



Effingham County Board  
101 N. 4<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 301, Effingham, IL  
217.342.4990

**Tax & Finance**  
**Committee of the Whole of the Effingham County Board**  
**3rd Floor Board Room, Effingham County Building**  
**Thursday, August 15, 2024 at 3:30 p.m.**

**MINUTES**

TAX & FINANCE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE: Norbert Soltwedel Chairman, Sandi Rich Vice Chair, Chris Keller, Dave Campbell, Josh Douthit, Doug McCain, Jeremy Deters, Tim Ellis, Mike Buzzard

Committee Members Present: Chair N. Soltwedel, Vice Chair S. Rich (via phone), C. Keller, D. Campbell, J. Douthit, D. McCain, J. Deters, M. Buzzard.

The meeting was called to order by Chair Norbert Soltwedel

**1. Approve Minutes**

- Member J. Deters made a motion to approve the minutes. Member M. Buzzard seconded. Unanimous. ***Motion carried.***

**2. Unfinished Business**

**• ARPA Earmarked Funds**

Chairman N. Soltwedel noted the remaining ARPA funds available are \$70,160.54 and remaining funds are committed to infrastructure.

○ **Effingham Regional Career Academy**

Norma Lansing with Effingham Regional Career Academy gave an update on the ERCA program and provided a handout. There are currently 57 students enrolled into the program. They submitted two invoices for the Effingham Regional Career Academy & Explore Class Fall 2024 tuition totaling \$32,500.00 which is the remaining ARPA funds available to ERCA. They did request additional ARPA funding for a Discover Drones curriculum and a Table Top CDL trainer with hardware and software. It was noted all remaining ARPA funding would be used for infrastructure. Member J. Douthit made a motion to recommend to the full board to approve the submitted invoices and the disbursement of \$32,500.00 in ARPA funding to the Effingham Regional Career Academy for Fall 2024 tuition. Member D. Campbell seconded. Unanimous. ***Motion carried.***

- **Effingham County Regional Airport**  
Greg Koester noted \$900,000.00 of ARPA funds have been earmarked for the Airport hangar. The project is being finalized and they are waiting for approval of some federal and state funding. It was stated that possibly not all of the earmarked ARPA funding may be needed. The design and plans are complete and the bidding process will take place this next month with the bids being open in mid-October.
- **Childcare Research Committee – Gap Scholarship**  
Trina Niemerg, Childcare Research Committee member, updated the board on the Childcare Research Committee Gap Scholarships. There are five approved families for the 12 month scholarship. Several families are reaching the end of the 12 month term. She is requesting an extension of the scholarship for an additional 12 months for these families. These families must meet the necessary requirements to receive the additional 12 months. She also noted there is a pending applicant. There was discussion on funding the additional months and recovering the unspent funds.
- **Effingham County Highway Department**  
Greg Koester provided a report which summarized the township bridge aid. He noted the remaining earmarked funds will be spent on the current bridge projects. Greg confirmed no ARPA funds will be returned.
- **Mason Township Park District**  
A letter was submitted by John Gillmore on behalf of the Mason Township Park District. It included a breakdown of the how the remaining earmarked ARPA funds of \$16,957.13 would be spent. These ARPA funds should be spent by October 2024.
- **Historic Courthouse Courtyard and Gazebo**  
Member J. Douthit gave an update on the earmarked ARPA funds of \$130,000.00 for the courtyard and gazebo project. He stated all funds will go towards the project and there should be no remaining funds available.
- **TREC Trail**  
Greg Koester stated a tree service quoted a cost of \$7,800.00 to remove a couple of trees along the trail. This expense will use the remaining earmarked ARPA funds. The preventative maintenance of the trail has been completed.
- It was noted only two entities will have possible ARPA funds to be returned back to the County.
- **ARPA Funding**
  - **Dive Team Vehicle**  
The Dive Team submitted an invoice for \$33,693.00 from NorthSide for a 2019 Ford F150 truck. Member C. Keller made a motion to recommend to the full board for approval of the invoice and the disbursement of ARPA funds in the amount of \$33,693.00 for the truck to Dive Rescue. Member D. Campbell seconded. Unanimous.  
***Motion carried.***
  - **Fire Department – Radio Payment Disbursement**  
Member J. Deters updated the board on the status of the new fire department radios. He stated the new system has been tested and working well. Global Technical Systems submitted an invoice in the amount of \$99,120.00 for the second payment per the

purchase agreement. Member J. Deters made a motion to recommend to the full board the approval of the invoice and the disbursement of ARPA funds in the amount of \$99,120.00 for the fire department radios. Member J. Douthit seconded. Unanimous.  
***Motion carried.***

### **3. New Business**

- **Mentally Deficient Levy**

Michael Tate, Chairman of the 377 Board, was present at the meeting. He provided a handout and a breakdown of the services provided. The program provides aid to 25 individuals. The total cost of the program is around \$214,000.00 and the 2023 tax levy received was \$195,000.00. He is requesting an increase of \$20,000.00 in the Mentally Deficient tax levy. He suggested a 3% increase per year. There was discussion on the request.

- **County Health and TB Levy**

The Health Dept submitted a letter for consideration of an increase to the County Health & TB levy. There was discussion on the tax rate and the impact of the increase in the equalized assessed values with the tax levy. There was discussion on the request.

- **Effingham County Coop. Extension Levy**

Jessica Barker with the Effingham County U of I Extension gave an update on their activities and the current fiscal year budget. They requested an increase in the Effingham Co Coop Extension tax levy in the amount of \$27,008.88. The current 2023 tax levy is \$94,000.00,

- **Late Fees and Electronic Payments**

The item was put on the agenda for discussion on addressing late fees and the possibility of implementing electronic payments. It was determined this was not necessary and may be at a later date.

- **Inmate Healthcare**

Paul Kuhns, Sheriff, talked to the board about inmate healthcare. Currently the County has a contract with Advanced Health Care which specializes in health care for jails. He stated ARPA funds were utilized to secure a four year contract and this has been paid in advance. He noted at the end of his term in 2026 this contract will expire. Paul requested no action but he is wanting to prepare a plan to set back funds for this upcoming expense. He estimated the annual cost for the inmate health care coverage will be \$100,000.00 and talked about the benefits of the current arrangement.

### **4. Appointments**

- None

### **5. General Information/Public Comments**

- **Legal Shield – Scott Vonderheide**

Scott Vonderheide was present at the meeting to inquire about Legal Shield being offered to county employees as a payroll deduction. Legal Shield is a benefit that offers legal advice, legal document review, standard will preparation, etc.

- Norbert Soltwedel highlighted items from the meeting especially the consideration to increase some of the tax levies.

- **Closed Session**

None

**6. Adjourn**

- Member C. Keller made a motion to adjourn this meeting. Member J. Deters seconded.  
***Unanimous.*** Motion carried

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle M. Kollmann  
Effingham County Clerk