

COMMITTEE REPORT

COMMITTEE: Legislative Committee
CHAIRPERSON: John Lang
DATE/TIME February 15, 2023 at 2:00 p.m.
PRESENT:

☒ John Lang ☒ Dan Holcomb ☒ LaDon Trost ☐ Darcy Wild
☒ John Schultz ☐ John Creighton ☒ Don Zillig

A quorum was established.

Other Board Members: John Grizzoffi

Others: Scott Toot and Kevin Turner

1. **Call to Order:** Chairman Lang called the meeting to order at 2:02 p.m.
2. **Minutes Approval:**
 - a) Minutes of the January 12, 2023 Legislative Committee meeting – John Schultz made a motion to approve the minutes of the January 12, 2023 Legislative Committee Meeting. Seconded by Don Zillig and motion carried.
3. **Citizens' Comments:** None.
4. **Unfinished Business:**
 - a) No Record of 1% Service Tax being introduced by Senator Chesney – SB1746 is a Senate Bill regarding the 1% Service Tax added to hotel stays in Jo Daviess County, which had been introduced by Senator Chesney by the time the Committee meeting was held. Lang said it would be a good idea to enter a witness slip, but it cannot be done until there is a committee assignment. We need all the support we can get for this. Another Bill introduced is SB2141, which would amend the Recreational Trails of Illinois Act. It would allow for counties, township and municipalities to use off-road vehicles within their jurisdictions. SB1659 would allow school districts to regulate and restrict access to public restrooms, locker rooms, and other similar places on the basis of biological sex, and could also adopt a policy that provides for gender neutral or alternative facilities for students, staff and public.
5. **New Business:**
 - a) Discussion on how to enter a witness slip in support or opposition to a bill – Lang instructed the Committee on how to enter a witness slip in support or opposition to a bill, on the Illinois General Assembly website.
 - b) Discussion on the Legislative calendar – The Committee reviewed the Illinois General Assembly Legislative Calendar provided in the packet.
 - c) Discussion on a list of bills that could affect County Government; taking a position to support or oppose – The Committee reviewed the list of bills provided in the packet.
 - d) Discussion on the Governor's ending of the Public Health Emergency on May 11th, 2023 – Lang said that the only real benefit to the Public Health Emergency Declaration is that members can vote via Zoom meeting and do not have to be physically present. More to come on this in the near future.

- e) Discussion on the Chicago Mayor race and the effect on Illinois – Lang stated that the candidates for Chicago mayor are predominantly male. Toot mentioned that he watched some commentary from Chicago. Garcia’s poll numbers have fallen recently. There is a graph in the packet that shows how much money each candidate has received and spent on the campaign.
 - f) Facts about Illinois –
 - (i) Fraudulent Paycheck Protection Program – The Committee talked about the Paycheck Protection Program and how there were a lot of fraudulent applications and payments paid out. An article in the packet showed that a large amount of applications that asked for assistance were from the same address. Some discussion of fraudulent Unemployment claims was also had.
 - (ii) The Reason Foundation found Illinois the 2nd highest in Nation in fines and fees - \$50 per person – In 2020, the average per resident on fines and fees in the Nation, was around \$50, compared to Kentucky’s less than \$3 per resident.
 - (iii) Kiplinger’s listed Illinois as the 2nd least tax-friendly state – New Jersey is the 1st – This topic was briefly discussed.
 - (iv) State guidelines on wind farms – The State has basically exceeded the counties’ authorities to regulate on wind farms. They can be placed very close to homes. There may be some type of agreement stating that after 25 years, the land needs to be turned back into farmland. We will be keeping an eye on this as it progresses and more information is learned.
6. **Legislation Board members or County officials want the committee to be aware of and take action on:** Sheriff Turner talked about a Sheriff’s Conference meeting down in Peoria. He talked about the Pre-Trial Fairness act and there will be a ruling in March. For the gun bill, there is a stay with the State and the next step should be to the Supreme Court. At this point it is still blocked. There have been at least 4 courts in Illinois that have found the gun bill unconstitutional.
7. **Citizens’ Comments:** None.
8. **Board Member Concerns:** Don Zillig said that we need to do something about zoning. Every month we are talking about exceptions and the 40-acre rule and nothing gets done about it. There needs to be a happy-medium where everyone should be able to agree. LaDon Trost said that a lot of the people doing this have a lot of money, and they’re coming from the city and building a house on 40 acres of land, which is taking the land away from farm production. He doesn’t feel that the 40-acre rule helps keep any farmland.
9. Next regular meeting will be held on March 9th, 2023 at 2:30 p.m.
10. Meeting adjourned at 3:22 p.m. following a motion made by John Schultz. Seconded by LaDon Trost and motion passed following a voice vote.