

Lake County Illinois

*Lake County Courthouse and Administrative Complex
18 N. County Street
Waukegan, IL 60085-4351*



Minutes Report - Final

Wednesday, February 4, 2009

8:30 AM

Conference Room C

Revenue, Records and Legislation Committee

1. **Call to Order**

Chair Paxton called the meeting to order at 8:36 a.m.

Present 7 - Vice Chair Bassi, Member Paxton, Member Nixon, Chair Talbett,
Member Carey, Member Hewitt and Member Pedersen

Also present:

*Amy McEwan, Sr. Assistant County Administrator
Suzi Schmidt, County Board Chairman
Barry Burton, County Administrator
Gary Gordon, Finance and Administrative Services
Willard Helander, County Clerk
Marty Paulson, Chief County Assessment Officer
Jennie Khoen, Communications Manager
Mary Otahal, County Board Office*

2. **Pledge of Allegiance**

Chair Talbett led the committee in the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. **Approval of Minutes - January 14, 2009**

3.1 **09-1214**

Minutes from January 14, 2009.

approval of minutes

Aye: 6 - Member Paxton, Member Nixon, Chair Talbett, Member Carey,
Member Hewitt and Member Pedersen

Abstain: 1 - Vice Chair Bassi

4. **Public Comment**

5. **Added to Agenda**

6. **Old Business**

7. **New Business**

Recorder of Deeds

7.1 **09-1155**

Report of Mary Ellen Vanderverter, Recorder of Deeds, for the month of December 2008.

received and placed on the consent agenda

Aye: 7 - Vice Chair Bassi, Member Paxton, Member Nixon, Chair Talbett,
Member Carey, Member Hewitt and Member Pedersen

County Clerk

7.2 09-1208

Joint resolution authorizing the Chair of the Board to execute an intergovernmental Cooperation Agreement with the Lake Bluff Park District for the purchase and sale of Tax Anticipation Warrants against taxes as levied by the District for the year 2009.

- Lake Bluff Park District has a need for funds for ordinary and necessary expenditures to pay liabilities and expenses of its operations until the receipt of property taxes.
- Lake County may provide such funds through the purchase of tax anticipation warrants to be issued by the District.
- The County will be paid back in full from future tax collections.
- An Intergovernmental Cooperation Agreement is required for this transaction.

Gary Gordon and Willard Helander explained this resolution, stating that due to a discrepancy in the tax amount submitted by the Park District and the tax amount entered into the County's system, the Lake Bluff Park District is \$250,000 short in their tax collection. Mr. Gordon stated that the County has the ability, through short term tax anticipation warrant sales, to loan the money to the district at 0% interest for the next 18 months. This requires a two step process, first out of the 2009 tax collection and then again in 2010. The cost to the county amounts to the loss of interest on this money, which in today's market would amount to approximately \$10,000 - \$15,000.

Some committee members expressed concern that this could set a precedent. Mr. Burton stated that only certain taxing bodies can make this request, and the county would take into account the situation and the amount involved. The county has no legal obligation to do this.

recommended for adoption to the regular agenda

Aye: 7 - Vice Chair Bassi, Member Paxton, Member Nixon, Chair Talbett, Member Carey, Member Hewitt and Member Pedersen

8. **County Administrator's Report**

1. *Willard Helander updated the committee on the cost of early voting. Start-up costs totaled close to \$800,000, with \$500,000 of that being used for capital expenses, such as voting equipment. Ongoing annual costs for the presidential election year were close to \$268,000; \$64,000 of which was for the judges payroll. Ms. Helander indicated that costs will be significantly lower in non-presidential election years. She also stated that once they are able to establish a history of early voting, they anticipate being able to consolidate polling sites.*

2. *Chief County Assessment Officer Marty Paulson stated that he has been working with Bob Skidmore and Communications Manager Jennie Khoen to determine how they can distribute information to the public regarding what the county functions are related to property taxes. The Chief County Assessment Office is committed to making more information available to the public. He presented a draft plan on how to help people understand what his office functions are and to make them aware of the spending side of the process.*

Mr. Paulson distributed a prototype of the 2009 assessment notice providing additional information, including making people aware of the taxing districts involved with their tax bill and showing the percentage of their last bill that went to those taxing districts. They are also working on making people aware of homestead exemption and whether they qualify for them. Committee strongly encouraged Mr. Paulson to print the new assessment notices on blue paper since people are already familiar with the blue card.

Member Nixon left the meeting at this point (9:15).

Discussion was held on ways to help the public better understand the assessment process, how the equalization factor is determined, and the role that the Board of Review plays in the tax appeal process.

3. *Federal Legislative Program update – Barry Burton stated that they have been sharing the Ferguson Group's write-up with all of the department heads. Mr. Lehman joined the meeting via speakerphone and introduced Melissa Hyman, a new partner at the firm.*

Mr. Lehman explained the deadlines for submitting stimulus projects to Congress, stating that the goal is to get the bill to the president by February 13. There is a lengthy version of the Stimulus Bill, and Ms. McEwan will forward a shorter version to the committee.

Mr. Lehman discussed the Highway Reauthorization bill, stating that Safetea-Lu expires on September 30 and we are submitting requests for this bill. Mr. Lehman is working with Marty Buehler, Barry Burton and Amy McEwan in this regard. Submission deadlines have not been set yet.

Mr. Lehman reported that the House passed its version of the Economic Stimulus package last week with a total price tag of \$819.5 billion and includes 70 or more categories in which federal assistance will be made available. Each category has different requirements as to how communities will access funding.

The Senate version of the bill is expected to be passed this week. It is similar to the House version, with a price tag of \$901.7 billion.

Mr. Lehman stated that the stimulus money is coming out of the General Revenue dollars, 100% federally funded with no local match, and he explained how the allocation will likely be made. He is working with Barry Burton and county departments to come up with a list of ready projects. The Ferguson Group is active with a number of organizations, including NACo, and is trying to push for ways that local communities have access to dollars that they can spend at their discretion.

Other programs, such as CDBG, will be based on a formula process, and will include formulas based on population and income. There will be money set aside so that, if you don't qualify under certain formulas, you can apply competitively through the grant process.

4. IMRF – Gary Gordon reported that IMRF funding has deteriorated and he explained the proposed changes that IMRF is recommending. IMRF is proposing changes to the way in which they calculate their rates that will minimize the impact to employers. The county's annual contribution is about \$16 million, and that could go up an additional \$10 million a year if there is no change. They are proposing two changes to the actuarial assumptions that are used to calculate what our contributions need to be. We currently have a 22 year closed amortization period, and they are proposing changing it to a rolling 30 years, which will push out the payments for an additional eight years. They are also changing the Corridor rule, which states that the market returns can't be more than 15% different from the actuarial returns by greater than 15%, and they want to increase that to 20%. He stated that because the rates could be increasing by 50-100%, they are talking about doing a capped phase in, with a 10% increase on the previous year's extension. In Lake County's case, this means that we would see a minimum required increase of 10% additional, or another \$1.6 million the first year. IMRF is asking for the County's support on this proposal and the County will agree to support this proposal on the condition that IMRF will support opposing any pension enhancements that would further deteriorate the condition of the system. The County has prepared a letter to IMRF outlining our tentative support.

**9. Adjournment
adjourn**

Aye: 6 - Vice Chair Bassi, Member Paxton, Chair Talbett, Member Carey, Member Hewitt and Member Pedersen

Not Present: 1 - Member Nixon

Minutes prepared by Mary Otahal.

Respectfully submitted,

Chairman

Vice-Chairman

Revenue, Records and Legislation Committee