

Lake County Illinois

*Lake County Health Department
3010 Grand Avenue, 3rd Floor
Waukegan, Illinois 60085*



Meeting Minutes - Final

Wednesday, August 23, 2017

8:30 AM

Lake County Health Department, 3010 Grand Ave, 3rd Floor

Lake County Commission on Government Reform and Accountability

1. Call to Order

Chair Foreman called the meeting to order at 8:37 a.m.

Present 11 - Ex-Officio Member Rummel, Member Foreman, Member Ryg, Member O'Connor, Member Osmond, Member Lamphere, Member Link, Member Shaw, Member Msall, Member Magalis and Member Kim

Absent 1 - Member Roberson

Excused 3 - Member Bensinger, Member Darch and Member Schaafsma

Others present:

Judy Martini, Board Member

Linda Pedersen, Board Member

Jeff Werfel, Board Member

Barry Burton, County Administrator

Jennie Vana, County Administrator's Office

Dakisha Wesley, County Administrator's Office

Amy McEwan, County Administrator's Office

Cynthia Canary, Executive Director, Independent Map Amendment

Dr. Norman Walzer, Senior Research Scholar, Northern Illinois University

Jim LaBelle, Former Lake County Chair

Susan Hoyt, Management Partners

Kevin Knutson, Management Partners

Mary Mathews, Public

Sonia Hernandez, County Administrator's Office

2. Approval Of Minutes

2.1 [17-0813](#)

Minutes from July 19, 2017.

A motion was made by Member Osmond, seconded by Member Link that the minutes be approved. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 10 - Member Foreman, Member Ryg, Member O'Connor, Member Osmond, Member Roberson, Member Lamphere, Member Link, Member Shaw, Member Magalis and Member Kim

Not Present: 2 - Ex-Officio Member Rummel and Member Msall

3. Chair's Remarks

Chair Foreman welcomed everyone to the meeting. He recounted the positive experience he recently had talking with eastern Europeans about their perception of the United States while he was traveling.

Vice Chair Ryg thanked Commissioners for their participation and engagement at the July 19, 2107 Commission meeting.

4. Public Comments (items not on the agenda)

There were no public comments. Chair Foreman asked for the public in attendance to introduce themselves.

5. Old Business

There was no old business to conduct.

6. New Business

6.1 [17-0878](#)

Update on Commission activities since the July 19th meeting.

Chair Foreman introduced Susan Hoyt from Management Partners, who gave an overview of the Lake County Commission on Government Reform and Accountability Background and Research Materials document that was circulated to members prior to the meeting. The document contains a list of relevant research, background materials, and organizations that will assist members in understanding the issues before the Commission. The document is updated monthly. The August update included reports on the 1977 and 1990 Lake County Governmental Study Commission Reports, the Lake County Prior Referenda on Elected Officials, the Lake County Board Chair Role, and Illinois County Board Sizes and Structures.

6.2 [17-0879](#)

Presentation by Cynthia Canary, Executive Director, Independent Map Amendment.

Ms. Canary gave a presentation on "Redistricting Principles" to the Commission. She explained the importance of establishing principles to guide redistricting decisions because clearly stated principles help officials determine 'what to advance and protect' and 'what to change' in making decisions. Stated principles also provide more transparency to the public and lead to more informed public engagement, which is a critical element in redistricting discussions.

Ms. Canary described the eight principles being considered by the CHANGE Illinois in its work around redistricting and an Independent Review Board. These principles are:

- Be in accordance with the requirements of the U. S. Constitution*
- Emphasize representation and be fully compliant with both the federal Voting Rights Act (VRA) and all state voting rights laws including the Illinois Voting Rights Act.*
- Be independent of partisan political considerations.*
- Result in maximum voter choice, encouraging electoral candidacy, and enhancing electoral competitiveness.*
- Consider true communities of interest.*
- Accurately represent the permanent residents of Illinoisans.*
- Be transparent and accountable.*
- Allow for meaningful public participation and have the confidence of the public.*

Ms. Canary concluded her presentation by advising the Commission that regardless of the institution that is responsible for redistricting decisions, be it an independent review board or elected officials, the public must be fully engaged in the process because it is about representation of the people.

Commissioners asked the speaker questions and discussed the complexities and challenges of redistricting.

Member Rummel entered the meeting at 8:55 a.m. Member Msall entered the meeting at 9:12 a.m.

6.3 [17-0880](#)

Presentation by Jim LaBelle, Former Lake County Chair, 1984-1987, 1998-2000.

Mr. LaBelle described his role as Lake County Board Chair from 1984-1987 and from 1998-2000. His responsibilities included being a policy leader and managing the agenda, including finding ways to lead the Board to agreement and action as well as coordinating and negotiating with independent elected officials. In addition, as Chair, he addressed regional and intergovernmental issues and represented the County on regional, state and national issues. He also represented his own district and served as a forest commissioner.

Mr. LaBelle was initially elected to the County Board when there were multi-member districts (5 districts of 5 members each) with a majority and a minority designation in each district. Later, the County moved to single district representation. He preferred the multi-district representation because one learned more about Lake County issues from the larger geography covered by the multi-member district. It also provided more opportunity for candidates with fewer resources to compete, since you didn't have to be the top vote getter to get a seat on the County Board.

Mr. LaBelle reflected on the difference between being elected by the County Board or elected at-large. He concluded that both models work. The job of leading the County and knitting the Board together exists under either option. Overall, he believed that being elected at-large would have the benefit of getting public countywide support for the Chair as the County's policy leader. It would provide more independence for the Chair and more continuity with a four-year rather than a two-year term. However, the Chair's election would be more expensive and, therefore, potentially more limiting as to who could serve in this role.

Mr. LaBelle believed that being elected by the County Board resulted in spending less money to become County Board Chair, but the majority support from colleagues may be tenuous. It also results in divided accountability between the countywide role as Chair and

constituents in the Chair's district. In addition, a two-year term limits the Chair's visibility and leadership potential.

Commissioners asked the speaker questions and discussed the pros and cons of electing the Chair under the current model, elected by County Board peers, and the at-large option. They also shared experiences with the multi-member districts and raised questions about it as an option for the future. Mr. LaBelle stated his support for the opportunity the Commission's work offers to put forth new ideas that could serve as the laboratory for innovation and reform for the state.

6.4 [17-0881](#)

Presentation by Dr. Norman Walzer, Senior Research Scholar, Center for Governmental Studies, Northern Illinois University.

Dr. Walzer described his work as Project Director with the Lieutenant Governor's Commission on Local Government Consolidation and Unfunded Mandates in the Report Delivering Efficient, Effective and Streamlined Government to Illinois Taxpayers, December 31, 2015. The purpose of the bi-partisan Task Force was to explore ways to reduce duplication of services in local governmental units and property taxes. The Task Force identified several possible solutions to reduce costs and maintain services resulting in Senate Bill 003 and House Bill 607. (Public Acts 100-106 & 107)

Dr. Walzer provided data on the rising costs of public services in Illinois, the effective property tax rates in the U.S. of which Illinois is 2nd highest, and the number of units of government in Lake County (192). Dr. Walzer said the actual number of local governmental units is not really known, since many units go unreported in surveys of local government entities.

Dr. Walzer reported that the Task Force identified several obstacles contributing to higher property tax costs in Illinois. These included changing technologies impact on how services are delivered, the existence of over 7,000 local governmental units with some duplication of services, the relative ease of creating new governments to deal with specific problems, the statutory obstacles to removing existing governments, and the lack of an organized approach to reviewing governments.

Dr. Walzer concluded his remarks by explaining that today's environment allows people to discuss the option of collaboration, consolidation and shared services.

Commissioners discussed the challenge of reducing the number of local governmental units to reduce costs.

6.5 [17-0882](#)

Discussion of Commission research agenda.

Due to time, there was no additional information on the Commission research agenda.

*Lake County Commission on Government
Reform and Accountability*