

# Lake County Illinois

*Lake County Division of Transportation  
600 W. Winchester Road  
Libertyville IL 60048*



## Meeting Minutes - Final

Wednesday, October 4, 2017

8:30 AM

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

### **Lake County Commission on Government Reform and Accountability**

**1. Call to Order**

*Chair Foreman called the meeting to order at 8:35 a.m.*

**Present** 12 - Ex-Officio Member Rummel, Member Foreman, Member Ryg, Member O'Connor, Member Roberson, Member Lamphere, Member Link, Member Shaw, Member Msall, Member Magalis, Member Kim and Member Darch

**Excused** 3 - Member Osmond, Member Bensinger and Member Schaafsma

*Others present:*

*Aaron Lawlor, Count Board Chair*

*Judy Martini, County Board Member*

*Susan Hoyt, Management Partners*

*Kevin Knutson, Management Partners*

*Jennie Vana, County Administrator's Office*

*Mary Mathews, Public*

*Barry Burton, County Administrator's Office*

*Sonia Hernandez, County Administrator's Office*

**2. Approval Of Minutes**

**2.1 [17-1043](#)**

Minutes from September 13, 2017.

**A motion was made by Member Kim, seconded by Member Shaw that the minutes be approved. The motion carried by the following vote:**

**Aye:** 12 - Ex-Officio Member Rummel, Member Foreman, Member Ryg, Member O'Connor, Member Roberson, Member Lamphere, Member Link, Member Shaw, Member Msall, Member Magalis, Member Kim and Member Darch

**3. Chair's Remarks**

*Chair Foreman thanked Commissioners for their participation over the past five months and for their input into today's work.*

*Members on the phone during the meeting: Member Darch, Member Link, Member Msall.*

**4. Public Comments (items not on the agenda)**

*There were no public comments.*

**5. Old Business**

*There was no old business to conduct.*

**6. New Business**

6.1 [17-1047](#)

Update on the Commission's activities since the September 13, 2017 meeting.

*There were no updates presented.*

6.2 [17-1049](#)

Introduction to today's meeting.

*Chair Foreman opened the meeting by explaining that its purpose was to discuss the reform measures posed to the Commission regarding: 1) the method of election of the chair, 2) the size of the county board, 3) the redistricting process and 4) other reform topics for future study.*

*Chair Foreman summarized the information the Commission received through background reading, reports and presentations on the method of electing the county board chair and the size of the county board. He shared the recommendations of the 1990 Lake County Governmental Commission II and Modernizing Lake County 2000, both of which recommended the at-large election of the chair and reducing the size of the county board to 13 to 15 members.*

*Vice Chair Kathy Ryg summarized the information the Commission received on redistricting and other reform topics that emerged during the Commission's deliberations.*

*Chair Foreman asked Kevin Knutson of Management Partners to facilitate the decision-making discussion on the four topics under consideration.*

*Mr. Knutson explained that each question would be addressed separately beginning with 1) What problem are we trying to solve? 2) What are we trying to achieve? 3) What do we recommend to the Board? and 4) What to consider for the future?*

6.3 [17-1051](#)

The method of election of the County Board Chairman.

*Commissioners shared their perspectives on electing the chair countywide or by peers on the board. They considered several factors. These included: the overall effectiveness of the current peer elected chair, the best way to represent the entire county, the continuity in the chair's leadership, the relationship between the chair and colleagues on the board, a comparison of the role of a peer-elected chair and an at-large elected chair, the consideration of a county executive and the ability of voters to elect the chair.*

*Commissioners noted that the initiative for the at-large elected chair was introduced to the county through 2017 legislation requiring a referendum on the question, which was later vetoed by the Governor. The initiative was partially motivated because Lake County is the only collar county without an at-large elected chair. Commissioners agreed that if the legislature took up this initiative again that it is best when decided through a referendum*

*and that the information learned by the Commission on this topic be shared with voters.*

*Mr. Knutson reminded commissioners that state law allows the county board to change from a peer-elected chair to an at-large elected chair without holding a referendum through the redistricting process.*

*Commissioners generally agreed that there was no compelling reason to change to an at-large elected chair now because the county board operates effectively under the current chair and the county is functioning well. For example, the county has a AAA bond rating and a regularly updated strategic plan.*

*Commissioners referenced the observation made by Dr. Zeemering in his September 13, 2017 presentation that frequently local government reform measures take on the character of neighboring governments, like the at-large elected chair in nearby collar counties, rather than recognizing the uniqueness of their individual government organization. Commissioners also acknowledged that they learned that there are no conclusive studies demonstrating that counties with an at-large elected chair perform better than a peer-elected chair. There are studies demonstrating that having professional management, which Lake County has in its county administrator, does improve performance.*

*Commissioners discussed the authority of the county board chair, which is defined through rules in county ordinance. Commissioners noted that the quality of leadership in the county relied on how engaged an individual chair is, not on the rules governing his position. Some chairs took on many roles and a lot of authority, whereas others chose to be less active in their role. Commissioners did not identify any compelling changes needed in the chair's duties as currently defined. Commissioners recognized the value of having the county board review this ordinance to make sure the duties are clear to the chair and the board. This would be especially important if the county went to an at-large elected chair.*

*Commissioners concurred that there was no need to go to a county executive form of government with or without home rule. This was considered in a 1988 county referendum, which was overwhelmingly rejected by voters. The presence of a county administrator to manage the day-to-day operations of the county replaces many of a county executive's duties.*

*Commissioners believe that the current leadership model, which relies on the chair collaborating with his colleagues to accomplish goals, is very effective. Whereas an at-large elected chair might be perceived as the person responsible for all county business and diminish the other board members' responsibility, especially in taxing and financial matters. Commissioners also expressed support for the current unwritten*

*leadership practice of assigning certain committee chairs to the minority party.*

*The Commissioners discussion resulted in the following recommendations on the method of the election of the chair:*

- 1. Maintain the current model of a peer-elected county board chair because
  - a. It is effective and works well in Lake County.*
  - b. It leads to a collaborative model of leadership, which relies on the chair to create and maintain relationships with other board members, and avoids the perception that the chair is solely in charge.*
  - c. If desired, the question of an at-large elected chair can be addressed by the county board through the redistricting process**
- 2. If state legislation requires a change to an at-large elected chair
  - a. Require a referendum be held on the question.*
  - b. Provide information on the pros and cons of the question learned through the Commission's work.**
- 3. If an elected at-large chair is approved through referendum or redistricting, encourage the county board to avoid confusion in roles by clarifying the chair's duties through the ordinance governing the chair's responsibilities.*
- 4. Find ways to share power between majority and minority parties by developing rules to maintain some minority party representation when the chair makes appointments to committee chairs.*

#### **6.4 [17-1052](#)**

The size of the County Board.

*Commissioners acknowledged that the county board must effectively represent voters while maintaining organizational efficiencies in decision-making. They recognized that rural districts may require more board member time to represent than municipal districts because more rural areas' issues often require solutions at the county, rather than at the municipal level.*

*Commissioners discussed their belief that county board members, themselves, are best positioned to analyze the size of the board because they understand first-hand how it operates and how size might affect it. In addition, the county board can change in the size of the board through the redistricting process without a referendum.*

*Commissioners discussed the recommendation from the 1990 Lake County Governmental Study Commission II that the board size be reduced to 15 members. It was noted that when this recommendation was made the County was rapidly developing and*

*the board dynamics were contentious. With a more fully developed county today, tensions are lower and the board functions more harmoniously. It was also observed that there was little difference in the county board actions when it was at its largest, 37 members, compared to the current 21 members. Dr. Zeemering's presentation of September 13, 2017 confirmed that there was no solid information that related county board performance to the size of the board. The performance was tied to professional management and a collaborative working style among the board members.*

*Commissioners considered the possibility of a potential cost savings with fewer county board members. It was acknowledged that a reduction in county board members would reduce the number of part-time salaries, but a cost savings was difficult to predict because it might require going to full-time county board members or require more staff support.*

*Commissioners discussed the benefit of the current system of single-member districts compared to multi-member districts with and without majority and minority party representation. The logic for single-member districts, recommended in the 1990 Lake County Governmental Study II, was described as supporting voter rights, encouraging more diverse representation, providing the best avenue to elect minority groups and creating a greater independence for board members. Commissioners expressed no dissatisfaction with the single-member district, but there was an interest in learning more about multi-member districts with majority and minority representation. The county board can change from single member districts to multi-member districts through the redistricting process. Moving to multi-member districts with majority and minority party representation requires legislation.*

*The Commission discussion resulted in the following advisory recommendations on the size of the county board:*

- 1. Maintain the current board size of 21 members. During redistricting, have board members review if changes in size would improve visibility, representation or efficiency of the board.*
- 2. Maintain single-member districts.*
- 3. Study the pre-1990 model of multi-member districts with majority and minority party representation to determine if this is a more effective way to guarantee a minority party voice in county government.*

#### **6.5 [17-1053](#)**

##### **Redistricting**

*Commissioners reviewed four options for redistricting that all require approval by the county board: 1) maintaining the current practice of the county board, 2) appointing an independent commission to recommend redistricting principles prior to redistricting, 3)*

*appointing an independent redistricting commission to develop a redistricting plan, and 4) appoint an independent redistricting review board to review the county board's redistricting plan.*

*Rather than debate the pros and cons of each option, the Commission reviewed a list of principles to apply to any redistricting model.*

- Meet the requirements of the U. S. Constitution and federal or state voting rights laws*
- Represent constituents*
- Represent "communities of interest" and minority communities*
- Maximize voter choice, encourage electoral candidacy and electoral competitiveness*
- Engage the public in understanding the plan*
- Ensure the plan is transparent*
- Take a nonpartisan approach*
- Ensure contiguous geography*
- Consider criteria for selecting independent redistricting members*

*Commissioners clarified what was meant by maximize voter choice, encourage electoral candidacy and electoral competitiveness as well as called out the principle of maintaining communities of interest.*

*Commissioners addressed the principles of public understanding and transparency of the redistricting plan. They recognized the benefit of engaging more members of the public throughout the redistricting process rather than the most recent practice of engaging stakeholders prior to the formal county board deliberations. Suggestions included using updated mapping technologies to demonstrate the impact of various redistricting decisions and making sure that clear, understandable explanations of the outcomes and the areas of disagreement from redistricting decisions were available to the public from non-elected persons.*

*The Commissioners discussion resulted in the following recommendations:*

- 1. Apply the following redistricting principles to any process for redistricting*
  - a. Meet the requirements of the U. S. Constitution and federal or state voting rights laws*
  - b. Represent constituents*
  - c. Represent "communities of interest" and minority communities*
  - d. Maximize voter choice, encourage electoral candidacy and electoral competitiveness*
  - e. Engage the public in understanding the plan*
  - f. Ensure the plan is transparent*
  - g. Take a nonpartisan approach*
  - h. Ensure contiguous geography*

*Consider criteria for selecting independent redistricting members*

2. *Monitor the current Supreme Court case (Gill v. Whitford) and other legal actions related to redistricting.*

3. *Address the method of election of the county board chair and/or the size of the county board through the redistricting process.*

6.6 [17-1054](#)

Other Reform Topics

*Commissioners considered additional reform topics that resulted in the following recommendations for future study:*

1. *Review all the county elected officer positions and the assessor position to understand each position's type of work, its policy authority, and costs. Following this analysis, identify the positions that might better serve as appointed rather than elected positions.*

2. *Develop an understanding of overlapping services and their costs including examples of intergovernmental service sharing, collaboration, consolidation and county-centric government.*

3. *Determine the pros and cons of using multi-member districts with majority and minority representation.*

4. *Be aware of ballot options including rank, cumulative and list ballots as multi-member and other redistricting approaches are explored.*

6.7 [17-1055](#)

Meeting Wrap Up

*Chair Foreman reported that county board members were asked to provide their input into the Commission's work through Commissioner Rummel, who represents the County Board on the Commission. Chair Foreman thanked the Commissioners for their time and insights.*

6.8 [17-1056](#)

Discussion on the Commission's Research agenda.

*There was no discussion on the Commission's Research Agenda.*

6.9 [17-1057](#)

Purpose of Commission meeting on November 15, 2017 from 11:30-1:30 at Division of Transportation.

*Chair Foreman explained the purpose of the next meeting is to review the draft report from the Lake County Commission on Government Reform and Accountability. November's meeting will take place at the Division of Transportation, 600 W. Winchester Road, Libertyville.*





---

---

---

---

*Lake County Commission on Government  
Reform and Accountability*