



McHenry County  
County Board - Committee of the Whole  
MINUTES

October 10, 2024, 9:00 AM  
County Board Room  
Administration Building, 667 Ware Rd., Woodstock, IL 60098

Members Present: Pamela Althoff (D6), Carolyn Campbell (D3), Joseph Gottemoller (D4), Terri Greeno (D5), Eric Hendricks (D3), Carl Kamienski (D6), Jim Kearns (D9), Matt Kunkle (D1), Theresa Meshes (D1), Louissett Ness (D7), John Reinert (D2), Brian Sager (D7), Michael Skala (D9), Mike Shorten (D4), Gloria Van Hof (D2), Tracie Von Bergen (D8), Kelli Wegener (D5), Chairman Mike Buehler

Members Absent: Larry Smith (D8)

Full comments on all agenda items are included in the video recording of this meeting.

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1. CALL TO ORDER

Meeting called to order at: 9:00 A.M.

Also present: Peter Austin, County Administrator; Scott Hartman, Deputy County Administrator; Adam Wallen, Director of Planning and Development; Renee Hanlon, Deputy Director of Planning and Development; Joe Korpalski, County Engineer; Scott Hennings, Assistant Director of Transportation; Darrell Kuntz, Assistant County Engineer; Alicia Schueller, Director of Public Affairs; Kyle Bruett, Assistant State's Attorney; Kerri Wisz, Chief Financial Officer; Suzanne Ziebart, Director of Human Resources; Dave Christensen, Director of EMA; Robb Tadelman, Sheriff; John Bucci, Undersheriff; Leonetta Rizzi, Executive Director of MHB; Mike Iwanicki, Superintendent of VAC.

**Mover:** Campbell

**Second:** Skala

To allow the remote attendance of Ms. Althoff and Ms. Greeno.

Aye (14): Campbell, Gottemoller, Kamienski, Kearns, Kunkle, Meshes, Ness, Reinert, Sager, Skala, Van Hof, Von Bergen, and Wegener

Absent (2): Hendricks, and Shorten

**Approved (14 to 0)**

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Kelli Wegener led the County Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

### **3. INTRODUCTORY ROLL CALL**

Kathie Bough, Administrative Manager, called the Roll.

### **4. CHAIRPERSON'S COMMENT**

Full comments can be heard on the McHenry County website audio starting at 00:04:37

Chairman Buehler shared several items before the review of next Tuesday's voting meeting agenda.

It was with a heavy heart that the Committee of the Whole began with the sad news of the passing of a county employee. On September 20th, Jeff Levato, a field supervisor with the Department of Health, passed away unexpectedly at the age of 49. He left behind two sons and had served the health department for over 25 years. Jeff was a dedicated public health professional who made a significant impact on many lives and was greatly missed. A moment of silence was observed to honor his memory.

Earlier that morning, Chairman Buehler had the privilege of joining the Department of Health for the ribbon-cutting of its new Mobile Clinic. The clinic was expected to significantly improve access to healthcare services for rural and underserved areas, offering immunizations, preventative care, WIC assistance, and more. The County Board approved the purchase in February, utilizing ARPA funds through the Advance McHenry County grant program. The clinic was already being put to use, offering flu vaccines to county employees.

The new Health Atlas, an online tool providing comprehensive insights into the health and well-being of McHenry County residents, had been launched. After Members' Comments and Public Comment at the meeting, County Epidemiologist Ryan Sachs gave a presentation on the atlas and its contents.

October had been designated as Manufacturing Month in Illinois, and a proclamation recognizing October as Manufacturing Month in McHenry County was on the agenda for next Tuesday. Manufacturing had remained a vital part of the county's economy, and through the Advance McHenry County program, significant strides had been made to support its growth. Initiatives included funding the Foglia Center at MCC, a metalworking lab at Woodstock North High School, and the creation of the Summer Rotational Manufacturing Internship, among others.

County Administration had also partnered with the McHenry County Economic Development Corporation to create a video series called Rise and Thrive, which showcased McHenry County as an excellent place to start or expand a business. The videos, available on the county's YouTube page, highlighted workforce training initiatives at MCC and the Workforce Network. Future videos were planned to feature a local manufacturer discussing why McHenry County was a great place for the industry.

Lastly, next Tuesday's agenda included a proclamation for Operation Green Light for Veterans. McHenry County had again joined governments nationwide by installing green lights at the County Administration Building and other facilities to let veterans know about the benefits they had earned and that the Veterans Assistance Commission was ready to assist them in applying for those benefits.

### **5. MEMBERS' COMMENT**

None.

### **6. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Full comments can be heard on the McHenry County website audio starting at 00:08:16

Lou Leone, of Harvard IL, regarding LGMC

Kirk Donald, of Johnsbury IL, regarding Tax Levy

Tim Beck, of McHenry IL, regarding Tax Levy

Janness Abraham, of Crystal Lake IL, regarding Tax Levy

Tara Nielson, of McHenry County IL, regarding Budget

Bruce Johnson, of Trout Valley IL, regarding Taxes

Judy Zaplinski, of Algonquin IL, regarding Taxes

Lisa Hartfelt, of McHenry County IL, regarding Taxes

**Mover:** Meshes

**Secunder:** Hendricks

To allow the remote attendance of Mr. Shorten

Aye (17): Althoff, Campbell, Gottemoller, Greeno, Hendricks, Kamienski, Kearns, Kunkle, Meshes, Ness, Reinert, Sager, Skala, Van Hof, Von Bergen, and Wegener

**Approved (17 to 0)**

## **7. REPORTS AND PRESENTATIONS**

### **7.a McHenry County Health Atlas**

Full comments can be heard on the McHenry County website audio starting at 00:30:13

Melissa Adamson, Health Administrator; Ryan Sachs, Epidemiology Program Coordinator; and Chloe Cavida, Health Epidemiologist, joined to discuss the presentation.

The McHenry County Health Department presented to the board to showcase the new Health Atlas, an interactive online resource offering data on local health trends and demographics. They highlighted the dashboard's development, inspired by the need for accessible, real-time data during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Health Atlas consolidates various health metrics, from communicable diseases to community health assessments, providing easy access for community members. With features like searchable topics, map views, and technical notes, the dashboard aims to support informed decision-making and foster public engagement with county health data.

## **8. NEW BUSINESS**

### **8.a Review of the October 15, 2024 County Board Agenda Items**

Full comments can be heard on the McHenry County website audio starting at 00:42:37

Chairman Buehler asked for any items that Board members will remove to allow staff that is not necessary for questions to return to their departments.

#### **ITEMS REMOVED FOR DISCUSSION**

##### ORDINANCES

17.a.1 - An Ordinance Providing for the Levy of Taxes for McHenry County, Illinois for the Fiscal Year December 1, A.D., 2024 through November 30, A.D., 2025 (18), removed for discussion by Ms. Greeno

17.a.2 - Annual Budget and Appropriations Ordinance for the County of McHenry, Illinois for the Fiscal Year December 1, A.D., 2024 through November 30, A.D., 2025 (18), removed for discussion by Ms. Greeno

##### **DISCUSSION**

Dr. Sager expressed sincere gratitude to those who spoke thoughtfully and respectfully at the county board meeting. He acknowledged the challenges of balancing a budget, noting the difficulty of meeting

residents' needs without imposing excessive tax burdens. He thanked the speakers for their positive and considerate contributions.

## ORDINANCES

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The county's budget discussion centered on balancing taxes, public services, and funding for the sheriff's department. Concerns were raised about increasing the levy or adding new growth, with the argument that the administration should find alternative revenue sources rather than relying on tax increases. It was emphasized that leveraging sheriff deputies in budget discussions was inappropriate, and there was a call for board members to vote with taxpayers in mind. The upcoming vote was clarified as being for posting the budget for review, with the final vote set for next month, allowing time for thorough review and ensuring that any potential tax increases are justified.

There was an explanation about property assessments and levies, noting that while property assessments may rise, taxes won't necessarily increase at the same rate. The county's levy has decreased over the past decade, although residents may not feel the reduction due to other taxing districts. The administration clarified that requests for supplemental positions, including for the sheriff's department, are genuine needs, not tactics, and referenced past support for attorney wages as an example of the county's commitment to remain competitive.

Questions were raised about the reduction in the levy despite the increased revenue from motor fuel and sales taxes. The administration explained that additional motor fuel tax revenue has allowed for a reduction in the transportation levy and helped avoid interfund loans. While the levy has decreased, minor tax increases are still necessary due to the shift toward alternative revenue sources like sales and motor fuel taxes. The sheriff's department's new contract with Kane County was also noted as expected to offset some expenses by generating additional revenue.

Discussions continued on funding for the sheriff's department, with strong support for fully funding capital investments and adding three sheriff officers. Requests were made for options to cut other expenses to fund these positions without sacrificing essential services. There was also the suggestion of charging municipalities for backup sheriff services if the county does not allocate the necessary funding. This, however, was seen as potentially conflicting with the county's shared services philosophy. The difficulty of balancing public safety needs with fiscal responsibility was stressed, particularly with concerns about staffing and the growing budget complexities.

Concerns were raised regarding the reallocation of funds to the Mental Health Board, which could increase the overall tax burden despite the promise to reduce the levy. The continuation of ARPA-funded positions after the funds run out was questioned, with the sheriff's department seeking \$465,000 potentially offset by reducing staff elsewhere. The need to freeze vacant positions or eliminate roles to cover the budget was discussed, along with the rising costs of liability insurance, which is affecting the budget due to diminishing surpluses in the fund.

The conversation also addressed the challenge of balancing budgetary increases with taxpayer impacts, especially regarding the sheriff's department. Suggestions were made to use fund balances or delay capital projects to cover the additional funding needed for the department. The broader fiscal context, including inflation and increases in sales and fuel taxes, was considered, with the county in a strong financial position but mindful of the need to manage future decisions carefully. The overarching goal was to ensure services continue without overburdening residents.

## **9. ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT**

None.

**10. OTHER**

None.

**11. EXECUTIVE SESSION (IF NECESSARY)**

None.

**12. ADJOURNMENT**

**Mover:** Skala

**Second:** Kamienski

To Adjourn at 11:15 A.M. -TCCazares

Aye (18): Althoff, Campbell, Gottemoller, Greeno, Hendricks, Kamienski, Kearns, Kunkle, Meshes, Ness, Reinert, Sager, Shorten, Skala, Van Hof, Von Bergen, and Wegener

**Approved (18 to 0)**