

INFORMATION PAPER



January 3, 2020
County Administrator's Office
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Asst. County Administrator

SUBJECT: RECORDER OF DEEDS / CLERK'S OFFICE CONSOLIDATION

Summary: The County Administrator's Office completed initial research into the steps required to consolidate the Office of the Recorder of Deeds with the Clerk's Office. Additional direction and consensus are needed to proceed.

Background

- The Recorder of Deeds attended the December 5, 2019 Financial & Administrative Committee and discussed the potential of consolidating the Recorder's Office and its duties with the Clerk's Office via referendum.
- The County Administrator's Office completed initial research related to the consolidation process and reviewed other county processes/studies.

Initial Research Results

- Under the Illinois Constitution, the Office of the Recorder of Deeds is not a mandatory office.
- The Illinois Constitution (Article VII, Section 4(c) and 11) provides that a County Board, by resolution, may authorize a referendum to eliminate a county office.
 - The Illinois Election Code (section 28-7) provides that a governing body may initiate a public question as outlined in Article VII of the Illinois Constitution through resolution. The resolution needs to be adopted no less than 79 days before a regularly scheduled election.
- Numerous counties in Illinois have approved the consolidation of the Recorder's Office including McHenry County (2018) and Cook County (2016). After December 2020, only 14 out of the 102 counties in Illinois will have a separate Recorder's Office.
- DuPage County initiated the referendum in 2019 and the question will be placed on the November 2020 ballot.
 - A request for proposal was issued for the completion of a feasibility study which also includes the development of a transition plan for potential consolidation.
- Winnebago County initiated a preliminary due diligence and feasibility study in 2017 which determined that:
 - It is feasible in Winnebago County if there is "proper planning, retention of key technical staff, and sufficient buy-in from the elected officials."
 - There is "very likely a net benefit to consolidation" with a minimum benefit somewhat less than the recorder's salary and benefits (\$100,000).
- Should Lake County proceed with the referendum, it needs to be adopted no later than August 16, 2020 for the question to be placed on the November 3, 2020 general election ballot.

Way Ahead / Options

- Option 1 (*Staff Recommended*): Draft a resolution authorizing a referendum to appear on the November 3, 2020 ballot to eliminate the county office by December 1, 2022. Using internal resources, work with the offices to draft a consolidation/transition plan.

- Option 2: Draft and publish an RFP to solicit services to conduct a feasibility analysis and develop a potential transition plan. The results of the analysis would be used in making the referendum decision. The RFP cost and project timeline need to be considered with this option.
- Option 3: Do not proceed with the consolidation or analysis.

COORDINATION & ALIGNMENT	Staff Coordination	2019 Strategic Initiatives		2019 Strategic Goals				2019 Strategic Themes										
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CAO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Finance <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recorder's Office <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Communications <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> State's Attorney's Office		X	X					X									
	Regional Leadership	Fiscal Responsibility	Exceptional Service and Operational Excellence	Public Safety & Justice	Econ. Opportunities	Infrastructure	Sustainable Enviro.	Build Healthy Communities	Inter-Org. Coop.	Quality of Life	Econ. Development	Infrastructure	Enviro. Sustain.	Sustainability	County Branding	Mental Health	Specialty Funding	Diversity & Inclusion