

League of Women Voters
Kane County Government
Monitoring Committee Report

MEETING: Annual Legislative Breakfast
DATE: Wednesday, January 24, 2007
REPORTING: BJ ZAHA

ATTENDING: Senator Mike Noland; State Rep. Pat Lindner; State Senator Chris Lauzen; State Rep. Ruth Munson; State Rep. Mike Fortner; State Rep. Ruth Munson; State Rep. Tim Schmitz; Senator Linda Holmes; Kane County Board Chairwoman Karen McConnaughay; Kane County States Attorney John Barsanti; Kane County Board members; Kane County Sheriff Pat Perez; and othe county officials representing the Health Department, Juvenile Justice, KDOT, and county lobbyists Andrew Raucci, David Sullivan, Frank Cortise

ABSENT: Phillip Lewis; Jim Mitchell

WAS PRESS IN ATTENDING: YES NO

DID PRESS COVER SIGNIFICANT ISSUES: YES NO

SUMMARY OF MEETING: Issues specifically addressed: The senior citizens assessment freeze; Mark Anderson of the Kane County Assessor's Office asked for simplification of the formula used so personal financial information need not be disclosed and to make the process less cumbersome for his department.

Kane County officials requested the Juvenile Court Delinquency age remain at 17 and under, instead of the proposed state legislation of 18 and under, to protect the youngest juvenile offenders currently in custody, minimize cost to taxpayers, and keep detention facilities and jail at maximum operation.

Additional court fee of \$5 per felony or misdemeanor conviction and court supervision as well as some civil cases, such as adoption or divorce, was formally requested. The additional fee is intended to off-set the rising cost of County Child Advocacy Centers.

Legislators were asked to exempt County owned property, such as highways and forest preserves, from the jurisdiction of newly created municipalities, such as the proposed Campton Hills incorporation as a village.

Local officials requested the sunset provision (cessation) of the emergency public health fund to be rescinded, in particular to continue the west nile virus surveillance program, which county officials deem vital to community health and well-being.

Prolonged discussion of Kane County's desperate need for state funding to address the transportation needs, new infrastructure and repair/maintenance of existing state roadways, included comments from Kane County Board Chairman Karen McConnaughay citing Kane County has not received state funding for the past two years and the transportation issue has reached a critical point locally. Senator Lauzen specifically refuted Kane County's claims on lack of state funding; however, there was some disparity in proposed and actual funding as well as the source of the funding provided or projected: federal, state pass through from federal sources, or directly from the state budget. Likely, county officials will increase the current gas tax from \$.02 per gallon to \$.04 per gallon to defray rising costs of expanding and maintain our local transportation infrastructure.

A presentation on Water Resource Management was viewed; as Kane County has already surpassed population projections of the 2020 Plan, there is a crucial need to maintain an adequate supply of water. To date, \$2 million has been spent on researching the options; a final report on the findings is due out later this year. Intent is to transform current county water supply plans with an 11 county "super-region" in northeastern Illinois, which would require state legislation to recognize the jurisdiction of the proposed super-region Kane County would be contained within.

Kane County wholeheartedly endorses a state-wide Clean Indoor Air Act, which would prohibit smoking cigarettes in any public location, i.e. court houses, hospitals, restaurants, bars, stores, etc.

COMMENTS/NOTES: Currently, court fees for any conviction, felony or misdemeanor, is approximately \$180. Nevertheless, county officials continue to add additional fees for court services and even incarceration. As the majority of inmates at Kane County Jail remain there prior to conviction because of financial limitations, being unable to post bond, it seems only to aggravate the disparity, by overwhelming this same population with additional costs. The socioeconomic impact with additional fees and unjust legal outcomes seem to create more problems for this group than to reverse their illegal or criminal activity. Note: Should there be a study on the indirect consequences, particularly on children and families, of these continued court fees on the poorest of our local, non-violent offenders?

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S): Continue to observe and monitor the state lobbyists' work.

NEXT MEETING: TBA 2008—unclear at this time.