

RESUME OF MINUTES OF STUDY SESSION OF THE
COUNTY BOARD, CHAMPAIGN COUNTY, ILLINOIS
February 27, 2024

The County Board of Champaign County, Illinois met at a Study Session, Tuesday, February 27, 2024, at 6:01 PM in the Shields-Carter Meeting Room, Brookens Administrative Center, 1776 East Washington Street, Urbana, Illinois, with County Executive Steve Summers presiding and Matthew Cross as Clerk of the meeting.

ROLL CALL

Roll call showed the following members present: Esry, Farney, Greer, Hanauer-Friedman, Locke, Lokshin, Rogers, Sexton, Smith, Stohr, Straub, Thorsland, Wilson, and Carter – 15; late: Peugh (arrived before 6:07 and missed the Agenda vote), Taylor (arrived at 6:08 and missed the Agenda vote), Owen (arrived at 6:10 and missed the Agenda vote), and Cowart (arrived at 6:14 and missed the Agenda vote) – 4; absent: Fortado, Michaels, and Rodriguez – 3. County Executive Summers declared a quorum present and the Board competent to conduct business.

READ NOTICE OF MEETING

The Clerk read the Notice of the Meeting, said Notice having been published in the *News Gazette* on February 8, February 15, and February 21, 2024.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA/ADDENDA

Board Member Locke offered a motion to approve the Agenda; Board Chair Carter seconded.

Board Member Farney offered an amendment to move up item VII Presentation Discussion to between IV Approval of Agenda and V Public Participation; Board Member Lokshin seconded. The amendment carried by unanimous voice vote.

The motion as amended carried by unanimous voice vote.

PRESENTATIONS/DISCUSSION

Noting the absence of County Director of Administration Michelle Jett, County Executive Summers briefly spoke about the background and recent history of the former Champaign County Nursing Home, including the conditions of its sale, the abandonment by the purchasers, and its current legal and physical state. The purchasers, University Rehab, defaulted on the mortgage and the property was taken by the bank, and has unsuccessfully sought to sell the property to be operated as a nursing home, as required by a deed restriction through 2028. The bank has received offers contingent on the removal of the deed restriction, and all offers are for substantially less than the remainder of the mortgage. In its current state the property cannot be reopened without major renovations, per Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) regulations. County Executive Summers explained the IDPH assessment for

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nursing home needs in the IDPH zone in which Champaign County resides. He also explained that University Rehab owes back taxes of at least two years and no taxes can be collected while the bank holds the deed. County Executive then took questions from Board Members. Board Member Rogers asked how much less the bids have been than what is owed on the mortgage; County Executive Summers stated that the bank has not shared that information. Board Member Hanauer-Friedman asked how much the county could get from the sale; County Executive Summers stated that is unknown at present but is hopeful the County can break even on its legal expenses. Board Chair Carter asked if the property use intentions of prospective purchasers are known; County Executive Summers stated that information is currently unknown, but the County may have a say in that use before a sale is finalized. Board Member Farney stated that the tax bill owed to the County is approximately \$20,000 and \$148,000 to Urbana School District 116, and the total yearly taxes owed is between \$270,000 and \$306,000. Board Member Thorsland noted the County's 300 bed nursing home deficiency; County Executive noted the Board has directed significant funds to do a nursing home need assessment in collaboration with the Champaign-Urbana Public Health District. Board Member Lokshin asked what other counties are in the IDPH zone; County Executive stated that he was unsure but will find that information. Board Member Cowart expressed a need for more nursing home facilities in the County. Board Member Wilson asked if the removal of the deed restriction is the only decision the Board; County Executive Summers confirmed. Board Member Wilson asked what the County can do to increase nursing home capacity in the County; County Executive Summers stated that is largely outside the purview of the County Board but is funding, in part, the assessment study.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Susan Schnuer, steering committee member of the Advocates for Aging Care (AAC), stated that given the reality of the real estate market and IDPH regulations, the AAC advocates for lifting the deed restriction. She also advocated for more nursing homes in the County and spoke about AAC surveys about nursing home care. She spoke beyond the five-minute public participation time limit without objection from board members.

Board Member Farney offered a motion to suspend the rules of Public Participation limiting speakers to five minutes; Board Member Lokshin seconded. The motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

Ursula Reuter-Carlson, of the AAC, read a statement from James Moffitt of Urbana about their experiences and difficulty finding rehabilitation nursing home care in the county for his wife.

Peggy Patten, of the AAC, urged the board to work to increase nursing home care in the county and shared her experiences and difficulty finding nursing home care in the county.

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Claudia Lennhoff, Executive Director of Champaign County Healthcare Consumers (CCHC), urged the board to work with the AAC to solve the nursing home bed deficiency, and stated the Champaign County Health Care Consumers supports the lifting of the deed restriction.

COMMUNICATIONS

Board Member Thorsland noted that following his communications about safe gun storage at the February 22, 2024, Regular County Board Meeting, a constituent purchased a gun safe.

Board Chair Carter thanked the CCHC for their work within the community, particularly uninsured individuals, and asked about their meeting schedule. Ms. Schnuer stated that they meet every Thursday at 2 PM.

Board Member Wilson asked Ms. Shnuer about the AAC surveys. Ms. Schnuer stated that they have three surveys: 1) targeting consumers over 55 about their healthcare needs, which has received approximately 800 responses; 2) questioning health care providers about difficulty placing patients in nursing care with 50 respondents; 3) a market study into nursing care infrastructure needs. Board Member Wilson asked about the IDPH Certification of Need; Ms. Schnuer provided specifics on the submission process and formal hearing with IDPH.

Board Member Lokshin about in-home care options in the county. Ms. Schnuer stated that the consumer survey addresses both in-home care and home-health care. Ms. Lennhoff added that options can vary widely, depending on the cost to the consumers, insurance coverage, and home accessibility.

Board Member Greer spoke on her experiences working in healthcare as a Certified Nursing Assistant, noting the poor quality of care offered at nursing care facilities. She asked if the AAC surveys cover quality of care; Ms. Schnuer confirmed that the surveys do cover quality of care. Ms. Lennhoff noted the differences in quality of care between publicly funded, non-profit, and for-profit facilities.

Board Chair Carter spoke about her experiences with the Champaign County Nursing Home, noting the poor quality of care, and noted the limitations of in-home care limitations.

Board Member Farney asked about examples of successful collaborations between local government and local advocacy groups for nursing home care. Ms. Schnuer stated that similar collaborations are minimal; Ms. Lennhoff added that other communities facing nursing home needs are reaching out to the AAC and the CCHC for insight.

Board Member Vanichtheeranont asked about the low response number in the health providers survey. Ms. Schnuer stated that it is a limited pool, aimed specifically at healthcare professionals who place patients in nursing home care.

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Board Member Owen stated he was impressed by the community work and asked if the board can earmark money from the sale of the former county nursing home to be put toward solving the nursing home need. County Executive Summers stated that the Board can do so if they choose.

Board Member Lokshin recommended opening the consumer survey to 30-50 year olds who care for aging parents.

Board Member Straub asked about how much the County owes on the former county nursing home. County Executive Summers stated that there are substantial debts, some of which are still accruing.

Board Member Thorsland spoke about the history of the nursing home and the decision to sell it. He thanked the AAC and CCHC for their advocacy work in the community, and supported Board Member Owen's suggestion to earmark funds. He asked if the County had any leverage in the sale; County Executive Summers stated the county has very little leverage, largely limited to the recovery of back taxes owed.

Board Member Hanauer-Friedman asked about partnering with community industry, like the University of Illinois and Carle Foundation Hospital. Ms. Schnuer stated that they are working with the university and read a brief joint statement from Carle and OSF hospital about their commitment to addressing the nursing home needs in the county. Board Member Owen noted that Carle is the seventh most profitable non-profit hospital in the nation.

Board Member Stohr noted that County Board District 10 constituents have expressed support for lifting the deed restriction.

County Executive Summers thanked Ms. Schnuer and Ms. Lennhoff.

OTHER BUSINESS

None.

ADJOURNMENT

County Executive Summers adjourned the meeting at 7:14 PM.



Aaron Ammons, Champaign County Clerk
and ex-Officio Clerk of the Champaign County Board
Champaign County, Illinois