger said that he was assuming that if we would go ahead and invite the Sycamore and DeKalb Chambers to come to our next meeting that we would also include the other communities and their chambers of commerce so that they are aware of what is going on.

Mr. Slack said that he realizes that those communities that have chambers of commerce we could approach, but how do we approach those communities that don't have a chamber of commerce?

Mr. Sands said that Ms. Kubiak has offered to go to each village board and asked to put on their individual agendas to explain the concept to them.

Mr. Slack said that his understanding of this proposal is that there will be an advisory board made up of members of various county communities, correct?

Mr. Sands said that yes, there will be an advisory board.

Mr. Slack said that he understands that the Sycamore Chamber is happy to participate, with the notion that an advisory board has to eventually evolve into something more definitive and then that board will have to include, for this to work, an equal weight in vote in how they spend the funds, for all communities.

Mr. Faivre said that this is a particular case, because the county would be providing funds for this concept, it's coming out of our funds.

Mr. Sands said that the county funds are only a portion of the funds not the total amount.

It was agreed by the committee to invite the DeKalb and Sycamore Chambers to the August meeting along with the other chambers throughout the county and villages. It was also agreed that Ms. Kubiak with the DCVB would be responsible to invite these individuals to our August meeting for the presentation and informational meeting. The meeting in August will be held in the Administration Building's Conference Room East to accommodate all of the people that will be invited.

Chairman Metzger said that he would contact Ms. Kubiak and let her know that she would need to contact the other communities involved and the Chambers of Sycamore and DeKalb and to invite them all to our next meeting in August.

ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Mr. Faivre, seconded by Ms. Fullerton, and it was carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeffery Metzger, Chairman

Mary C. Supple, Secretary