

League of Women Voters
Kane County Government
Monitoring Committee Report

MEETING: Joint Meeting of Public Service & Finance Committees

DATE: 2-27-2007 REPORTING: Darlene Bakk. Also attending Kim Haag and Hal Cattron

ATTENDING: Members from the Finance Committee and Public Service Committees. Both chairmans: John Noverini (Finance/Budget) and Kenyon (public service) Also attending, Board Atty Shepro, Cheryl Pattelli, finance director.

ABSENT:

WAS PRESS IN ATTENDANCE:

YES: *Beacon/Courier* (Steve Lord) *Daily Herald* (Lisa Smith) *Kane County Chronicle* (Paul Dailing) *Tribune*

DID PRESS COVER SIGNIFICANT ISSUES: Some better than others. Paul Dailing in my opinion had the best coverage out of three county papers. I did not see anything in *Trib*.

SUMMARY OF MEETING: This joint meeting was created to discuss the ongoing discussion regarding the clerk's unbudgeted purchases. Equipment purchases put the clerk's office \$42,000 over budget in 2006. If he keeps unapproved purchases it will put office approx. \$200,000 over budget for year. The clerk admitted "making a series of errors," and apologized to the board members for the mistakes which he was taking full responsibility for. Cunningham stated he had already purchased equipment but if funds can't be found, he is still able to return even though county has been billed. The explanations for shortfall are as follows: 50 eSlate and VBO printers for a cost of \$179,380; 50 additional caddies for \$50,370; and 22 VBO printers for \$22,500. According to a power point presentation conducted by the Clerk's office, the shortfall was because 1) held payment due to caddy failure in 2006 general primary--wheels fell off and caddies collapsed causing \$27,000 extra to move by picking up instead of rolling causing more time and effort. 2) Oversight excess of e-slate purchase and 3) Hart loaned 20 VBO printers for 2006 General Primary & General Election and was invoiced in December. Additionally, the \$25.00 per election judge reimbursement he receives from the state for the 2006 general election of \$40,628 was deposited into the General Fund as revenue instead of going back as line item in clerk's budget. Additional challenges were dealing with projected population growth; Cunningham estimated there will be a need for 50 to 100 new precincts with a projected capital expense of \$1,100,000 to \$2,200,000 and a recurring expense from \$629,000 to \$1,258,000. He expects there will be a need to purchase 150 new eSlates between 2007 and 2010 for a cost of \$562,500.

Consequences: Cunningham put the board "on notice" that if we (the county) do not have the proper equipment there will be 8,000 calls coming to his office during the next election and he suggested that chairman Kenyon give out his phone number to receive these calls. Another

problem is the state legislature's vote to move the primary in even-numbered years to first Tuesday of February. Handed out to committee members were documents which outlined the Illinois Association of County Clerks and Records legislative efforts on elections law in 2007 focusing on making elections more efficient, less costly, and more open to voters; and a legislative briefing document which listed upcoming bills which affected the election process.

County Response: We (the County) are having budget difficulties due to loss of revenue from landfill closure and new added costs of building a new jail. Noverini mentioned another solution would be raising taxes which he didn't want to do. Cunningham will return and ask the board for any available money left in the capital budget in July vying with the coroner, sheriff and other offices for the funds

MOST CRITICAL ISSUES(S): Several complaints have been recorded by the State' Attorney office after the fall 2006 election. Cunningham was requested to follow procedures in the future and ask for supplemental funding and not to think that he can use purchases needed to fulfill statutory duty as a right to writing blank checks.

COMMENTS/NOTES: Will adding new machines resolve the problems? Board member Hollie Kissane, D-Carpentersville asked if more eSlates would mean a better election. Will providing more education to election judges/workers help alleviate the problem?

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S): Continue to monitor the election system/process in Kane County remains an important aspect of LWV.

NEXT MEETING: March 19, 2007