

Draft
FINANCE COMMITTEE
MINUTES
June 4, 2008

The Finance Committee of the DeKalb County Board, met on Wednesday, June 4, 2008 @ 7:00p.m. in the Administration Building's Conference Room East. Vice-Chairman Vince Faivre called the meeting to order. Members present were Jerry Augsburger, Julia Fullerton, John Hulseberg, and Ruth Anne Tobias. Mr. Haines and Mr. Steimel were absent. A quorum was present. Others present were Ray Bockman, Gary Hanson, Karen Grush, Greg Millburg and Julia Fauci.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Moved by Mr. Augsburger, seconded by Ms. Tobias, and it was carried unanimously to approve the minutes from May 2008.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

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

SPAY/NEUTER PROGRAM – JULIA FAUCI

Ms. Julia Fauci, DeKalb County Board Member and DeKalb County Board of Health Member, approached the committee about a spay/neuter program for the County of DeKalb. She said that this program would address the ultimate goal to reduce and eliminate animal-overpopulation. She said that the Board of Health requested \$15,000 in funding from the DeKalb County board to pilot a spay/neuter program for low-income individuals in DeKalb County. They added to this amount - pickup fees and client co-pay. It will be a pool of money and once it is exhausted for that year, then the operations will stop.

Ms. Fauci said that the meeting was excellent. All of the veterinarians in the County were invited to attend this meeting. With this program a citizen of DeKalb County qualifies to participate in this program. The level of poverty income they decided to go with is 200% of the poverty level. The veterinarians also agreed to a cap cost for reimbursement, which is about 50% of their normal fee. She explained that basic care will be given and that the human client would need to sign a disclaimer for their pet's operation. They would need to prove residency, prove their income level, find a vet in the program and receive a voucher that has a timeframe mentioned on it. During that timeframe the client needs to find a vet who is in the program and the vet can determine when the operation would occur. The vet could turn down a client if they choose to and not have to explain why. If this should happen then the client would have to go and find another vet and so, on.

The priority that came out of this meeting is for overpopulation of cats and dogs. They unanimously agreed that they would just like to have the program for cats only. They are the single most reason for overpopulation and they are the biggest problem. The Board of Health approved this recommendation unanimously. The Board of Health is leaving the decision of only allowing this program for cats or for both cats and dogs up to the County Board.

The DeKalb Animal Shelter animals that fit the criteria, would be eligible. There is no limit on how many animals per family can qualify. There also is no micro chipping occurring right now under this program. This program does not include feral and stray cats.

Mr. Augsburger feels that a family could just be irresponsible in one aspect by saying that the County will bail them out anyway with all of their pets with this program. It would be a possibility of abuse, he further stated.

Ms. Fauci said that if the goal is to stop overpopulation then there is no such thing as abuse. If this committee wants to add this limit to the proposal then you can.

Vice-Chairman Faivre said that he does not feel that we should take tax dollars to support people who do have the responsibility to take care of their pets. He feels that the overpopulation is not dealing with cats that are in households but it's the wild cats that are the problem. He feels that this program does not solve the problem.

Ms. Fauci said that it was determined at the County Board level and the Board of Health level to not include feral cats.

Vice-Chairman Faivre said that from the original meeting where we approved a pilot program for spay/neutering it was his understanding that we would not have to vote on a plan and go forward with a program.

Ms. Fauci said that it was her understanding at that original meeting that a plan should be drawn up and that an appropriation has already been made.

Mr. Bockman said that the appropriation was subject to an approval of a plan. It was his suggestion to make the appropriation and hold it and bring back a plan, which is what you have done.

Ms. Fullerton asked if the costs for this program and the reduction in funding for the Extension Office and their 4H Program, if there is a limited amount of money in the “pot” so that we could possibly support both of these programs?

Mr. Bockman, County Administrator, said that it would be disingenuous of him to suggest to the committee that with a \$70 million operating budget to say we could not afford a \$15,000 program.

After further discussion Mr. Hulseberg said that he would be in favor of limiting the amount of animals per family to 2 or 3 pets.

Ms. Tobias said that she would be in favor of letting the program run for a year and see how it is going.

Mr. Augsburger said that we could do a trial period of one year and then receive a very detailed reporting system to be very specific about what kind of results have occurred.

Ms. Fauci said that is why we are having everything being handled by the Health Department to show measurable kinds of things.

Ms. Tobias asked if we have it run until the end of this year or until next year’s budget?

Mr. Hanson said for this year that we are in. You will be making your next decision in about 3 or 4 months.

Ms. Fauci said then we need a formal report after 3 months of operation.

Mr. Augsburger said that we would need to see positive outcomes.

Vice-Chairman Faivre asked if this is our responsibility to do this for a family of four making \$42,000 a year. They should be able to take care of their own pet.

Ms. Tobias asked if we could go at 150% of poverty?

Mr. Bockman said that there will be pickup fees, how much do you think that would generate?

Ms. Grush, Public Health Director said about \$1,000.00. She also said that there would not be enough information gathered to make a formal report in six months.

Ms. Fauci said that she highly recommends that the County try this program. She has gotten a lot of positive feedback about the program from the people that she has spoken to. As the human population grows, our animal population will grow too.

Mr. Bockman asked Ms. Fauci if this could catch on with the municipalities?

Ms. Fauci said that she would be approaching them and the private sector, too for funding.

Ms. Fullerton asked if we could wait until the 2009 budget cycle?

Ms. Fauci said that that would be okay so that they could get their marketing items done.

Vice-Chairman Faivre said no matter what the committee decides he would want the proposal amended to exclude dogs because in the early stages you don't really have the money to include them and the number one problem, as you've said, is cats.

Mr. Augsburger said that he agrees with Mr. Faivre.

Vice-Chairman Faivre asked if anyone wanted to make a motion to forward the item to the county board? If there is no motion then we will allow it to lie and bring it up at a later date. No motion was made.

GROUNDWATER/STORMWATER DISCUSSION:

Mr. Bockman, said that he sent some materials in the mail to the committee to remind them that the groundwater/stormwater item will be on the agenda again at the Executive Committee next week. If the Board thinks that this work should be done, and the Board decides to take responsibility to find funding for it, and if you decide that it will be done by a referendum, and if you decide that's going to happen this year, you will have until the August meeting. The September meeting will be past the deadline for the fall ballot, he continued.

Mr. Bockman said, if someone on this committee cannot make the Executive Committee and they wanted to provide some input either at this meeting or between the two meetings, he just wanted to give them a heads up, so that they could.

He further stated, that as far as the referendum goes, he provided them with some language that would be mandatory. It does not include the word "water" anywhere in the language. He said, that you tell the voters how much you are raising your limiting rate, what the financial effect it would have on our budget and the effect it would have per 100,000 dollars of real estate value, but nothing else.

So, if someone is serious about getting this business done, there is going to have to be some organizational effort to get the facts and merits of the case in front of the voters or they are going to very confused by the language, Mr. Bockman said.

Ms. Tobias asked if it is possible to do it in April?

Mr. Bockman said that you could put it on any ballot.

Vice-Chairman Faivre, said that with the Public Safety Sales Tax referendum, we have had an aggressive group that has tried to educate people and point out why we need the referendum and we have not been successful. He feels that it would not be beneficial to put it on the ballot to vote on a referendum unless we have someone out there who is willing to educate people. There is going to be a lot of confusion out there. Is there a group out there that is fired up enough about this to take it up and run with it?

Mr. Bockman said that he does not know of anyone yet.

The committee asked Mr. Greg Millburg from the Farm Bureau what their feelings are on this?

Mr. Millburg said that by not being able to use the word "water" on the ballot it would be tough to educate people on it. He is not saying that the Farm Bureau is for it or not.

Mr. Hanson said that Mr. Steimel called him and said that he would not be at the meeting tonight but could Mr. Hanson pass along his feelings on this issue. Mr. Hanson said that Mr. Steimel commented that this would be a hard one to pass, but that he felt April would be better to put it on the ballot. He is for a two-year levy, and he feels this would be a fair way to fund this initiative. He felt that it was unfortunate that we cannot say what the referendum is for.

Mr. Bockman said that he has alerted the County's federal lobbyists to be on the lookout for any funds for any of the water initiatives and that they are a high priority. He said that he is not asking for any action tonight, he is just trying to raise consciousness.

FY2009 BUDGET CALENDAR

Mr. Hanson passed out the FY2009 Budget Calendar to the committee. He said that he and Mr. Bockman would begin to meet with County Board Members in July to discuss the budgets for their committees and any special areas of interest. In August, they will then meet with the various County departments. The budget workbooks will be presented at the September Finance Committee to all County Board members. Also, in September he and the County Administrator will hold a "Question and Answer Forum" for all board members to further clarify the rationale behind the budget recommendation. This will be at 6:30p.m. prior to the monthly County Board Meeting. The adoption of the budget will be in November 2008.

Mr. Hanson said that the workbook would be made available electronically. If a county board member would like a paper copy they can ask for one.

Moved by Mr. Hulseberg, seconded by Mr. Augsburger, and it was carried unanimously to accept the FY2009 Budget Calendar.

ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Mr. Augsburger, seconded by Mr. Hulseberg, and it was carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Vice-Chairman Vince Faivre