



McHenry County
Law & Government/Liquor - Public Meeting
MINUTES

March 25, 2025, 8:30 AM
County Board Conference Room
Administration Building, 667 Ware Rd., Woodstock, IL 60098

Members Present: Pamela Althoff, Mike Shorten, Carolyn Campbell, Matt Kunkle, Brian Sager,
Patrick Sullivan, Gloria Van Hof

Portions of these minutes may include content based on transcripts created by Generative AI technology
(Otter.ai). Full comments on all agenda items are included in the video recording of this meeting.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Meeting called to order at: 8:30 A.M.

Also present: Peter Austin, County Administrator; Scott Hartman, Deputy County Administrator; Alicia Schueller, Director of Public Affairs; Tiki Schulte, Director of ETSB; Dr. Michael Rein, County Coroner; Dan Wallis, Trial Court Administrator; Chalen Daigle, County Coordinator; Sandra Salgado, Sheriff's Office Business Manager; Joyce Nardulli, MCCG Lobbyist.

Mover: Sager

Second: Van Hof

To allow the remote attendance of Mr. Shorten.

Aye (6): Althoff, Campbell, Kunkle, Sager, Sullivan, and Van Hof

Abstain (1): Shorten

Recommended (6 to 0)

2. MINUTES APPROVAL

2.1 Law & Government/Liquor - Public Meeting - Feb 25, 2025 8:30 A.M.

Mover: Campbell

Second: Kunkle

To approve the minutes from the February 25, 2025 meeting.

Aye (7): Althoff, Shorten, Campbell, Kunkle, Sager, Sullivan, and Van Hof

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

4. MEMBERS' COMMENTS

Gloria Van Hof mentioned that they had been at Valley Hi the other day for the Memory Care Unit wing opening and noted that it was a pleasure to see the project completed. She shared that some members had served on the committee, and the changes over the past 30 days were tremendous. She remarked that it was a beautiful reception. She concluded by saying it had been a warm and welcoming reception.

Brian Sager stated that he had an update on the transit efforts taking place in Springfield.

Chair Pam Althoff noted that Mr. Sager did not need to present the update at that moment but would be available to share it later when Ms. Nardulli joined the session. She mentioned that she would be joining shortly, and at that time, Alicia Schueller and Chalen Daigle could also take the floor. Additionally, she requested permission to move up 7.4 on the Consent Agenda. She explained that Mr. Wallis would not be able to remain past 9:00 a.m., and if there were any questions specific to that item, they could be addressed at that time. She clarified that no action would be taken during the discussion, but the item would remain on the Consent Agenda.

After the discussion of Members' Comments, Chair Althoff moved forward to 7.4.

5. NEW BUSINESS

5.1 New Liquor License, Manager and/or Amusement License Requests

5.1.a Additional Owner - Megan Leuthold

Megan Leuthold addressed the board regarding the transition of ownership for the Gen Mill liquor license. She introduced herself as the daughter of the current owner, Patricia, and explained that she intended to take over the day-to-day operations of the business.

Megan shared that she has lived in McHenry County for the past eight years and is a mother of five children, with her oldest being ten years old and her youngest just nine months. She has extensive experience in the service industry, including roles as a server, bartender, and manager, as well as operating a mobile bar business. After the passing of her spouse in 2021, she began exploring new ways to support her family and saw this opportunity as a natural next step.

The board discussed the responsibilities associated with holding a liquor license, emphasizing the importance of not serving minors and maintaining appropriate conduct.

Mover: Van Hof

Second: Kunkle

To approve Megan Leuthold as an owner of the liquor license for The Gin Mill.

Aye (7): Althoff, Shorten, Campbell, Kunkle, Sager, Sullivan, and Van Hof

Recommended (7 to 0)

5.1.b Change from "B" to "A"

The board discussed a proposed change in liquor license classification for Family Food Mart. Sam, the owner, explained that the business is seeking to add video gaming as a new source of revenue.

As part of this effort, he described plans to expand the store, install a new cooler, and construct a small room designated for gaming.

Board member Mr. Sager asked Sam to clarify the specifics of the license change and reminded him of the responsibilities that come with operating a gaming facility. These include not selling alcohol to minors, prohibiting minors from entering the gaming area, adhering to approved hours of operation, and ensuring proper supervision of the gaming space.

Sam confirmed that during recent remodeling, they created a separate gaming area that is clearly visible from the clerk's station, allowing for adequate oversight.

Mover: Sager

Second: Sullivan

To approve the change of license type from "B" to "A" for Family Food Mart.

5.2 8:30 - Christopher Bennett - Fire District - McHenry Township

5.3 8:40 - Scott Logan - Fire District - Harvard

5.4 8:50 - Joel Brouillette - Fire District - Harvard

5.5 9:00 - Laura Evers - Fire District - Harvard

5.6 9:10 - Michael Kunz - Fire District - Fox River Grove

5.7 Deliberation and Selection for McHenry Township Fire Protection District

Mover: Sager

Second: Kunkle

To recommend the appointment of Christopher Bennett to the County Board Chairman for the McHenry Township Fire Protection District for a term to begin on April 30, 2025, and expire on April 30, 2028.

Aye (7): Althoff, Shorten, Campbell, Kunkle, Sager, Sullivan, and Van Hof

Recommended (7 to 0)

5.8 Deliberation and Selection for the Harvard Fire Protection District

Mover: Sager

Second: Kunkle

To recommend the appointments of Laura Evers and Scott Logan to the County Board Chairman for the Harvard Fire Protection District for terms to begin on April 30, 2025, and expire on April 30, 2028.

Aye (7): Althoff, Shorten, Campbell, Kunkle, Sager, Sullivan, and Van Hof

Recommended (7 to 0)

5.9 Deliberation and Selection for the Fox River Grove Fire Protection District

Mover: Sager

Second: Kunkle

To recommend the appointment of Michael Kunz to the County Board Chairman for the Fox River Grove Fire Protection district for a term to begin on April 30, 2025, and expire on April 30, 2028.

Aye (7): Althoff, Shorten, Campbell, Kunkle, Sager, Sullivan, and Van Hof

5.10 Updates from Fox River Grove Fire Chief Kreher

Chief Bob Kreher from the Fox River Grove Fire Protection District provided an update covering several key areas. He noted that the district currently employs 10 full-time firefighters, with a minimum of four personnel on duty at all times. Their equipment includes a fire engine from 2004, their newest ambulance from 2022, and their oldest ambulance from 2010.

Financially, the district faces challenges. They receive approximately \$1.577 million in annual tax revenue, with ambulance billing bringing in about \$300,000 per year. However, with personnel costs totaling around \$1.6 million, very little is left for equipment replacement or other expenses.

Kreher highlighted their average ambulance response time of 3.5 minutes and praised their strong mutual aid partnerships. They use a "closest unit" dispatch system to ensure the fastest possible response times by deploying the nearest available unit.

Staffing continues to be a struggle, particularly in retaining personnel. The district finds it difficult to compete with higher-paying departments in surrounding communities. Training a new firefighter costs around \$120,000, and many end up leaving for better-paying positions in places like Arlington Heights, Palatine, and Buffalo Grove.

Lastly, he mentioned that the district's last referendum was in 2000, which came in response to community concerns about response times. That successful referendum allowed them to transition from a volunteer-based department to one staffed with full-time firefighters.

6. LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Alicia Schueller, Director of Public Affairs; Chalen Daigle, County Coordinator; and Joyce Nardulli, MCCG Lobbyist, joined the for the discussion.

DEADLINES AND PROCEDURAL ITEMS

The committee deadline was March 21 for both the Illinois House and Senate. The next important deadline is the third reading deadline set for April 11, with the committee deadline for bills outside their chamber of origin will be May 9. Third reading for bills outside their chamber of origin will be May 23, and the Assembly is scheduled to adjourn on May 31.

Congress averted a federal shutdown by approving a continuing resolution on March 14.

ILLINOIS LEGISLATIVE ITEMS

Police Social Work

HB 1329 Co-Responder Unit- McHenry County (Ness)

Amends the Co-Responder Pilot Program Division of the Illinois Municipal Code. Adds the McHenry County Sheriff's Office to the offices to which the Division is applicable and requires the Office to establish a co-responder unit no later than 6 months after the effective date of the amendatory Act and hire specified personnel.

Sheriff Robb Tadelman traveled to Springfield at the invitation of Rep. Ness to deliver testimony to the House Appropriations-Public Safety and Infrastructure Committee about the efficacy of the McHenry County Police Social Work Program and why it should be admitted to the State's Co-Responder Pilot Program. Chairman Buehler, Member Althoff, the McHenry County Council of Governments, the Illinois Sheriff's Association, and the Illinois State Association of Counties slipped in support of HB 1329.

Transit

SB 5/ HB 1883 Metropolitan Mobility Auth Act (Villivalam)(Delgado) “The MMA Bill”

SB 1938/ HB 2963 Metro & Regional Transit Auth (Villivalam) (Evans, Jr.) “The Labor Bill”

Assistant Director of Transportation Scott Hennings and County Administrator Peter Austin traveled to Chicago at the invitation of Senator DeWitte to deliver testimony to the Senate Transportation Committee on March 11 regarding regional transit reform. The bills discussed were the SB 5, the Metropolitan Mobility Authority Act, which would consolidate the transit service boards and SB 1938, a labor coalition bill that would maintain the service boards amid transit reform. Currently, the MMA Bill has 10 sponsors in the Senate and 12 in the House. The Labor Bill has one sponsor in the Senate, who is the same sponsor of the MMA Bill. The Labor Bill has one sponsor in the House.

Townships

The Governor championed township elimination as part of his annual budget address this year. SB 2217 and SB 2504, which propose township consolidation and/or elimination, have not passed committee.

Other

HB 3563/SB2416 Wind & Solar Facility Drainage. (Ford/Jones) 2/18/2025 Referred to Rules, 2/7/2025

Referred to Assignments This is the ISACo Wind and Solar Committee bill to improve solar siting legislation and provide some additional controls in terms of drainage issues and decommissioning.

SB 71 3/20/2025 Second Reading

This bill, as currently written, imposes unfunded mandates upon local governments and requires the development of additional plans and the setting of school evacuation routes for hazardous waste spills which may cause confusion during an incident. Member Althoff connected with the Senate sponsor who was open to working with McHenry County on improvements should the bill's third amendment not satisfactorily resolve the current issues.

SB 2447 Court Fees-Various. (Sims) Referred to Assignments 2/7/2025

This bill is the product of an Illinois Supreme Court workgroup in which our Circuit Clerk, Kathy Keefe, participated to re-evaluate court fees.

FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE ITEMS

Chairman Buehler, Administrator Austin, Algonquin Village President Debby Sosine, McHenry County Council of Governments Executive Chalen Daigle, and I attended the National Association of Counties Legislative Conference in Washington D.C. At the conference, we learned more about current immigration initiatives and how they relate to housing development, agricultural production, and the childcare industry. We also attended a presentation by Doug Collins, the new United States Secretary of Veterans Affairs where he discussed cutting administrative costs to pass on to veterans. We acquired and passed on his staffer's contact information to our VAC should they have any questions as the Department of Veterans Affairs moves forward. Another session we attended was the Great Lakes Counties Forum, which discussed the possibility of creating a caucus within NACO focusing on the needs of counties in states touching the Great Lakes. Counties discussed area issues including invasive species, loss of infrastructure, the impacts of algal blooms and pollution, youth engagement programs, engineering needs for coastal erosion and build up, and the diversion of waters outside the member states. We also attended the Federal Government Expo where we had the opportunity to connect with intergovernmental affairs personnel from various federal agencies and develop contacts for future projects and needs.

While in Washington, we met with Congressman LaHood, Congressman Schneider, Congresswoman Schakowsky, Senator Durbin and Senator Duckworth to discuss Community Project Funding for the Police Social Work Headquarters and to learn more about evolving federal funding priorities. We shared information we learned from the conference regarding the proposed elimination of the tax-exempt status for municipal bonds. The tax-exempt status lowers the cost of government building projects and improvements for communities. Taxation would provide additional revenue streams for the federal government at the expense of local communities and their taxpayers.

Congress ultimately did pass a continuing resolution that would fund the federal government through the end of September. The continuing resolution did not include community funding projects, although the opportunity to pass them was not completely foreclosed for the next funding bill.

Ms. Nardulli provided a legislative update highlighting several key issues. She noted that the Local Government Distributive Fund is expected to remain unchanged this year. On transit, she mentioned ongoing funding discussions, potential expansion of the sales tax to services, likely fare increases, and a focus on governance reform. The Governor has indicated that local governments will need to contribute more.

Regarding pensions, Ms. Nardulli said multiple bills aim to reform tier two pensions due to concerns some retirees may receive less than Social Security. However, no immediate changes are expected.

She also covered zoning and land use, noting that HB 1813 and HB 1814 aim to ease the housing crisis by limiting municipal restrictions. These bills are backed by realtors but opposed by municipalities.

Other topics included a crime-free housing bill, proposed video gaming on phones, and debates on homeschooling regulation. Ms. Nardulli wrapped up by noting political challenges, including low approval ratings for Brandon Johnson, and emphasized the complexity of transit and governance issues.

7. ROUTINE CONSENT AGENDA

Mover: Campbell

Second: Kunkle

To approve the items of the Routine Consent Agenda.

Aye (7): Althoff, Shorten, Campbell, Kunkle, Sager, Sullivan, and Van Hof

Recommended (7 to 0)

- 7.1 Resolution Supporting Upgrade of Cradlepoint Wireless Routers and Enterprise Routers for McHenry County Fire Agency Dispatch (29)

Mover: Campbell

Second: Kunkle

To support the McHenry County Emergency Telephone System Board upgrade and installation of Cradlepoint wireless routers and Enterprise routers with a 5-year NetCloud service.

Recommended

- 7.2 Resolution Authorizing Annual Enhancements and Modifications to iJustice Case Management Software FY 2024-25 (41)

Mover: Campbell

Second: Kunkle

The attached Resolution is for FY 2024-25 annual iJustice case management software enhancements & modifications to be contracted with ISS (Integrated Software Specialists, Inc.) under the current ISS Support & Maintenance contract pricing for consulting services, as approved by the Circuit Clerk and Chief Judge.

Recommended

- 7.3 Resolution Authorizing ISS iJustice Annual Support and Maintenance FY 2024-25 Budget (41)

Mover: Campbell
Seconded: Kunkle

The attached Resolution is for payment of annual support & maintenance on the Circuit Clerk's iJustice case management software for the McHenry County Circuit Clerk, Court Services and 22nd Judicial Circuit Specialty Courts.

Recommended

- 7.4 Approval of a Three-Year Contract with Scram Systems of Illinois Inc to Provide Court Monitoring (GPS, EM, CAM & Equipment Cost) Services for the 22nd Judicial Circuit Court and Authorization for an Expenditure Over \$30,000.00 (42)

Dan Wallis, Trial Court Administrator, joined the committee to provide a brief overview of the electronic monitoring and GPS alcohol monitoring program as it relates to the Pretrial Fairness Act. He explained that individuals arrested and held in the McHenry County Jail undergo a validated risk assessment conducted by probation officers. Based on the results, judges may order GPS or electronic monitoring. Individuals placed on monitoring receive credit for time served, similar to incarceration.

The program was initially allocated \$200,000 at the start of the year. Current spending is approximately \$12,000 per month, with a projected annual total of around \$150,000. A stop-gap budget of \$200,000 remains available as a financial cushion.

Mr. Wallis noted that the program does not proactively select individuals for monitoring; participation is based on the nature of the offense. He emphasized that, due to the time-served credit, the program functions similarly to incarceration. His presentation focused on the program's current implementation and budgetary status.

Mover: Campbell
Seconded: Kunkle

Approval of an expenditure greater than \$30,000.00 to provide electronic monitoring services to the 22nd Judicial Circuit.

Recommended

8. PRESENTATION

- 8.1 Overview of the Emergency Telephone Systems Board (ETSB)

Tiki Schulte, Director of the Emergency Telephone System Board (ETSB), joined the committee for the presentation.

Ms. Schulte provided an overview of the organization's mission, funding, and services. The ETSB supports and maintains the 911 infrastructure in McHenry County, assisting three dispatch centers, 26 police departments, and 15 fire departments. Established in 1989 through a 50-cent surcharge referendum, the organization has been operational since April 7, 1992. The ETSB is solely funded by the 911 surcharge, which is currently \$1.50 per network connection, but this funding is set to sunset on December 31, 2025. Recently, there has been a 23% decrease in surcharge collections, though no clear explanation has been provided.

In 2024, the ETSB handled approximately 98,000 911 calls, with 83% (81,000) of them being wireless. Additionally, 230,000 administrative calls were made, 355 text-to-911 calls were received, 226,000 police calls were dispatched, and 44,000 fire and EMS calls were sent out. The ETSB provides various services, including technical support for dispatch centers, computer-aided dispatch systems, mapping, voice and

data logging, automatic vehicle location, and electronic ticketing. Since its start with only two staff members in 1992, the ETSB now employs seven staff members, thanks to advancements in technology.

8.2 Update on Morgue Remodel

Michael Rein, County Coroner, joined the committee for the presentation.

Dr. Rein provided an update on the Coroner's Office renovation, detailing the funding, budget, planned changes, and improvements. The project has allocated \$700,000 in 2023 and \$1.5 million in 2024, for a total budget of \$2.2 million. Planned renovations include expanding cooler and freezer space to accommodate the needs of the office.

To save on costs, the decision was made to purchase gurneys instead of stackable units, which resulted in a savings of approximately \$50,000. Additionally, hard flooring will be installed in common areas, and Department of Justice (DOJ) grant money will be used for key card access systems. Proposed improvements include replacing the air handler, adding antimicrobial and professional-looking wall tiles, creating ballistic security areas in the waiting room, and enhancing key card access for better security.

During the discussion, Mr. Kunkle raised concerns about potentially reusing existing refrigeration units, noting the possibility of replacing equipment prematurely while it is still halfway through its lifecycle. There was also a conversation about balancing the preservation of existing infrastructure with the need to improve functionality. Security enhancements will include adding key card access to restrict entry and installing ballistic glass in the waiting area to address safety concerns, particularly for staff dealing with emotionally charged visitors. The committee requested follow-up information on specific equipment costs and potential cost-saving strategies during the upcoming administrative services and finance committee meetings.

9. OLD BUSINESS

None.

10. REPORTS

None.

11. EXECUTIVE SESSION (AS NECESSARY)

None.

12. ADJOURNMENT

Mover: Sullivan

Seconder: Kunkle

To adjourn the meeting at 10:53 A.M. -TCCazares

Aye (7): Althoff, Shorten, Campbell, Kunkle, Sager, Sullivan, and Van Hof

Recommended (7 to 0)