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DeKalb County Government  
Sycamore, Illinois

**Committee of the Whole Minutes  
June 10, 2020**

The Committee of the Whole of the DeKalb County Board virtually met via Zoom on Wednesday, June 10, 2020. Chairman Mark Pietrowski called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Those Members virtually present via Zoom and/or by phone were Mr. Tim Bagby, Mr. Scott Campbell, Ms. Rukisha Crawford, Mrs. Karen Cribben, Mrs. Laurie Emmer, Mr. Steve Faivre, Vice-Chairman John Frieders, Mr. Tim Hughes, Ms. Kiara Jones, Mr. Tracy Jones, Ms. Dianne Leifheit, Ms. Maureen Little, Mr. Jim Luebke, Ms. Mann-Lamb, Mr. Roy Plote, Mr. Chris Porterfield, Mr. Craig Roman, Ms. Linda Slabon, Mr. Paul Stoddard, Mr. Larry West, Mr. Jeff Whelan, Ms. Suzanne Willis, and Chairman Mark Pietrowski, Jr. Mr. Jerry Osland was absent. A quorum was established with twenty-three Members present and one absent.

Others present included Gary Hanson, Derek Hiland, Greg Millburg, Kathy Lampkins, David Berault, Nathan Schwartz, Katie Finlon, Deanna Cada, Pete Stefan, WLBK, Anna Wilhelmi, and a couple additional members of the public.

**APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

**Mr. Porterfield moved to approve the agenda as presented. Ms. Mann-Lamb seconded the motion and it was carried unanimously by voice vote.**

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

**It was moved by Mr. Whelan, seconded by Mr. Hughes and it was moved unanimously to approve the minutes from the May 13, 2020 Committee of the Whole Meeting.**

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

There were no public comments.

Mr. Plote lead the Committee of the Whole in the reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance.

**CHAIR'S COMMENTS**

Chairman Pietrowski commented on the recent peaceful Black Lives Matter protests that are continuing locally during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Chair shared that it is important to acknowledge people's first amendment rights to peacefully protest, but he wanted to make it clear that he wants them to be able to follow safety procedures as well because COVID-19 is still an issue. This would mean wearing masks and trying as hard as they can to socially distance and use disinfectants.

Chairman Pietrowski additionally thanked Ms. Deanna Cada for hosting a recent Zoom Forum on Race Relations in DeKalb County. There were about 330 people that attended the Forum where community members and community leaders gathered to listen to ideas, stories, and experiences from Persons of Color in the community. It lasted around two hours and was recorded and available to watch or listen to on the County's Website. He also thanked County Board Members Rukisha Crawford and Kiara Jones for sharing their stories during the Forum as well.

## **PRESENTATIONS/DISCUSSIONS**

### **Reports from Committee Chairs**

Mr. Faivre, Chairman of the Planning & Zoning Committee, shared the Committee did not meet so they have no action items for the Board to consider. The County has begun hosting Virtual Public Zoning Hearings and there are few more to come in the upcoming weeks.

Mr. Plote, Chairman of the County Highway Committee, shared that the Committee approved to forward three Resolutions to the full County Board. He reviewed those items with the Committee. The first regarding putting a floor down for the new Salt Shed that will be built at the Highway Department in the fall as well as some lot patching and repairs. The next Resolution had to do with encumbering Federal Highway Matching Tax for current and future highway and bridge projects. The last was for an Engineering Agreement for the Phase I Engineering for Plank Road Improvements.

County Engineer Nathan Schwartz was present and answered numerous questions from Board Members regarding the current resurfacing of Peace Road from Peace Road, from Illinois Route 64 south to Bethany Road and Mercantile Drive from Peace Road west to Illinois Route 23 and the future Plank Road Realignment Project. Since there were so many questions still surrounding the Plank Road project and with the amount of money that was anticipated to be spent, Vice-Chair Frieders expressed that he didn't think the Board should move forward yet with the proposed Resolution to approve the Engineering Agreement for Phase I Engineering for Plank Road Improvements.

Mrs. Emmer, Chair of the Economic Development Committee shared that the Committee did not meet this month and they had no items to present to the Board.

Mr. Porterfield, Chairman of Health & Human Services Committee shared that the Committee received the 2019 Annual Report from the Community Mental Health Board. Each Board Member will be receiving their copy of that report and he suggested everyone take a look at it. The Committee additionally forwarded two Resolutions and an Ordinance to the full County Board recommending their approval. All three of the action items have to do with the annual Federal Section 5311 Grant Application for rural transportation that is provided by the Voluntary Action Center. When funds are approved, they are passed through the County to the Voluntary Action Center along with all responsibilities and liability.

Ms. Leifheit, Chair of the Law & Justice Committee, reviewed that the Committee receiving staffing updates from the Public Defender. Margi Gilmour, previous Director of the County Services Department for 30 years, officially retired last week. Mr. Michael Venditti has been appointed to replace her as the new director. The Courthouse reopened on June 3<sup>rd</sup> and all court-related offices are anticipating a very busy late-summer, early-fall with the backlog of cases that will be coming through. The Committee also received 2019 Annual Reports from Dennis Miller regarding the Emergency Services Disaster Agency (ESDA) as well as the Sheriff's 2019 Annual Report. Ms. Leifheit noted that both reports had a lot of information in them and she suggested that Board Members view them on the County's Website. She also added that the Committee had no actionable items this month for the Board's consideration.

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Mr. Bagby, Chairman of the Finance Committee, shared that the Committee reviewed and accepted the 2019 Annual Report of Compliance with the Bond Record Keeping Policy and the Fund Balance Reporting & Flow of Funds Policy Annual Report. They additionally forwarded a Nursing Home Bond Parameter Ordinance to the full County Board which would delegates the authority to sell the bonds to the County Administrator so that when an opportunity present itself in the bond market to complete the bond sale at terms favorable to the County that are within the parameters defined in the Ordinance. The FY 2021 Budget Calendar and Process was approved and although it may be a difficult task, they still would like to see a Balanced Budget for Fiscal Year 2021. There are still many unknowns surrounding this year's budget and beyond relating to the COVID-19 pandemic but each month they are keeping an eye on the numbers with Mr. Stefan's updated charts and graphs. Another action item that was forwarded to the full County Board was a Resolution that establishes the goal for the reserve balance for the Tort & Liability Insurance Fund to be at the 95% Confidence Level at the end of each fiscal year, with the annual revenues adjusted as necessary and appropriate through the annual Budget Ordinance in order to achieve and maintain that goal. Lastly, Treasurer Johnson provided an update on the property tax process.

Mr. Stoddard, Chairman of the Forest Preserve Operations Committee, shared the Committee had no actionable items but he was pleased to report that the Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation has approved a grant of up to \$597,563 to DeKalb County Forest Preserve District for the purchase of the Wood's Property in Genoa (previously Oak Club Golf Course). The Forest Preserve District was awarded a 50% grant for the Wood's Property acquisition. The \$1,175,127.00 appraised value minus the \$587,563.00 ICECF Grant (also added \$10,000.00 grant to assist with restoration costs) minus the \$250,000.00 donation from the Wood family = \$337,564.00 balance for the Forest Preserve District divided by 103 acres = \$3,309 per acre.

### **County Administrator's Report**

County Administrator Gary Hanson shared that relating to COVID-19, most of the County Buildings have opened back up in some way or another at the beginning of June. Some offices are completely open to the public while others may only be available by appointment but either way work is continuing.

On June 3<sup>rd</sup> the DeKalb County Rehab and Nursing Center (DCRNC) was informed that two of its' employees have had a COVID-19 positive test result. One employee has been on home isolation since May 12<sup>th</sup> due to a possible COVID-19 exposure. Because the employee was isolating at home, he/she did not participate in the mass testing on May 26. The second employee's positive test, which was determined from the mass testing on May 26, was reported to the facility. This employee is also on home isolation at this time. Only one of the two positive cases are a DeKalb County resident. Following Illinois Department of Public Health Guidance, mass re-testing of the residents and employees of DCRNC also occurred on June 1. The very good news is that no residents of the facility have tested positive.

County Board Meetings will continue to be conducted through the end of June. The Governor's Executive Orders for Open Meetings Act are set to expire on June 27<sup>th</sup> which will take the Board up to their Summer Recess. At that time, Mr. Hanson noted they will have to see if that order is extended yet again or if he will begin making plans of how the Committee's can safely meeting in-person again at the end of July.

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Mr. Hanson shared that Robin Brunschon, Supervisor of Assessments, went on medical leave for time uncertain. Robin is facing very serious health issues and she was finally convinced by family and doctors that work, and related stresses, need to be put aside for a while so that she could focus full energy on her health.

Last month, Mr. Hanson described that there was hail damage on the roof of the newly purchased storage building north of Sycamore. Thankfully, those costs are going to be completely covered by insurance.

The Courthouse Expansion Project has been put on hold at this time but background work has continued on with the anticipation that the Board may approve the funding for it. Besides the City of Sycamore Code Review, the project will be ready to go out for bid in late Summer if the Board approves to move forward with the project.

As mentioned earlier, Ms. Margi Gilmour retired after 30 years of service to the County. Because of COVID-19, they were not able to through a normal retirement party for her but instead her Department decided to throw her a retirement parade that went through the Sycamore Campus Parking Lot. It was well attended and a creative way to bid farewell to Margi.

Lastly, Mr. Hanson mentioned that if Board Members would like to stick around through the Executive Committee, Chief Civil Assistant State's Attorney David Berault will be speaking in an Executive Session for the purposes of discussing Pending or imminent litigation as provided for in 5 ILCS 120/2(C)(11).

Deputy County Administrator Derek Hiland noted that due to COVID-19 the 2020 Census has looked a little differently so far. They have been using more of the Census Grant Funds to focus on marketing and stressing to the public that the Census is still very important. Census Enumerators will start visiting households in August for those who have not responded. Anyone can call, or go online today to complete your Census at [www.my2020census.gov](http://www.my2020census.gov).

## **ADJOURNMENT**

**It was moved by Ms. Crawford, seconded by Ms. Slabon and it was carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 8:07 p.m.**

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Chairman Mark Pietrowski

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Tasha Sims, Recording Secretary