

CHAMPAIGN COUNTY BOARD  
**COMMITTEE MINUTES**

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**ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE SPECIAL COMMITTEE**

**Wednesday, April 1, 2009**

**Jennifer K. Putman Meeting Room, Brookens Administrative Center  
1776 E. Washington St., Urbana**

5:00 p.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Tom Betz, Brendan McGinty, Steve Moser

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** None

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Carol Ammons (County Board Member), Jan Anderson (County Board Member), Steve Beckett (County Board Member), Deb Busey (County Administrator of Finance & HR Management), David DeThorne (Senior Assistant State's Attorney), Matthew Gladney (County Board Member), Brad Jones (County Board Member), Alan Nudo (County Board Member), Samuel Smucker (County Board Member), Amanda Tucker (HR Generalist), C. Pius Weibel (County Board Chair), Barbara Wysocki (County Board Member)

**CALL TO ORDER**

McGinty called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. The meeting was moved into the adjoining Lyle Shields Meeting Room due to the size of the audience.

**ROLL CALL**

Betz, McGinty, and Moser were present, establishing the presence of a quorum.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA/ADDENDUM**

**MOTION** by Moser to approve the agenda; seconded by McGinty. **Motion carried.**

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There was no public participation.

**CHAMPAIGN COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT**

**Discussion – Structure of Committees Proposal, Size of County Board, & Elected Officials Positions Analysis**

McGinty stated the special committee has previously viewed administrative structure information from comparable counties collected by Tucker. The issues on the agenda include the next

steps and a direction from the Policy, Personnel, & Appointments Committee. McGinty spoke about what has been previously discussed at the special committee meetings. Betz stated that he did not have a problem discussing the committee structure because that was sent to this special committee by the Policy, Personnel, & Appointments Committee. However, he thought the size of the County Board and elected officials issues belong before the Policy, Personnel, & Appointments Committee instead of the special committee. He wanted to have a structured process for the discussion over those issues at a regular series of meetings. Betz spoke about holding public hearings to hear the input from the Farm Bureau, the League of Women Voters, the NAACP, Urban League, and the political parties. McGinty asked Betz if it was possible to talk about the committee structure without talking about the size of the County Board. Betz said he was sure it was possible because he viewed those as very separate issues. During his previous terms on the County Board, the committee structure was very different than it is now. He was once on five committees at one time, which was both educational and exhausting. He sees the benefit of serving on fewer committees. Betz described reducing the County Board and changing the Board to function in a similar manner to the city councils where they would meet as a committee-of-the-whole for all County business. There are a variety of different ways to restructure the County Board. Betz views the proposal to restructure the current County Board committees as the pressing issue and he would like that discussion to be the focus of this meeting. He thought all the issues were too big to discuss at one meeting.

Moser did not want to talk about the size of the County Board because they did not know who would be drawing the map. McGinty asked if Moser wanted to wait until after the lines are redrawn to discuss the matter. Moser said the committee could talk about it, but whoever was in control in 2010 would be drawing the map and he did not think they would pay much attention to the opposition party. McGinty asked if Moser objected to discussing the issue at the Policy, Personnel, & Appointments Committee meeting. Moser stated he did not, but this County Board would not tell the next Board what to do. In regard to putting a question about elected officials on the 2010 ballot, Moser stated the County Board had until August 2010 to make a decision.

McGinty asked DeThorne if the County Board could have a question about the elected officials whose terms end in 2012 on the 2010 ballot. DeThorne said there was some precedent that indicated the elected officials' positions could be eliminated at the same election candidates are running for those offices. He thought there was some misrepresentation that the elimination of positions could only occur during an election year when the positions were being elected. DeThorne confirmed the County Board could take action in 2010 to eliminate an elected position with a term expiring in 2012. McGinty stated the statutory positions the County Board could affect include the Auditor, Coroner, and the Recorder. Moser agreed and added those terms all expire in 2012.

Betz echoed Moser's comments that the process was inherently political and whichever party controls the County Board will redraw the district lines. He said the County Board itself had the final authority over its size, not the voters. He wanted the County Board to have a discussion about the Board size issue this term so there is some consensus after the census figures are received in 2010. He warned the special committee that they could not bind a future County Board on that issue. He wanted to focus on the number of committees at this meeting. Moser related the discussions from the last time the Board size was debated at various meetings held throughout the County. Betz acknowledged that the Board did put the question of single member districts on the ballot. Both Betz and Moser campaigned against that issue and the public voted it down then. He thought it was not a bad idea to

revisit the reform issue every 8-10 years. He was not trying to stop this County Board from having the discussion, but he wanted to develop a framework to deal with these issues in a rational approach. In the interest of others who had come to the meeting, McGinty suggested breaking off the County Board size and elected officials positions analysis to allow other Board members the chance to talk about those issues before moving on to the committee structure. Moser noted the County Board could decide to have the Board Chair be an at-large elected position for the whole county. Betz agreed there were many more issues in terms of County reform than were being discussed here. He fully supported discussing these issues, but within the bounds of a process. McGinty concurred there were numerous possibilities and some specific proposals would have to be generated for focused discussion with a larger audience. McGinty opened discussion to other Board members on the Board size or elected officials positions.

Jones asked what the past objections were to single members County Board districts. Betz thought people were concerned with single members districts leading to a reduction in the size of the County Board and thereby a reduction in the diversity represented on the Board in terms of race and rural vs. urban. Betz said it was very interesting to see the African-American community and unincorporated Champaign County vote identically in opposition to the issue. He described how the issue was on the ballot in a March election instead of during a big November election. There were many arguments made by both sides on the issue. Moser indicated rural residents were worried the single member districts would end up like District 4 with several townships in a single district. Beckett stated that he supported single member districts with the philosophy that single member districts are more reflective of direct representation and the voter would more closely identify with a single representative.

Betz spoke about his desire to gather information from other counties, have discussions about the pros and cons, develop some alternatives on the issues, and then solicit advice from the public. He did not think there was any specific proposal on the table at this point and he did not expect to see one about the Board size for quite some time until the Board has the statutory framework and public hearings. McGinty said the only suggestion came from a few ideas he and Knott put together, including some ideas for discussion about Board size. He expressed there is no set proposal on the floor for changing the Board size. Moser requested the County Board hold public hearings as they previously did. Betz said, as Policy Committee Chair, he did this the last time and he would be happy to do it again.

Nudo concurred with Betz about having a timeline and procedure for gathering information on the elected officials positions so that a vote can be taken before December 1, 2009 when the change to a single County Administrator is made. This approach would allow the County Board to put the issue of which positions should be appointed versus elected before the public so the decision is set for the single Administrator and planning could begin from that point. Nudo supported considering the issue of removing elected positions from a ballot prior to 2012. This way the issue of removing positions would not be on the same ballot as candidates for those offices. He advised the County Board should consider the issue in 2010. He wanted to have a lot of study and public participation in order for the issues to be understood and a rational decision be reached over which positions should be elected and which should be appointed. The County Board needs to take a look at how it can have efficient, productive positions in all of its areas. In 2010, the County Board needs to be able to inform the public

about what the alternatives are to having elected positions and this is why Nudo supported the approach with the County Administrator.

McGinty wanted people to understand that the position analysis concerned the positions and how they fit into the broader organization only, not the personalities of the individuals who hold the positions. The Board members are trying to address how to best serve the public in the future. He urged Board members to look at the issues from a structural standpoint.

Ammons asked if it would be beneficial for the current elected officeholders to make presentations to the Policy, Personnel, & Appointments Committee so the committee can get a full picture of what their offices do. She felt part of the analysis needs to include the perspective of the person whose has been serving in that position. Betz said that was part of the proposal in the Policy Committee packet included structuring how the discussion would commence. Betz wanted to look at the statutory framework within the offices, hear from the current and past officeholders, and hear from the public and interest groups on these questions.

McGinty summarized that the committee sounded like it was discussing a six-month goal to walk through the two issues at the Policy Committee meetings. There were no objections from the Board members. McGinty moved onto the committee structure proposal.

Moser agreed with the idea of getting down to four committees because of the cost savings, including though administrative savings. McGinty asked about the concerns that have been raised about losing oversight and the focus of the committee with consolidation. Moser stated some Board members would get their back up because they might not be able to stay on certain committees. He thought the difficulty would be determining how big the restructured committee would be, for example 7 versus 13 members. McGinty summarized the positive benefits of committee restructuring as being cost savings and having all the meetings in one week from an administrative standpoint. Some of the drawbacks that have been raised include oversight and Board members only serving on one committee. Betz noted increasing the number of members on fewer committees would lower or eliminate the cost savings. He thought the committees were functioning well in many respects. He encouraged committees to cancel meetings or arrange for short meetings before County Board meeting if there is no business for action to generate cost savings. Betz spoke about his concern about the length of Policy Committee meetings if it was combined with the Justice & Social Services Committee.

McGinty liked the fact that the County Board was looking at the committee structure. His concern was only serving on one committee because it could harm the analysis ability of the Board members, but there are a lot of ways the committee structure can be worked to gain some efficiency without losing oversight. He thought there may have been some misunderstanding about the intention of the restructuring proposal.

Beckett, who brought the proposal forward, explained it resulted from the County's struggles with the first round of budget revisions this year. He saw the County Board cutting department budgets without accepting any responsibilities itself or showing the County employees that the Board was willing to take a cut and put more work on themselves. Busey assisted Beckett in developing the proposal at his request and neither put any particular emphasis on the names of the consolidated committees. The proposal's purpose was to consolidate committees, not to eliminate the Justice &

Social Services Committee. This could generate \$15,000 in savings and would say something good to the employees. Beckett also reviewed the number of action items coming out of the committees and the length of the meetings. He has listened to the comments from other Board members and some comments have been very positive about the Board members being more representative instead of less. He described the approach used by entities like the city councils, which hold study sessions and meetings attended by all members. The County Board is currently too large to meet as a whole without committees. Last week, someone suggested having 4 committees, each with 13 members. This would lose the savings from County Board per diems, but it would still generate savings for administrative staff time by having all the meetings in one week. This will mean more work for Board members to be better prepared to discuss the materials at the meetings. He hoped that the Policy Committee will consider the 4 committees with 13 members structure which would achieve more participation from Board members. Beckett noted that one caveat would be that it is essential for the Highway Committee's functions to be able to meet on Fridays at 9:00 a.m. with Jeff Blue involved and Lorraine Cowart as the Chair. McGinty asked why the Highway Committee had to be scheduled then. Beckett explained the township road commissioners and the Highway Department staff can attend Friday morning meetings when there are agenda issues that require the commissioners or staff. The meeting could be changed, but Beckett knew Jeff Blue wanted those meeting on Friday mornings because there are special needs that he can accomplish with that meeting schedule. Beckett wanted to please as many people as possible with any committee restructuring.

Anderson pointed out a few things she hoped Board members would keep in mind during their discussions. She chaired the Justice & Social Services Committee meeting minutes and estimated the committee's shortest meeting time last year was 1 hour and 5 minutes with the longest meeting time being 2 hours and 45 minutes. She calculated the average meeting time of that committee during the last year was 1 hour and 45 minutes. She thought combining the Justice and Policy Committees could lead to some long meetings. She expressed that the Justice & Social Services Committee has discussed topics about elected officials' offices after being pushed to by the general public. She indicated these discussions made the public feel as though their concerns were being aired although the County Board cannot set policies in elected officials' offices. She asked to see the figures on any savings possibly generated by the Board restructuring to 4 committees with 13 members. She spoke about the length of meetings and how different Board members react to long meetings.

Gladney echoed Anderson's statements and added that he would hate to see the Board members sacrifice their responsibility of commitment and oversight for the sake of efficiency. He did not understand the notion of increasing the number of members on a committee at the same time the Board might be discussing reducing the total number of County Board members.

Jones stated the current economic climate would reflect heavily on the County's budget later this year and next year, therefore, the County Board does have a responsibility to look at ways to save money, such as the one to restructure committees. It is good to have proposals generate discussion points. He spoke about committees that regularly have short meetings, such as the Highway Committee and ELUC, and how wasteful it is to pay Board members per diems for a 10-minute meeting. He had previously suggested combining the Highway Committee and ELUC, which met with objections from ELUC members concerned about upcoming zoning issues. Jones encouraged Board members to examine the proposal and consider other possibilities about the committee structure.

Moser spoke about ELUC and the benefit of having Board members educated about zoning issues. He would like to see ELUC be a larger committee because of the upcoming windmill issues.

Ammons spoke about the proposal and where the Justice & Social Services Committee's responsibilities would be included in the County Board Rules. She supported the idea of larger committees so Board members would be better informed. Ammons wanted to look at the actual structure of the committees in addition to their size. She thought part of the problem was that issues come to the committees from outside sources instead of ideas being originated in the committee meetings.

Betz was glad this issue had come before the Board and spoke about the evolution of committees during his time on the County Board. He would like to see a draft proposal for having 4 standing committees with 13 members each because it is an interesting proposal. He was more attracted to developing a better structure than enacting cost savings. He objected to committee meetings that are held in the mornings because it tends to make public participation more difficult, but those issues are not insurmountable. McGinty inquired if Betz had a suggestion about who should put together the proposal. Betz did not and Beckett volunteered to prepare a draft to share with all members. The committee supported the Beckett drafting a proposal and discussed holding its next meeting in the near future.

Weibel suggested 4 committee meetings could be held each month and the County Board could decide which 4 committee would hold meetings that month. Nudo spoke in favor of the 13-member committee structure so half the Board is addressing issues and would be better informed. He stated that a lot of the discussion at Justice Committee meetings is about reports, not actionable items. This can be a useful learning experience; however, these discussions could be remanded to the County Board meetings in order to allow all Board members to ask questions. Nudo wagered a lot of County Board members do not read the Justice Committee agenda packet in depth because it does not contain a lot of actionable items. Incorporating the monthly and quarterly reports into the County Board meetings instead of a committee meeting would bring the discussion to a different level without any loss of oversight. Ammons did not know how the County Board could give oversight when members are not reading their agenda packets. She felt the Justice Committee has the responsibility to do more than it has done in the last few years and should be reshaped in some way. She wanted the committee structure to include things that the Board members would like to see happen from the committee as opposed to what is in the rules language.

Beckett mentioned that Board members learn what occurred at other committee meetings during the Democratic Caucus meetings. Based on the questions posed to Beckett as Facilities Chair at caucus meetings, it is clear that Board members have not read the Facilities Committee agenda packet. The situation in the remainder of FY2009 and FY2010 will likely include departments being asked to do more with fewer employees. He wanted the County to look at itself and do more with less. This will mean Board members working harder to take on greater responsibility. He remarked, having served on the Justice Committee, that discussion at those meetings involves more pontification than actual oversight. The County Board once had a committee about jail overcrowding that held lengthy meetings and accomplished nothing. The jail overcrowding issue was actually dealt with by the County Board Chair, the Circuit Court, Court Services/Probation, the State's Attorney, and the Public Defender; who were those with the authority to make decisions about the situation. The oversight of

elected officials is sometimes more heavily weighed by some Board members than the County Board actually has the authority to do. In response to the suggestion that meetings be canceled, Beckett noted that some meetings cannot be canceled due to deadlines involved with contracts and grants that have to be acted on in a given month. He canceled a regular Facilities Committee and held a short meeting before the County Board meeting only to have committee members not show up and dislike being pressed for time in making a decision, which is not unreasonable. He does like there is great benefit to the 4 committee structure with some adjustment. He encouraged the Board to not delay long in deciding a committee structure for the rest of this Board's term to respond to the current economic times. The next County Board makes changes to the committees as it deems appropriate.

Moser said the reason the elected officials issue went nowhere last time was because the Sheriff and the County Clerk told the County Board that they did not want the responsibilities of other offices.

Smucker agreed with the idea of having more educational orientation for County Board members and more open-ended discussion. He did not see that in the proposals, but he did not know how to build it into the proposal. He asked for Beckett or others to think about how an educational component could be built into the structure. He felt when reports go to the full County Board there is less oversight because Board members are less likely to read the reports. Regarding the cost savings, Smucker thought the Board's per diems were low and wondered how they compared to other counties. McGinty explained the County Board has already done the per diem analysis and the County is at the bottom of the compensation range. Smucker said some Board members have very high-end skills, such as lawyers, geologists, and accountants, and he did not want the Board members to short-change themselves. By asking the Board members to essentially volunteer their time, they would be sending the message that this work is not that important. He spoke about the meetings that Board members attend without being paid and how they are running a bare bones operation.

Busey clarified that a statistical assessment was done of the Justice Committee's action items from January 2007 through January 2009. There were 57 items in total sent to the County Board from the Justice Committee during that 2-year period. Of those items, 46 would go the Finance Committee under the restructuring proposal because they were grants or Animal Control agreements with the villages for services involving finances. There were 11 items that were not financial and would have been considered by other committees, 5 of which were Nursing Home issues that would no longer go to the committee. She wanted to make the Board members aware that a lot of what the Justice Committee has done would go the Finance Committee, not the Policy Committee.

Gladney, in response to Smucker's comments about the low per diem, expressed that he did not view the per diem rate as an indicator of the importance of the County Board's work. He considered being a public servant and an elected official as a unique responsibility. He thought the County Board could do their work for free without impugning its importance or quality. There are also people in the community who think the Board members should not be paid at all.

Busey suggested April 15<sup>th</sup> at 5:00 p.m. for next meeting. The committee agreed to aim for that date. McGinty remarked that he wanted the Board to reach a decision point on these issues. Too many things have been discussed in the past and then died. He wants the entire Board to have discussion and vote on it, whatever the final outcome.

Wysocki agreed with the statement that the bottom of the economic recession has not yet been reached, but she did not think economics should drive the decision. The County Board has had a set number of committees for years and everyone has become comfortable with that menu of committees without fully assessing what the committees are doing and whether they are still relevant. She supported the idea of looking about the committees themselves at the start of every 2-year County Board term rather than just looking at committee assignments. She encouraged the Board to think about the appropriate forum for educating people on what is at stake in the lesser understood committees like ELUC. The Board needs to be forward-thinking on these issues and have a vision of what County government is all about because it is an evolving creature, instead of looking to the past.

### **OTHER BUSINESS**

There was no other business.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting adjourned at 6:33 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kat Bork  
Administrative Secretary

*Secy's note: The minutes reflect the order of the agenda and may not necessarily reflect the order of business conducted at the meeting.*