

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Special Meeting

January 21, 2020

The Finance Committee held a special meeting on January 21, 2020 at 7:00 p.m., at the McDonough County Courthouse, 3rd Floor Law Library. Committee members present were County Chair Scott Schwerer, Larry Aurelio, Letha Clark, Rod McGrew, Trevor Toland and County Vice Chair Mike Cox. Others in attendance included: County Clerk Gretchen DeJaynes, Patrick Stout, Joe Erlandson, Terra Litchfield, Julie Melvin, and Stacey Alexander.

County Chair Schwerer called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Review & Approval January 8, 2020 Minutes

Chair Schwerer entertained a motion to postpone the minutes, due to some things that weren't in there that were at the Finance meeting and would like to get those corrected. Motion to postpone approval until regular Finance meeting in February moved by Member McGrew, second, Member Aurelio. No discussion. Motion passed on a voice vote.

County Board Administrative Assistant

County Vice Chair Cox addressed the Chair about the agenda, asked for an overview of what the procedure will be once we go through these steps. He questioned that he assumed it will all go full board. County Chair Schwerer said yes, he said the only thing that might not go to full Board will be the authority to assume administrative duties temporarily. Vice Chair Cox then also asked, the order of the agenda should be changed to the temporary duties to the top, considering that is the issue of the day. County Chair Schwerer then questioned County Vice Chair Cox, when they created the position for Administrative Assistant, what was the plan for a situation such as we are facing right now. County Vice Chair Cox said he doesn't think they had gotten that far, it wasn't that long ago, but I think that there has been some discussion since things have progressed the way they have to what that would look like or whether we would be able to find someone for that position, but that's as far as it has went as far as he knows. County Chair Schwerer addressed, we received a week's notice about Danette retiring, so we didn't have much time to go in to think about finding a replacement for her, or what we want to do and I think that's unfortunate that we didn't have more time. Vice Chair Cox stated that he agreed, we also met with Gretchen on December 20 and she was approached by certain members of the Board to address that issue and I think she agreed to contact me the first of January, whether she would even entertain that and it was the eighth of January when I went to her to see if she would be willing to do that. I think she voiced that she would, but she was

going to wait until the outcome of the County Board meeting give her some direction. County Chair Schwerer asked Vice Chair Cox to explain a little about that meeting they had or what transpired there. Vice Chair Cox explained, that meeting we just asked, I knew that things were falling apart and that Gretchen, her staff was going to be a part of that, and so a group of us went to her and ask her, I guess the Board members suggested that they look at three things, Claims, HR and budget. So, that's what we approached her with and asked her to consider that and get back to us. County Chair Schwerer asked, what did you ask, what did you want to happen. County Vice Chair, I think, not me personally, but those Board members there all kind of agreed that we would like to see her take some of those back or consider it, I think is the way it was worded, so that was on December 20, 2019. County Chair Schwerer asked the Committee, how should we proceed and go forward, Trevor? Member Toland said he thinks, he has had some people talk to him that they would like to see somebody in the office part of the time, the county office, Joe was one of those he thinks, to have a face on our office up here. Member Toland doesn't think that's possible, but it might be possible to be part time there and split some of the duties, like Mike has already eluded to you, that was discussed with Gretchen before, to take duties, the whole list of duties and I would favor a person from the Clerks office being in this office up here a couple hours a day and doing work for the County and spending the rest of the time in the Clerks office. County Chair Schwerer asked what did you envision this person doing, besides the claims, HR, Insurance and Budget, that possibly the County Clerks office could reassume those duties, what did you see as the duties for the person up here in this office, Mike? County Vice Chair Cox stated that I think that we have saw that by having somebody there, I know the short time I was there I appreciated it, and sending out some emails, doing some correspondence work, I think some of the Chairs of the committees probably appreciated that as well, so that will continue. The minutes at the committee meetings would be good, to have that person take care of that and I do know that Danette expressed that she would do that, but also that she lived over by Plymouth, so she couldn't run home and that was also a part of her process a long with other things, so, in light of that, the next person needs to probably, we need to let them know that it is a responsibility and they might want to choose someone closer, so they don't have that far of a commute. But, those things would be good, as a new chair, I would assume that you could utilize that person, and that could be a good question to ask you I guess, because you would be the one getting the most value out of that. Chair Schwerer, for two years of experience, I had no problems, I didn't see there was a need, I was able to work very well with the Clerk's office. I was able to take my own phone calls and all of that and it's a savings to the County to not have someone up there. There was always someone in the Clerk's office, there was a face there, multiple faces as opposed to just one face. Vice Chair Cox, in the short time I was there, I had been in contact with Kelly Murray at the State, and she commented that she was glad to see somebody there because she had somebody they could contact and that all of our Board members had jobs and other lives, but that did leave someone for them to reach out to, that didn't have other responsibilities as well. Chair Schwerer mentioned that he knew that Rod asked about being able to contact Danette a day before she resigned and that was two months after and he hadn't been given contact information. Member McGrew stated he didn't know a thing about it, he

found out about three days before full board meeting. Vice Chair Cox said there were some balls dropped there. Member McGrew said, as a committee chair, at least he should know, for one thing, right now, I've already talked to the attorney, but I want to bring up the marijuana thing and put it on the new agenda, but it does me no good to call her and so I don't know who I'm going to call. Chair Schwerer states, that is what this conversation is about. Member McGrew, I do like it when someone is in this office and I've been here both ways and I don't feel like I should call Gretchen or one of the other office holders whoever was going to do it, say I wanted to look up minutes at a meeting that happened 10 years ago, I don't know that they have the time. County Clerk DeJaynes states that if you're going to look up the minutes of a meeting 10 years ago, you have to come to me, because I am the only one who has them. Member McGrew said, at one time though, we had an administrative assistant that looked them up for me, it wasn't that long ago and I kind of liked having someone up here, I don't want to take anything away from anyone, I mean it worked when we had Gretchen and some of her assistants and whatever, but I just kind of liked having someone here in this office. I also was flabbergasted, when we went from 30 some thousand to 41,000 and I don't know how that took place without more discussion or something, because I didn't know it until all hell broke loose. But I kind of did like the fact they thought they could hire someone for right around \$30,000, or in that area, but I was flabbergasted when it was \$41,000 when we were pushed for money anyway. Chair Schwerer, there were a couple reasons when we originally did this to switch, one of the real complaints was, Beth wasn't up in the office because of Comp time and then there was nobody, there wasn't anybody else they could go to, and down in the County Clerk's office there was always somebody there you could go to. It was also done as a cost saving measure, I know Mike told us they looked at Adam's County for a model for this type of thing and Adam's County is considerably bigger than McDonough and they also are not under PTell, so their finances are considerably different than ours, because they have the ability to raise taxes down there, where we don't have that ability. Those were a couple strong reasons to go the other way. I guess I would ask, Gretchen, what are you willing to do. County Clerk DeJaynes questioned Chair Schwerer, are we talking about temporarily. Chair Schwerer, yes, temporarily. County Clerk DeJaynes stated, she will do absolutely nothing until they decide what they are doing permanently, she said she doesn't want to sound hateful, she would not trade places with the situation Beth was in for anything, she was in a horrible situation, but there was no one there, my office stepped up and did it all and that's fine, but we are not going to continue to do that every time something goes south. You can't expect us to pick up the pieces and then decide you don't want to do that. It will be all or nothing for our office. We will work and we will do it, but we will not step in for two months and then you hire someone and expect us to train them, that's an unrealistic expectation of the Board. Member Clark explained that she understood what County Clerk DeJaynes was saying. Member Toland addressed County Clerk DeJaynes, Gretchen, right now if we were to go to some kind of split like I was talking about on a permanent basis, do you have somebody in your office that could do that right now, and get everything done ok, without stressing out the staff that we have? County Clerk DeJaynes stated yes, but it also depends on what you are wanting, whomever you have doing the employee benefits, handling the insurance, needs to be here everyday 8-4. Sometimes it's a lunch hour

that someone comes in for questions, and someone needs to deal with those issues. We do all Court Services employees and they've had a lot of turnover lately, and they will continue to have, as I think they have around four retiring this year. They bring them down we do all the paperwork. Someone just needs to be here everyday all day for that. Member Toland asked if we could think outside of the box, what would work best and maybe have a presence here and get everything done in a good way. County Clerk DeJaynes asked what they were wanting the person to do upstairs, minutes, answer phone calls? Member Aurelio then asked what is the purpose of a person upstairs. Member Toland answered the purpose is to have a face here for a certain amount of time. Member Aurelio then asked, wouldn't there be a couple faces downstairs? Member Toland said, sure if they decide to do it that way, it was just a way to have a face for the County. County Vice Chair Cox said, the dream world I had, was that this person would come on board and would be accepted into this work force and at some point she could be used as a cover in other areas, just like if we had someone in this position she could cover in another department, to help Gretchen out if need be, not be just a scope of work to answer the phone and send out some emails, but if someone was sick she could be used as a cover, even if it was just half of a day. County Clerk DeJaynes explained that can't happen in my office and I don't think it can happen in Kim's, they all have to take an oath and be sworn in, they all have specific jobs. County Board Vice Chair Cox explained he was speaking, such as HR, helping out something there, to get the coverage you're talking about. You're never going to have anybody here all the time day in and day out, so that means somebody else is going to have to cover at some point, no matter, if the need is there what you're saying. County Clerk DeJaynes explained, someone is always in my office 8-4 every day. Member McGrew said, he's looking to the future and say the next clerk says no I'm not going to mess with that, and I'm not going to ask my employees to go to meetings at night through the week, and I'm not doing it and you've been fortunate enough you've had one Chair and there's a possibility that you could have a new Chair every two years. You can't ask everybody to completely get along, there wouldn't be any wars if we all got along, but you know, there may be another Chair. County Clerk DeJaynes explains that would happen anywhere because these are elected positions. Member McGrew states that he would like to set something down that will take care of the future and to me the real world, if we had a real person that could take over all the duties they used to and say she's going to retire and bring in somebody else for two months to actually learn the process of everything to go through, right now we don't have any experience, we haven't got anybody to do anything right now and it's going to put the whole County in a bind. County Chair Schwerer says, here's an important thing, you talk about one person losing an election, down in the County Clerk's office there are how many employees, eight employees, now barring a bomb in the Courthouse, all eight of those people will not leave at one time. Now you have co-training of those people and even if the County Clerk is defeated in election, there is going to be people there that are experienced in doing those jobs and will stay there, even though there is a new County Clerk, unless a bomb hits this place and gets rid of everybody. Member McGrew says the County Clerk controls that office thought right? County Chair Schwerer, yes. McGrew, and if the new Clerk says, no you're not going up there anymore, we're not messing with it. County Clerk DeJaynes explains, there's also a possibility in two years we are going to have 21 new

County Board Members. Member McGrew agreed. County Clerk DeJaynes explains, it is the business to be elected, continuity is something that you can't control, in 2022, 21 Board Members are up for election, maybe 21 new ones. Member McGrew, I know, but it's hard for me to, I would just like to see somebody up here. Member Clark asked County Clerk DeJaynes, kind of along the line of what Trevor was talking about, somebody in your office, I'm going to pick Jana to put a name with it, I'm going to say, is there a way that Jana could be up here for whatever, two hours a day, whatever work she does. If she could just be up here, so if Rod called, if he said, I would like to have a copy of the minutes from January 1992, she would say ok I would get those for you and mail them, she could answer that call up here. Is there a way that she could have a phone line that would ring here and also down at her desk and no matter which place she was in, she could be up here or maybe she could do all of her work up here, or if she was downstairs, is there a way something like that would work? Is that a possibility, it would answer Board Members questions if they called in and it wouldn't be a distraction to others, is that what you were thinking? County Clerk DeJaynes explains that it gets difficult to work out the two offices, I have one on each floor and I guarantee you that I'm in the basement when I need to be on first floor and on third floor when I need to be in the basement. It's not that it's impossible to do that, it's basically where you put stuff. County Chair Schwerer, we are looking at this office up here, is there any reason that there's not a place downstairs that we could designate a County Board compact place and if it was one specific person down there, would that be a possibility. Member Aurelio states, they would be there eight hours then, not two, if we wanted to call at 9:00 or 2:00 they will be there. County Clerk DeJaynes explains that putting a separate phone number for the County Board office is easy enough, that is a call to MTC. County Vice Chair Cox explains there is a number now and you all should've known that and I apologize for that. County Chair Schwerer, maybe we are stuck on this office up here, and I really think the Chair of the Board needs an office some place and meet with people, County Vice Chair says yes, but it would also be nice to be close to the person you're working with. Schwerer says that depends on how much you're going to rely on them, I didn't rely on a person like that, that much. Member Toland questions, I'm pretty sure that space is not on the first floor, but could you in the basement? County Clerk DeJaynes explains, Jana's office is in the back of Voter Registration now, we did a little rearranging, because she will be helping with the Election some, so Deanna took the big desk in Accounting, Jackie moved to the back, so we are trying to maximize the absolute most space we have, to eliminate people standing in the hallway to vote. Member Toland, so you think that would be possible? County Clerk DeJaynes, I mean she is the back of the Voter Registration office, she has a desk. Toland, have a sign up there, that says County Board, Rod what do you think? McGrew, whatever, I would go along with majority, I just voiced my opinion, I would go along with whatever will work really. County Clerk DeJaynes, here's the problem with anybody being, what are you going to do, if you do all the Claims in the basement, all the HR stuff in the basement, so all this office really handles are phone calls and sending out meeting notices and emails, and it is January where the meeting was the 15th, they have two full weeks, with really absolutely nothing to do, it would be my opinion a waste of my employee to sit up here two to three hours a day for maybe one phone call a week, when that part of their job is done. Member Toland, if we made their contact spot

down there, they would never be here. County Clerk DeJaynes, then they could do other things. Member Toland, then you could keep them busy doing whatever you need. County Clerk DeJaynes explains that it's full time job to keep up on all the claims, depending on how you break it up. Member Toland said he doesn't think that anyone is going to do a demurral and try to figure out how many hours are devoted to County Board and how many hours are devoted to straight Clerk duties, I don't think that's an issue. County Chair Schwerer, not if it is all what the County Clerk and it is her employee. Schwerer explained, we are really talking about the County Board Administrative Assistant position, and I am going to go back to talking about that, what I would really like from this committee, I would like a motion to eliminate the Administrative Assistant's position and approve an agreement that we will have to come up with, we don't have it tonight, but come up with an agreement with the County Clerk's office to assume those duties.

Member Toland moved to eliminate the Administrative Assistant's position and approve an agreement with the County Clerk to assume those duties. Member Aurelio seconded the motion. Motion carried on a voice vote. Member McGrew asked County Clerk DeJaynes if that was acceptable to her and she said we could come to an agreement permanently, but she will not take it temporarily, and she thinks it should be a year, because it is going to take time to get everything changed back and in working order, it's too much to do without having a minimum of a year. Vice Chair Cox asked for two years, Chair Schwerer asked also if County Clerk DeJaynes would be open to a two year agreement. County Clerk DeJaynes answered, yes, she would be open to a two year agreement, she would not do it for less than a year.

Member Toland amended his motion to make it two years on that, Member McGrew seconded. Motion carried on a voice vote.

Chair Schwerer explained that the details of this agreement will have to be worked out. Member Toland explained that County Clerk DeJaynes will have to think through this too, it isn't just the Board, and understand all the implications of it.

HIPAA Officer

County Clerk DeJaynes explained to the Committee, that the County needs a HIPAA officer and right now we don't have one. She explained that she has always went to the Finance Chair and we don't have one at the time, you don't go to big Board for that. It is always is handled by Finance and right now it is up in the air, with no HIPAA officer or Finance Chair. Chair Schwerer asked if the HIPAA officer would be included in their agreement with her office and County Clerk DeJaynes said yes she would, she did explain that if she takes back health insurance, that she would ask for compensation, because health insurance is a lot of work, also it is the biggest benefit we have for the employees, it is awesome. Our employee's health coverage is free, family is very affordable. We have a very low deductible, we have worked very hard to keep that plan, we have to stay on top of it and we have to do it correctly. Our employees appreciate

our health insurance. Chair Schwerer explains that he is going to move on from the HIPAA officer, assuming this all goes through that it will be part of the agreement.

Temporary Authority to Assume Administrative Duties

Chair Schwerer asked County Clerk DeJaynes if she would be willing to assume duties until full Board. County Clerk DeJaynes answered yes. Vice Chair Cox asked to what, and Chair Schwerer explained at least through Full Board in February.

Member Aurelio grant temporary authority to the County Clerk's office to handle our administrative duties. Member McGrew seconded. Motion carried on a voice vote.

Other

Vice Chair Cox asked about the HIPAA officer, is it proper for two or three people to know within the office, I realize when you bring it to committee, we are held to. County Clerk DeJaynes, yes you need one HIPAA officer, but you can have multiple privacy officers that are eligible to be privy to information. Vice Chair Cox, do we have that? DeJaynes, yes, we did have that.

County Board Chair Comments

Chair Schwerer would like to thank everyone for a good discussion this evening, on a lot of good ideas, I hope that we could come to an agreement that is satisfactory for everyone. I appreciate everyone's intake tonight.

Public Comment

Terra Litchfield addressed the committee, I just want to ask one question. With us going back to the Clerk's office and that, I the only problem I kind of have a little bit with it is the separation of power and because of what we had went through the past year, I was hoping that you know, if we do have a different Clerk or a different Chair, I was hoping that we would still get some kind of cooperation from the Clerk's office. County Clerk DeJaynes asked Litchfield, exactly what cooperation did we not get from the Clerk's office, give me specific things, tell me examples of things, tell me what you thought should have happened that didn't. Litchfield, well I thought that we should at least been able to get some answers, questions answered and that. DeJaynes, what questions did not get answered. Litchfield, well I think quite a few of them. DeJaynes, do you have specifics, because I don't know that there was anything that we did not give to you, so if you have specific things. Litchfield, I don't know about giving or anything like that, but just that in general as far as any questions, as far as. DeJaynes, so did you ask questions that did not get answered? Litchfield, I didn't ask any questions. DeJaynes, do you know of people who did

ask questions, specific questions that did not get answered. Litchfield, I do. DeJaynes, tell me what those were and who didn't answer them, tell me specific things that got asked. Litchfield, I can find that out. DeJaynes, because I know George asked me multiple times if I would put on the agenda, what needed to be roll called and what needed to be voice voted, that is a Chair duty, not a County Clerk duty, I didn't do it for the past Chair, I wouldn't do it for a Chair going forward. Litchfield, uh huh. DeJaynes, I don't think there was a question that did not get an answer, it may not have been the answer that someone wanted, but the questions were certainly answered, so I'm a little offended that you would say that. Litchfield, I guess you'll have to be offended then.

Adjourn

Member Toland moved to adjourn the meeting, with a second by Member Clark. Motion carried on a voice vote. With no further business to discuss the meeting was adjourned at 7:43 p.m.