

COMMITTEE REPORT

COMMITTEE: Legislative Committee
CHAIRPERSON: Don Zillig
DATE/TIME: May 20, 2015 @ 1:00 p.m.

PRESENT: Don Zillig Randy Jobgen Brad Petersburg
 Steve McIntyre Terry Stoffregen Ron Smith
 Merri Berlage

Other Board members:
Others: Hal Gilpin, Dan Reimer and Katherine Walker.

1. Call to Order – Don Zillig called the meeting to order at 1:05 p.m.
2. Roll call and establishment of a quorum – Roll call was taken and a quorum was established.
3. Approval of Minutes – **Ron Smith made a motion to approve the minutes of the April 1, 2015 Legislative Committee meeting, seconded by Don Zillig, and motion passed.**
4. Citizens' Comments - None
5. Unfinished Business
 - a) **Update on Sunset Clauses for Referendum questions:** Representative Stewart has not yet introduced legislation on this item.
 - b) **Update on prevailing wage legislation by Merri Berlage and discussion of current prevailing wages:** No report at this time.
 - c) **Update on 9-1-1 funding:** Nothing new to report at this time.
 - d) **Update on Economic Development/But For Clause:** Nothing new to report at this time.
 - e) **Update on UCCI lobbyist:** The committee discussed the possibility of working with a lobbyist. Don Zillig will check to see if there might be a local lobbyist who could help us with certain legislation.
 - f) **Update regarding possibility of increasing Hotel/Motel tax to help cover other County Expenditures:** Don Zillig discussed that some areas of the State have a higher hotel/motel tax rate and a portion of the tax is designated for a special purpose. Zillig suggested the Committee explore the possibility of increasing the local hotel/motel tax by a half percent or one percent for emergency services and the emergency radio communication system.
6. New Business
 - a) **Discussion and possible action on possible FEE on Motel/Hotel to use fee money for general fund need** – Don Zillig discussed that he asked States Attorney John Hay to research the possibility of the County implementing a user fee, not a tax for visitors who stay overnight in quest accommodations. Steve McIntyre commented that possibly a fee could be placed on meeting rooms as well.

- b) **Discussion and possible action on referendum possibility to add an additional 1% tax on Hotel/Motel lodging** – Don Zillig reported that he addressed this item with the State’s Attorney and is waiting to hear back.
 - c) **Discussion and possible action to start state legislation for an increase of the hotel/motel tax for general use for Jo Daviess and other counties** – Don Zillig commented that when Senator Bivins attended a Legislative Committee meeting last fall he thought that this might be a possibility.
 - d) **Discussion of Brian Stewart’s assistance regarding his representation of Jo Daviess County issues** – Don Zillig would like to continue to work with Representative Brian Stewart on issues that are pertinent to Jo Daviess County. Dan Reimer suggested that we invite Representative Stewart and Senator Bivins to one of the upcoming Committee meetings.
7. Legislative Looking Glass: The Legislative Committee started the Legislative Looking Glass several years ago in an effort to follow certain legislation and proposed bills. They also researched bills that could apply to or affect Jo Daviess County. The looking glass has not been maintained for several years.
 8. Citizens’ Comments: Melisa Hammer expressed her concern with several bills that were recently introduced that would permanently freeze property taxes. Ron Smith added that there are four bills that would freeze property taxes for all Illinois Taxing districts, including those that are not currently subject to PTELL. The only mechanism for increasing the extension limitation under these bills would be by referendum. Each of these bills would also freeze the debt service extension base.
 9. Board Member Concerns: Don Zillig asked Katherine Walker to give the committee her input regarding what would affect the tourists. Katherine Walker commented that at this point it might be helpful for the committee to see what other areas around us are charging and what rates are being charged by competing destinations. There are other possibilities – the amusement tax and the food and beverage tax on eating establishments. If allowed by statute the food and beverage tax might be something to look at. The hotel/motel tax maybe captures about sixty-five percent of the visitors. Don Zillig stated he would do some research on the alternatives. Dan Reimer discussed how new construction increases the tax base and helps the local economic grow. Hal Gilpin commented that we need to focus on economic development. Don Zillig will work on updating the Legislative Looking Glass.
 10. Next regular meeting - Wednesday, June 17, 2015 @ 11:00 am
 11. Meeting adjourned at 2:13 p.m. following a motion by Steve McIntyre and a second by Terry Stoffregen.