

STATE Initiatives to Sponsor

Topic: Fox Waterway Public Safety Fee

Issue: The Lake County Sheriff's Marine Patrol Unit, in conjunction with McHenry County, provides the Fox Waterway with public safety enforcement. Historically, the Unit's costs for Lake County have been as high as \$650,000, but in 2013 the cost will be \$354,000. Lake County is no longer receiving revenue from the Fox Waterway Agency for sticker enforcement and a nominal amount from the issuance of citations.

It is estimated that 40% of all users on the Chain of Lakes are not Lake County residents, meaning that Lake County residents are paying for the cost of safety enforcement while out-of-county users are not. Lake and McHenry Counties have been working diligently with the state to develop a plan to coordinate on waterway enforcement with conservation police. This has allowed the Sheriff to reduce the Marine Patrols on the Fox Waterway. However, the counties still have significant costs to provide public safety service to the Chain of Lakes waterway each year. The counties are requesting the authority to institute a public safety fee to support the operating expense of the Sheriff's Marine Unit.

Recommendation: Sponsor an amendment of the statute (615 ILCD 90/7.2) Ch. 19, par. 1209.

- The amendment grants the county boards of Lake and McHenry Counties the ability to pass a resolution establishing a single public safety enforcement fee not to exceed \$30.00, to be charged by the Fox Waterway Agency.
- The fee will be limited and the fee may not be greater than the actual cost incurred by the two Counties for marine public safety services.

STATE Initiatives to Sponsor

Topic: Establishment of Affordable Housing Trust Fund

Issue: In Lake County, the free market is unable to meet the demand for affordable housing without intervention due to land and property costs. Statistics demonstrate that housing costs exceed the reach of many residents, from young people starting out to seniors to those who have struggled with medical crisis or job layoff. Additionally, a lack of housing options- especially near job centers- translates into increased traffic congestion and environmental degradation, lower quality of life for commuters and residents, and a disincentive to employers seeking to move into or stay in Lake County. The lack of affordable housing undermines individuals and families, neighborhoods and communities, business and the environment.

Recommendation: Sponsor the creation of a Lake County Housing Trust Fund that will catalyze the increase and preservation of affordable housing opportunities in Lake County, with a focus on serving low and moderate income households and neighborhoods. By offering a flexible and creative financing source that is designed to leverage other dollars as well as local policy, the HTF will help overcome market barriers to affordable housing and make possible projects that otherwise may not occur. The types of projects that would potentially be funded include, but are not limited to:

- Housing production, including new construction, redevelopment and rehabilitation
- Acquisition of vacant or improved property for affordable housing production
- Down-payment assistance to homebuyers
- Rehab assistance to homeowners
- Preservation of existing affordable housing
- Foreclosure assistance and counseling
- Any other activity that the County Board determines would address the County's strategic priorities, e.g., housing near business or transportation centers, employer-assisted housing for new business centers, etc.

The County requires state authorization to establish a recording fee on any real estate related document. If the state adopted such enabling legislation, the County Board would enact an ordinance to impose such a fee. The ordinance would direct that funds be collected and disbursed to the County Treasurer for deposit in the HTF. Up to 10% of the fund may be used annually by the County for its administrative costs to the administration of the HTF program.

STATE Initiatives to Sponsor

Topic: Expedite Demolition of deteriorated conditions and unsafe buildings

Issue: Currently, County code enforcement staff can only declare accessory structures unsafe or dangerous on residential buildings two stories or less in height. Staff is currently prohibited from fast-tracking the demolition of dangerous and unsafe non-residential buildings or accessory structures. If desirous to demolish, the County Board must apply to the Circuit Court for an order authorizing action to be taken with respect to a building. This route may be taken if the owner or owners of the building, including the lien holders of record, after at least 15 days' written notice by mail, have failed to commence proceedings to put the building in a safe condition or to demolish it.

Recommendation: Sponsor a change in state legislation to allow the County to declare any building a dilapidated building that is a continuing hazard to the community because of its deteriorated condition a dangerous and unsafe building and expedite its demolition. This will allow for:

- Code enforcement staff to be able to quickly remove dangerous and unsafe buildings;
- Control/Reduce County costs associated with processing nuisance violations;
- Abate violations in a timely manner that will help stabilize neighborhoods;
- Preserve property values that otherwise would be impacted by dangerous and unsafe accessory structures;
- Maintain a quality of life for adjacent property owners who will be able to enjoy the use of their property without the concern of declining property values and health and safety concerns associated with dangerous and unsafe buildings on adjacent property.

Without this legislation dangerous and unsafe buildings continue to blight portions of unincorporated Lake County. The Code Enforcement Division of the Planning, Building and Development Department will incur additional costs associated applying to a circuit court to allow the Department to compel property owners to either put buildings in a safe condition or to demolish them.

STATE Initiatives to Support

Topic: Raise the Court System Fee

Issue: State and county budget shortfalls have created a need to generate additional revenue to support the overall court system and the services provided by courts. Municipalities' increased use of red light cameras and administrative hearings have resulted in fewer case filings and lower revenue for the courts while other demands have increased. Service demands facing the courts include mortgage foreclosure mediation services, interpreter services for civil and family matters, services for prose litigants, and services for veterans participating in the Veterans' Court. The upper limits of most fees are determined by state statute, so in order to increase the fees it is necessary to make a legislative change.

Recommendation: Support legislation that will increase the court system fee from \$5 to an amount not to exceed \$15. These changes would benefit court systems throughout the state.

- Metro Counties and the Illinois Probation and Court Services Association may support more funding for court services.
- There would be no cost or workload impact to the counties anticipated at this time.
- This may impact the distribution of traffic ticket revenue, which would impact other units of government.
- This will provide a measurable increase in revenue which will allow the courts to maintain and increase services.

The County requires state authorization to amend Sec. 5-1101 allowing additional fees to finance court system.

STATE Initiatives to Support

Topic: Emergency Funding for Judicial Needs

Issue: State and county budget shortfalls have created a need to generate additional revenue to support the overall court system and the services provided by courts. There is also a great need to establish funding for capital improvements and new construction for courthouses. Furthermore, the lack of adequate reimbursement funding received from the typical appropriations process for probation, court services and detention staff has placed a tremendous burden on county operations. This situation has raised the level of risk in our communities. Past levels of treatment, supervision and programming need to be restored in our criminal justice system.

Recommendation: Support legislation that will allow local county boards by county ordinance to impose an additional surcharge not to exceed \$25 per case in all civil cases and for each conviction, plea of guilty, finding of guilt in criminal misdemeanor, quasi criminal, traffic infractions, ordinance violations and conservation violations.

- Metro Counties and Illinois Probation and Court Services Association may support more funding for court services
- No cost or increase in workload is anticipated at this time.
- This proposal may impact the distribution of traffic ticket revenue, which would impact other units of government.

The proposal will provide a measureable increase in revenue which will allow the courts to maintain vital services and maintain or develop the necessary infrastructure to meet the needs of the local community and protect the public.

STATE Initiatives to Support

Topic: Holding Mortgagees Responsible for Abating Code Violations on Vacant Properties

Issue: While Lake County currently interprets our Nuisance Ordinance to hold mortgagees responsible during the foreclosure process, the state law should be amended to provide clear statutory authority to do so. Without a change to state law we will have a difficult time improving the abatement process.

Recommendation: Support legislation to change the State Statute to allow the County to hold any mortgagee responsible for failure to maintain or secure vacant property:

- Code enforcement staff will be able to more quickly identify and notify those responsible for abating violations on vacant properties.
- Decrease County costs associated with processing nuisance violations.

STATE Initiatives to Support

Topic: EPR Paint Legislation

Issue: The budget challenges of organizations like the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) are well known and soon they may not be able to help offset the rising costs of recycling paint. Paint is 30% of Household Chemical Waste (HCW) collected by Solid Waste Agency of Lake County (SWALCO), so whatever is not offset by state and environmental organizations would then be placed on local government. SWALCO and Lake County must find a more sustainable way to fund its HCW collection.

SWALCO is looking to the paint manufacturers to help solve the problem. This will help shift responsibility for recycling or other safe disposal of products and packaging to the producers.

Over the last two years SWALCO has worked with the Product Stewardship Institute (PSI), an agency that works with state and local government agencies to partner with manufacturers and others to reduce the health and environmental impacts of consumer products such as paint in Illinois. Under the proposed legislation, similar to efforts in Oregon, California and Connecticut, paint manufacturers will assume the costs of managing unwanted latex and oil-based paints.

Recommendation: Support legislation from the American Coatings Association and the Illinois Paint Council that will institute an upfront fee on new paint purchases to pay for the proper management of the paint. This will make the industry responsible for developing and implementing a statewide paint recovery plan, including education. The legislation will also save SWALCO approximately \$12,000 which has been spent on paint management and accounts for 1/3rd of the material SWALCO collects.

STATE Initiatives to Support

Topic: Increase Deputy Sheriffs' Probationary Period

Issue: Currently state law allows municipalities to have an eighteen month probationary period for newly hired police officers. Deputy Sheriffs are not included in this provision, and we are only allowed a twelve month probationary period; therefore, the eighteen month provision in our current bargaining agreement cannot be enforced due to the Merit Commission rules for probation, which are based on state law.

Recommendation: Support legislation sponsored by the Illinois Sheriff's Association that will allow the Sheriff's Department to increase the probationary period for Deputy Sheriffs to eighteen months. This will allow us to perform a better evaluation of employees and allow us more time to evaluate how they perform on their own after being released from Field Training:

- This would not increase workload or cost
- This would affect all County Sheriff's Offices
- Allow our CBA agreement to be fulfilled

FEDERAL Initiatives to Support

Topic: Workforce Investment Act Reauthorization

Due to the economic crisis and the number of individuals, who are unemployed, the services made available through the WDD and the WIB provide much needed support for individuals and businesses. Stakeholders, i.e. those who make use of the Job Centers' services and programs encompass the entire spectrum of individuals – from those with no discernable job skills to professionals including lawyers and engineers. In terms of education, individuals making use of the Job Centers may be illiterate to individuals with advanced professional degrees. In August 2012 alone, over 700 employees were laid off from local businesses. Also during August 2012 over 2,000 individuals used the Waukegan and Grayslake Job Center's computers, workshops and resume services.

Issue: The entire budget for the Lake County Workforce Investment Board and the Lake County Workforce Development Department (WDD) are supported by the federal funds made available under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA). Should Congress not reauthorize WIA or annually appropriate workforce development funding, then all services provided would be terminated pursuant to County Board policy regarding termination of federal funding. Due to the continuing economic crisis, and the types of businesses in Lake County and the surrounding region that are now laying off employees, the Job Centers are increasing seeing individuals with professional backgrounds.

Recommendation: Support the federal Workforce Investment Act (WIA) which was enacted in 1998 with an original five-year lifespan. Since 2004, Congress has passed one (1) year continuances. It is vitally important that Congress pass WIA Reauthorization to ensure continuance of the federal funds made available for retraining and education efforts. Reauthorization of the Workforce Investment Act is being supported nationally by workforce board, workforce development and educational associations. Major proponents include: the National Association of Workforce Boards, the National Workforce Alliance and the Community College Association. Within Illinois, reauthorization is supported by the Illinois Workforce Partnership (the association comprised of representatives from the 26 workforce areas across the State) and the Chicago Jobs Council. Locally, the Lake County Workforce Investment Board has supported reauthorization efforts.