

**MINUTES
METRO PEORIA AD-HOC COMMITTEE
JANUARY 8, 2014
2:30 PM**

MEMBERS PRESENT	Timothy Riggerbach, Chairman Mary Ardapple Michael Phelan	Ryan Spain W. Eric Turner
MEMBERS ABSENT	Andrew Rand	
OTHERS PRESENT	Amy McClaren, County Engineer Carol Trumpe, County Board Kate Green, Assistant to the City Manager Patrick Urich, City Manager	Scott Sorrel, Assistant County Administrator Steve Sonnemaker, County Clerk Tom O’Neill, County Board

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Riggerbach at 2:30 PM.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion to approve the minutes of the November 13, 2013, meeting was made by Member Ardapple; seconded by Member Spain. The motion was approved unanimously by viva voce vote.

DISCUSSION

Joint City-County Legislative Agenda

Chairman Riggerbach requested that a representative from each the County and the City review the legislative agenda requests.

Mr. Sorrel reviewed the joint policy requests made cooperatively by both the County and the City, which included:

- Illinois Fiscal Concerns: Support efforts that protect and enhance existing revenue base of local governments in the face of increasing pressure to use traditionally local revenues to bridge the State budget gap.
- 9-1-1 Surcharge: Modify and extend the wireless 9-1-1 surcharge. Mr. Sorrel noted that a bill had movement last year on this topic, but it did not reach the Governor’s desk.
- DCEO Flexibility: Revise process for attracting and retaining businesses with State incentives. Mr. Sorrel said that several economic development projects that the City and County pursue are large and mandate State involvement. He said that flexibility in incentive packages could help finalize the larger projects. In response to Member Spain, Mr. Urich noted that EDGE credits are set dollar amounts based upon the

number of jobs created. He said that flexibility on the amount of the tax credit could help to incentivize projects.

Mr. Sorrel then reviewed the County policy requests, which included:

- **Election Commission:** Create a trailer bill that inserts language to give the County Board oversight and approval of the County Election Commission's annual budget. Mr. Sorrel commented that the language in the current law did not include all of the recommendations such as a transition period between the two Election Commissions, as well as concerns over election funding tied to Equalized Assessed Value. Chairman Riggerbach asked if only one referendum would be needed to disband the City Election Commission and create the County Election Commission. Mr. Sorrel said that only one referendum was required, and that a Countywide majority was necessary for it to pass. He noted that the majority of the population lives within the City. Member Spain inquired if the County Board is responsible for placing the referendum on the ballot. Mr. Sorrel agreed. It was noted that the County Board does not plan to move forward with the referendum until the language is changed.
- **Sustainable Infrastructure Funding:** Find alternatives to keep transportation funding structures in line with inflation. Mr. Sorrel said that the Motor Fuel Tax (MFT) has not kept pace with inflation, which results in lower buying power. He also noted that MFT has decreased due to higher fuel efficiency. He said that proposals include raising and indexing MFT or swapping out to a different funding structure, but it is too early to tell if there will be any movement on bills for either approach.
- **DCEO Grant:** Restore \$1 million in funding for construction of the Peoria Riverfront Museum. Mr. Sorrel said that the balance of the grant was swept by the State, and the County is still owed \$1 million to be reimbursed for the full amount of the grant award.
- **Probation Officer Salary:** Restore reimbursement levels for probation officers' salaries from the Supreme Court. Mr. Sorrel said that the Administrative Officer of the Illinois Courts (AOIC) increased funding about 10%, but this is still far short of the statutory requirement. He said that all funding is lumped into one AOIC appropriation, so the State Supreme Court has control over the allocation for the probation officers. Mr. Urich noted that the AOIC has not been willing to give up control over probation officers as a judicial function as other states have done, even though the AOIC continues to avoid funding the probation officers' salaries.

Mr. Sorrel and Mr. Urich then discussed the capital requests on the legislative agenda, which include:

- **Capital Bill:** Support a capital bill that can help fund \$10 million in County infrastructure needs, including County roads within the limits of the City of Peoria.

- Pioneer Parkway Extension: Support funding for the extension of Pioneer Parkway. Mr. Urich informed the Committee that the last estimate for project completion was \$74 million.
- University Street Repair: Support funding the rehabilitation of University Street between Pioneer Parkway and Townline Road.
- Pedestrian Infrastructure on State Routes: Support funding for construction of pedestrian infrastructure on existing State routes, especially War Memorial Drive/150 near Northwoods Mall.

Mr. Urich reviewed the City's policy requests, which include:

- Non-Ad Valorem Property Tax Item: Allow the creation of a non-ad valorem property tax line for the collection of Peoria's garbage collection fee. Mr. Urich noted that this item was high priority for the City.
- Local Pension Reform: Support common sense reforms for the public safety pension system. Mr. Urich said that the State has taken up this issue on the State side, but that it still needs to be addressed on the local level. He said that a couple specific items need to be addressed, including defining "catastrophic injury." Member Spain asked if a presentation was going to be given at the legislative breakfast which depicts the issues pensions are creating for local governments' budgets. Mr. Urich said that presentations have been given in the past, so either a presentation or handout could be prepared for additional visualization. Member Spain commented that while State legislators are informed about this issue on a State level, they are not as aware about the issues with local level pensions. He mentioned concerns that the City of Chicago could address pensions on its own, which would then leave the rest of the State without the wherewithal to pass legislation.
- Walkable Urban Areas: Funnel the local share of State MFT directly to municipalities or require IDOT to comply with local design guidelines and policies when rehabilitating infrastructure. Mr. Urich clarified that this request is for cities with populations of 100,000 or greater. He noted that costs for municipalities to rehabilitate would be much less if they were not required to follow IDOT regulations.
- Special Assessments for Municipal Charges: Allow fines, fees and other municipal debts to be collected via special assessment on property taxes.
- Declare Vacant Land Abandoned: Allow cities to declare vacant land abandoned when its owner ceases maintaining the property. Mr. Urich said that the current requirements are too strict. There are three criteria that must be met, one of which defines that the building on the land must be dangerous or unsafe. He noted that a number of vacant properties do not have structures, which makes it impossible to meet that criterion. He said that this change would move parcels out of the tax sale process. County Clerk Sonnemaker suggested that oddly shaped, small parcels should also be included in this request. Mr. Urich agreed and said that this proposal could be combined into a joint request.

- Recording Fee Waiver: Exempt cities from the fee to record or release liens filed to remove nuisances or dangerous structures. Mr. Urich said that the General Assembly may ask why the City and County cannot come together to achieve an intergovernmental agreement on this topic. He said that it is a cash flow issue to file the recording fee because it is eventually reimbursed once the lien is collected. Member Spain asked if this created a reluctance to file the lien due to the cash flow concern. Mr. Urich said that the major concern is running out of the line item dedicated to this. Member Spain suggested pulling this item from the legislative agenda and working on it through the Committee. Member Phelan asked if the City currently maintains these properties. Mr. Urich stated that the majority of the properties do require upkeep provided by the City. In response to Member Phelan, Mr. Urich said that some neighbors do have interest in the vacant properties, but some lack interest due to the increase in property taxes. Member Phelan suggested the possibility of a short term tax abatement to incentivize interest. Member Ardapple asked if the City has a plan for these properties. Mr. Urich said that there was originally a discussion about a land bank, but the realtors opposed the idea. He noted that the City Council had a neighborhood preservation policy session slated for the near future.
- Fleeing and Eluding: Create a law that would suspend the driver's license of anyone convicted of fleeing and eluding the Police. Member Phelan inquired the number of people who are fleeing the Police that actually have a license.
- Speeding Enforcement Cameras: Allow the use of video cameras to document and ticket speeders. Mr. Urich noted that this was another policy intended for cities with a population of 100,000 or greater.
- Certified Appraiser: Exempt cities from the requirement to utilize a certified appraiser for right-of-way or easement purchases under \$10,000. Mr. Urich said that counties are already exempt, so the purpose of the policy is to grant the same exemption for municipalities.

Member Ardapple asked if the legislative agenda had ever been structured to identify the top three to five priorities, and then identify a legislator to champion each of the priorities. Mr. Urich said that the legislators usually decide who wants to champion each issue. Member Spain said that Member Ardapple's comments were an improvement to past practice, and that a condensed agenda might be more productive. He also suggested drafting the language for the proposed legislation. Mr. Urich noted that this task could be assigned to the City and County lobbyists.

County Clerk Sonnemaker noted that in terms of the election commission consolidation, the allotted time to transition between the two commissions was not feasible in terms of the timing of elections. He said that additional considerations including office space, assigned duties in between elections, and the appointment of Commissioners need to be considered with the consolidation. Chairman Riggerbach asked if the County Clerk and Peoria Election Commission Director Tom Bride should present to the Committee.

Member Ardapple agreed. Chairman Riggerbach added the presentation to the April agenda.

Mr. Urich returned to the idea of prioritizing the legislative agenda. He noted four items that the City would want included: non-ad valorem property tax item, walkable urban areas, speeding enforcement, and vacant land and small parcels. Mr. Sorrel said that the County would want to include the DCEO grant restoration and the trailer bill for the election commission consolidation. Mr. Urich said that the presentation would be crafted around these priorities. In response to Member Turner, Mr. Urich said that the lobbyist would draft the language for the bills. Member Spain noted that the City and County could then monitor who co-sponsors the bills and how far they get into committees.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Stormwater Management Update, February 2014

City-County Road Transfer Agreement Revisions, February 2014

Election Commission Presentation, April 2014

MISCELLANEOUS

Ms. McClaren noted that the City and County are working to get a survey out to colleagues throughout the State regarding cooperation between municipalities and counties.

Member Ardapple informed the Committee that Andy Colgan had been added to the County's Transportation Committee in order to convey information back to Representative Bustos.

In response to Chairman Riggerbach, Mr. Urich said he would check to see if the update on stormwater management would be ready for the Committee for the February meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned by Chairman Riggerbach at 3:40 PM.