

**MINUTES**  
**METRO PEORIA AD-HOC COMMITTEE**  
**July 8, 2015**  
**2:30 PM**

<b>MEMBERS PRESENT</b>	Michael Phelan Andrew Rand Timothy Rigggenbach	Ryan Spain W. Eric Turner
<b>MEMBERS ABSENT</b>	Mary Ardapple	
<b>OTHERS PRESENT</b>	Chris Setti, Assistant City Manager Eric Dubrowski, Peoria County Chief Financial Officer Jim Scroggins, City of Peoria Finance Director Joyce Blumenshine, Heart of Illinois Group Sierra Club	Joyce Harant, Peoria Families Against Toxic Waste Mark Rothert, Assistant County Administrator Rebecca Cottrell, Sustainability & Resource Conservation Scott Sorrel, County Administrator

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Phelan at 2:33 PM.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Ms. Blumenshine, speaking on behalf of the Heart of Illinois Group Sierra Club, urged Peoria County to fill the vacant County represented position on the Springdale Cemetery Board. She commented on the importance of the involvement of Peoria County in Springdale Cemetery to ensure the best future for the site, including protection of the savannah.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A motion to approve the minutes of the March 11, 2015, meeting was made by Mr. Turner; seconded by Mr. Rand. The motion was approved unanimously.

**COMMITTEE ACTION**

**Election of Chairperson and Vice Chairperson**

Mr. Phelan opened the floor for nominations for Chairperson. Mr. Turner nominated Mr. Spain for the role of Chairman. There were no further nominations. Mr. Rigggenbach motioned to elect Mr. Spain to serve as Chairperson; seconded by Mr. Turner. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Phelan opened the floor for nominations for Vice-Chairperson. A motion to defer the nomination to the next scheduled meeting was made by Mr. Rand; seconded by Mr. Turner. The motion carried unanimously.

## **CITY/COUNTY LEGISLATIVE INITIATIVES**

### **Update on Spring 2015 session**

#### **Joint County of Peoria/City of Peoria Legislative Priorities**

1. Non-Ad Valorem Property Tax Line Items - Mr. Sorrel stated that the bill passed the Senate but is held up in the House. However, the deadline has been extended to July 31.
2. Declare Vacant Land Abandoned - Mr. Sorrel advised that the bill passed out of the Senate but has been "hijacked" in the House. The issue will have to be reintroduced in the spring.

#### **City of Peoria Legislative Priorities**

1. State Historic Tax Credit Extension - Mr. Setti advised that the bill is likely dead for this session, noted that a majority of revenue associated bills are stalled due to fiscal issues. The bill could be moved later in the session or in the veto session.
2. Property Liens on Owner Property - Mr. Setti stated that the bill passed out of the Senate with minimum required votes and failed to move out of the House. He advised that the bill has strong opposition from the Illinois Realtors Association.

#### **County of Peoria Legislative Priorities**

1. Erroneous Homestead Exemptions - Mr. Sorrel advised that both Senator Koehler and Rep. Gordon Booth proposed bills in each chamber, both were referred to the Rules Committee and did not make it out of Rules. The bills are effectively dead and will need to be reintroduced next session.
2. Retailers Occupations Tax - Mr. Sorrel stated that the bill recently passed out of the House, but was picked up by a hostile sponsor with the Department of Revenue (DOR) insisting on a language change regarding confidentiality statements. A shell bill amended the language so that it was agreeable to both the County and DOR; the bill passed in both chambers and there is an opportunity to work through the concurrence process during the veto session.

## **DEPARTMENT COORDINATION**

### **Emergency Management: Illinois River Flooding**

Mr. Sorrel commented on the assistance that the County provided the City as a result of the recent flooding, including hauling sand and provision of work release crews from the Peoria County Jail to fill sandbags.

Mr. Setti advised that a new system was effectively utilized for the latest flooding, defending more of the riverfront while keeping businesses along the riverfront open and operating. He stated that emergency management professionals worked in tandem with City and County officials to alleviate flooding conditions and assist individuals whose properties were impacted by the water by ensuring they received the needed

resources. Mr. Setti commended the work of the Public Works employees as well as the work release crews.

**Economic Development Coordination update: National Resource Network Conference Report**

Mr. Rothert commented that he and Mr. Setti attended an annual convening of the National Resource Network, consortium of mostly larger communities that has been created across the country. The annual conference enables like-sized communities to network and trade ideas on best practices on subjects such as education, poverty and community development. Mr. Setti agreed that the conference was a great opportunity to talk with a cross-section of communities that all face many of the same issues.

Mr. Setti advised that the joint Enterprise Zone Application has been scored internally, and he is hopeful of a final, positive result toward the end of this summer. He noted that 64 applications were filed for a total of 49 slots. He also stated that his staff has been working with Mr. Rothert on a joint City/County Incentive Policy, which is currently being revised as a result of feedback from the City Council. A draft will be presented to the County as well. He stated that one of the few matters that a city and/or county has control over in terms of incentive is property tax abatement, and this subject will be a good joint effort not only between the city and county, but fellow taxing bodies as well.

**Storm Water**

Mr. Sorrel advised that the County's Land Use and Infrastructure Committee has asked county staff to work with the City Manager and City staff to present to the full County Board (educate) on the CSO (Combined Sewer Overflow) update issues and challenges that the City is working with. The County recognized that CSO is not an issue that is exclusive to municipal boundaries of the City of Peoria, but encompasses a larger area. What the CSO project entails and what impacts will be on multiple municipalities within Peoria County, as well as unincorporated areas with the county.

**Fiscal/Budget**

Mr. Dubrowski advised that prior to any State cuts, the County's finances are trending at a positive budget surplus, even with issues such as Growth Cell payments, an unanticipated special election and a decrease in federal detention revenue. He stated that if the State makes any material cuts to the revenue, the 2015 budget surplus could become a deficit, with the actual impact still unknown. He noted that Staff is challenged by a \$1.8 million cut in local government distributive funds, with the County facing potential cuts of \$1 million in 2015 and \$2 million in 2016 and beyond. He stated the amount equals an approximately 4% hit to General Fund revenues, and summarized how this deficit would impact various departmental budgets and State funded programs.

Mr. Dubrowski stated that the Governor has proposed a \$1.5 billion cut to Medicaid. The County currently has 121 Medicaid qualified residents at Heddington Oaks;

approximately 65% of the current census. The proposed cut would result in approximately \$750,000.00 in lost revenue.

Mr. Dubrowski stated that an area where cash flow would be impacted would be that of Sales Tax. A Sales Tax Sweep will most likely occur, and although there will be no dollar impact, reducing the flow will increase the amount of delay in payments. He also commented that Peoria County has observed its own property tax rate freeze for some time, and if a proposed property tax freeze is on the levy itself, both the City and County will lose gains with the increase growth in property valuations.

Mr. Scroggins noted that if the General Assembly considers a property tax freeze, the City would not be impacted as much as 50% reduction in income taxes, but the impact would be great. He stated that the City has a tax rate of .95 per 100 and the library and library bonds are at .44, which generates around \$27.8 million. If the dollar value of the EAV is frozen, the City would lose approximately \$381,000 in potential future revenues and the library \$129,000. He stated that the only bond the City has issued that is levied on property tax bills is the library bond; if the tax was frozen at the dollar amount, any future increases in debt service on the library bond would significantly impact library operations.

Mr. Spain asked if there was any language drafted regarding a property tax freeze which reflects the duration of the freeze and provides specificity on a discussion whether the freeze pertains to the levy, not the rates. Mr. Dubrowski advised that information received from the County's lobbyist states that the property tax freeze is on the tax extension for all units of governments, with a two year Sunset on December 31, 2018.

Mr. Spain advised that the Governor spoke at a press conference today, introducing priorities and prerequisites to a budget deal. Mr. Spain stated that several areas that may have an impact on the City and County include work comp reforms and pension reform for local, downstate public safety employees. He commented that a greater and putting the issues in context would enable the committee perform collective advocacy in discussing the impact at a local government level for the City and County.

### **Work Plan Update**

The committee was updated on the following areas of the Work Plan:

#### **Health and Sustainability Initiatives:**

- A. (*Local Food Economy*) Ms. Cottrell invited committee members to a meeting of the Local Food Policy Council, scheduled for July 9, 2015 at the Neighborhood House.

#### **Department Coordination:**

- A. (*Coordination Meetings*) Mr. Sorrel advised that he and the City Manager meet regularly to discuss a variety of issues.

- B. *(Emergency Management Coordination)* Mr. Sorrel advised that a County-wide planning exercise intended to test all of the various emergency management components in the community will be held in September. In addition, conversation regarding the possibility of a joint operations center has shifted due to the County Board action of transferring responsibilities of emergency management from the County Administrator to the Sheriff's Office.
- C. *(Economic Development Coordination)* Mr. Sorrel stated that activities related to the Asian Carp Initiative have been moved to August due to high floodwaters. Mr. Rothert advised that Staff will be bringing a recommendation to the Chairman's Cabinet on paths to proceed with the Buy Local Campaign, and wish to also reach out to the City regarding collaboration. Staff is considering several options, including organizing the campaign in-house or hiring a consulting/marketing firm to assist in marketing a buy local education campaign, in an effort to increase spend within Peoria County and the City of Peoria. Mr. Phlean suggested targeted marketing encouraging both employees and citizens to buy within the city and county, via internal marketing or partnering with the Chamber of Commerce. Mr. Sorrel advised that the external component could also include the various municipal chambers throughout the county.
- D. *(IT)* Mr. Sorrel stated that City and County departments continue with the Planning and Zoning software evaluation, and anticipates a capital budget request in the next fiscal year. He advised that the joint project will enable the City/County to secure the same vendor and use the same platform.

Miscellaneous:

- A. *(Springdale)* Mr. Sorrel advised that a discussion on County direction regarding Springdale Cemetery is on the July Executive Committee agenda.
- B. *(Election Commission)* Mr. Sorrel advised that the Election Commission is fully transitioned; they successfully ran a special primary yesterday and will be running a special general election in September. Staff continues to seek a permanent location that is both affordable and meets the operational needs of the commission.

**Miscellaneous**

Mr. Rand noted a recent matter involving an issue with a barking dog that was investigated by PCAPS, and it was noted that there were many dogs at the residence. He asked if it was feasible for the City to perform proactive code enforcement in summer months when there are numerous animal complaints. Mr. Setti advised that although the City has a Nuisance Property Team based within the police department that looks at specific properties that are continually in violation of a variety of ordinances, staffing cuts have greatly reduced the number of code enforcement officers.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 3:37 PM upon a motion by Mr. Turner and second by Mr. Riegenbach.