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DeKalb County Government
Sycamore, Illinois

**Ad Hoc Rules Committee Minutes
November 14, 2017**

The Ad Hoc Rules Committee of the DeKalb County Board met on Tuesday, November 14, 2017 at 6:30 p.m. in the Administration Building's Conference Room East in Sycamore, Illinois. Chairman Pietrowski called the meeting to order. The roll reflected that the Members present were Ms. Askins, Mr. Bagby, Mr. Faivre, Mr. Frieders, Mr. Jones, Ms. Leifheit, Mr. Stoddard, and Chairman Pietrowski. A quorum was established with all eight Members present.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

It was moved by Mr. Bagby, seconded by Mr. Jones, and it was carried unanimously by voice vote to approve the minutes from the April 17, 2017 Meeting.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Mr. Faivre moved to approve the agenda as presented and Mr. Frieders seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously by voice vote.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments made.

Chairman Pietrowski noted that all the items on the agenda for the evening were up for discussion and if they decide to move forward with any of the items the wording would be worked out and brought back for a final review before an official vote.

HIRING PROCESS

Chairman Pietrowski noted that this item stems back from when the County Board approved a hiring freeze for the County. He explained that this item wasn't intended to put a freeze back in place but to be used as a way to have a hiring process laid out in the rules. The Board would then have input on whether or not a position should be filled for those departments that report to the County Board. The Chairman also suggested that there be at least a minimum of a month break in-between a position being filled in order to allow an assessment period to evaluate if the newly vacated position is in need of being re-filled. He also shared that he would like to see the Department Head come before the Committee they report to and provide a presentation on why the position should be re-hired.

Mr. Stoddard shared that he liked the idea of the Department Head justifying their need for the position but he wouldn't want to see the whole process tied to a specific timeline (such as a minimum month break).

After further discussion, it was suggested that after the initial report, if a position is not filled within six months then the Department Head must return to their appropriate Committee and either update the Committee on why it has not been filled yet and/or re-justify the need for the position.

As for the approval process, it was suggested that the justification for an open position would first go through its appropriate Committee that the Department Head reports to and if approved by them it would be moved to the Finance Committee for a final say.

The Committee requested that language for this new potential rule be written up for review at their next meeting.

MID-YEAR BUDGET REVIEW

The Chairman mentioned that the mid-year budget review process was previously brought up as a possibility for the Finance Committee and is something that he wanted to get a feeling on whether the Board wanted it in their rules moving forward or not. The Committee Members agreed that it was a good idea to do this but were unsure of the details and what really can be done mid-year. They additionally discussed what may be the best month to have the review. The Committee felt that May seemed to be a good time to start the process but they also felt the details of the process should be more left up to the Finance Committee.

The Committee again requested that language for this new potential rule be written up for review at their next meeting.

RESERVE POLICY

Chairman Pietrowski asked the Committee if they would like to see some type of rule in place that would call for Boards to have an annual reserve amount equal to what the Auditors suggest and no lower than that. Mr. Stoddard noted that he didn't feel that they should or could tie future Board to that type of stipulation.

Mr. Bagby shared that he agreed the Chairman's suggestions would be a good practice but would not necessarily make a good policy.

The Committee further discussed the possibility of a reserve policy and what their thoughts may be regarding the County's reserves. There was a consensus from the Committee that they would shelve this item for now and not pursue going forward with an official reserve policy.

BALANCED BUDGET APPROACH

Currently, the Finance Committee has made it their statement that they want to proceed forward with Balanced Budgets for the County throughout the fiscal years. The Chairman questioned whether they should make that a policy moving forward or keep things the way they currently are. After a brief discussion the Committee determined that they would like to keep the same approach to the budgets as they are currently doing.

DEPARTMENT HEAD REVIEW PROCESS

Chairman Pietrowski noted that annual reviews for County Department Heads have not really been happening over the years and he doesn't feel that it is good practice or policy. He thinks that employees want reviews and that it benefits them personally and professionally. The Committee Members additionally echoed their thoughts on the benefits of going through a review process. Mr. Jones noted that he would like to see the actual process left up to the Committee on how they would conduct a review.

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Mr. Bagby pointed out that there is already a policy in place and is in the County Board Rules under Article III, Section 2-66, d, 12: *“Performance evaluations for county board appointed department heads will be conducted by the county board in a manner determined from time to time by the executive committee of the county board. The county administrator may submit input to the board as part of that evaluation process. The county administrator may also choose to perform interim evaluations as deemed appropriate.”* Because a review process is already in place, the Committee didn’t see any need to pursue this item any further.

COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR REVIEW PROCESS

The Chairman noted he would like to see an annual review process formalized within the Administrator Section of the rules. He added that it would be most appropriate to have the Executive Committee conduct that evaluation. The Committee discussed the benefits of evaluating the County Administrator and keeping the line of communication open in order to ensure everyone is on the same page moving forward.

The Committee requested that language for the County Administrator Review Process be written up for and ready for review at their next meeting.

DEPARTMENT HEAD RESIDENCY REQUIREMENT

Chairman Pietrowski shared that this is a topic that has been brought up to him numerous times from numerus different people how they are unhappy to see County Department Heads not live within the County. He added that these are highly paid positions and there is a sense that by living here (within the County) they have an investment in the community. He noted that obviously there are currently some Department Heads that do not live within DeKalb County so if they were to adopt a residency policy they would be grandfathered in.

Mr. Jones, Ms. Leifheit, and Mr. Faivre all spoke very strongly in favor of adopting a residency requirement for County Department Heads. Ms. Leifheit shared that it is one of the topics she has heard about more than anything from constituents.

Mr. Stoddard expressed his concern that adopting a residency requirement would have the potential of limiting the talent pool.

The Committee agreed that they would like to move forward with wording for a County Department Head Residency Requirement Policy which would mean outline that if a Department Head was hired and does not live within the boundaries of DeKalb County they have one year to move here. If not, it would present room for dismissal of the position.

STRATEGIC PLANNING

Chairman Pietrowski shared that the last strategic plan that the County did was back when Mr. Pritchard was Board Chairman in 2004. The typical thought is every five to ten years there is a strategic plan for any type of organization or business. He asked the Committee if there was any sense of trying to put into place an establishment of some type of internal strategic planning recommendations for future Boards. The Committee discussed strategic plans but not having the funds to fulfill what is outlined in them.

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Mr. Faivre noted that what he has missed coming on the Board this past time was that the first two times he was on the County Board there was a County Board Workshop held on a Saturday and a report was given by each Department Head within the County. This was done as a way to meet all the Department Heads and to get a better overview of what each department does on a daily basis and what their future goals are for their offices. There was also question and answer sessions as well with the Department Heads. He added that he thinks every two years that would be something he would strong encourage bringing together again. This would be beyond their initial Committee Orientation.

The Committee liked this idea and noted that they would like to get some wording together to review at their next meeting on possibly holding a County Board Retreat every two years.

ROLE OF COUNTY BOARD AS LEGISLATORS AND ROLE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR AS ADMINISTRATOR

Chairman Pietrowski provided a brief clarification on the boundaries of the County Board and the County Administrator. No further action was generated by this agenda item.

NEXT MEETING DATE

The Committee decided not to set a next meeting date but agreed that they would look for a date later on sometime in December.

ADJOURNMENT

It was moved by Ms. Askins, seconded by Mr. Frieders and it was carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Chairman Mark Pietrowski

Tasha Sims, Recording Secretary