

LIVINGSTON COUNTY BOARD
MINUTES OF APRIL 25TH, 2023 STRATEGIC PLANNING WORK SESSION

OPENING

Executive Director Alina Hartley called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m., in the Board Room of the Historic Courthouse, 112 W. Madison, Pontiac, Illinois.

Executive Director Alina Hartley called roll with the following members **present:** John L. Vietti, Rebekah Fehr, Gina Manker, Linda Ambrose, Jim Blackard, Seth L. Welch and Steven J. Lovell **Absent:** Michael Haag, Joel Barickman, Marty Fannin, Dan Myers, Mark Runyon, William Mays, Robert F. Weller, John J. Vitzthum, Gerald L. Earing, James A. Carley and Paul A. Ritter

Also Present: Executive Director Alina Hartley, Finance Director Diane Schwahn, Human Resource Director Ginger Harris, County Treasurer M. Nikki Meier, Public Defender Marinna Metoyer, Supervisor of Assessments Shelly Renken, Probation Director Ronald Baker, VAC Superintendent Michael Haerr, Zoning Administrator Jesse King, Jail Superintendent Lisa Draper and Facility Services Manager Steven Shoop.

There was no quorum present

BUSINESS

Strategic Planning - Work Session:

On April 25, 2023, County Board Members, Elected Officials and Department Heads kicked off the 2023-2024 Strategic Planning Process with a presentation given by Human Resources Director Ginger Harris, Finance Director Diane Schwahn and Executive Director Alina Hartley. The presentation focused on current trends, analytics and data for Livingston County for the purpose of stimulating conversation during the planning process. Following is a synopsis of the presentation given.

Retention and Recruitment

Retention and Recruitment was an identified Strategic Priority for the 2022-2023 planning year. Harris reported a total of 116 employees left the County for various reasons from 2019 through current 2023. Of the 116 employees leaving, 61 were from the Sheriff's department and Jail representing 53%. Turnover at the Public Health Department represented 12% and the Circuit Clerk's Office represented 10%. The remaining 25% was spread amongst twelve other departments. Of the 116 individuals leaving the County during the period, 21 (19%) left due to retirement, 34 (30%) left for more money, 10 (9%) left for family insurance, 12 (11%) were terminated, 16 (14%) left with no notice, 7 (6%) left for personal reasons, 5 (5%) left to work from home and 11 (10%) provided other reasons.

Recruitment data was reviewed reflecting significant increases in applicants since the implementation of Cyber Recruiter. The position of Deputy Clerk in the Circuit Clerk's Office received 5 applicants in 2019, 5 applicants in 2021 and 22 applicants thus far in 2023. The Maintenance Laborer position received no applicants in 2021 and 6 applicants in 2022. The Secretary position in the Sheriff's Department received 13 applicants in 2021 and 31 applicants in 2022. Harris noted that attracting talented employees is the goal in recruitment. Creating and sustaining a culture that promotes employee engagement and development will increase retention.

The County's response to the statutory minimum wage increases were reviewed. As of January 2024, the minimum wage will have increased by \$4.75 since 2020. Since 2020, non-union employees increased by \$3.80 on average. While significant wage increases were provided in 2022 and 2023, the Consumer Price Index increased by 7% and 6% respectively, minimizing the overall impact.

Insurance Rates and dependent coverage were reviewed noting that nearly 90% of the employees who enroll in health insurance take single coverage only. It was noted that only 9 employees enrolled in employee plus one and

7 employees elected family coverage. The County currently covers 80% of the employees premium and does not contribute towards the dependent coverage. Family coverage through the County has been viewed as unaffordable. Harris reviewed insurance comparable to similar situated Counties as well as local municipalities. Six of the eight entities surveyed provided a higher level of contribution than Livingston County, with half of the entities providing a family coverage contribution rate of at least 50%.

Harris then reviewed the results of a Benefit, Wage and Insurance Survey that was conducted amongst employees.

- How satisfied are you with County Benefits?
7% Very Satisfied / 59% Satisfied / 27% Partly Satisfied / 8% Not Satisfied
- IMRF – Did you know the County contributes to IMRF? 92% Agreed
- IMRF – Do you know how IMRF works? 59% Agreed / 24% Neither / 17% Disagreed
- Vacation – Are you satisfied with the Vacation Policy?
14% Very Satisfied / 66% Satisfied / 19% Partly Satisfied / 3% Not Satisfied
- How satisfied are you with County Response to Minimum Wage Increase?
12% Very Satisfied / 38% Satisfied / 31% Partly Satisfied / 20% Not Satisfied
Additional Comments:
 - Only benefits certain people
 - Left out the unions
 - New employees making what a 5+ year employee makes – Not fair
 - Are you serious?

Insurance:

- My deductible rates are reasonable?
43% Agreed / 33% Neither Agree or Disagree / 24% Disagree
- I feel confident that my healthcare insurance will meet my needs in the future?
52% Agree / 31% Neither Agree or Disagree / 17% Disagree
Comment: only while employed
- The benefits the County offers can compete with those offered by other organizations?
 - Health Insurance is too expensive – 26
 - Wages are too low – 8
 - Have not researched other organizations – 4
 - Other companies have better benefits – 3
 - Neighboring agencies pay better – 1
 - Getting more competitive – 1
- Where would you like to see improvements with the County's benefit plan options?
 - Cheaper / Affordable Family Insurance – 40
 - Lower rates / premiums – 15
 - Increased Vacation & Sick Time – 6
 - More options – 2
 - Lower Co-pays – 2
 - More local providers for oral surgeons – 1
 - Improved dental coverage – 1

- Do you have any additional comments or suggestions regarding the benefits at the County?
 - Offer higher wages – 16
 - Cheaper Premiums for Family Insurance – 13
 - Offer workplace flexibility / 4-day work weeks – 4
 - Invest in your employees – 3
 - Offer better benefits – 3
 - Seminar from IMRF going over how it works – 3
 - Increase compensation if you are not on County insurance - 2

County Financial Data

A Summary of Revenues, Expenses and Fund Balances for all funds were reviewed for the period FY 2013 through FY 2022. The categories of revenues and expenses were reviewed as well. Overall fund balances have steadily increased over the period with large capital projects having little to no impact financially. A Summary of Revenues, Expenses and Fund Balances for the General Fund were reviewed for the same fiscal periods, FY 2013 through FY 2022. Revenues for the period have seen notable increases with the most significant increases coming from Other Tax Revenue and Fees, Fines & Charges for Services. General Fund revenues and expenses by function were also reviewed. The General Fund Total Fund Balances show consistent increases across the period, while transfers from the Pontiac Host Fund to support the General Fund decreased from \$2.1 million in FY 2013 to zero in FY 2022. Overall the financial position of the County remains strong.

Out of County Housing Analysis

An analysis of the County Housing Program was provided. It was noted that it is impossible to 100% accurately quantify the net profit of the program, noting that percentages and averages were utilized in the analysis to provide reasonable allocations based on the data available. All base costs of operating the jail were allocated to Livingston County. The cost of operating the jail and ultimately the housing program have increased significantly with expenses of \$1.8 million in 2012 compared to a budgeted \$3.9 million in 2023. However, the net jail expenses, after receipt of housing revenues, decreased from \$1.8 million in 2012, to a low of just over \$54 thousand in 2019, and estimated at just over \$1 million in 2023. The estimated net profit for the program is estimated at \$1.7 million in 2022. It was noted that for 2023 the net profit is estimated at just over \$1 million reflective of significant increases to personnel, including the addition of four officers, and medical related increases.

Property Taxes / Extensions

Property Taxes and Extensions for Livingston County were reviewed for the period FY 2017 through FY 2023. In 2016, the Board established a goal to maintain or reduce the County Tax Rate or the Certified Rate. The Certified Rate for the period FY 2016 through estimated FY 2023 were reviewed, with the rate decreasing from 1.1958 in 2016 to an estimated 1.0491 estimated for 2023.

Total Extensions for all 171 taxing bodies within the County were reviewed as well. The average property tax rate in Livingston County for 2011 was \$9.77 compared to \$9.04 in 2021. Livingston County's portion was 1.1535 in 2011, compared to 1.2052 in 2016 when the goal was established and 1.10770 in 2021. It was reported that when the goal was established Livingston County had the fourth highest average tax rate in the State of Illinois, and are now ranked at number 30. It was noted that had the County maintained the tax rate without reductions, additional tax revenues of over \$4 million would have been generated over the six-year period, while the increased cost to the average \$100,000 home owner is estimated at \$23.

EAV Allocations

EAV Allocations (property value allocations) were reviewed comparing FY 2010 and FY 2022. Residential values accounted for 56.23% in 2010 compared to 25.06% in 2022, noting that the residential values began recovering from the 2008 recession beginning in 2017 and first exceeded the 2008 rate in 2020. Farm ground has

continued to see large increases based on current legislation, doubling in some cases over the period. Farm ground accounted for 13.84% of the overall EAV in 2010, compared to 27.59% in 2022.

ADJOURNMENT

The Strategic Planning Work Session adjourned.

James A. Carley, Chair

Attest:

Jordan E. Uselding

Executive Assistant

On behalf of County Clerk, Kristy Masching