

**MACON COUNTY BOARD  
OPERATIONS & PERSONNEL  
COMMITTEE MEETING**

**Macon County Office Building  
141 S. Main St. – Room 514  
Decatur, IL 62523**

**April 25, 2022**

**5:30 P.M.**

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Debra Kraft, Chair  
Bill Oliver  
Pat Dawson  
Jason Comer  
Kristen Larner  
Grant Noland  
Shad Edwards

**COUNTY PERSONNEL PRESENT**

Carol Reed, Auditor  
Mary Eaton, Recorder  
Josh Tanner, County Clerk  
Rocki Wilkerson, Workforce  
Jessie Smalley, HR  
Karl Coleman, County Board member  
Kevin Greenfield, County Board Chairman  
Jeannie Durham, County Board Office

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

The meeting was called to order by Chair Kraft at the Macon County Office Building.

**MINUTES**

Motion to approve minutes of prior meeting 2/22/2022 made by Mr. Oliver, seconded by Ms. Larner, and the motion carried 7-0.

**APPROVAL OF PAYROLL**

Motion to approve payroll made by Ms. Larner, seconded by Mr. Edwards, and the motion carried 7-0.

**APPROVAL OF CLAIMS**

Motion to approve the claims made by Mr. Comer, seconded by Ms. Larner; the motion carried 7-0.

**REPORTS**

*Auditor's Office –*

*Macon County Board Resolution Approving Blue Cross Blue Shield Health Insurance Proposal from AJ Gallagher & Co*

Ms. Reed explained that the Insurance Committee had met last week and decided they only needed

to meet the one time. The best offer from Blue Cross / Blue Shield was for a 1.8% increase which was thought to be reasonable considering everything. The HRA, the funding that the County does between the deductible the employee has and the actual deductible, will be kept. Last year was the first year for the HRA and it worked out fairly well once a few kinks were worked out.

Motion to forward the resolution on to the finance committee with recommendation to approve was made by Mr. Edwards, seconded by Ms. Larner, and the motion carried 7-0

***Macon County Board Resolution Approving One Year Delta Dental Insurance Proposal from AJ Gallagher & Co***

Ms. Reed explained that Delta Dental has been our dental insurer since at least 2012 and during that time, there have only been a couple of increases in 2012 & 2013 as well as a 2% in 2017. The 5% increase that has been presented was the best they could do this time and it was felt that it is reasonable. The dental insurance is 100% employee paid.

Ms. Dawson asked how many people use it. Mr. Malachowski said 350. Ms. Reed confirmed that quite a few people do take it.

Motion to forward the resolution on to the finance committee with recommendation to approve was made by Mr. Edwards, seconded by Ms. Larner, and the motion carried 7-0

***County Board –  
Macon County Board Resolution Approving Contract Between the County Administrator and the County of Macon, Illinois***

Motion to forward the resolution on to the finance committee with recommendation to approve was made by Mr. Edwards and seconded by Ms. Larner.

Mr. Edwards asked if any changes had been made from the previous copy they had been supplied. Chair Kraft said the only changes the State's Attorneys Office had made was to correct a date. Everything else remained the same.

Mr. Oliver asked if there was a resume'. Chair Kraft said it is not attached, but the hiring committee approved it. Mr. Oliver asked about the board members being able to see it. He asked what they are voting for. Chair Kraft said they are voting to hire her. Mr. Oliver explained he understood that, but had no idea about who they were voting to hire. Ms. Kraft said it is Tamara Wilcox who has worked in County government, been with DOVE for many years, is very qualified, a lifelong Macon County resident. She said she has great faith in her, but that is her bio and what she knows. Mr. Oliver asked why the other committee members had not been given that. Chair Kraft said she would do that if that is what Mr. Oliver wanted. Ms. Larner reminded Mr. Oliver that he did get the email that this would be voted on at this meeting. Ms. Dawson agreed, but said that if they don't know who a person is, just to see the contract without knowing

who it applies to doesn't help. Ms. Lerner said she also did not know, but she had inquired and had been told her name, that she had worked for DOVE, etc. She said she thinks that that is their job, to come into these meetings informed. That is why they give us the priors. Ms. Dawson asked who they were supposed to get the information from. Ms. Larson said she knew that Ms. Kraft is the Chair of the committee so she had reached out to her. Ms. Dawson asked if that means that Ms. Kraft has the answers when she was not on the committee. Ms. Kraft agreed that she was not on the committee. Ms. Lerner said they could find the information. Ms. Dawson said the committee could have presented its members with the resume'. Chair Kraft asked Ms. Wilkerson to come forward.

Ms. Wilkerson informed the members that she could get them all copies of her resume' if they'd like. That would not be a problem. She did go through the process, actually two sets of interviews. She scored well. She submitted her resume' at the end of March. She was interviewed through April. She said she could send out scores and results of the interviews and how well she scored and in what areas. She said she could give a more thorough report if they'd like as well as a copy of the resume'. Mr. Edwards asked if that could be done prior to the board meeting. Ms. Wilkerson said she could do it tomorrow.

Ms. Dawson asked about the 15 days of vacation. Mr. Tanner clarified that the contract called for 15 days per year. She asked how many employees the County Administrator would be overseeing. Mr. Tanner explained that it would be the Planning & Zoning Director, The Environmental Management Director, the IT Administrator and the County Board Executive Secretary. That is it. Ms. Dawson asked if the County would be paying \$105,000 to oversee four people. Mr. Tanner said that is the contract that is before them. Ms. Dawson asked who she (the County Administrator) would be reporting to. Mr. Tanner said the County Board. Ms. Dawson asked about grants and if she would be writing grants strictly for those 4 people. Mr. Tanner said he did not think so. The intent from the committee and when the job description was put together was that she would also seek out grants for areas that do not fall under a current officeholder. For example, extended grants for the fiber optic network that was originally passed by County Board Resolution with Shelby Electric. Now there are other cooperatives and that cooperative and the state and federal government are reaching back out. They would like to expand on that project. That doesn't really fall under a current office holder's purview, so it would fall under this position. That and things like that. For example, if the Sheriff has a contract for the jail or a grant opportunity for the jail, the Sheriff would be writing that. But anything that doesn't fall under an officeholder's purview would be something that we would hope that the County Administrator would try to do. Ms. Dawson asked what kind of grants would be under the purview of the County Board. Mr. Tanner said something the County Board has never pursued in the past, but there are opportunities and things like Economic Development Grants. The County Board, also, through ordinance, controls the cannabis sale and distribution. So, there may be opportunities there. Any other opportunity besides economic development which could include a lot of things. Mr. Tanner said he assumes that the County Administrator may be aware of other opportunities through organizations that he or she may be involved in that she could forward to the Highway Engineer or the Sheriff or the Circuit Clerk. If, for example, she would be attending an Illinois

County Association meeting or event and hears about other grant opportunities, she could forward that along. Mr. Tanner said he thinks the County probably, when it comes to each individual officeholder, they do a pretty good job of getting their own grants, but there are just a lot of things that just don't fall into their purview that we probably could be getting, but we're just not getting. Especially, when it comes to zoning, if the County wanted to pursue other companies when it comes to windfarm grants, solar farm grants, the broadband, economic development especially when it comes to warehousing that may not be interested in locating in the city but may be interested in locating in the County. The County participates in the Enterprise Zone and so we don't have anyone actively at the county level engaging with industrial or commercial opportunities to take advantage of the enterprise zone. The EDC does, but the County doesn't have anyone on our behalf reaching out for that. That is another area that they might be able to network.

Ms. Dawson asked if the people referred to earlier would be answerable to the County Administrator as opposed to the County Board Chairman. Mr. Tanner said correct.

Ms. Dawson asked Chairman Greenfield what the Chairman's job would then entail and would the County Administrator help him with his duties. Mr. Greenfield explained that the County Administrator would help out tremendously. As far as the everyday operations of the County. He explained that he cannot, and he didn't know of any Chairman that could be present every day / all day and know what the employees are doing. He said he has to pick and choose what meetings he can attend where an Administrator would be able to make a lot more of them and hopefully between the two of them they could share them and make them all. A county of this size is a pretty big operation, a pretty big business with a \$74 million budget. Someone that can go out and work with the officeholders, especially when times are bad to see where cuts and whatever it takes can be made. He said he thinks it will pay for itself. Ms. Dawson asked how long the Chairman thinks the county will be able to sustain it. Chair Kraft said she thinks, and she spoke with Ms. Wilkerson about it, that there is grant money available and she thinks grant money can help pay the County Administrator salary. She said she has every confidence in that. Ms. Dawson said she agrees that she thinks it could, but wouldn't want to do a financial budget based on that. She said she did not want to be so short sighted thinking of today and hire somebody and then down the road, we can't afford to pay her. Ms. Kraft said she is very aware of that. Ms. Larner reminded them that it is only a 3 year contract. Chairman Greenfield agreed with Ms. Dawson that they have to look long range. Ms. Dawson asked if they think this is a full time job. Mr. Tanner said yes.

Mr. Oliver asked about recommendations and seeking new employees, etc. Mr. Tanner explained that for those departments that are under control of the County Administrator, if there is a vacancy, then the County Administrator would fill it through whatever means she deems fit within the budget given by the County Board. Most of the departments use online sources. Mr. Oliver asked about guidelines for advertising. Mr. Tanner said that to fill a position, it does not have to be posted. He said he thought that they do have to post on the website which most of the offices post on the website. There are also contractual obligations with the union. None of these positions are

in the union, but for those positions that are under the union, the union has to be notified with a certain number of days notice. But, she would fill them however she sees best fit to fill them.

Mr. Oliver asked what happens if there is a dispute between the Chairman and this particular person. Mr. Oliver said it is listed in the contract under termination and severance. It takes 2/3 of the County Board to terminate. So, it does not matter whether the Chairman likes it or not. It matters whether 2/3 of the board agrees to sever. For just cause, it lists felony, professional misconduct, willful disregard and gross, willful substantial failure to perform the essential duties.

Mr. Oliver asked who files the charges / complaints. Mr. Tanner explained that before that section referred to by Mr. Edwards, there is a procedure outlined for how the County Board would go about putting the County Administrator on a paid leave, what the recourse is for the County Administrator, how that is reviewed and then how that is ultimately adjudicated. The whole process is lined out there. Mr. Oliver asked how things come about if the Chairman and the County Administrator don't agree and how would he find out about it. Mr. Tanner explained that if they don't agree on a regular decision, when this person was hired, they are now in charge of these departments just like when you contract for the County Engineer or the Supervisor of Assessments, they are in charge of their offices. They have internal control. So, if the County Board Chairman or any other County Board member doesn't necessarily like one of their decisions, obviously, the best bet is to talk to the County Administrator first to see if it can be resolved. But, ultimately, if there are enough County Board members that do not like the decision, it is just like with the City Manager, the County Board has, once contracted with someone they run that office, and if you don't like the job they are doing, termination is the only other alternative. You don't have control over the internal office afterwards. Outside of the County Board making changes to the County Handbook or some other general rule for the County. Mr. Oliver said one thing that bothers him is the fact that there is not enough information given before hand on decisions that come before the board and the members are expected to make good decisions quickly on a lot of the things that they are not prepared to do so. Mr. Tanner asked if he was speaking in regard to this resolution or just lots of resolutions. Mr. Oliver said in general. Mr. Tanner said that is one of the purposes of the County Administrator. That is to be someone that any of the County Board members can contact when they have questions about something on the agenda so that they can find out more information. Obviously, when an office holder is bringing a resolution forward, most of the members will call the officeholder who is bringing it forward and get questions answered. But, there are a number of resolutions that go forward that are not originated by an officeholder. So, those would be the ones that the County Administrator would be able to answer questions for the board. The way the County Board is structured, it is a committee and so the committees, according to the board rules, an office holder or the County Administrator would bring a resolution to a committee. Once the committee passes the resolution, per the board rules, technically, the committee then is in charge of the resolution. Then the resolution moves to the full board, then the committee is responsible to answer the questions for the full board. That is because the committee is the representative of both parties. That is the way it is set up in the board rules. That is not necessarily the way it operates. Hopefully, the County Administrator will be someone who can answer the questions for the resolutions that do not fall

under an officeholder and hopefully, all of the board members will be able to freely call the County Administrator and ask questions. If the County Administrator does not have the answers, hopefully she will be able to get the answers prior to the board meeting. There are times where the board, and this is a good instance – the Board passed a resolution to set up a committee to find a person. Then the committee reports back, either through Ms. Wilkerson or at O&P to report of what is going on. The structure is set up so that each party has representation feeding information back to the rest of the board members. That is the general design of the committee structure. There is representation from both sides. The committee hears the nitty – gritty details and makes a decision as to what gets forwarded on to the full board. Obviously, the office holder or the County Administrator can answer questions at the full board, but the premise of the committees is that the committees then would answer questions to the rest of their caucus during the caucus as to what happened during the committee. That is the way it is designed. Again, it does not always work that way.

Mr. Noland pointed out the fact that the sub-committee of this committee (the hiring committee) was designed to get into the nitty – gritty as Mr. Tanner referenced. So, Mr. Noland said he would just like to point out the fact that he thinks they've all had the opportunity. People had the opportunity prior to this committee to do some of the vetting. So, he said he guessed that he does not necessarily feel that this was sprung upon the committee because we all had advanced knowledge that a committee had been established and that we had faith in those individuals who were office holders and bi-partisan board members to look into it.

Ms. Lerner added that it was her understanding that the hiring committee has already gone through this process once and did not feel there were qualified candidates they could bring forward so they did not just bring somebody / anybody to us, but went back to step one and tried again. The committee did not just settle, but came back at it.

Ms. Dawson asked how many board members were on the committee. Mr. Tanner explained that initially, two were appointed by the resolution, Mr. Coleman and Ms. Little. Then, once it got to a certain point in the process, they tried to engage two more board members, Mr. Greenfield and Mr. Holman. The original committee decided they wanted to get more board participation in the event they get to a candidate. There were also some availability issues, so having two members from each party, allowed meetings to be scheduled with at least one person from each side. Ultimately, four board members were on the interview committee. Not all four board members were present at all meetings, but there was at least one from each side during every meeting.

Ms. Lerner asked about the compensation portion of the contract and clarified that adjusting the County Administrator's salary has to come before the board and voted upon. Mr. Tanner agreed saying that the employee is the employee of the board, so only the board can adjust that. Unlike an officeholder where you can only set the salary one time. This is a contractual employee, so . . . He said he thought the contract states though that there is a minimum guaranteed. If you were to offer more, it would have to be a full board decision.

Roll call, at Chair Kraft's request, showed the motion carried with Kraft, Larner, Comer, Noland, Edwards voting yes. Mr. Oliver abstaining, and Ms. Dawson voting present.

Chair Kraft announced that the motion had carried and it will go before the full board.

Mr. Edwards commented that board members would still have a chance to make comments at the board meeting. Ms. Kraft agreed that yes, that could be done at caucus.

***County Clerk –***

Mr. Tanner reported that early voting starts May 19. No excuse is needed. So, anybody that wants to come in can come in and vote in the office early as of May 19. That is a Thursday and it is the first day. It is also the first day that vote by mail ballots will be mailed out. Vote by mail ballots can be requested at this point in time through the website or US mail. That is also a no excuse needed. Those will be mailed on May 19. Mr. Oliver asked about boxes on the corners. Mr. Tanner said there will be one here at the office. He said they have a new box. They had gotten a grant last year and used the money to get a steel box. It will be at the corner here at Main and Wood. The State, when they passed the law allowing the drop box required a certain number of security arrangements that other places may not be comfortable with. It has to be monitored 24 hours through video surveillance, it has to be lit. The Election Judges have to go and empty it once a day. So, it is going to be tried out here first and see how it goes. Mr. Tanner said he assumes that the general direction of this is that there will be more return boxes in the future. It is better than having them come in. In 2020, they had to return inside the office and it generated a lot of excess traffic. The boxes are not cheap. It will be here. They can drop off 24 hours a day. We will see how it is utilized. There will be extended hours as well. They are posted on the website and at the entrances to this building. Two weeks before the election, they will be open Saturday and Sunday. The last week before the election, they will be open until 7. Lots of extended hours for people.

***Recorder –***

Ms. Eaton distributed her monthly report and offered to answer any questions. There were no questions

***Workforce Investments –***

Ms. Wilkerson reported that they have a lot going on. Starting tomorrow, Tuesday, April 26, the Health Care Fair is going on. It will run Tuesday and Thursday at Richland Community College. 180 Junior High students are expected to attend on Tuesday and over 247 High School students on Thursday. About 14 employers are all set up where students can engage in activities about different career pathways. The Healthcare tours are being conducted. There are lots of packets of information for them to take home and go over with their parents to help them be more aware of the different occupations that are available in healthcare.

Ms. Wilkerson gave an update on the Youth Careers Pathways that was the \$250,000 grant and is being held at the Decatur Public Library. The County Board Chair and the City Manager were

invited in to meet the class. Senator Doris Turner is planning to come to the jobsite. They just completed the theory component which was 9 weeks in the classroom. This week they are at Richland doing OSHA, Forklift, and CPR. So, they will have those certifications. Then they will go to the jobsite which will be a house from the City of Decatur. They will be working with different people from the various carpenter, plumber, pipefitter, sheet metal, etc. unions. They will have a lot of really good mentors and a lot of direction. The hope is for them to get a good chance to do some hands on training.

Recruiting has been going on for the Illinois Works Grant which is a \$500,000 grant. A press conference at IBEW was done, as well as on Workforce Wednesdays on WAND TV for the last month. They have gone to Eisenhower and MacArthur High Schools. Robo calls have been done to parents of seniors trying to get them to take advantage for any student 18 and over. We pay tuition, books and fees for them to get into an apprenticeship program. Ms. Wilkerson said she currently has 48 names on her list. They are being interviewed starting on Wednesday. They have to go through the process and have to be 18 years old, a resident, and either a high school grad or have a GED. There will be two cohorts of 25 with one in May and one in August. The goal is to be able to produce 50 qualified workers. Mr. Noland asked if the employers are on board. Ms. Wilkerson said yes, there are about 14 and they are on board with this.

Ms. Wilkerson said she is currently working on the JTED grant and they are finalists. It is a two year grant called Job Training and Economic Development. She said if they get this, she will be working very closely with Decatur Housing, DOVE and Homeward Bound. This grant focuses on people with a lot of barriers, limited education. Workforce puts them through some training. They are put on a job site and Workforce pays their wages for work experience. The three areas that will be worked with is hospitality, CDL & logistics. Hospitality is good because even with the background, they can get work somewhere. CDL is in demand and is really good money. Logistics is the same. They are supposed to fill 60. It is a two year grant, so 30 each year.

There has been a lot of collaboration with the partners. None of this could be done without the development of really good relationships with employers who understand when we get this federal money we want to bring it to Decatur and Macon County and we want to do something good with it.

Chair Kraft thanked Ms. Wilkerson for all the work she does. She thanked her for all the work she did on the County Administrator work.

*Mr. Edwards excused himself from the meeting and left.*

#### **Citizen's Remarks -**

Mr. Karl Coleman, County Board Member, commented that when a contract had been offered to Ms. Huston, the selection committee members had discussed putting a meet – n – greet together so that County Board members could actually meet the candidate, preferably before the vote is taken. Hiring that candidate was not successful. No discussion has been had since then. The next



meeting is May 12<sup>th</sup> and it is April 25<sup>th</sup> now, so if there is time to do something like that prior to that County Board meeting, it would be good. Chairman Greenfield said that they are trying to schedule something for after the Finance Committee meeting on Monday, May 2. We thought we'd have some refreshments here and give all the County Board members an opportunity to come in and meet with her. The State's Attorney's Office has said that it will not be an open meetings act violation as long as we are not talking shop. That is the plan right now.

**Old Business** - *None*

**New Business** –

***Diversity Training for All County Employees Discussion***

Ms. Dawson said that she just wanted to have a conversation about diversity training. She said she has spoken with Ms. Smalley, HR and she may want to address what we discussed. She said she just feels like the board and the whole county organization needs to have some diversity training.

Ms. Smalley reported that she had done an orientation with a new Health Department employee whose title is Diversity and Inclusion Coordinator. She just started and works for the Health Department. During another conversation, she said she had asked about what the position does and was told that she would be starting with the employee group. She explained that diversity is growing within the community, so it is going to start out small and then they will partner up. Ms. Smalley asked if there was anything she could send her way so she could get some diversity training out. She said she thinks they are still working on her position and what it is going to do, so she did not have anything immediately available, but she said she would touch base again once they got her off and running. Ms. Dawson said she wanted something not just for the Health or Highway departments, but like there is sexual harassment training, ethics training, etc that are required, she she just feels like there should be some diversity training too. Not just hit and miss. Chair Kraft agreed and asked Ms. Smalley to keep them informed.

Mr. Oliver commented that he is now planning to become more involved and has been catching up on his emails. Not too long ago, he said he had read something about trying to get a rental place for the 911 center. They want \$2,000 to \$3,000 a month for a place like that. Chairman Greenfield said he had no idea what he was referring to. There is the CIRDC building that houses dispatch and other things. Mr. Oliver said his understanding was that they were not able to come to any real strong agreement about paying that kind of money per month for rent. That is quite steep and he said he wasn't sure where he had read it at, but wanted to make mention of it. He said that brought back something that happened in the past when there was a golden opportunity for this County to have some future growth potential. That was a proposal for the waste material west of town. He wondered if that ground is still open. Chairman Greenfield said it was sold and half the proceeds went to the County and half went to the city. Mr. Oliver said his contention is that here is ADM going to spend \$300 million to expand their facility and talk is about someplace to dump some materials too. If we have to pay \$2,000 to \$3,000 a month to rent someplace for some property we already own, it doesn't make sense. There is all kinds of potential for growth and if we own a piece of property, we could put up the kind of building that it needed out there

while we are waiting for that to grow, because it is going to grow if we are going to grow as a county. Mr. Greenfield said that Mr. Roderick has a compost site that was closed for a few years, but it has reopened so we actually have 2 compost sites now in the County. One is about 50 acres and the other is about 10 – 12 acres. They are off of Bearsdale Road. Mr. Oliver said it is not going to go away, the fact that we need someplace to put used materials that are coming from our businesses here. Since we are known as, and intend to stay that way, as the Agricultural Center of the World, we're going to be talking about those commodities that have to be disposed of. If we owned our own outfit, we wouldn't have to be paying \$2,000 to \$3,000 a month to own someplace. We could do a whole lot on our own with the \$24,000 to \$36,000 a year that we are paying out for rent and then we'd have our own place too. Chairman Greenfield asked the Auditor if she knew where the County was paying \$2,000 to \$3,000 a month rent. She said we pay only \$1,500 a month for the recycling center. Mr. Greenfield said he believes Mr. Oliver, but has no idea what it might be. We own the CIRDC building. We own the tower and the property where they are. Mr. Oliver said he thought it went back to the 911 system and asked if he would look into it and Mr. Greenfield said he absolutely would.

**CLOSED SESSION - None needed**

**NEXT MEETING:** Monday, May 23, 2022

**ADJOURNMENT** Motion to adjourn made by Chair Kraft, seconded by Mr. Noland, the motion carried 6-0 and the meeting was adjourned at p.m.

*Minutes submitted by Jeannie Durham, Macon County Board*