



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, October 16, 2025 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, 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

None

3. New Business

• **Proposed FY26 Budget and Tax Levy**

Chairman N. Soltwedel spoke briefly on the budget process and stated the layover budget could be changed. Deb Ruholl, Treasurer, noted increases to several funds on the proposed tax levy with several funds remaining the same. She indicated the IMRF fund did decrease because the 2026 employer IMRF rate decreased. Pam Braun, Assessor, noted the EAV is considered an estimate on the proposed 2025 tax levy. The FY25 budget will be slightly in the black with revenues over expenses.

○ **Hotel/Motel**

At the prior meeting there was discussion on setting guidelines for applicants to request Hotel/Motel funds. Tentative guidelines were drafted for review by the board members.

Member M. Buzzard highlighted the organizations that received hotel/motel this past year. He expressed his thoughts on some guidelines and the need for a deadline to request funds. It was noted the need for applicants to promote the Airbnb rentals and the requirement for the applicant to apply annually for the funds. There was board discussion to set the budgeted amount as a percentage of the fund balance or an allocated amount. There was a suggestion to provide a post event survey to be completed by the applicant/organization. There was no adoption of the proposed guidelines to apply for hotel/motel funds. This agenda item will be discussed at the next Tax and Finance meeting.

- County Employee Insurance Stipend

The county will continue to subsidize the employees group health insurance premium up to \$1,000.00 per month. Also, the county will contribute \$1,700.00 to the health saving account for employees who are enrolled in the high deductible health savings plan. These amounts are accounted for in the FY26 budget. Member J. Deters made a motion to recommend to the full board to approve an employer contribution of up to \$1,000.00 monthly for employees group health insurance premium and a contribution of \$1,700.00 to employee's health savings account who are enrolled in the high deductible health savings plan. Member D. McCain seconded. Unanimous. **Motion carried.**

- 708 Board Levy

Member D. Campbell, 708 board member, requested the levy amount for Mental Health be increased \$20,000.00 to match the levy amount for Mentally Deficient. He stated there are seven active organizations who utilize these funds. Member J. Douthit requested the 708 board to provide actual financial data of the reimbursements to these organizations to prove the need for additional funding. Deb Ruholl, Treasurer, noted the increase would affect the other funds on the levy and amounts would need to be adjusted. It was suggested to wait and see how the budget process continues before increasing the Mental Health Levy amount.

- County Health Levy

It was noted the County Health Levy increased a total of \$92,500.00. This increase is needed so the Health Department may reimburse the General Fund for the cost of the employee's health insurance. Last year the health insurance expense was paid thru the General Fund so this year this expense will be shifted back to the County Health Levy. Jeff Workman, Health Dept. Administrator, was in agreement with the proposed tax levy increase.

- Chairman N. Soltwedel noted the proposed FY26 budget will be placed on a 30-day layover for the public to view. Member J. Douthit made a motion to recommend to the full board to layover the proposed FY26 budget. Member M. Buzzard seconded. Unanimous. **Motion carried.**

- County Employee Christmas Party

There was board discussion on the annual county employee Christmas party. The amount has been budgeted. The Christmas party will be the same as last year with an employee luncheon on the third floor. A gift certificate will be issued to all full-time and part-time employees. There was discussion on the qualifications of the part-time employees. It was stated the qualifications could include how many hours the employee works yearly or any employee who received a W-2. There was a suggestion the board members do not receive the gift certificate. Member J. Douthit suggested the department heads submit a list of employees who would

receive the gift certificate. Member J. Douthit made a motion to recommend to the full board to approve the Employee Christmas luncheon and a \$25.00 gift card to county employees with the list of eligible employees be submitted by the department head to the county board by December 1st. Member S. Rich seconded. Unanimous. ***Motion carried.***

4. Appointments

None

5. General Information/Public Comments

Kasey Kemme, County Extension Director, gave a staffing update. The office support position will be filled soon and the 4-H Director position is filled. There is one open position for an educator. She updated the board on the programs that are offered thru the Extension office.

- Courtney Yockey was present at the meeting. He complimented the board on all their work on the fiscal year budget. He updated the status of the Effingham Regional Growth Alliance for manufacturing collaborative.
- It was noted the tentative date for the November Special County Board meeting will be on Monday, November 24th, 2025.

6. Closed Session

None

7. Adjourn

Member J. Douthit made a motion to adjourn this meeting. Member T. Ellis seconded. Unanimous. ***Motion carried***

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle M. Kollmann
Effingham County Clerk