

Committee of the Whole Minutes

Wednesday, May 11th, 2022 5:30 PM

The Committee of the Whole of the Rock Island County Board met on Wednesday, May 11th, 2022. Minutes as follow.

Call to order and roll call

Vice Chairman Brian Vyncke called the meeting to order at 5:33 PM

Members Present: R. Morthland, D. Cremeens, M. Burns, M. Moreno, L. Burns, L. Moreno, C. Enburg, B. Vyncke, J. Deppe, P. McNeil, L. Thompson, D. Adams, R. Brunk, A. Normoyle, E. Sowards, K. Swanson, E. Langdon, R. Simmer, L. Boswell- Loftin, J Woods, D. Mielke, B. Westpfahl ()

Members Absent: D. Beck, K. Bogdonas, D. Clevenger

Others Present: A. Palmer, L. Ewert, B. Gustafson, J. Grafton, K. Davis, C. Przybyla

Public Comment

Vice Chairman Vyncke made three calls for public comment. There were no requests for public comment.

Approval of the Minutes from the April 13th, 2022 Committee of the Whole Meeting

Motion to approve as presented by L. Moreno

Seconded by D. Cremeens

Motion carried R. Morthland, D. Cremeens, M. Burns, C. Enburg, P. McNeil, D. Adams, E. Sowards, E. Langdon, R. Simmer, J. Woods, D. Mielke

Condition of Funds Report

Auditor April Palmer presented her standard condition of fund reports. She stated she was unable to do the monthly write-up. She commented that the scheduled H; State of Illinois payments are higher for the two year comparison, up by about \$700,000. Probation salary reimbursements were higher as well. There will be an increase record month revenues in income tax revenues, and sales tax. Referencing Schedule J the loan amounts outstanding to the General fund and other funds;

Staff Reports

Treasurer Louis Ewert reported on the supplemental sales tax for the month of February, being received 323955.37.

Year-to date from two years From the previous year

Money from the state continues to increase; income and replacement tax is up. On the monthly report, she stated the pie chart

Tax bills were on track to collect over 272 million in property taxes that would be distributed.

Should be able to pay of the tax anticipation note for Hope Creek. Liability fund after the tax anticipation warrant is paid off.

Finance and Personnel Committee Report

Given by Chairman Luis Moreno

Vice-Chairman Vyncke opened the discussion on the elected officials' salaries and stated that the group of elected officials had presented to the Finance and Personnel Committee previously.

He welcomed Ms. Ewert and Mr. Gustafson to the floor for dialogue. Ms. Ewert presented a handout in reference to the resolution on compensation stating, "that has to be passed in May for terms starting December 1, 2022; it has to be passed 180 prior to the start of their terms."

She referenced the proposal that the elected officials put out after a meeting in the previous week with Chairman Brunk and other elected officials. She continued that some proposed salary resolutions had already passed in other counties and were proposed to be passed in a few others. Under the comparison, she drew attention to the salary

history of the elected officials since 2008, and mentioned if looking at 2009-2017, wages for the elected officials were frozen for 9 years. When the other elected terms came up, they were frozen for 7 years and then 4 more years. She stated the resolution also proposed 2 terms for the County Treasurer and the County Clerk and fix the salaries for the next terms to avoid coming back in two years.

There was a comparison salary presented being frozen for 9 years, 2 years and 2 years again. She indicated in 2014, there was a resolution that stated the chief deputy was to get 70-80 percent of the elected officials' salary. She continued that she thought the proposal was conservative and mentioned salary suppression for many years, presenting a chart of the disparity. She stated an example of where the staff members are sometimes outpacing the elected official's salaries by 1/3, including step increases that count on W2s and adds to salary. She mentioned at the there are department heads and chief deputies that are far behind and with the 3 percent raise, would outpace the department head.

Vice Chairman Vyncke asked for the proposed first year increase; Ms. Ewert stated "From \$93,636.00 to \$100,000. " Vice Chair Vyncke asked if that was a 7 percent increase. Ms. Ewert stated she did not know the percent of increase, but stated the first two years were frozen and the last two years were frozen, and that she had taken that average over 4 years, which she mentioned was less than 2.5 percent.

Chairman Vyncke stated he understood trying to catch up but asked if there was a reason for roughly 7 percent increase for their first year instead of doing it over a period of time.

Ms. Ewert stated, "Absolutely, because of the years we were frozen. Obviously, there was no problem with freezing (them) for 9 years. Basically trying to catch up to the wages of like ..."

Vice Chair Vyncke stated "The one concern: You didn't get here in a year, and it's not going to be fixed in a year. Why can't you fix it in one year?"

Ms. Ewert stated "If you look at the salary from 2017 to 2018, that also took a big jump because they were trying to catch up."

Vice Chair Vyncke stated "No one else in the County got a 7% increase this year. The other issue is, there is a term called pension spiking; honestly, a 7% bump for anyone that is going to retire in the next few years is what I would consider a pension spike. We have gotten into some issues with IMRF where we've gotten behind and make up some of the shortfalls; I don't think anyone gets 7% raises."

Ms. Ewert stated that was not the intention and mentioned she would be retired before the increase would take place.

Chairman Vyncke stated, "It would be more palatable if we did it over a period of time. First year bump is my concern.

"We're just trying to catch up to comparable Counties: we've been left behind several times and there are only 6 elected officials that this resolution

Vice Chairman Vyncke stated if using Louisa's figures, there was almost a 20% increase from her position to her chief deputy salary which was a substantial difference.

Ms. Ewert stated that municipalities have that much of a difference between the official and the chief deputy. Chairman Vyncke stated that in coming from Moline, that was not the case.

Ms. Ewert stated she did have those figures and presented Chairman Vyncke with salaries from Moline, and Chairman Vyncke asked if she had the listings from the fire department, specifically, the differences between the ranks.

Mr. Swanson was recognized and noted that in the proposal, the clerk, treasurer, and auditor all receive stipends from the forest preserve but that those are nominal, and thanked Ms. Ewert, Ms. Kinney, and Ms. Palmer. He also noted that there are fewer offices in the comparable counties with some offices absorbing more jobs than others, and counted that as an asset to Rock Island County, but means that the total compensation pool for activities required on those offices, there is a higher aggregate pool in Rock Island County.

He noted that on the provided comparison sheet, it was noted to take the counties closest, but noted Kendall County is a rapidly growing suburban county that includes Oswego, Plano, Sugar Grove, and that is not an apple to apples comparison to Rock Island County in terms of economic development. He continued, personally that he wanted to see increases happen and get close within four years, but was cognizant of the fact that the County was in a stage of being on guard against fiscal stability now, as opposed to 2, 4, 6 years down the line. He stated being mindful in catching the salaries up, but not seeing the revenue growth accompanied with it.

He also noted that since step increases were mentioned, very few in the present economy; the elected officials made a choice to volunteer to run for an elected office; the official then foregoes many of the benefits that many county employees opt for under contractual employment that include step increases.

Ms. Ewert interjected that step increases were not to be used as point of argument, being included in the salary.

Chairman Vyncke called Ms. Ewert out of order; stating Mr. Swanson still had the floor.

Mr. Swanson continued that step increases were a very separate matter and were contractual.

He reiterated, the elected positions were voluntary and encouraged fellow board members to take into account the differences between the comparable counties, being mindful of all of them. He also stated the Board; the economy takes it as a hit when the board appears to behave in a "fiscally imprudent manner."

Mr. Westpfahl stated that the salaries are so behind; setting the salaries in 2011, the term was not up yet. When the term was up, he stated someone made a motion and it passed.

Ms. Ewert mentioned that the salaries listed were more than just regular increases, due to step increases. She continued that the Sheriff Salary reimbursement program would take effect July 1st, 66 2/3 of the sheriff's annual salary. In December, after the election of a new sheriff, would get any salary set in comparison to the States' Attorney. She stated 5 months of savings equaled \$32,000 that would be additional money in the general fund that would cover the first year salaries and half of the second year. She stated beyond that, a savings of almost \$80,000 a year to the general fund since the sheriff's salary would be reimbursed.

Mr. Adams stated the chief deputies were be he didn't have a problem with setting the salary of the treasurer and the County Clerk but had issue with setting recorder and circuit clerk; those offices not being elected in the upcoming election.

Ms. Loftin stated that, bringing up Mr. Westpfahl's comment; the year that Ms. Kinney was elected; the elected officials graciously agreed not to have their salaries raised and mentioned that was done under a different board, under the condition that they would be made whole at a later time.

Mr. Mielke commented to keep in mind the office, and not the persons holding the office when discussing the salaries.

Mr. Westpfahl stated he would like to hear what Mr. Gustafson had to say. Mr. Gustafson thanked the committee for their time and stated the increases averaged out to less than 2.5% per year. In looking at the spreadsheets, he stated the increase went 9 years at one 2% raise and then 6 years at a wage freeze. He agreed that he ran for the office, but

the Unions got 2-3% with an 18-27% change. He stated at less than 2.5% the raises would be palatable and quite conservative.

Mr. Swanson stated after the wage freezes in 2018 there was an 11% increase and 2% in 2020.

Ms. Normoyle stated that the math adding the percentages would not be accurate at 27%. Ms. Ewert stated that Ms. Normoyle did not have the comparison sheet available.

Mr. Langdon stated that he did not recall the offices volunteering to not take raises back in 2018. Ms. Loftin stated the office holders had agreed to come on the salaries when the general fund was healthy again. Ms. Ewert stated in 2009, the board passed a salary increase and there was an uproar, and the board reconvened and rolled the salaries back without objection from the officials.

Chairman Moreno cautioned when saying, "that these people deserve raises for whatever reasons because these are for ... Going through an election to give raises to the elected, not the people." He stated as Chairman for the Finance committee to be cautious of any future spending, as the economy could be uncertain in 2 years.

Ms. Normoyle stated the finance committee had also discussed similar paths to a similar end, and wanted to suggest to bring it to the full board. Mr. Vyncke stated there was a discussion addressing the core issues; and the proposal how to deal with the proposal and get to the same result over time. He agreed there needed to be raises, but in a different means than proposed.

Chairman Brunk stated the county had been fiscally responsible; the negotiating committee negotiating three year terms with collective bargaining due to unknowns with the finances and for the 2024 group could pass another resolution that would make anything previously passed null and void. He stated the increase bringing up 2% each year for the clerk, and treasurer which would get them to over \$101,000 just shy of the proposal figures.

Mr. Swanson agreed with Mr. Adams stating that he wanted to address the clerk and treasurers position. Ms. Ewert stated there were other counties that other counties had proposed 2% and into the next terms of the officials. She stated she didn't think it was uncommon; more common to have 5 year fiscal projected budget and included in that 5 year budget. She stated one county had proposed county board salaries 10 years out.

Chairman Brunk clarified there was not a 5 year budget at that time, and it was not a binding document. Mr. Vyncke stated the next one would be considered by a new board, and they could undo what the current board would set.

Governance, Health & Administration Committee Report

Given by Chairman Jeff Deppe

Public Works and Facilities Committee Report

Given by Chairman Larry Burns

Approval of the County Board Agenda

Motion to approve as presented by D. Cremeens

Seconded by J. Deppe, L. Moreno

A roll call was taken:

R. Morthland, D. Cremeens, M. Burns, M. Moreno, L. Burns, L. Moreno, C. Enburg, J. Deppe, P McNeil. L. Thompson, D Adams, E. Sowards, K. Swanson, E. Langdon, R Simmer, L Boswell-Loftin, J. Woods, D. Mielke, B. Westpfahl -- YES
Motion carried

Committee member opportunity for brief comment (*no decisions will be made*)

Mr. Westpfahl commented that all previous discussions by the Board on union salaries was done in closed session and stated the Board just had a lengthy discussion on the elected officials salaries and it was all done in open session,

questioning what the difference was.

Chairman Brunk was recognized and stated that in looking at the Open Meetings Act, compensation for elected officials is not allowable for closed session.

Vice-Chairman Vyncke thanked the committee for the discussion and reiterated that the County Board compensation was not changing and since the board was seated in December 2012; there would be no increase.

Adjourn

With no further business, the Committee of the Whole adjourned at 6:47 PM with motion by D. Adams. Seconded by J. Deppe. Motion for previous roll call by L. Moreno Seconded M. Moreno
Motion carried.

**The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Committee of the Whole will be on
Wednesday, June 15th, 2022 at 5: 30 PM**