

COMMITTEE REPORT

COMMITTEE: Legislative Committee
CHAIRPERSON: April 14, 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: Steve McIntyre and Don Hill

Others: Mike Dittmar, Sheriff Turner 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 February 10, 2022 Legislative Committee meeting – **LaDon Trost made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 10, 2022 Legislative Committee meeting. Motion seconded by Diane Gallagher. Motion carried.**
 - b) Minutes of the March 10, 2022 Legislative Committee meeting – **John Schultz made a motion to approve the minutes of the March 10, 2022 Legislative Committee meeting. Motion seconded by Don Zillig. Motion carried.**
3. **Citizens' Comments:** Mike Dittmar spoke regarding his concerns with the 1% service tax advisory referendum.
4. **Unfinished Business:**
 - a) Adoption of advisory referendum wording – The advisory referendum wording was reviewed. Steve McIntyre explained his experience with the EMS service in Arizona. They levy a tax on the people who actually use the service. He feels the tax should be paid by the people who use the service. Don Zillig stated he feels the tourists use the roadways and police services and they do not pay towards them services. The hotel/motel service tax would take care of this. Hendrica Regez recommended working out all the details before presenting this advisory referendum to the public. **John Schultz made a motion to accept the advisory referendum wording as written in page 12 of the meeting packet (*Should the Jo Daviess County Board seek the passage of legislation in the Illinois General Assembly that would allow the County Board to levy up to a 1% Service tax on the billings of overnight guest accommodations in the County with the funds raised used to support the cost of volunteer Emergency Management Services in Jo Daviess County*). Motion seconded by LaDon Trost. Motion carried following a roll call vote resulting in all ayes.**
5. **New Business:**
 - a) The last week of the Legislative session. – John Lang commented that last week almost all of the state's significant legislation was saved for the last week. They finished with a 20 hour session from Friday to Saturday morning.
 - b) Significant bills from the spring session.

- i. – Distributive fund – HB900 was titled Department of Human Rights. This is your budget bill. If you went out to try to find it, you wouldn't find it under its title. That is the bill that gives us the increase in the distributive fund from 6.069 to 6.169. The committee looked at HB4228 – Mental Health Validation. The status was Senate Floor Amendment No. 2. Then turned back to the Budget Implementation Bill HB4700 – DHS/Gambling Disorders. On page 503 they put Sec. 3-6007.5. Sheriff's salary. The Sheriff's salary didn't pass in a separate bill but they passed it within another bill. Turning to page 412 of the same bill provides funding to Ambulance Service Providers which is a good thing.
 - ii. – Temporary tax reduction bills – SB157 – Inc Tax – River Edge Credit. Again this bill title does not have the same name. This is their tax relief bill. A couple of things they have in this bill for tax relief is they are not going to increase the gas tax which was supposed to go up .02 to .03 based on inflation. Gas stations will be required to have a sign up on each pump thanking the General Assembly for the tax relief. If they do not post the sign, the gas station will incur a \$500 fine. They are also going to take off a 1% tax on grocery bills for one year. The state will reimburse federal government for that 1% loss. There are supposed to be \$50 checks coming to everyone whose income is under \$200,000. There is also going to be up to a \$300 rebate on property taxes that will also be tied to your income. The back-to-school tax will be for ten days this year from August 5th to the 14th. The state earned income credit could help some lower income people. It was raised from 18% to 20% based on your federal earned income tax credit. Our state unemployment insurance fund had a 4.5 billion dollar hole in it and they are using federal funds to pay off 2.7 billion dollars of that. Also there is a \$2,500 increase for legislators. One of the bills provides up to \$10,000 for respectful burials of children who are under 17 and murdered by gun violence.
 - iii. – Support for law enforcement.
- c) Bills committee members or County officials want to bring to the membership attention. – None at this time.

6. **Citizens' Comments:** Mike Dittmar commented on the 1% tax. Considering that you have no data on tourism and how it impacts us considering that no ambulances have even requested for you to do this, considering that you do not have any plans on what you are going to do with the money and how you are going to distribute it, considering that right now that inflation is at 8.5% and this will make it more expensive to come out here, it is already 8.5% more coming out and it is going to hurt business, considering that two EMT districts have almost tripled in the last four years isn't the \$200 fee that Elizabeth Ambulance and people in Arizona as Steve McIntyre said for out of district people isn't that \$200 fee a way better solution for this problem than raise taxes and potentially hurt our businesses? Dittmar thinks it is unless you can do some research. Dittmar is a teacher and makes his kids do a research paper. Can you imagine what grade he would give someone if you turned in a research paper and it didn't have any research in it? What kind of grade he would give? You are attempting to pass a tax, raise taxes and you haven't done

any research. Dittmar urges you to slow down and do a better job because it's going to be a tough sell to the community. Steve McIntyre responded that he gets it and the reason we are putting this forward is to satisfy our legislator's curiosity as to whether it should be pursued on a state level for some of the counties like us that have people from out of the area using and tapping into the services that are here. If that's the only reason it is on the ballot that's fine. But, good luck getting this anywhere only because businesses post COVID, there are businesses shutting down left and right because of COVID and everything else. And then to add insult to injury you are going to go out to the citizens and ask them for more money to try and pay for things that they totally screwed up in the first place is totally ridiculous. McIntyre is ready to tell everyone asking for money "For those reasons, I'm out." That's the kind of response you are going to get from a lot of people who are getting to the point, they are to that level. How many people have left Illinois? Look at the statistics. Sheriff Turner commented that he was trying to forward everything that the Sheriff's Association has been watching but things didn't really go as they had hoped with the reversal of HB3653 The Safety Act.

7. **Board Member Concerns:** Diane Gallagher commented that if we are going to move this to a report for the May 10th County Board meeting do we have a method of putting some more details with it? Some facts and data? Scott Toot responded that he attended a meeting on April 5th with the Galena Ambulance with the County Board chairman, Mayor Renner, Mark Moran, Ben Petitgout, and Bill Bingham. Galena Ambulance provided him at this meeting some information about their ambulance service having money problems. Diane Gallagher suggested a survey that could compile some basic comparisons. Don Hill attended this meeting as well. He asked Galena EMS if they charged Galena residents the same amount and was told they charge significantly more for non-residents. Warren Ambulance does the same thing. Lucas Bourquin has approached Hill about having a meeting because they are having money problems as well and they want to increase their rate. Other areas do charge more for non-residents. Part of the problem is the Medicaid write-offs. And the cost of equipment has gone up.
8. Next regular meeting will be held on May 12, 2022 at 2:30 p.m. Depending on what additional information comes out we may or may not have a meeting.
9. Meeting adjourned at 3:23 p.m. following a motion made by John Schultz. Seconded by LaDon Trost and motion passed.