



2018 CONSOLIDATION ACTION PLAN FOR LAKE COUNTY BOARD-APPOINTED UNITS OF GOVERNMENT

~A ROADMAP FOR CONSOLIDATION~

LAKE COUNTY BOARD CHAIRMAN AARON LAWLOR

FOCUSING ON CONSOLIDATION THAT SAVES TAX DOLLARS AND MAKES SENSE

Year after year, Lake County property owners open their property tax bills to two consistent truths: the amount they owe almost always goes up and the excessive number of local governments never go down. Property owners across our State share that same begrudging experience each May when **Illinois' 7,000 units of local government reach into their wallets.**

The 2018 Consolidation Action Plan for County Board-Appointed Units of Government advances consolidation proposals that enhance **efficiency, accountability, cost-savings, and high-quality, right-sized services.**

In the first year, the action plan prioritizes three County Board-appointed units of government for consolidation, dissolution, and transfer of appointment authority respectively. The plan also includes an initial review to determine the feasibility and potential benefits of consolidating drainage districts, mosquito abatement districts and housing authorities. The review will also seek to determine the most efficient process to utilize for consolidation such as using the Local Government Reduction and Efficiency Act, initiating state legislation and the use of intergovernmental agreements.

While streamlining County Board-appointed units of government is important, they make up 5% or less of property tax bills and are just one of many actions needed to deliver meaningful, sustainable property tax relief to Lake County property taxpayers.

Meanwhile, the state legislature is considering a temporary property tax freeze to distract residents from their continued fiscal recklessness and income tax increase. It is the same as treating the painful symptoms of the problem without addressing what's causing them. Frankly, tax bills won't decrease unless leaders at all levels of government work together toward an "all of the above" approach, including:

- Eliminating duplicative and unnecessary units of local government
- Funding pension liabilities
- Living up to state responsibility to fund education

- Repealing unnecessary state mandates on local government
- Reversing the trend of our shrinking base due to outflow of people and businesses

OVERVIEW: ELECTED & APPOINTED LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN LAKE COUNTY

Lake County is home to 704,000 people and 230 units of government; 144 are elected, 27 are appointed by the County Board and the remainder are appointed or selected in another manner.

The units of government that drive upwards of 85% of property tax bills on average are predominantly selected by voters during consolidated elections held in April of odd years. The remainder are appointed by the County Board, township or municipal leaders; however, Illinois law grants many special purpose districts the ability to transition to an elected board by voter referendum.

In either case, consolidation of the units of government that make up property owners tax bills is a complex and politically charged matter. Many voters and leaders believe the much-publicized Local Government Reduction and Efficiency Act applies broadly to the 230 units of local government in Lake County when, in fact, there are 14 County Board-appointed units of government that are subject to the Act.

Here is a breakdown of the 230 units of government in Lake County by type and manner of selection. Each have their own board that sets their budget, determines how much they are spending and levies their district’s property tax.

Quantity	Government Type	Manner of Selection
1	Joint Action Water Agency	County Board Appointed
1	County	Elected
1	Forest Preserve District	Elected
1	Public Water District	County Board Appointed
1	Fox Waterway District	Elected
52	Municipalities	Elected
18	Townships	Elected
3	Community College Districts	Elected
10	Drainage Districts	County Board (8) and Locally Appointed (2)
33	Elementary School Districts	Elected
14	High School Districts	Elected
5	Unit School Districts	Elected
40	Fire Departments and Districts	1 Elected, remainder appointed
15	Library Districts	Elected
23	Park Districts	Elected
5	Sanitary Districts	County Board (3) and Locally Appointed (2)
2	Mosquito Abatement Districts	County Board Appointed

There is a lot of work to do and the Lake County Board is leading on the issues where we have the authority to make a difference in the lives of our residents.

2018 ACTION PLAN FOR CONSOLIDATING COUNTY BOARD-APPOINTED GOVERNMENTS

5 PRIORITIES THAT STREAMLINE GOVERNMENT & DEMONSTRATE VALUE TO TAXPAYERS

1) Dissolve the Seavey Drainage District

The Seavey Drainage District falls within the Villages of Vernon Hills, Mundelein and Libertyville. The District has not levied a tax for over 20 years (to our knowledge) and maintenance and restoration work has been conducted and paid for by the Villages of Vernon Hills and Mundelein. Vernon Hills Mayor Roger Byrne, Libertyville Mayor Terry Wepler and Mundelein Mayor Steve Lentz are supportive of dissolving the district and assigning its duties to the respective villages.

2) Lakes Region Sanitary District

Every time customers of the LRSD flush their toilet, they pay four taxes and fees to three different government entities. We can do better. The County and Lakes Region are entering into an intergovernmental agreement. This will be followed by an analysis of potential cost savings and service enhancements that can be achieved through consolidating Lakes Region into the Lake County Public Works Department and potentially transferring local sewer lines to municipal partners.

3) Lakeside Cemetery

Transfer of appointing authority from the County Board Chairman to the Libertyville Township Supervisor and Board consistent with how other cemeteries are governed.

4) **Conduct initial cursory review** on the feasibility of consolidating local housing authorities, drainage districts and mosquito abatement districts, as well as opening dialogues with stakeholders.

5) Lake County will continue to focus on:

- Continued progress on 911 consolidation
- Creating opportunities and developing data accessibility for large-scale back office shared services for all local units of government

THE LAKE COUNTY BOARD'S AUTHORITY TO ADVANCE CONSOLIDATION

Illinois law now provides the state's 102 county boards the ability to consolidate or dissolve a narrow group of units of government of which they are the sole appointing authority, including drainage, sanitary, mosquito abatement, water and paper fire districts.

The enabling Public Act, known as the Local Government Reduction and Efficiency Act, establishes a dissolution/consolidation process for a unit of local government located entirely within one county and to which the county board chair appoints a majority of its governing body with board

consent. The process requires a number of steps, including but not limited to an ordinance, an audit of the unit of government, petition to the Circuit Court seeking designation of a trustee, the opportunity for voters to force a 'backdoor referendum' on the dissolution and a timeline of a minimum of six months.

Consolidation and dissolution can also be achieved through state legislation if practical and no substantial opposition exists. Also, de facto consolidation can be achieved through intergovernmental agreements, consolidation management, and operational functions, as well as increasing joint procurement and shared service initiatives.

The recently enacted **law only applies to 14 of the 27 Lake County Board-appointed units of government** that make up a small fraction of property owners tax bills and leaves out other units of government that make up 85% of the residents' bills.