

**DRAFT**  
**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**  
**MINUTES**  
**JUNE 2, 2005**

The Economic Development Committee of the DeKalb County Board met on Monday, June 2, 2005, @ 7:00p.m. in the Legislative Center's Freedom Room. Chairman Jeff Metzger called the meeting to order. Members present were Steve Slack, Dennis Sands, Julia Fullerton, and Sally DeFauw. Mr. Faivre was absent. Others present were Kim Kubiak, Heather Crichton, Sarah Siebert, Pamela Fettes, Margaret Whitwell, Roger Hopkins and Greg Millburg.

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

**Moved by Ms. DeFauw, seconded by Ms. Fullerton, and it was carried unanimously to approve the minutes from May 2005.**

**APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

**Moved by Ms. Fullerton, seconded by Mr. Slack, and it was carried unanimously to approve the agenda.**

**RIVER VALLEY WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD**

Chairman Metzger introduced Ms. Pamela Fettes, Director of the River Valley Workforce Investment Board who is responsible for the oversight of the workforce for Kane, Kendall and DeKalb Counties. Their role is to provide a workforce environment for the general workforce. This board provides oversight to organizations and businesses. Through this board \$476,410 was delivered to DeKalb County for administration and delivery of training here. Services to youth amounted to \$185,923.00 and \$113,169 was for services to adults (See overview of report attached to these minutes).

Ms. Fettes said that there are forty(40) business and public sector executives that make up the Workforce Investment Board. They represent a diverse group of stakeholders. The members share a vision to ensure the economic vitality of Kane, DeKalb, and Kendall County and are advocates for an integrated workforce development system.

The River Valley Workforce Investment Board is involved in a consortium comprised of the nine Workforce Boards in the Chicago metropolitan area. This consortium is focusing on a number of regional initiatives aimed at supporting business, the community, and the region's economic vitality. Under its industry-based strategic initiatives, the consortium is targeting healthcare, manufacturing, and transportation/warehousing/logistics industries with the intent to bring awareness to these career paths and to provide skill development for current workforce initiatives.

Chairman Metzger asked Ms. Fettes, if they had a partnership with Open Door or Opportunity House, that is, people who have developmental disabilities? Ms. Fettes said that absolutely, they do have partnerships with Ben Gordon and Opportunity House.

Mr. Slack asked what they are doing about the transportation problems and what are they? Ms. Fettes said that they are inviting educators, business leaders, economic development officers and transportation experts to sessions where they play a game called "Transopoly." The groups develop very specific solutions to the area and

there is a budget..... Mr. Slack asked solutions to what? Ms. Fettes, said to the transportation problems. Ms. Slack again asked what are the problems? Ms. Fettes said that they could be people who can't get to schools or job interviews or services because transportation is not available. They are working with various groups to provide what is needed for the workforce.

Ms. Fullerton asked what is the average education level of adult participants? Ms. Fettes said about 6-8<sup>th</sup> grade level is the average of the people that they test. If a person has a minimum of an 8<sup>th</sup> grade level then they are to receive additional training.

Chairman Metzger thanked Ms. Fettes for her very informative presentation.

Mr. Roger Hopkins, Executive Director, of DeKalb County Economic Development Corporation and a member on the River Valley Workforce Investment Board, said that they are looking for input on members from the private sector for the board. To be eligible for the board, the person or the business would have to provide a service in this area.

### **SUPERVISOR OF ASSEMENTS ANNUAL REPORT**

Ms. Margaret Whitwell, DeKalb County Supervisor of Assessments, reviewed her 2004 Annual Report for the committee. She said that our area and county is continuing to grow. The current Board of Review members are Jerry Wahlstrom, Marlin Chaplin and Doug Johnson. Several townships have had to contract with assessors as no one in the jurisdiction had the qualifications to run for the office of assessor or to be appointed. The 2005-year will be the final year for the current Shabbona/Paw Paw and Afton/Pierce Township Assessors. New assessors will be appointed in 2006 as there were no candidates for the 2005 election for those jurisdictions. All of the other jurisdictions have either elected or appointed officials.

She then highlighted some areas of her report for the committee. She said that in 2004 new construction in DeKalb County increased by almost \$164 million over 2003. The 60,470,056 assessed value in new construction for the 2004-year is equivalent to just over \$181 million in market value.

Their 2004 total assessed value increase of 113,840,983 is a 7.1% increase from 2003. The 2003 assessed value was 1,606,362,399 and the 2004 value is 1,720,203,382. The increase was due to reassessment, multipliers, and new construction. Although farmland values decreased 10% for all soil types there still was a substantial increase in the County's total assessed value. Farmland in 2004 made up 91% of the total county acres.

New legislation in 2004 changed several exemption amounts and requirements for the exemptions. The owner occupied exemption increased from 3,500 to 5,000; the senior citizen exemption increased from 2,000 to 3,000; the home improvement exemption increased from up to 15,000 to 25,000; and the senior citizen assessment freeze income requirement changed from a total household income of \$40,000 to \$45,000. Because of these increases in exemption values and the increase in the number of exemptions, the total amount of exemptions in the County increased approximately 39,000,000. The total value of exemptions for 2004 was 132,227,821. In 2003 the total value of exemptions was 88,699,348.

Equalization factors (multipliers) for the townships varied a great deal this year, ranging from .9700 to 1.0768. The Illinois Department of Revenue certified a final state equalization factor of 1.0000 for the 2004 year on March 28, 2005. This indicates that DeKalb County is within the level of assessment parameters set by the State of Illinois.

Mr. Sands asked Ms. Whitwell for her opinion on growth in our county over the next few years? Ms. Whitwell said that she anticipates growth, but the amount is unknown. She said that we will see increases.

Mr. Slack asked Ms. Whitwell how something like the Target Distribution Project is assessed? Ms. Whitwell said that it is assessed locally. We are looking at the fact that it will be a partial assessment now and will not see the full impact of the total new construction for another year or two. Mr. Hopkins said that the building will be handed over to Target Corporation in August 2005, but not occupied and it won't be used until June of 2006. Mr. Hopkins further stated that we are critically expensive in our tax rates. They are very high compared to some of the other competing areas in Will, Lee, LaSalle, Grundy and Ogle Counties.

Chairman Metzger asked Ms. Whitwell if the County Board Members were going to get a copy of her report? She said, yes they will.

#### **TOURISM ALLOCATION PROPOSAL FOR THE DEKALB AREA CONVENTION AND VISITOR'S BUREAU**

Chairman Metzger briefly reviewed for the committee what the discussion was last month regarding the Convention and Visitor's Bureau and Tourism (CVB) in DeKalb County and why it was brought back again this month. He stated that Mr. Sands has suggested a proposal of \$50,000 to be funded each year by DeKalb County to the Visitor's Bureau.

Mr. Slack said that in the month's time that has gone by since this subject was discussed, he has heard from Sycamore Chamber of Commerce and every member of the Chamber Board asking what is going on? He said he also has heard from almost every chamber in the county. Why are we favoring the DeKalb chamber over the local offices? How do I respond to them? He asked.

Mr. Sands said that he met with the Sycamore Chamber Office and they had a long discussion about that. There were a lot of factors that came into place, DeKalb and Sycamore have always been rivals, no matter what the subject. The other issue was that if we were to proceed with this concept, does the County want to get involved and do they want to be the "lead" office and hire a person to operate the tourism bureau. Or would it be better for us to take advantage of the people that have already been doing it and that have been reaching out to the County and make their office a county-wide office.

Ms. Kubiak introduced Ms. Heather Crichton, who will be replacing Ms. Sarah Siebert who is leaving the CVB.

Mr. Slack asked Ms. Kubiak if there was anything that the CVB had done yet that had benefited the Sycamore Chamber and had come to Sycamore as a result of your work? They are listed on all of our publications, Ms. Kubiak said.

Mr. Slack then said, that this has always been the issue that he has run into with chamber directed CVB. The chamber members start saying, I'm a member of my chamber, and I pay money to this organization. I don't want competitors in Sycamore or wherever, to get the same value that I'm getting. Then the chamber gets into the position of having to try and explain that to their members, said Mr. Slack.

Mr. Sands said that they would need to run them separately. They would need to operate the chamber part separately from the tourism part and they also have to separate the dollars. Ms. Kubiak said that her CVB has its own board of directors now. Mr. Slack asked how many of those board members are from outside of DeKalb? Ms. Kubiak said a few are. Mr. Slack said what would be wrong with having a governing board that had representatives from the other chambers throughout the county? If we have to we will, said Ms. Kubiak. Mr. Slack said, then what if that governing board then said that they wanted their own director, which I would assume that they might want to do? Maybe they would want to have the director from Sycamore or another chamber. That stuff can happen, it's the practical problem that comes out of a chamber driven CVB, he further stated. Now having a county originated CVB, you would eliminate that problem, but then you have other issues, said Mr. Slack. The other problem is that we were hoping to get state funds to augment this. Mr. Slack said that he felt that we need to talk to the chambers more.

Chairman Metzger said that there seems to be a lot of "what if's" with this issue, and that all chambers will resist any CVB that they don't control. He would be open to any suggestions that the committee has to further investigate this issue. Maybe we should look at a written business plan before we make a recommendation or suggestion, said Mr. Slack. Ms. Kubiak said that she does have one and she can email it to everyone.

Ms. DeFauw said that she would like to have more information on where the money is going to come from.

Mr. Slack said that he would like to see a CVB that is independent of a specific chamber.

Ms. Kubiak said that the plan is to be separate, but most CVB's start from a chamber.

Ms. Sands said that he thought of bringing people together, but he doesn't want to if the committee is not interested in the concept. This committee needs to get a consensus of whether or not it's a good idea and if you want to support the concept.

Chairman Metzger said that the committee is not against the concept, but it needs more information to review before it makes a commitment and a decision.

Ms. Kubiak informed the committee that the deadline for funding is July 1, 2005.

Mr. Sands said that if the committee wants him to put effort into this issue he would donate the time. Chairman Metzger asked him if this issue could wait until next month? He said yes.

Chairman Metzger suggested reviewing the business plan before the next committee meeting and to invite Mr. Gary Hanson to the July committee meeting and to discuss the issue further.

#### **DISCUSSION OF WORKSHOP CONCEPT**

Ms. Fullerton said that she would like to bring everyone together to discuss tourism and economic development. She would like people who are involved with tourism and economic development, the chambers and a representative from DECA, to be present at this workshop.

Chairman Metzger said that he talked to someone from the State Treasurer's Office who is involved with economic development in the state. They are interested in participating in the workshop also. The committee had no objections in going forward at looking into a workshop.

**ADJOURNMENT**

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

Respectfully submitted,

---

Jeffery Metzger, Chairman

---

Chris Halstead, Secretary

G:Economic Development Committee Minutes 060205.doc