



Effingham County Board
101 N. 4th 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, September 12, 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, C. Keller, D. Campbell, J. Douthit, D. McCain, J. Deters, T. Ellis, 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 D. McCain seconded. Unanimous. ***Motion carried.***

2. Unfinished Business

• **ARPA Earmarked Funds**

○ **Effingham County Regional Airport**

Greg Koester reported no updates from last month. The bids will be opened in early November for the estimated 1.6-million-dollar project. The hanger and access pavements were combined to allow the state to put additional funding towards the pavements. He stated by the end of 2024 the bidding process will complete with the project completion by 2026.

○ **Childcare Research Committee – Gap Scholarship**

Courtney Yockey and Trina Niemerg were present for the meeting. A letter was submitted by the Childcare Research Committee requesting \$53,100.00 of the remaining ARPA funds for the childcare programs. The total amount of earmarked funds for the Gap scholarship is \$131,730.00. The requested amount will assist with Gap scholarships for five current applicants and two pending applicants thru 2026. The two

pending applicants are pending eligibility. If there is any reason there is a default, the remaining unused amount will go back to the County. The agreement will be amended to include the verbiage on the default and this will be reviewed by Aaron Jones, States Attorney. It was noted approximately \$78,630.00 of unspent ARPRA funds will be returned back to the County. Member J. Deters made a motion to recommend to the full board the distribution of \$53,100.00 of earmarked ARPA and recoup \$78,630.00 back to the County ARPA funds. Member J. Douthit. seconded. Unanimous. **Motion carried.**

- **Effingham County Highway Department**

Greg Koester noted contracts are in place with contractors for the remaining bridge projects. All remaining earmarked ARPA funds will be utilized.

- **Mason Township Park District**

A letter was submitted by John Gillmore on behalf of the Mason Township Park District. A breakdown of the expenses was provided on how the remaining funds will be spent. It was noted that all earmarked ARPA funds will be used by December 2024.

- **Historic Courthouse Courtyard and Gazebo**

Josh Douthit gave an update to the board on the Courtyard and Gazebo project. He noted a possible partnership with the City of Effingham on some funds to be allocated towards this project. He is not asking for any ARPA funds at this time. The requested amount should be available at the next tax and finance meeting.

- **TREC Trail**

It was noted a bill for \$8,850.00 from Nelson Tree Service was submitted for payment. This was for the removal of two trees on the TREC trail. The remaining earmarked ARPA amount for the TREC trail is \$6,881.57. The difference of \$1,968.43 will be paid from the hotel/motel tax fund. Member J. Douthit made a motion to recommend to the full board the distribution of \$6,881.57 of earmarked ARPA funds to Nelson Tree Service. Member T. Ellis seconded. Unanimous. **Motion carried.**

3. New Business

- **ARPA Funding**

- **Boardroom Bookshelf**

Member J. Douthit suggested a display cabinet or bookshelf be built for the board office to display items or plaques. He contacted EHS Woodshop for this project. An invoice was submitted in the amount of \$709.00 for the cost of materials. Member C. Keller made a motion to recommend to the full board the distribution of \$709.00 of ARPA funds to EHS Woodshop for the bookshelf. Member M. Buzzard seconded. Unanimous. **Motion carried.**

- **Effingham County Historic Museum Repairs**

Delaine Donaldson with the Effingham County Museum submitted a work order from Central Illinois Construction for repair work to the roof of the museum. A couple members of the Effingham County Museum board gave some highlights of work that needs to be done to the historic museum's roof. Some of the work includes a patch on the roof, new rubber coating to be applied to the roof and other repairs for the roof. They reported an estimate of \$220,000.00 for the roof repairs for materials and labor. It was noted the County has ownership of the building, this would be considered an RFP and there may be possible grants to assist with this project. The County will check into some grants for the project.

- **County Building Carpet Replacement**

Travis Buhnerkempe, Chief Sheriff Deputy, presented quotes from Holland House Flooring and Wright's Commercial Design for the carpet replacement. The carpet replacement will be for the Supervisor of Assessments office and lobby area. It was noted the Wright's bid includes labor costs for moving furniture. The office area will be carpet and the lobby area will be LVT. Holland House submitted a bid for \$16,856.03 and Wright's submitted a bid with a total cost of \$18,632.00 and additional \$2,600.00 for an upgraded carpet tile for high traffic areas. Member J. Deters made a motion to recommend to the full board the approval of the Wright's bid in the amount of \$18,632.00 with allocation from the Capital Improvement fund for the carpet replacement. Member C. Keller seconded. There was discussion on upgraded carpet tile in the amount of \$2,600.00. Member J. Deters made a modification to his motion to recommend to the full board the approval of the Wright's bid in the amount of \$21,232.00 to from the Capital Improvement fund for the carpet replacement. Member S. Rich seconded. Unanimous. **Motion carried.**

- **Opioid Funding Request – Effingham County Sheriff's Office**

Travis Buhnerkempe, Chief Sheriff Deputy, presented an application on behalf of the Effingham County Sheriff Paul Kuhns for funding from the Opioid Settlement Fund. The application outlined how the spending would be utilized for inmates who successfully complete detention in the jail or are involved in supervised released programs administered by the Probation Office. Several inmates struggle with opioid and substance abuse addictions. This application stated the Sheriff's Dept would partner with several local agencies for this treatment plan. The total estimated cost for 6 individuals for this treatment plan for the two-year program would be \$164,264.00. It was noted the possible opioid treatment plan would be reviewed by Aaron Jones and this doesn't require immediate action except to secure funding. There was concern on dedicating all Opioid funds to one request. Member C. Keller made a motion to table the Opioid Funding request from the Effingham County Sheriff's Dept until the next Tax and Finance meeting. Member D. McCain seconded. Unanimous. **Motion carried.**

- **County Employee Group Health Coverage Stipend**

- **County Employee Group Health Coverage Waive Incentive**

Both of these agenda items were discussed as one.

Member J. Douthit informed the board that the past fiscal year there was \$90,000.00 budgeted for the employee health incentive for employees who waive the group health insurance. The amount of the incentive paid is \$100 per month per employees. Josh is in favor of increasing the monthly employer contribution towards health insurance premium up to \$1,000.00. The current monthly employer contribution is \$765.96. He recommended removing the health insurance incentive and to do a one-time contribution to the employee's health saving account in the amount of \$1,650.00. The contribution would an incentive to enroll in the Hope Trust health savings insurance plan. Member C. Keller voiced his concerns with the Hope Trust insurance and those details were discussed at the Health Insurance meeting. There was discussion on the continuation of the employee health incentive program, how this affects the monthly insurance premium, the monthly Medicare payment of \$350.00, labor laws, and there was feedback from dept heads about the health incentive payout. No action was taken.

4. **Appointments**

None

5. General Information/Public Comments

- **Levy Discussion**

Chairman N. Soltwedel gave an informational presentation on the Effingham County levy, EAV, the tax rates and the process. There was discussion on the request received from entities to increase their tax levy, the concern to raise the levy, the year end process and budget. Pam Braun, Assessor, provided a handout on the tax cycle, a breakdown on the township equalization rate and a tax extension summary.

- Courtney Yockey, informed the board the monthly webinar to be held on September 26, 2024 and More for Montrose will be holding a meeting on September 12, 2024.

6. Closed Session

- None

7. 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