

COMMITTEE: Legislative Committee
CHAIRPERSON: Merri Berlage
DATE/TIME: October 15, 2008. 1:00 pm

Present were: Merri Berlage, Bill Cooper, Margie Montelius, Terry Stoffregen, Sally Toepfer

Others were: Representative Jim Sacia, Senator Tim Bivins, Marie Stiefel, Dan Reimer

Absent were: None

1. **Citizens' Comments.** None
2. **Minutes.** Bill Cooper made a motion to approve the September 23, 2008 minutes as presented. Margie Montelius seconded and the motion passed.
3. **Unfinished Business**
 - a. Regional Superintendent of Schools – Discussion on the funding of the Regional Office and how the funds are dispersed to all three counties. Marie explained the state code and that each County pays by their EAV and not by the student count. The Committee's concern is that Jo Daviess County portion of funding has increased each year for the past several years, although the student population has remained flat. Jim Sacia commented that the diversity of the different counties is what makes it very difficult for legislation to have the backing to change education codes. Representative Sacia explained the strategy for writing and presenting a possible code change. He pointed out that the writing should be clear and concise to understand and that it would be helpful if other counties were involved and helped to promote changes. Bill Cooper asked if Marie Stiefel could research the information on whether there is a declining amount of students per county and district and make that available to the committee.
 - b. Motor Fuel Tax (MFT) – The Committee has been keeping track on the actions of SB1291 and that this is in the rules committee and will not continue if not enacted on by January 1, 2009, so this would need to be reintroduced to be continued into the next session. Steve Keeffer, County Engineer, joined the committee to discuss the price of salt. He reported that his bidding went through CMS (Central Management Services) with the State of Illinois and that we are obligated to take the amount that was originally requested and at the price that they quoted. Last year Jo Daviess County used 3,3000 tons with an additional amount for the townships, which totaled around 5,000 tons at the price of \$35.00 per ton. Keefer used this amount of 3,300 ton for bidding and the bidding came back at \$131.74 per ton. Wayne Isley from CMS informed Keeffer that the County is obligated to take the amount at the price given. North American Salt, the vendor, will consider a request for a lower quantity.

SB3063 is placed in the rules committee, this bill proposes that the state pay the amount that is above \$67.00 per ton for salt. It was noted that County Board Officials should write letters and make phone calls to support this bill. It was discussed that HB224 and HB4294 for Motor Fuel Tax should be kept on our list as these could help us in the future with funding for road improvements.

- c. Election Code – Questions that are to appear on the election ballot were handed out. The Committee was concerned that the non-binding questions are only required to allow 5 days for advisory notice while the binding questions are required to allow 35 days. The Committee suggested to Sacia that they would like to see the change for notification of non-binding referendums be the same as binding, 35 days. It was discussed at length that the Committee is concerned with how the questions that are on the ballot may be misinterpreted. Committee chair Berlage will ask at the next County Board meeting if the Board would like the committee to wait until new session is in place to forward their proposed changes.
- d. School Facility Occupation Tax. Board Chair, Merri Berlage, attended the meeting with the school superintendents on September 30, 2008 at the Galena Territory to discuss the school facility occupation tax presented by Jim Burgett. At this time the Galena and East Dubuque School Districts are asking that the School Facility Occupation Tax be adopted into Jo Daviess County. If either the Warren or Stockton School Board approve moving forward then 51% of the total JDC student enrollment would be represented and would require the County Board to place this referendum question on the ballot (next springs election).
- e. Historic Sites and Parks. Senator Bivins updated the committee on the sweep fund SB790 and the appropriation of sweep funds SB1103. At this time there are parks scheduled to close on November 30, 2008 unless SB1103 gets signed by the Governor. Senator Bivins informed the committee that \$2.1 million is needed to keep parks open and that \$4.8 million is needed to keep parks and historic sites open. It was noted that the Governor has \$25 million in discretionary funding that he could use to resolve the issue of historic sites and parks. It was advised that the County Board should contact the Governor and urge him to sign appropriation for parks and historic sites SB1103. Merri Berlage asked Sacia and Bivins the question about the viewing town that is near Elizabeth and whether this site could be purchased from the State of Illinois by a private owner to repair and then quick deed it to Jo Daviess County. Jim Sacia informed the Committee that he does not know the exact criteria for the State to dispose of property.
- f. Open discussion on other items that may not be listed.

- i. A question that came from the County Board Meeting was asked; “Why do we have to use Union labor and pay prevailing wage, when using MFT (Motor Fuel Tax) funds?” Jim Sacia informed the Committee that he has a bill in place at this time that states that as of January 2008 no non-union group can be granted IDOT bids until they go through a specific training. The advice that both Sacia and Bivens gave was to send letters and emails to Governors and Democrats explaining the hardship caused by the legislation.
- ii. 911 Funding – There is concerns that land based phones are being replaced with cell phones thus cutting funding to the 911 fund. The County is very concerned with the loss of revenue for funding communications officers and radio updates. Because of the uniqueness of Jo Daviess County and the part time residents in this area our County does not receive the 911 funding from cell phones because of the taxes being paid in the billing areas outside of Jo Daviess County. Senator Bivens advised that the County look into the legislation of the possibility of charging a fee for false alarm dials to 911.
- iii. IMRF increase for FY2010 – Dan Reimer reported that information received from IMRF stated that employer IMRF contribution rates for FY2010 could possible increase by 23%. This estimated increase is due to the current economic situation which has reduced the value of IMRF’s investments from 100% funded to approximately 79%. Because JDC is limited by PTELL this would be a significant financial burden to the County. The Committee is asking for the support of HB4682 which would allow the IMRF levy to be separated and not subject to the limitations of PTELL.

4. Review of Legislative Looking Glass. No changes.

5. New Business

a. Discussion of new legislation. Not at this time.

b. Proposal of any legislation. Not at this time.

6. Citizens’ Comments. None.

Terry Stoffregen motioned to adjourn; Bill Cooper seconded and the motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 3:00pm.

Next regular meeting: Wednesday, November 19, 2008 at 1:00 pm and will be held at County Board Room.