

Champaign County Board Democratic Caucus  
9/21/21

Present:

Jen Straub, Eric Thorsland, Kyle Patterson, Chris Stohr, Leah Taylor, Jenny Lokshin, Lorraine Cowart, Mary King, Steve Summers, Samantha Carter, Emily Rodriguez, Stephanie Fortado, Wayne Williams, Beth Vanichtheeranont.

6:32: Taylor calls to order. Straub moves agenda, Lokshin seconds, passed unanimously.

6:33: Public comment: Wayne Williams discusses the importance of redistricting.

6:34: Communications: King discusses the fact that Auditor Danos is unvaccinated and that he should be asked to wear a mask.

6:36: Taylor discusses appointment of Beth Vanichtheeranont to County Board.

6:38: Fortado discusses finance items.

6:40: Thorsland discusses the need for a super majority vote on the zoning ordinance for research facilities because the Urbana city council objected.

6:43: Taylor introduces Beth Vanichtheeranont.

6:52: Summers discusses that the elected salaries on the agenda are the same as his amendment from COW. County Executive could veto. Summers offers compromise to raise Clerk salary by \$15,000 and Treasurer by \$5,000, because the Clerk has additional duties now.

6:56: Rodriguez does not like the Executive salary being \$70,000. Thinks it will gut the office.

6:59: Stohr offers compromise of \$110,000 for Clerk salary.

7:05: Taylor discusses information only section. Tax levy projection, ARPA update, reapportionment discussion.

7:08: Patterson discusses possibility of new map. Wayne Williams explains that himself and Patterson have worked on maps and the caucus should choose. Williams discusses how the County Executives redistricting group had a non-public meeting with incomplete data to make their new map. Fortado says that the flaws of the process must be discussed at the meeting.

7:15: Discussion of ARPA choices: Thorsland says the dem caucus should get united behind specific priorities. Fortado discusses county department requests, totaling \$2.715 million. Need for a facility study, especially concerning Sheriff and Clerk space needs. King expresses support of paying sanitary district bills down. Patterson expresses support for unemployment bonuses.

7:25: Stohr expresses support for small business assistance. Carter expresses that small businesses need help, particularly Black owned businesses because they do not get the same help.

7:32: Fortado expresses support for \$3.5 million on housing and \$4 million on anti violence programs.

7:35: Summers expresses support for staff bonuses of \$500 and giving 24 hour staff \$5,000. Would be around \$670,000. Fortado says there is a lot of turnover and this would help. Fortado states that AFSCME wants to bargain bonuses.

7:39: Fortado thinks we should spend \$500,000 per district on water infrastructure. All dems should put their \$500,000 towards the Garden Hills project.

7:45: Fortado states that with about \$14.5 million not assigned yet, it should probably all be spent on county facilities needs. Fortado discusses that moving forward with the jail without

additional tax revenue will likely require around \$8,000,000 in ARPA funds. Summers states the county must move forward on the jail project or else the jails will kill our budgets down the road. Carter states she would like to see some of that money go towards programming at the jail.

7:52: Cowart expresses that she feels the jail is inhumane and something should be done about it. Rodriguez expresses that she does not want to add to the bed count of the county. Lokshin, Straub, Thorsland, King, Patterson, Vanichtheeranont all express support of \$7 million towards jail.

8:01: Taylor adjourns