

Draft
FINANCE COMMITTEE
MINUTES
November 5, 2008

The Finance Committee of the DeKalb County Board, met on Wednesday, November 5, 2008 @ 7:00p.m. in the Administration Building's Conference Room East. Chairman Michael Haines called the meeting to order. Members present were Jerry Augsburger, Julia Fullerton, John Hulseberg, Roger Steimel and Ruth Anne Tobias. Mr. Faivre was absent. Others present were Ray Bockman, Gary Hanson, Jim Scheffers, Kevin Hickey, Sheriff Roger Scott, Joan Berkes Hanson, Elena Grimm, Eileen Dubin, Aaron Ruder, Mike Stuckert, Mary Ramp, Rich Osborne, Julia Fauci and Margaret Whitwell.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

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

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

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

PUBLIC HEARING ON PROPERTY TAX LEVY

Chairman Haines opened the floor for anyone to speak on the Public Hearing for the Property Tax Levy.

Ms. Kay Shelton from DeKalb, Illinois. Asked the committee to cut inanimate objects, like computers and furniture because all of these little things do add up. She also mentioned that the County of DeKalb is ranked 37th in the country in terms of property taxes paid as a percentage of income at the website by the Tax Foundation (www.taxfoundation.org).

No one else addressed the committee on the property tax levy and therefore Chairman Haines closed the public hearing.

PUBLIC HEARING ON PROPOSED FY2009 BUDGET

Chairman Haines opened the floor for anyone to speak on the Proposed 2009 Budget. No one spoke.

Chairman Haines closed the public hearing since no one spoke on the item.

FINAL FY2009 BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS

Mr. Gary Hanson, Deputy County Administrator, passed out a list highlighting changes to the FY2009 budget recommendations.

Mr. Hanson stated that he wanted to update the committee on an open item. The new construction value is right where we have projected after checking with Ms. Whitwell, Supervisor of Assessments, that is, right around the \$42 - \$43 million figure. This is down in 2009 from previous years, he said.

Regarding health insurance premiums, Mr. Hanson said, said that most rates are not finalized yet, but preliminary rates are right about at 9-10% level, which is the percentage that they used in the budget. He said that this is good news.

Regarding the energy costs, Mr. Hanson informed the committee that the gas prices have been down for highway snowplowing vehicles and Sheriff's patrol. They have locked in the natural gas costs for next year and so that is within the budget projections for next year, as well.

Labor contracts will unlikely be settled before the County begins the new fiscal year for the three contracts. He said that once they do get settled the three contracts will be impact the budget with some variables involved.

The Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund (IMRF), with the markets crashing their investment revenue is off by quite a bit. Based on September results, they are projecting for 2010, a rate increase of 23%. We pay for the majority of our employees, around 8.65% of their salaries into the IMRF fund. If we get a 23% increase that figure will go up to 10.64% in 2010, which results in another 2% onto all of our salary costs for 2010.

Appeals:

Item #6 - To reduce the salary increase for the ESDA Director by \$1,500 so that the salary would increase from \$37,000 to \$38,500 rather than increase to the recommended \$40,000 level.

Moved by Mr. Haines, seconded by Mr. Hulseberg, and it was carried to accept this appeal. Ms. Tobias voted no.

Item #21 - Deny the request for a half-time Public Defender at an annual cost of \$40,000, but add a paid Law Clerk position at a salary cost not to exceed \$7,000 (not to exceed \$8,000 with benefit costs).

Ms. Fullerton asked if the Public Defender was okay with this decision?

Mr. Hulseberg said that at the Law and Justice Committee meeting and when he spoke with her she said that she was fine with it.

Ms. Tobias said that the Public Defender was fine with it now but as a temporary measure.

Moved by Mr. Hulseberg, seconded by Mr. Steimel, and it was carried unanimously to accept appeal #21

Item #26B: Add \$1,000 to the administrative fee charged by Community Services to the Senior Service Program; the funding comes for reducing the dollars allocated for seniors.

Ms. Fullerton said that she felt that Ms. Ramp and her staff perform a lot of work on the Senior Tax Levy Hearings; they come prepared to the meetings with a spreadsheet updating the committee on where the senior tax levy grant is at. She feels that this is a good thing.

Moved by Ms. Fullerton, seconded by Mr. Augsburger, and it was carried unanimously to accept appeal #26B.

Item #27: Eliminate the proposed Spay/Neuter program, saving \$15,000. (The budget request was then withdrawn by the Board of Health.)

Moved by Mr. Augsburger, seconded by Mr. Steimel, and it was carried unanimously to accept appeal #27.

Item #28: Eliminate funding for a Federal Lobbyist, saving \$90,000.

Moved by Mr. Haines, seconded by Ms. Fullerton, and it was carried unanimous to accept the appeal #28.

Ms. Fauci said that she feels that we need to have some sort of communication with our legislators whether it is through a county board member or a committee. She said that it might not be a bad idea to send one or two county board members to Washington, D.C. to meet with our legislators.

Chairman Haines then addressed Section B. of the Budget Recommendations regarding accepting budget items #6, #21, #27 and #28 that would make available for re-allocation. The Staff recommendation is to allocate the \$138,500 in savings to the Building Fund for the Criminal Justice System, changing the total in budget item #37 from \$1,100,000 to \$1,238,500.

Chairman Haines then said that any unobligated money from previous budget items, rather than being cut out of the budget, they could be placed in the jail building fund or the opportunity fund to begin preparing for the tough times ahead. Along that same logic, he said that adding new staff, continuing staff with salaries and fringe benefits seems to be committing ourselves to an expenditure that we don't know if we will have the money to support. They both seem to be the same thing. The new positions that are mentioned in the budget recommendations, what does this committee think about the possibility that we look at implementing a hiring freeze for fiscal year 2009?

Mr. Steimel said that he felt that the county board, the committees and department heads have been using restraint when it comes to their requests for the FY2009 budget.

Chairman Haines said that the committee could go back to this discussion and moved forward on the agenda.

Moved by Mr. Augsburger, seconded by Ms. Fullerton, and it was carried unanimously to accept the reallocation of \$138,500 to the Criminal Justice Building Account.

It was then moved by Mr. Steimel, seconded by Mr. Augsburger, and it was carried unanimously to forward the FY2009 budget and tax levy to the full county board for approval.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Respectfully submitted,

Chairman Michael Haines