

## COMMITTEE REPORT

**COMMITTEE:** Finance, Tax & Budgets  
**CHAIRPERSON:** Yerda Potter  
**DATE/TIME:** June 28, 2007. 7:00 p.m.

**PRESENT:**

Beth Baranski  
 Jody Carroll

Alan Kent  
 Ron Mapes

Yerda Potter  
 Marv Schultz

Other Board members:

Others: Dan Reimer, Diane Williams, Angie Kaiser, Donna Berlage, Carol Soat

### MINUTES

Yerda Potter called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

#### 1. Minutes

Beth Baranski made a motion to approve the committee minutes of April 26, 2007. Jody Carroll seconded and the motion passed. Ron Mapes made a motion to approve the committee minutes of May 31, 2007. Marvin Schultz seconded and the motion passed.

#### 2. Staff Reports

- a) Chief County Assessment Office. Donna Berlage reported that there are still two township assessors who have not brought their work in; the office expects to receive it this week or next. There is no new information about SB17. The office is beginning work on value changes for 2007. The Farmland Assessment Review Committee met and adopted the proposed 2008 equalized assessed values. A couple of Freedom of Information Act requests have been received for Board of Review minutes. Berlage is sending a letter to the editor regarding some recent articles that have been published in the Galena Gazette.

#### 3. Unfinished Business

- a) Soil and Water Levy. No further information has been received on this item.
- b) Certificate of insurance policy. County Administrator Dan Reimer reviewed the reason for implementing this policy to set minimum standards. Since the last meeting, a few more revisions have been suggested by the representatives from the Illinois Counties Risk Management Trust. The committee discussed the various recommended levels of coverage at length and the possibility that some of the smaller vendors and contractors might not be able to provide a certificate at the required levels. Reimer would like to give the staff one more time to comment on the policy before sending it forward to the County Board.

Optional insurance incentive program. This item was not on the agenda; Reimer reported that some requests have been brought forward by employees and the issue will be placed on the next month's committee agenda for discussion and possible action.

#### 4. New Business

- a) Presentation – Property Tax Cycle. Berlage began the presentation by stating that the assessment process begins with the township assessors. Their information is brought to the Chief County Assessment Office where the staff places values on each property. Each year, one quarter (quad) of the county is revalued. The office then sends assessment notices to the property owners and they have 30 days in which to file a complaint. Berlage continued to explain how complaints are addressed through the Board of Review process and further hearing options available to the property owner. She also outlined the various owner exemptions that exist and are maintained by their office. Berlage reported that the state does pay a stipend to the assessors in counties that maintain assessments within a specified range. The committee discussed the importance of communications between the township assessors and the property owners. Berlage and the committee members discussed how the sales ratio is determined by the state.

Chief Deputy Clerk Angie Kaiser reported that the tax extension takes place in the County Clerk's Office. The final abstract is sent to the state to generate the final equalization factor. Once the factor is received, they start processing each taxing district's individual levy. She reviewed Property Tax Extension Limitation Law (PTELL) in detail with the committee. PTELL is a calculation that they do to determine the limited rate. The rate is multiplied by the adjusted EAV in order to determine the total extension for a taxing body. Within each district, they may levy for multiple funds. The committee discussed at length the process for capturing all the tax allowed under the limit and reasons why a taxing body would do that. The committee discussed various ways of educating the public on this process. Kaiser also reviewed an estimate for the 2007 taxes payable in 2008 for the FY2008 budget process.

Treasurer Carol Soat explained how the tax bills are printed, processed, and paid through her office. The first installment is due, by statute, 30 days after the tax bills are mailed. The second installment is almost always due in September in order to accommodate the completion of the process before the end of the fiscal year. She advised the committee when the distributions to the taxing bodies will be made this year and that the tax sale is usually scheduled for the last week of October. She clarified that buyers at the sale are only buying the unpaid taxes, not the actual property. Very few of the parcels purchased at the tax sale ever result in a tax deed. The tax deferral exemption is handled in the Treasurer's Office. Kaiser clarified that the tax sale is the state's way of making sure that all the taxing bodies receive all their tax money for the year. Soat also reported on the work of the tax buyer, Joseph Meyer, and how that has benefited the county.

#### 5. Staff Reports

- a) Treasurer's Office. The committee discussed the salaries report compared to budget. Some of the departments may be under budget currently because of seasonal part-time positions and because payroll increases happen throughout the year on the employees' individual anniversary dates.

## 6. New Business

- a) FY2008 budget – Revenue estimates. The committee reviewed the tax levy estimates. The committee discussed maximizing the tax levy and designating the additional money for capital projects; this is an option for a future adjustment and doesn't need to be decided at this point. Reimer stated the rationale used to determine the increase for each individual levy. Carroll made a motion to accept the preliminary tax levy distribution as presented. Mapes seconded and the motion passed.

Reimer reviewed all the General Fund revenue estimates by source group and identified the key changes in revenue. Revenues remain generally flat. Reimer also reviewed a list of guidelines to use in establishing the expense budgets, including salary increases, health insurance increases, and other necessary or mandatory expenses. The committee also discussed options for re-allocation of revenues. Carroll made a motion to approve the guidelines for FY2008 expense budgets as presented. Mapes seconded and the motion passed.

- b) Sullivan tower property valuation. The committee discussed various values for the tower property that the Sullivan Trust is going to donate to the County. The County Board needs to determine a value of the donation for Mr. Sullivan. Baranski made a motion to set a value of \$9,000 on the property in question for donation purposes. Carroll seconded and the motion passed.
- c) Safety Building - over budget line item. Reimer stated that the County Board has been receiving over-budget line item requests each month due to the extraordinary inmate medical expenses in the Sheriff's Office. The money that was budgeted in the contingency line item was meant for settlement of a grievance but it was actually accounted for in FY2006, so the budget funding is available to move to professional services. Carroll made a motion to recommend a line item transfer of \$15,500 from the Sheriff's budget contingency line item to cover the additional inmate medical expenses charged to professional services in the Public Safety Building budget. Baranski seconded and the motion passed.

## 7. Other

- a) Board member concerns  
Baranski would like the County Board to monitor the timelines for the township assessors and stress the importance of timeliness to them next year. She also asked about the Galena Territory exploring the idea of incorporating as a municipality; Reimer and Schultz reported that the association is developing a report. Baranski asked if the CVB positions are included in the salary survey and it is believed that information was submitted with all the other county positions.

## 8. Citizens' Comments

Meeting adjourned at 10:20 p.m. following a motion by Mapes and seconded by Schultz.