

**Finance - Special Taskforce
Tentative Minutes
February 29, 2024**

- 1) Call Meeting to Order: Chairperson Billeter called the meeting to order at 8:32 a.m. Present: Finfrock [Remote], Griffin, Jacinto, Larson, Nordman, O'Brien, Youman [Remote: 8:38 am] and Billeter. Others present: Melissa Spangler, Shannon Ludewig, Paul Cooney, and June Jacobs
- 2) Discuss Organizational Approach: Billeter shared the first step is defining the issue this taskforce is focusing on today and going over a general direction and start getting information. Billeter stated the problem the County is facing is that we are not generating enough funds to cover our expenses. Billeter stated we are going to look at both the revenue and expenses to see if there are some things we can do as a county to find more funds. Billeter shared one option is to put it on the tax payers and the committee agreed that is not a solution that will be looked at.

Billeter stated let's talk about the two main issues on the revenue side first. The first was communicated in last month's meetings regarding the tipping fees and the lack of proper payment to the county. Billeter shared this issue is currently being looked at but we have no guarantees as to what the outcome will be numerically. The second is the jail and not being occupied like it was anticipated.

Billeter shared we are still paying the bonds for the jail and there is roughly \$8.4 million to be paid back by January 2028. He shared everyone was aware that this year we had to move some funds from the Solid Waste fund, to help pay the bonds since the monies were not there from the tipping fees. In the process of looking at numbers the question of keeping the Solid Waste fund no lower than \$2 million was been brought up. Nordman stated she believes this resolution and the history behind the fund amount, should be looked into and see if in the future it can be amended/present a new resolution lowering that amount. Nordman shared after the bonds are repaid she doesn't see there being an issue of taking it back to \$2 million. Nordman clarified she isn't certain what the amount should be but the committee can make that decision.

Youman stated the second concern is the County Jail based on the most basic business principle; is costing the county \$236,000/month to run. Youman commented this is an issue that no one could have seen coming and is no one person's fault. Youman shared if we continue to let things operate this way we are just agreeing to poor business. Youman stated he believes there needs to be some kind of analysis or consultant brought in to see what we can do to increase our population or run the facility better. It is stated Winnebago County is full of Federal prisoners and it is uncertain why if they are so full the prisoners are not being sent to Ogle County as well. Youman and Finfrock agreed into looking for or contacting some consultants and see what they can offer. Nordman shared we can probably look into the services of Charlene Coulombe & Ellen Blokus to see if they may have any ideas for monies. Billeter commented those are all great ideas and that wraps up the majority of the issues on the revenue side.

Billeter shared on the expense side of things there really is one major issue and that is the jail. Billeter expressed the costs to run the jail daily for its small population is putting us in the red every month. Conversations were had about operations on a reduced scale, new opportunities within the building, and even mothballing the jail but it was decided there isn't enough concrete numbers and information to be making these decisions already. It was again discussed some sort of cost analysis being done do true numbers can be discussed.

Other cost savings that were offered to be discussed in future meetings were holding departments to their budgets and or proper budgeting guidance, centralized purchasing, outsourcing tasks and reorganizational structures within departments. Billeter stated these are all good things to start looking into but we need to gather the information to start properly looking into these suggestions. It was also stated that we are to be under a hiring freeze but that isn't being followed. Billeter asked the Treasure and HR offices start looking into possible consolidation in departments where/if it is plausible. Jacinto also shared there are departments like the County Clerk & Recorder's office that is down two positions so we would need to look at this instance and the hiring freeze.

Billeter shared he thought this was a great first meeting to open the door for further investigation. He reviewed the direction the different committee members would be moving to gather information to get a clearer understanding of numbers and details so that serious discussions can be started on how to move forward and best help the county.

3) Public Comment:

Shannon Ludewig stated she would like to be kept in the loop and that other departments should be looked at, not just theirs.

4) Adjourn Meeting: With no other business Billeter adjourned the meeting at 9:53 am.

Respectfully Submitted,
June Jacobs