

COMMITTEE REPORT

COMMITTEE: Social and Environmental Committee

CHAIRPERSON: Don Hill, Chairman

DATE/TIME: February 18, 2021, 6:36 p.m.

PRESENT:

☒ Don Hill

☒ Bill Bingham

☒ Robert O'Connor

☐ Bob Heuerman

☒ Hendrica Regez

☒ Scott Toot

A quorum was established.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Diane Gallagher and John Lang

OTHERS PRESENT: Kathy Gable, Nicole Hermesen, Sandra Schleicher and Kay Trusty

1. **Introduction of Nicole Hermesen, Program Compliance Oversight Monitor** – Don Hill welcomed Nicole Hermesen, the new Jo Daviess County Program Compliance Oversight Monitor. Hermesen informed the committee that tomorrow will officially be one month in the role of PCOM. She has learned a lot and is enjoying her position. She has been working a lot with Rich Machala, Interim PCOM, Dan Reimer and Angie Kaiser. Hermesen has completed the two grant applications that are due in April. Hermesen is originally from Washington State. She has been living in Galena for about a year now and is looking forward to working with everyone.
2. **Minutes Approval:**
 - a) Minutes of the September 17, 2020 Social & Environmental Committee Meeting – **Bob O'Connor made a motion to approve the minutes of the September 17, 2020 Social & Environmental Committee meeting. Seconded by Hendrica Regez and motion passed following a roll call vote resulting in all ayes.**
 - b) Minutes of the November 17, 2020 Special Social & Environmental Committee meeting – **Scott Toot made a motion to approve the minutes of the November 17, 2020 Special Social & Environmental Committee meeting. Seconded by Bill Bingham and motion passed following a roll call vote resulting in all ayes.**
 - c) Minutes of the November 19, 2020 Social & Environmental Committee meeting – **Bill Bingham made a motion to approve the minutes of the November 19, 2020 Social & Environmental Committee meeting. Seconded by Bob O'Connor and motion passed following a roll call vote resulting in all ayes.**
3. **Citizens' Comments:** None.
4. **Unfinished Business**
 - a) FY2019/FY2020 Strategic Goals & Plans – Review Committee Assignments from 2019 County Board Retreat – Update Status Progress – Don Hill discussed that we reviewed our strategic goals & plans in November and asked if there was anything that anyone wanted to address at this time. Hendrica Regez commented that there are two items that they are looking at in their Quality of Life working group that reports to the Ad-Hoc Economic Development group. One is research opportunities/methods for increasing the County's population and the other is to look into ways to increase ability to address/serve mental health needs within the County. We want to talk to the 708 Mental Health Board to see what we can do. Those two items are ongoing. Get the Health Department "back online" with Director and Board is completed. We do have room for one more doctor on the Board of Health. Expand Health Department services pretty much all got dropped this year when COVID hit.

We discuss it once in a while, but COVID takes up most of Sandra Schleicher's time, as well as her the time of her staff. This item is on hold for now. Maintain a positive public image for living/working within the County has been referred out to the Economic Development Committee. Research a County 'Climate Action Plan' has been placed on hold since the resolution was passed. Bring back cat and dog registration we have chosen not to do.

- b) Update on Jo Daviess County Health Department – Sandra Schleicher, JDC Public Health Administrator reported that most of her update is COVID related. We are running clinics as vaccine allows. We did have to downsize the one for tomorrow because we didn't get as much vaccine as we had been getting and anticipating when we scheduled that clinic. We are hoping in the next few weeks that our allocation picks up so that we can schedule bigger clinics and get more people vaccinated more quickly. There is a huge demand and a lot of kickback from everyone. It is not just Jo Daviess County, but the state and the whole country is really in the same boat. Schleicher asked for patience from everyone for that. On Monday we will be starting a call center out of the emergency operations center in Hanover. The Medical Reserve Corp and volunteers that work with EMA Director Chuck Pedersen will be manning the call center for questions and they will also establish a waiting list of people to help those over 65, especially those that don't have access to computers and internet that need help registering. Numbers are way down so we are doing good with cases which is encouraging. Hopefully none of the variant strains make it this far too badly so that we pick things back up again. It is pretty much COVID 24/7 at the Health Department right now.
- c) Passenger Rail Feasibility Study Update – Hendrica Regez reported that the contract with the consultants was approved to do the study and it came in at \$20,000 under budget. The next step is focus groups. They are going to look for people that want to participate.
- d) Discussion and possible action regarding Animal Control Ordinance Violations – Don Hill commented that at the last Board of Health meeting he asked Sandra Schleicher to get together with State's Attorney Chris Allendorf as soon as possible before he got too much on his plate. Schleicher responded that she did reach out to Allendorf and was not able to secure any time with him. She was able to give him a brief summary of what we were looking for and he thought some of it could already be covered in some of our existing ordinances and maybe just some ordinance amendments would be needed but she has not been able to meet with him to discuss further.
- e) Update on the Jo Daviess County Transit Service Area Plan – Last November we talked about the amount of fees that were being charged by Transit. The fees schedule was included in the informational packet. There was concern that we were charging .50 a trip in Jo Daviess and other counties were averaging \$2.43. Kathy Gable was going to review and look at revising the fees. Gable commented that right now we are .50 in town of Galena. She doesn't know when that started. It's been like that for decades. That would be an option of raising those charges but when it came to out-of-town charges and medical we were pretty much within the range if not over. With COVID it has really been hard to even get .50 out the patrons that ride. That would be a decision up to the County. Tomorrow we have 43 rides which is the highest we have had since last March 16th or 17th of last year. Things are looking better. Gable believes we would have to have a referendum to raise the price. The majority of the ridership is within Galena when it comes to a daily basis. We should focus on the in town and the medical charges. Hill added that with COVID it is a bad time to raise the rates, but it is something that we need to address in the future if we want to keep it solvent. Gable agreed. There was discussion on conducting a study through a grant like Rockton did. We can include whatever demographics the County Board would want to see in it. We can tell them what our needs and wants are. The Northwestern University Transit Center is very eager to help us with this study. Gable is not sure what the cost would be but that is where the grant falls into place. She has talked to Nicole Hermesen and they think that is the way to

go about figuring out how to raise rates in each of these categories. Scott Toot would like us to wait until COVID is over; until we can get the majority of the population in the county vaccinated and we can start to get life back to normal. Nicole Hermesen interjected that is a question to ask the Bureau Chief regarding a referendum and how long it will take for that process. She will email him this evening. Hendrica Regez commended Gable for finding out about this study at Northwestern and asked if there is any way we can get that started now. Gable is waiting to hear back from that professor who is the director of that department. They said they would get back to her by next week.

- f) Update on the farmer's market food establishment fees from the SBSG Program Committee meeting – Sandra Schleicher commented that this was brought to the Small Business Grant Committee last week to go forward with revising the grant guidelines. They decided to have the vendors and the food establishments apply directly for the grant instead of having the Health Department do it. We were going to try to get that in at license renewal time when we first started talking about this. Now that is all done and the money has already changed hands at the Health Department so they are going to make it an eligible reimbursement through the grant program for anyone that is eligible to apply for it. Don Hill commented that the reimbursement is 50% for food establishments and 100% for farmer's market. They do have to put in an application for that and provide a copy of their license for the year. Scott Toot added that Eric Tison and Emily Legel are working out the details and it will go to the Executive Committee and then to County Board in March.

5. New Business

- a) Discussion and possible action on Social & Environmental Committee meeting date and time.– Don Hill reported that this is our first meeting since the new committee was formed. We meet at 6:30 p.m. on the third Thursday of the month. A schedule of the meeting dates was included in the informational packet. **Robert O'Connor made a motion to approve the meeting dates for Fiscal Year 2021 as presented. Seconded by Scott Toot and motion passed following a roll call vote resulting in all ayes.**
- b) Discussion and possible action regarding an annual Ordinance authorizing the County to operate a Public Transit Service in Jo Daviess County– Nicole Hermesen commented that the ordinance was included in the informational packet. It is the same ordinance that we have used for the past several years. Nothing has changed on this other than the dates. **Scott Toot made a motion to approve an annual Ordinance authorizing the County to operate a Public Transit Service in Jo Daviess County. Seconded by Bill Bingham and motion passed following a roll call vote resulting in all ayes.**
- c) Discussion and possible action regarding a Resolution authorizing application for a Public Transportation Financial Assistance Grant – Nicole Hermesen commented that this is a resolution authorizing the 5311 and the DOAP Grant agreements. The governing board of the County of Jo Daviess says that Hermesen is able to submit the applications. **Hendrica Regez made a motion to approve a Resolution authorizing application for a Public Transportation Financial Assistance Grant. Seconded by Bob O'Connor and motion passed following a roll call vote resulting in all ayes.**
- d) Discussion and possible action on FY2022 5311/DOAP Grant Budget – Nicole Hermesen commented that in the packet she included the FY22 5311 and DOAP grant budget. She did a comparison with and without the CARE grant. We have that grant until 2023. Without the grant we are running at a \$63,000 deficit for Workshop expenses and when you add the County in there it is \$107,000 deficit. With the CARE grant you can see that the budget deficit will be \$0 in both categories because the CARES grant will provide the match and cover the deficit. **Bill Bingham made a motion to approve the FY2022 5311/DOAP**

Grant Budget as presented. Seconded by Hendrica Regez and motion passed following a roll call vote resulting in all ayes.

- e) Discussion and possible action to approve a recommendation to the County Board that it pass a resolution authorizing the County Board Chairperson or Vice Chairman is authorized and directed to execute and file on behalf of the County such application and to furnish such additional information as may be required by the Department and FTA in connection with such application for said grant, and amend such Agreement, if necessary, in order to obtain grant assistance under the provisions of Section 5311 – Nicole Hermesen commented that this sounds very similar to the other resolution, but for this we had to have this committee approve the resolution for 5311 and DOAP, but in order for her to actually submit the grants on behalf of the County this has to be recommended to the County Board from this committee. **Bill Bingham made a motion to approve a recommendation to the County Board that it pass a resolution authorizing the County Board Chairperson or Vice Chairman is authorized and directed to execute and file on behalf of the County such application and to furnish such additional information as may be required by the Department and FTA in connection with such application for said grant, and amend such Agreement, if necessary, in order to obtain grant assistance under the provisions of Section 5311. Seconded by Bob O'Connor and motion passed following a roll call vote resulting in all ayes.**
- f) Discussion and possible action to set a Time and a Date to hold a required Public Hearing for both the FY'22 Federal Section 5311 and FY'22 State DOAP Grant Applications – Nicole Hermesen commented that she spoke with County Administrator Dan Reimer about this. They talked about potentially March 9th prior to the County Board meeting. This will need to be published in the newspaper for the public and it would also be beneficial if it is on the same day as the County Board meeting. This will be a special Social & Environmental Committee meeting. **Scott Toot made a motion to hold a special Social & Environmental Committee meeting for the purpose of a Public Hearing for both the FY'22 Federal Section 5311 and FY'22 State DOAP Grant Applications on Tuesday, March 9, 2021 at 6:30 p.m. Seconded by Bill Bingham and motion passed following a roll call vote resulting in all ayes.**
- g) Review, discussion and possible action on fares charged by Transit – Don Hill commented that we talked about this item earlier and we decided to put it on hold and have Kathy Gable look in to getting a study going. We will come back to this item at that time.

6. Staff Reports

- a) Jo Daviess County PCOM – Nicole Hermesen, Jo Daviess County Program Compliance Oversight Monitor (PCOM) thanked everyone for getting through all of those motions. They are important and will be moved forward to the executive board so that we can move forward with our applications. That is our main focus at this time. As soon as we can conclude the application process we will begin rewriting policies and making sure that we amend everything that may need to be amended. We were pretty far behind when she started. She has gotten a lot of our compliance issues caught up so that we are in good standing with the State and IDOT and for the National Transit database as well. Scott Toot added that things are going very well and he thinks that Nicole is doing a great job. She and Kathy are working very well together.
- b) Jo Daviess County Transit – Kathy Gable, Jo Daviess County Transit Director, just wanted to say that Nicole is a rock star! Gable is thrilled to come in to work since she has started. Some really great things are going to happen in our future even through this COVID. It has already been positive. Gable also commented that they are just trying to get through each day and not have their drivers catch COVID.

- c) Public Health – Sandra Schleicher, Jo Daviess County Public Health Administrator, had nothing more to report at this time. Bob O'Connor asked who staffs the installation at Midwest Medical for the COVID vaccinations. Schleicher responded that it is Health Department staff, Medical Associates staff and staff from Midwest Medical. All of us are working together. We asked FHN to participate, but they didn't want to come this far. They will do periodic clinics on the east side of the county. O'Connor added that you are to be complimented for the operation there. It was a pleasure to go there and everything was hyper organized, everybody moving from module to module, plenty of staff to direct people, well laid out, and thought out. Congratulations! Scott Toot asked Schleicher to touch on how much vaccine is available. Schleicher responded that the CDC is sending out 13.5 million doses weekly nationwide. Illinois is receiving just under 300,000 doses a week that get divided up between the pharmacies that are doing the long-term care facilities, health departments and some of the other pharmacies that they are starting to work with. We had been getting 300 doses a week. They cut us back this week to 200 doses that we will probably be at for the next two to three weeks. There was a large amount of first doses given four weeks ago so they have to allocate a lot to second doses to make sure that people don't miss that. We are still on target with making sure everyone gets their second dose we just unfortunately aren't able to do many first doses. The Medical Reserve Corp staff and Chuck Pedersen's volunteers were all working together to staff the call center at the emergency operations center in Hanover which will begin on Monday. They will put that number out for people to call and get on the list if they are over 65 and need help. They will make appointments from there as vaccine allows. They will also be able to answer some common questions that people have.
- d) Mental Health Board – Colleen Farrell, 708 Mental Health Board President, was unable to attend the meeting. Hendrica Regez commented that at the last meeting the 708 Mental Health Board went over the service provider contracts.

7. **Citizens' Comments:** Diane Gallagher shared some positive words that were said about how generous the transit drivers are and that made her think of the "Good Guys" column that the Galena Gazette has. It also reminds her how our Development & Planning /committee made a recommendation that we are going to try to say something positive at each meeting because when we try to encourage people to life in our county we need to put a positive face on with our words and actions. Gallagher heard that NACO had the free registration from Grant Finder. Would there be someone in the county that could use that registration? It is a service where you can look at different grants that are coming up and get details about them. Nicole Hermsen will reach out to our Grants Administrator, Tammy Cahill for more information on this. Gallagher also suggested that they post a sign in each of the transit buses showing the rates so that people are aware of the fare. John Lang commented that he is glad to hear that Sandra is moving forward with doing more for senior citizens. Not a day goes by that he doesn't get approached by somebody in his district wondering why they can't get a COVID shot. He is glad to hear they are setting up a better system beginning on Monday.
8. **Board Member Concerns:** None.
9. **Adjourn:** Motion to adjourn was made at 7:42 p.m. by Bill Bingham, seconded by Hendrica Regez. Motion passed following a roll call vote resulting in all ayes.

Next regular meeting will be on Thursday, March 18, 2021 @ 6:30 p.m.