BUDGET CAUCUS MEETING OF THE ST. CLAIR COUNTY BOARD
NOVEMBER 26, 2018

After the Pledge of Allegiance was said by all, the meeting was called to order by Chairman Mark A. Kern. Mr. Thomas Holbrook, CountyClerk, called roll and determined a quorum was present.

Chairman Kern stated this was the 2019 Budget Caucus Meeting and that although this was a Public Hearing, no action could be taken or debated. This meeting was for information and discussion only on the Budget.

Chairman Kern called for questions from the public on any Budget issues.

Mr. Paul Sullivan, from the Illinois Federation of Public Employees, representing the men and women of the Probation Department is asking if the County Board is totally aware that the Budget that is proposed removes the salaries and benefits of eight (8) members. It is in violation of our collective bargaining agreement. These members are officers that work in the 26th Circuit in Washington, Perry, Monroe and Randolph Counties. Their salaries and benefits have been included in this Budget for decades. They are paid for by their individual Counties but administered by St. Clair County. So removing them from the Budget will not be a savings. This Budget takes the step to unravel decades of past practices. It completely ignores the Collective Bargaining Agreement which in my opinion is clearly an unfair labor practice. We will address this with the Labor Relations Board. These actions have made it impossible for us to fairly negotiate with the Chief Judge. I am asking you reconsider this. If the County Board passes this Budget they are sending a clear message that they do not support the members of the Probation Department, they do not support organized labor and do not respect the collective bargaining process. I appreciate your time.

Chairman Kern addressed this issue because of a needed correction. Chairman Kern stated that Randolph, Perry, Monroe, and Washington are the Counties that they work for and those are the County Boards that are responsible for paying their wages. For a long time, St. Clair County has picked up that bill but as we know things have changed with IMRF. We now have to report unfunded pension liability on our audits. We have been reporting the unfunded pension liability of eight (8) employees that do not live or work for the County. That is the number one problem for us.

The number two problem is St. Clair County taxpayers subsidize the health insurance for our County employees. Those eight (8) members are not St. Clair County employees. They are employees of the Counties they service. We pay the vast majority of the health insurance of our employees which is subsidized by the real estate taxpayers in St. Clair County. It is unfair to subsidize an employee who does not work or live here. Two years ago, we gave notice to these Counties that this issue was coming. It was talked about last year when we balanced the Budget that there was probably $100,000 in savings out there, and possibly more, if these eight (8) employees no longer receive our health insurance.

It is not that we do not value probation but that the eight (8) employees should be paid by the Counties they represent. The law is pretty clear on that.

Mr. Sullivan responded that the Collective Bargaining Agreement directly addresses the issue and it states that they will remain under the current medical insurance. The Chairman said that this County Board has not signed a Collective Bargaining Agreement.

Chairman Kern called for questions or comments from the County Board Members on any Budget issues.

At this time, discussion ensued with questions and responses from the following individuals:

Mr. Steve Reeb asked how the abatements worked this year. Dr. Debra Moore, Director of Administration, stated we will not abate until March when the State gives us the multiplier. Mr. Reeb stated that he noticed it went up this year. Mr. Frank Heiligenstein stated that the levy that was adopted made the tax rate $2.01 vs. $1.11. Chairman Kern stated that the Budget was balanced and does not raise real estate taxes.

Mr. C. David Tiedemann thanked Dr. Debra Moore, Director of Administration, Ms. Sue Schmidt, Financial Analyst, and Mrs. Jackie Krummrich, Chief Deputy of the Auditor’s Office, for their hard work on the Budget. He also asked about the MidAmerica Terminal Modification Grant that was applied for and if received where would the $7 million match come from. There is nothing budgeted. The Chairman stated we do not know when the funds are coming if received and that there may be some capital funding that we already have in reserve or it may have to be bonded. Dr. Moore stated that we are pursuing 100% funding and may be able to get it from multiple sources.

A motion was made by Mr. Frank Heiligenstein, seconded by Mr. Robert Allen Jr. to close the Budget Caucus and adjourn. Motion Carried unanimously.

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THOMAS HOLBROOK, COUNTYCLERK AND EX-OFFICIO
CLERK OF THE COUNTYBOARD

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JUDICIARY COMMITTEE