

DEMOCRATIC CAUCUS
Committee of the Whole
Tuesday, 01/09/2024 – 5:45 p.m.
Jennifer Putman Meeting Room
Brookens Administrative Center
1776 E. Washington St.
Urbana, IL 61801

Present: Carter, Fortado, Hanaur-Friedman, Locke, Lokshin, Patterson, Peugh, Rodriguez, Stohr, Taylor, Thorsland, Vanichtheeranont

1. Call to Order: 5:45 pm

2. Approval of the Agenda–

- a. Moved by Carter, second by Vanichtheeranont
unanimous approval.

3. Approval of the Minutes from 2023.

- a. Moved by Thorsland, second by Vanichtheeranont
unanimous approval

4. Public Participation–

- a. Executive Summers: re last county board meeting, always felt like county board is a deliberative body and when J. Wilson didn't want to have any discussion re Auditor and Coroner and this felt bad since we are the legislative body there to balance my executive position. The opportunity to talk about what you're voting on is important. The talking about it is very important. Concerns about how that played out. Will speak with Jeff Wilson directly about all this soon. Secondly, seeing the impact of public comment on how board members vote. Each of us had 2-3K people vote for us - they are who put us in office. For example the Stop the Violence program recent vote. We had about 25 impassioned speakers who want to do good but having said that, the VA offers counseling for vets with PTSD and if you have insurance you can get it and if you don't, Lynn Canfield can help get them counseling. Worried that they spent so much on food and whether the money we allocated will really go to help the problem. As a deliberative body it's important to get as much info as you can on whether what you're voting on will play out.
- b. Vanichtheeranont: Question - can we prioritize people from in the county for public comment? Steve's response: Anybody can speak, but we can prioritize people in-county.

- c. Carter: I've had some concerns as well that I want to share: I don't want to be part of a circus, I want to be an advocate for my community. Conversations are being had and I'm not a part of those conversations. I've always been held accountable for my actions. Decisions that are being made have negatively impacted the black community and the worst is when people come to me and I didn't already know about something. It feels like we have two democratic boards and we need to unite. You can call me and talk to me. Also regarding the Vets/the Walkers, whenever a person needs help, they're more likely to reach out to somebody who looks like them and who has experienced the same trials and tribulations and therefore I was for them because I knew they would reach people who the VA would not. I'm even going to reach out to republicans to have coffee and talk.
- d. Clerk Ammons: to expand on what Samantha just shared. My wife and I have experienced losses through 2023. You all know I was livid about the Faraci appointment. I was not happy that many of you didn't say anything publicly about this. Many of us have been working together since 2014 and I don't know how this stuff happens. Many of you don't experience the stuff that we do as black folks and sometimes we take it personally when allies don't show up for us. We're supposed to fight for our communities. As for the agenda - we have the polling locations and increase in election judge pay. Any questions?
 - i. Stohr: did Mr. Wilson or anybody from the republican caucus reach out to you on this? Ammons answer: no. Stohr had asked him to do so, so discussion could happen in advance. State Board of Elections is covering part of the pay raise so nothing is coming from county budget.
 - ii. Taylor: re polling places - what are the major changes? List is on last page of the agenda.
 - iii. Thorsland: as a former rural voter, everybody living in the county gets in their car to vote, so it's not a big deal if they have to go somewhere a bit further. Nobody out there can walk to the polls.
 - iv. Ammons reminded group that they can vote by mail, vote early, etc. We're trying to push early voting as much as possible. HB4198 gives all election authorities the option to mail to all voters in jurisdiction.

5. Announcements/Communications—

- a. Thorsland: heads up re next week's meeting that Bondville is protesting a solar farm on the Extra Territorial Jurisdiction (ETJ) (1.5 miles outside their border). The solar farm is coupled to a data center, and the second use makes it protestable. The petitioners will come and present an economic statement. The solar farm shops and hires locals. They've done four others in the area. They provide \$\$7 million in labor in Champaign County. \$2 million at Tepper and Springfield Electric. Needs 17 votes to pass. We may want to consider postponing it to the following meeting to give them

time to withdraw their protest. ZBA said all was fine from a zoning standpoint, but voted against it because Bondville does not want it.

6. Review and Discussion of the Full Board Agenda

a. Justice and Social Services–

- i. Rosecrance financial report - will ask for a different type of report that would be more informative for us. Replacement for Misty is in place and working. They stopped giving Rosecrance contact information for newly released folks.

b. Policy, Personnel, and Appointments–

- i. Lots of vacancies
- ii. Would like to see some recruitment for correctional officers - will really need them when the new jail opens
- iii. We need to recruit folks for open appointments
- iv. Polling places - discussed with Clerk Ammons

c. Finance

A. Budget Amendments/Transfers

1. Budget Amendment BUA 2023/12/369 8-9

Fund 2110 Workforce Development Fund / Dept 110 Workforce Development

Increased Appropriations: \$100,000

Increased Revenue: \$100,000

Reason: To allow the Workforce Development Program to adequately drawdown funding from the existing grants through the end of 2023.

2. Budget Amendment BUA 2023/12/675 10-51

Fund 2089 County Public Health Fund / Dept 049 Board of Health

Increased Appropriations: \$150,000

Increased Revenue: \$350,000

Reason: To appropriate funds from the IDPH Strengthening Illinois Public Health Administration grant for FY2023.

3. Budget Amendment BUA 2023/12/695 52-53

Fund 1080 General Corporate / Dept 031 Circuit Court

Increased Appropriations: \$47,756

Increased Revenue: \$0

Reason: To cover outstanding expenditures for professional services and for a final payout to a retiring employee.

Fortado: This should not happen like this. Usually we do this once at the end of the year, but we shouldn't see this in the future if things are managed properly. There will be another one in February.

4. Budget Amendment BUA 2024/01/29 54-56

Fund 2634 Public Defender Grant Fund / Dept 036 Public Defender

Increased Appropriations: \$144,979

Increased Revenue: \$144,979

Jett: PD is getting 3 new staff and county is only paying for fringe on one of them.

Fortado: Everything the auditor said during public comment at the last board meeting was factually inaccurate. If we repeal our public safety sales tax, it would blow a \$7 million hole in our budget. There is no bond that expires in 2030. Will do a presentation today to walk us through the bonds and set the record straight.

6. Next Caucus Meeting: Jan 18, 2024 @5:45pm

7. Adjournment 6:27 pm