

Approved 3/22/21
MINUTES
Ways and Means Committee
February 22, 2021
@ 3:00 P.M.

MEMBERS PRESENT:	Steven Rieker – Chairperson; Jennifer Groves Allison – Vice Chairperson (<i>via teleconference</i>); Eden Blair (<i>via teleconference</i>), James Fennell , Rachel Reliford , Phillip Salzer , William Watkins, Jr.
MEMBERS ABSENT:	
STAFF PRESENT:	Scott Sorrel - County Administrator; Shauna Musselman – Assistant County Administrator; Jennie Cordis Boswell - State's Attorney's Office; Angela Loftus – County Administration; Rachael Parker , Mike Deluhery – County Clerk; Tom Bride – Election Commission (<i>via phone</i>); Dave Ryan – Supervisor of Assessments; Nicole Bjerke – Treasurer; Mike Brooks – VAC
OTHERS PRESENT:	

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Rieker at 3:00 p.m.

Approval of Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes of January 25, 2021 was made by Mr. Watkins and seconded by Ms. Reliford. The motion carried unanimously (7-0; Ms. Groves Allison and Dr. Blair voted aye via teleconference).

Informational Items/Reports/Other Minutes/Updates

County Clerk

➤ **Collections and Transactions Report**

Ms. Parker directed committee members to the submitted report and stood for any questions. There were no questions or comments from committee.

Peoria County Election Commission

Mr. Bride advised that a City of Peoria and Peoria Township primary election will be held tomorrow. He stated that early voting and vote-by-mail numbers have increased significantly, with over 4,000 individuals having voted to date, and expects a larger election day turnout than the past several primaries. He advised that vote-by-mail ballots must be turned in by 7:00 p.m. or postmarked by tomorrow. He also noted that early voting locations are posted on the Election Commission's website.

Mr. Bride stated that the Commission is also preparing for the April 6, 2021 election, with vote-by-mail ballots for voters living outside the City of Peoria going out this Thursday and early voting for all in Peoria County beginning March 12, 2021.

Supervisor of Assessments/Board of Review

• **Tax Cycle**

Mr. Ryan advised Board of Review claims are complete and the final abstract has been sent to the Department of Revenue. He stated that after a review by the Department of Revenue, the abstract will go to the County Clerk's Office and the Treasurer's Office. He stated that the Board of Review received 777 complaints, with approximately 36% receiving a reduction.

Mr. Ryan advised that over 14,000 Homestead Exemptions have been processed, for a total of \$400 million. He stated that the office continues to explore process options for Homestead Exemptions in light of ongoing COVID-19 precautions. He advised that Senior Freeze renewal forms will be distributed in April as opposed to the regular distribution of January/February, as he awaits a decision on legislation regarding re-filing. He stated if the legislation ultimately does not pass, he is hopeful that many senior citizens will have been vaccinated by the time it is necessary for them to re-file.

Treasurer

Ms. Bjerke advised that the office is completing the process of closing out last year's tax cycle and preparing for the external auditors. She stated that approximately 1,100 mobile home bills will be issued March 1, 2021.

- Trustee Auction Update

Ms. Bjerke gave a presentation on the Trustee Program. She explained that a tax sale is conducted annually in November, with all unpaid parcels going to the tax sale. She stated that tax buyers bid on the parcels, with the lowest bid winning. She advised that one of those tax buyers is the Peoria County Trustee, who acts as Trustee on behalf of all taxing districts in Peoria County. She stated that if there is no interest in the property after several years, the Trustee takes over the property through a Court ruling, and becomes an owner of the property on behalf of all Peoria County taxing districts. She remarked that the County maintains a contract with the Trustee, as opposed to individual contracts with all 150 taxing districts. She stated after the Trustee becomes the owner of the property, an annual surplus auction sale is held, with the highest bidder receiving the property. She emphasized that the goal of the Trustee is to get the parcels, many of which are small and cumbersomely shaped, back onto the tax roll.

Ms. Bjerke advised that in response to concerns raised by the City of Peoria, she will contact the City Manager of the upcoming auction date as soon as it is known and will provide him a list of properties. She remarked that she will reach out to the City Manager on multiple occasions prior to the auction to determine if there are any objections to any properties going to the auction. She advised that the City Manager has communicated that he desires further discussion of the program as a whole, as well as land banking. She stressed that any changes to the trustee program must be through legislation.

Veteran's Assistance Commission

Mr. Brooks advised that the Commission currently has 301 active VA claims awaiting decision, and 165 appeals. He stated that over \$1 million in new money has been brought in within the past two months, with total compensation brought in through February at \$6.3 million. He commented that the protocols for appeals have changed recently, stating that a TEAMS Meeting is now held with the VA and discussion can be held via TEAMS with the VA presenting their arguments.

Mr. Brooks advised that walk-in Wednesdays are cancelled moving forward due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Resolutions

- **Monthly Delinquent Taxes**

A motion to approve was made by Mr. Fennell and seconded by Mr. Salzer. The motion was approved unanimously (7-0; Ms. Groves Allison and Dr. Blair voted aye via teleconference).

- **Rollover Appropriation in FY2021 budget for purchase of glass divider panels**

Ms. Parker advised that just prior to re-opening after the Courthouse shut down, the office was evaluated and it was determined at the time that glass panel dividers were necessary due to the proximity of the staff's work spaces. She stated that due to limited funds at the time, the Clerk did not receive all requested panels. She commented that staff requests \$5,440.00 in unspent FY2020 budget to be appropriated into FY2021 in order to complete the project.

The resolution was approved unanimously (7-0; Ms. Groves Allison and Dr. Blair voted aye via teleconference).

- **Rollover Appropriation into FY2021 Election Commission budget for unused grant funds**

A motion to approve was made by Mr. Fennell and seconded by Mr. Watkins. Mr. Bride advised that the Commission received a \$109,544.00 grant from the Center for Tech and Civic Life (CTCL) in October 2020 to fund safe and secure elections. He stated that in the process of verifying expenditures in November/December it was determined that the entire grant amount had not been expended. He advised that CTCL granted the Commission's request for an extension until June 30, 2021 for \$19,430.00 in unspent grant funds. He is requesting a rollover appropriation into the FY2021 budget in the amount of \$19,430.00. He advised that the funds will be utilized to offset expenditures related to upcoming spring elections.

The motion was approved unanimously (7-0; Ms. Groves Allison and Dr. Blair voted aye via teleconference).

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned by Chairman Rieker at 3:34 p.m.

Recorded and Transcribed by: Jan Kleffman