

Minutes of the Executive Committee Meeting

The Executive Committee of the McLean County Board met on Tuesday, March 11, 2003, at 4:30 p.m. in Room 700, Law and Justice Center, 104 West Front Street, Bloomington, Illinois.

Members Present: Chairman Sweeney, Members Sorensen, Bass, Berglund, Bostic, Segobiano, and Renner

Members Absent: Members Gordon and Hoselton

Other Members Present: Members Moss, Kinzinger, Rodgers, Owens, Dean

Staff Present: Mr. John Zeunik, County Administrator; Mr. Terry Lindberg, Assistant County Administrator; Ms. Lucretia Wherry, Human Resources Assistant; Ms. Christine Northcutt, County Administrator's Assistant

Department Heads/
Elected Officials Present: Mr. Eric Ruud, First Assistant Civil State's Attorney, State's Attorney's Office; Ms. Jennifer Ho, Director, Risk Management; Mr. Bob Kahman, Supervisor of Assessments; Ms. Connie Clifford, Supervisor of Assessments Office; Ms. Sandy Parker, Circuit Clerk; Mr. Mike Gallagher, Assistant Director, Information Services

Others Present: None

Chairman Sweeney called the meeting to order at 4:32 p.m.

Chairman Sweeney presented the minutes of the February 11, 2003 Committee meeting for approval.

Motion by Berglund/Bostic to approve and place on file the minutes of the February 11, 2003 meeting. Motion carried.

Chairman Sweeney stated that there are nine reappointments and one resignation for which the Committee's advice and consent is sought.

Motion by Bass/Sorensen to recommend approval of the nine reappointments and one resignation as recommended by the Chairman. Motion carried.

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Chairman Sweeney informed the Committee that the next item for business is the introduction and presentation by candidates seeking appointment as County Treasurer. He announced that there are only two candidates. Chairman Sweeney advised the Committee that Mr. Alan Holderly and Mr. John Schroeder would be withdrawing their applications for the position of Treasurer for personal reasons.

Chairman Sweeney introduced the first candidate, Mr. Michael McFarland.

Mr. Michael McFarland stated that he wanted to thank the Board for allowing him to speak. He explained that this appointment will help to determine the fiscal stability and future growth of the Treasurer's Office.

Mr. McFarland informed the Committee that he has many qualities and ideas that can help enhance the day to day function of the Treasurer's Office. He stated that by taking his experience and the knowledge of the current staff, he know his objectives will be met. He further stated that he has six years of banking experience, and many years of administrative experience. He has lived in McLean County for his entire life, which gives him a strong understanding of the community. The final objective that Mr. McFarland wanted to bring to the Committee's attention is his strong sense of public service. He explained that he has six years of banking experience with National City Bank. He has managed two of National City's branch offices and has supervised as many as 17 employees in his charge. He worked with the former Treasurer during tax time and in investing the County's funds.

He stated that he knows what it will take to run a campaign and to win the office in 18 months. Mr. McFarland informed the Committee that if he does not receive the appointment, he will be out in the public campaigning to insure that he will win the office at the next election.

He plans to keep the current staff in place so the Treasurer's Office can function in a stronger better way. He asked the Board if they had any questions.

Chairman Sweeney stated that he would ask the Executive Committee first if they had any questions, and then the Board.

Mr. Sorensen stated that Mr. McFarland outlined three discussion topics: ideas, his experience and public service. He asked Mr. McFarland if he could state his ideas to enhance the operations of the Treasurer's Office.

Mr. McFarland replied that the most important idea is to help create an open and strong communication system between the Assessor, County Clerk and the Treasurer's Office because those offices work very closely together. The offices may need to meet once a month or once a quarter, depending on the need. He further stated that in his banking experience, he has learned that customer service is very important. The Treasurer's Office is a very important office especially during tax time. He would like to ensure that the office offers the best customer service that is available.

Mr. Sorensen stated that other than a once a month meeting, he did not hear any specific ideas.

Mr. McFarland responded that he plans to go into the Treasurer's Office and see where his banking experience can be applied. He wants to see where the office can save money. From his banking experience, he can help find ways to save money on fees and cut costs.

The Committee had no further questions for Mr. McFarland.

Chairman Sweeney thanked Mr. McFarland and introduced the next candidate, Ms. Becky McNeil, Assistant County Treasurer.

Ms. McNeil stated that she is extremely honored to come before the Committee to discuss her interests and reasons for pursuing the position of County Treasurer. She advised the Committee that she brings a strong educational background to the position. She has a Bachelor's and Master's degree in Economics from Western Illinois University. In her undergraduate studies, she achieved Minors in Management and Marketing. Her prior work experience focused on accounting and finance.

Ms. McNeil informed the Committee that her employment in the McLean County Treasurer's Office began in 1999 with an appointment as Payroll Accountant. In 2001 Mr. McNeil was appointed as Chief Deputy to former Treasurer Jim Boylan. The duties of Assistant Treasurer have been very extensive and have allowed Ms. McNeil to become familiar with the duties and responsibilities of the County Treasurer as well as become familiar with the many offices and departments of County Government. As Assistant Treasurer, Ms. McNeil has been responsible for assisting the County Treasurer in investing the County's revenues in a way in which provides both security and liquidity to meet the expenses of the County's overall \$59 million budget. Ms. McNeil explained that she has also been responsible for overseeing the calculation, distribution and collection of property taxes in McLean County. This is a very extensive process which involves six months of rolling \$177 million through the office and distributing it to 189 taxing bodies. It requires a great deal of coordination and accountability.

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Ms. McNeil stated she has been responsible for managing the staff in the office and providing them with leadership. Ms. McNeil has been reporting to the County Administrator and the County's Finance Committee on the County's financial status. She stated she has been instrumental in assisting the County Administrator in watching accounts, working with departments, and especially watching receivables that are due from the State of Illinois.

Ms. McNeil noted that many of the accomplishments have been as a result of significant technology that Information Services have provided them. She informed the Committee that the Treasurer's Office is very grateful for their assistance. It is a resource that has eliminated the office from incurring additional costs. Information Services has assisted them in streamlining operations and making them more efficient. In regards to property taxes, Information Services has assisted the office in the process of issuing a direct debit and credit card payment option for taxpayers. Information Services has also created a database system to house all of the delinquent mobile home records since 1983. These records can now be easily accessed. They have also aided in generating reports to help to assess the collection and distribution of property taxes. Ms. McNeil informed the Committee that new reports have been created for the Finance Committee that break down fund balances so she could present the Committee with a clear picture of the cash and receivables.

Ms. McNeil stated that her goals for the office are to continue to be actively involved in the day to day operations as she has been for the last four years. She expressed that she has a great deal of experience as a result of time spent in the office. Her experience will help her to identify the areas which need improvement and the areas which have been significantly improved. She stated that she hopes to be able to better educate the taxpayers of McLean County as to what the Treasurer's Office does. By adding an explanation on the back of the tax bill, she would be able to better illustrate how the property tax bills are collected. Many people do not understand how property taxes are collected and how the money is distributed. She would like to continue to work with Information Services to enhance development of the web site. Ms. McNeil advised the Committee that she continues to be a strong advocate in promoting a new tax administration system. She expressed that such a system would be very beneficial to the Treasurer's Office. It would streamline a number of their operations, specifically the calculation of property taxes. These operations are sometimes very cumbersome because of the current system. She would like the three offices to be able to work on one system to promote teamwork.

Ms. McNeil stated that her personality and initiative will greatly enhance her political ability. There will be two elections, one in 2004 and one in 2006 that will require a great deal of commitment from her and her family. She is ready to take that step. She has in place a wonderful team of supporters who are confident in her ability.

Chairman Sweeney asked if there were any questions for Ms. McNeil.

Mr. Owens asked Ms. McNeil how she planned on financing the various technological ideas with the current budget restrictions.

Ms. McNeil stated that many of her ideas can be accomplished with no additional expense to the County. There have been some improvements already accomplished by taking advantage of the resources that are already available. She would like to continue to find ways in which technology can improve the operations in the office. There are a number of operations which have been restructured and statutes which have been researched to determine that some steps no longer have to be taken. Information Services have also helped create reports to cut down on the time that is spent manually printing those reports. She stated that she is aware that there would be a significant cost in implementing a tax administration system, but there are overall benefits to the County, taxpayers and the taxing bodies.

The Committee had no further questions for Ms. McNeil. Chairman Sweeney thanked Ms. McNeil.

Chairman Sweeney presented a request for approval of an Emergency Appropriation Ordinance Amending the McLean County FY 2003 Combined Annual Appropriation and Budget Ordinance General Fund 0001, County Board Department 0001 – Safe Havens Grant.

Motion by Sorensen/Berglund to Recommend Approval of
Emergency Appropriation Ordinance Amending the McLean
County FY 2003 Combined Annual Appropriation and Budget
Ordinance General Fund 0001, County Board Department 0001.
Motion carried.

Chairman Sweeney presented a request for approval of the Centranet contract with Verizon as submitted by Information Services.

Motion by Berglund/Bass to Recommend Approval of the
Centranet contract with Verizon. Motion carried.

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Chairman Sweeney presented a request for approval of the Mitsubishi Motors of North America, Inc., Assessment Settlement Agreement.

Motion by Renner/Sorensen to Recommend Approval of the Mitsubishi Motors of North America, Inc., Assessment Settlement Agreement.

Motion carried.

Mr. Segobiano advised the Committee that the last time that the County dealt with this issue, the County was sidetracked by Unit 5 and he had a concern that the same thing would happen again. Mr. Segobiano noted that he discussed this matter with the County Administrator and his concerns and questions were answered.

Chairman Sweeney informed the Committee that the next item on the agenda is the Land Use and Development Committee report. Mr. Gordon is out of town attending his mother-in-law's funeral.

Mr. Segobiano stated that due to lack of activity there was no monthly meeting and there is nothing to report.

Ms. Diane Bostic, Chairman of the Property Committee, presented two items for the Committee's attention. The Committee recommended approval of two items that were presented by Mr. Jack Mitchell, County Engineer, County Highway Department. They Committee recommended approval of the request to proceed with drilling a well to test for adequate water and performing percolation tests to determine location and size of septic fields for the Route 9 County Highway site. These are items that will require attention from the Board. There were no questions for Chairman Bostic.

Mr. B.H. "Duffy" Bass, Chairman of the Transportation Committee, presented no items for the action at this time.

Mr. Matt Sorensen, Chairman of the Finance Committee, presented no items for action at this time.

Mr. Tari Renner, Chairman of the Justice Committee, presented no items for action at this time.

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Mr. John Zeunik, County Administrator has no items for business at this time.

Chairman Sweeney presented the bills for payment. The fund total for this month is \$221,889.27.

Motion by Berglund/Bass to recommend approval of the
Bills as of February 28, 2003 as presented by the Auditor.
Motion carried.

There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 4:57 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine Northcutt
Recording Secretary