

Legislative Committee
Monday, May 24, 2010
JAMES P. COUGHLIN CENTER

Present: Stan Kline, Bill Wingren, Pat Brennand, Ken Robl, Tom Widener, David Albrecht, Kathy Lennon, Harvey Rengstorf, Tom Ellis, Patrick O'Brien, Jerry Finch, Jef Hall, Chuck Farrey and Tim Hamblin

Also

Present: State Representative Richard Spanbauer, Diane Fremgen – Clerk of Courts, Gregg Underheim – Congress Petri's Office, County Executive Mark Harris, Bill Tedlie – Sheriff's Department, John Casper – Chamber of Commerce, State Representative Greg Hintz, State Representative Dean Kaufert

Excused: None

Absent: None

The meeting was called to order at 8:33 A.M. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited and introductions of those present were made. .

At this point in the meeting – nominations were held for Chairman, Vice Chair, and Secretary.

Nominations for Chairman – Stan Kline was nominated by Bill Wingren and it was seconded... David Albrecht moved that nominations be closed. This was seconded. Stan Kline was elected chairman by unanimous vote.

Nominations for Vice Chair - Ken Robl nominated Pat Brennand. This was seconded. Chuck Farrey moved that nominations be closed and this motion was seconded. Pat Brennand was elected Vice Chair by unanimous vote.

Nominations for Secretary – Chuck Farrey nominated Bill Wingren. This motion was seconded. It was moved and seconded to close nominations. Bill Wingren was elected Secretary by unanimous vote.

It was moved to approve the minutes of March 22, 2010. This motion was seconded. This was carried by voice vote with C. Farrey abstaining.

UPDATE OF LEGISLATURE

Representative Spanbauer told the committee there were some things that went through the legislature that he was proud of and some that he was disappointed in. He felt that the issue of jobs was not addressed. His thoughts are that in a recession, money needs to be injected into tax cuts and tax credits to stimulate the economy. At this time, there is not enough revenue coming into the state because of the lack of people working. He told the committee that the stimulus money was used to fill holes and the issue of robbing peter to pay paul was not addressed. Mr. Spanbauer feels that the emphasis in the legislature this term was political and getting re-elected rather than working on people issues.

Representative Hintz told the committee as tough as this budget was – the next one will be equally if not more challenging. There will more than likely be no federal assistance for the next budget. There will tough decisions to be made. There were revenues that were raised to balance the budget and there was \$3.1 billion cut in spending. There was not an increase in income or sales tax across the board. We need to build the right climate for the economy to grow.

We are the 27th state to pass a state wide smoking ban. After a 14 year struggle – a puppy mill ban was passed. Drunken driving legislation was changed after many years and this was due in part to the Safe Streets plan. After 15 years of no regulations, the payday loan bill was passed with bi-partisan support.

Representative Dean Kaufert told the committee that this is first time in the history of the State of Wisconsin that revenue went down. Mr. Kaufert felt there were a lot of good things done in this session, however, he also feels that lots of mistakes were made. One party was in control of all three houses. The budget was totally done by the majority party. There was no bi-partisan input for the budget. Mr. Kaufert felt that there was too much raiding of funds to balance the budget. The Transportation Fund was raided again. Taxes and fees were raised \$3.2 billion this budget. A new tax bracket was added.

One time money was used for ongoing expenses. Mr. Kaufert feels that means jobs were saved, but fewer jobs were created. In the last two weeks of this session, 100 bills a day were being taken up.

There were 21 retirements in the legislature, and Representative Kaufert feels that there is a message there. The job is not what it used to be. Mr. Kaufert feels the biggest problem is campaign finance and it is not being addressed.

DISCUSSION AND ACTION ON A RESOLUTION RETURNING 17 YEAR OLDS TO JUVENILE JURISDICTION

Bill Tedlie told the committee that juveniles that waived into adult court should be based more on history and the nature of the crime rather than aged based. Minors in juvenile court make more paper work for the clerk of courts office. If the juvenile is waived into adult court – they are under state control.

More than affecting the jail – this issue will affect Human Services. If a minor is sentenced to probation – it is taken care by the state. If the juvenile goes to supervision – that is a county cost.

After discussion with the committee it was decided that no action will be taken by this committee until hearing from the Human Services side of the issue.

UPDATE FROM THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Executive Harris told the committee that the target budgets for departments had been set and forwarded to the department heads. The range is from 0% to 3%. This will be hard for departments to meet these budgets.

Mr. Harris told the committee that the change in the Register of Deeds Office from a per page fee to a flat fee will increase revenue and the state will leave the increase with the county.

Executive Harris talked with the committee about the levy limit and the rate limit. At this time we cannot exceed the rate limit that we had in 1992. At this time, we are 4% under the rate limit.

Although the numbers will not be out until August, there is a web page that suggests that Winnebago County residential real estate declined by 2% in 2009. This would leave us with only a 2% increase in our levy. We would be at the rate limit and there would be no more increases in the levy. If commercial real estate continues to decline, we will have to cut our levy. At this time, Columbia is at their rate limit. There is bi-partisan support from the Urban Affairs Committee to repeal the rate limit.

UPDATE ON LEGISLATURE cont.

Gregg Underheim discussed with the committee the Tea Party movement.

Mr. Underheim feels that a federal budget will not get passed this year. There is talk of more stimulus money – however stimulus money tends to dig a deeper hole for local municipalities.

Discussion continued with legislators regarding local issues and concerns.

Gregg Underheim discussed fund raising. The leadership of the parties does most of the fundraising. Control from the leadership is much more intense than in the past.

NEXT MEETING – The date of the next meeting is June 28. Term limits is a potential topic of discussion. It was moved by Jerry Finch and seconded to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 9:45 am.

Respectfully Submitted By:
Bill Wingren
Secretary

Recorded By:
Jean Mahy
County Clerk's Office

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