

COMMITTEE REPORT

COMMITTEE: Legislative Committee
CHAIRPERSON: John Lang
DATE/TIME January 13, 2022 at 2:30 p.m.
PRESENT:

☒ John Lang ☒ Hendrica Regez ☒ LaDon Trost ☐ Darcy Wild
☒ John Schultz ☒ Diane Gallagher ☒ Don Zillig

A quorum was established.

Other Board Members: Don Hill and Bill Bingham

Others: Representative Andrew Chesney, Senator Brian Stewart, Brandon Behlke, Steve Stadel, and Scott Toot

1. **Call to Order:** Chairman Lang called the meeting to order at 2:30 p.m.
2. **Minutes Approval:**
 - a) Minutes of the May 13, 2021 and June 10, 2021 Legislative Committee meetings – John Schultz made a motion to approve the May 13, 2021 and June 10, 2021 Legislative Committee meetings minutes as presented. Seconded by Hendrica Regez and motion passed.
3. **Citizens' Comments:** None.
4. **Unfinished Business:**
 - a) FY2021-22 Strategic Goals and Plans – This item was bypassed this afternoon.
5. **New Business:**
 - a) **Introductions** – Senator Brian Stewart and Representative Andrew Chesney were in attendance via Zoom. Committee members introduced themselves.
 - b) **Overview of the 2021 Legislative Session** - Representative Chesney thanked the committee for the invitation to attend this meeting. 2021 was as to be expected. It was a reasonably ambitious agenda. We recently installed a new speaker, Speaker Welch. He is very ambitious and looking to move his agenda through and through very quickly. The criminal police reform bill that was passed during the lame duck session in between the transitions of Speaker Madigan and Speaker Welch has had dire consequences on our state. Chesney is hopeful and encouraged that there is going to be a legislative redo of the defund the police criminal justice reform bill that was passed in early January of last year. It has been signaled by Speaker Welch that he is going to take on the responsibility of correcting the wrongs of what was in the underlying bill. We saw massive spending that primarily came out of the Federal government. Much of your stimulus dollars, American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) dollars, and local and state dollars have come from the Federal government and was passed through from the state. The legislature didn't have much of an input on how that was allocated. The reason given was due to COVID-19. The Governor has taken a pretty heavy handed approach on how he has regulated the state. We are the only state in the Midwest that has a universal mask mandate. They did pass a budget. We were just one of two states to borrow money from the Federal government and that

was recently repaid. We still have a significantly underfunded unemployment fund. He anticipates an increase in our motor fuel tax dollars.

- c) **Thoughts on the 2022 Legislative Session** – Representative Chesney anticipates in 2022 it will be a pretty skinny session. The Speaker's office has cancelled session for the remainder of this month and Chesney anticipates they are going to be on a very abbreviated session. They will not pass much other than emergency or high priority legislation. This is consistent with how they have handled the COVID-19 pandemic. The primary focus is the elections that will be happening in 2022. They had signaled that they will end session in early April which is very historic as they normally go through the end of May. The good news is there is a lot of Federal money that is going to mask a lot of Illinois problems. The bad news is that we don't have a way to pay for this and we don't know how to pay for this over the next ten years as these programs are rolled out. Senator Stewart commented that Representative Chesney did a great job of covering everything that needed to be covered from last year's session and this year. The only few things that he may add is he is a little more skeptical that they will do the amount of police reform that needs to be done. One of the primary goals of the legislature needs to be is improving public safety. Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) recently put out a mandate that they are not taking any more inmates sentenced to the IDOC from local counties. That is going to increase costs to the local counties. The bail reform eliminates cash bail which will put a further strain on counties and municipalities.

- d) **Jo Daviess County Board Legislative Issues–**

- a. Legalize the use of ATV's for controlled tourism – Senate bill 70 was discussed. Senator Stewart commented that he and Representative Chesney are both strongly in support of tourism both personally and legislatively. Being a citizen here tourism is important to him personally and certainly important to this district. The ATV's also bring a lot of public safety issues that he knows law enforcement entities across the state are opposed to with ATV's upon public roadways and not being licensed. Stewart pulled up HB70 and it is in assignments and was sent to a subcommittee which is essence means the bill will not go anywhere. There needs to be a comprehensive look of not only the ATV's on the road but also the other motoring public that shares the roadways as well. The public safety perspective far outweighs the tourism perspective. He completely supports the tourism aspect. He knows what tourism and ATV's do for the State of Wisconsin. He doesn't know if they will have the same effect here. John Lang feels it should be up to each county to decide if they want to allow it or not on their roadways. Representative Chesney added that law enforcement as an association is opposed to the bill. It is very important to legislators to know where organizations are on certain pieces of legislation. It is a workable challenge; we may be able to work together to find a solution. LaDon Trost gave input from police friends from the Wisconsin area. He believes the economic benefit to our county and counties like ours is so great. Hendrica Regez commented on a discussion at the last UCCI meeting with a representative of the Illinois Sheriff Association. He said he would not oppose the bill if we could address the public safety concerns in the bill.

b. 1% Service tax on Guest Housing for EMS – John Lang commented that we are finding out EMS services are not sustainable in this county without some additional financial support. Bill Bingham spoke to the EMS sustainability report that was done two to three years ago. Bottom line the agencies are doing the best job that they can with the resources that they have. EMS has changed significantly over the past ten to twenty years. What we are doing now is not sustainable and any help such as this would be greatly appreciated. Scott Toot added that the state does not consider EMS an essential service like law enforcement and fire. He doesn't know if there is some legislative change that can make it an essential service. Representative Chesney commented that he shares our concern with this. He filed a piece of legislation to help us address this three years ago and then shortly after filing it COVID-19 hit. You can't probably think of an industry that has been hit harder than the tourism industry with the impact COVID-19 has had on that. He does not sense that this juncture especially to COVID-19 that there is going to be the appetite to advance a piece of legislation like this. Chesney suggested putting an advisory referendum on the ballot. Should that receive the requisite support he would be happy to move that piece of legislation forward. John Lang added that tourism has exploded in the county and COVID-19 has added additional stress on the EMS services. Bill Bingham stated past information has confirmed this for the past year and a half. Up until this past year Galena EMS would respond to somewhere in the area of 40 to 50 times per month. Last year in November we transported over 100 people and that was consistent for the two months before that as well as what we are seeing right now. This is causing an awful lot of issues in organizations that are basically not getting paid. They are doing this of their own volition and at some point regardless of what other issues are out there this is going to have to be addressed or people are simply not going to have ambulance service anymore.

c. Intergovernmental Agreements for Mutual Aid with out of State Law Enforcement – John Lang commented that one of the things we have run into with the police reform package that Illinois passed in the lame duck session is out of state agencies no longer want to engage in mutual aid with our law enforcement. There should may be a hold harmless clause included if an out of state agency responds in Illinois. They won't be held to the same requirements as police in the State of Illinois. LaDon Trost shared an example of this. Senator Stewart discussed the ramifications of passing this bill and the underlying issues that are in this bill that prevent mutual aid. This affects all of the bordering counties.

e) **Any Proposed Legislation the Committee should Oppose or Support** – A good source to follow for proposed legislation is UCCI. No particular bills were discussed at this time.

6. **Citizens' Comments:** Steve Stadel commented that Scales Mound Township did do a resolution authorizing UTV's for township roads. Don Hill added that he has gone to most all of

the municipalities in the county and all of them allow for them to ride within their municipalities. There are also several precincts that have signed resolutions to drive within their township. He has also spoken to Lafayette County in Wisconsin. We are missing out on a lot of revenue and he is willing to do whatever it takes to move this issue along. Stadel explained the definition of the statute that they have. Chesney will continue to encourage the stakeholders to make this a state wide initiative. We are going to need the help of other organizations in this. UCCI has largely been silent on this. Senator Stewart added that the biggest opposition is from the Secretary of State's office. If his office doesn't like the bill it's not going to go anywhere.

7. **Board Member Concerns:** Don Zillig expressed concern that meetings in the General Assembly are being cancelled. Diane Gallagher thanked our legislators for being here and for the marvelous opportunity to hear from them honestly and frankly. John Lang expressed his thanks to Senator Stewart and Representative Chesney as well. LaDon Trost echoed Gallagher and Lang. Senator Stewart replied that it is an honor and a privilege to represent Jo Daviess County. Representative Chesney echoed Senator Stewart. John Schulz reported on a meeting with Congressman LaHood at the Farm Bureau in Elizabeth. The congressman expressed his interest in coming to a County Board meeting soon. If he gets reelected he will be our representative.
8. Next regular meeting will be held on February 10, 2022 at 2:30 p.m.
9. Meeting adjourned at 3:55 p.m. following a motion made by Diane Gallagher. Seconded by John Schultz and motion passed.