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MINUTES

SANGAMON COUNTY BOARD SPECIAL MEETING

SEPTEMBER 29, 2005

The Sangamon County Board met in Special Session on September 29, 2005 in the County Board Chambers. Chairman VanMeter called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Mr. Montalbano gave the Invocation and Taylor Cox Fraase led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Chairman VanMeter asked the Clerk to call the roll. There were 26 Present – 3 Absent. Mr. Bond, Mr. Griffin and Mr. O’Neill were all excused.

RESOLUTION 1

1. Resolution approving the Sangamon County Employee Voluntary Severance Plan.

A motion was made by Mr. Goleman, seconded by Mrs. Long, for the adoption of Resolution 1.

Mr. Cahnman asked how they could assure the savings goals will be met when an exception is granted with this plan. Paul Palazzolo, Auditor, explained that an exception would only be granted in the case of a severe hardship. The plan would not have to be compromised because when two or three people leave from a department they could be staggered out through the time frame. The opportunity for an employee to leave is December 1st through March 31, 2006, so they would have the opportunity to leave throughout various different times during this period. The service would not be

compromised when an employee leaves. Management has the opportunity to look at when an employee would leave and structure it that way.

Mr. Cahnman asked if the employee could leave whenever they want. Mr. Palazzolo stated that they could. Mr. Cahnman asked if the savings is because there are no benefits being paid out for six months.

He asked if an employee could only be hired if there is an exception before the six month period is over or has to be hired at a pay in excess of 60% as an exception. He asked how the savings would come about. Mr. Palazzolo explained the plan virtually pays for itself during Fiscal Year 2006. Mr. Cahnman stated that it seems to him there would be no savings if an exception is granted. Mr. Palazzolo explained that exceptions may not be granted because management has the opportunity to look at the time frame and determine what the needs are. They could work with an employee who would like to take advantage of the opportunity and offer them a different time to leave and assure that service would not be compromised. The time frame allows management to make sure an exception isn't needed.

Ryan McCrady, County Administrator, explained they cannot look at the savings on each and every position. They have to look at all of the positions that leave in a given department. That salary and benefit cost is lumped together for all those positions. Maybe they would have to make an exception for one position, but there could be two other positions that can be vacant for more than six months. Also, they could bring people in at less than 60% or combine duties and reallocate resources. You can't look at just one position. He stated that if it is done that way, he is confident the County has highly qualified managers and administrators who will make good management decisions. Also, when the elected officials accept this plan for their offices they agree to abide by the plan and he assured he is confident they will abide by it. Everyone knows what the rules of the game are when they sit down and play it.

Mr. Cahnman asked for clarification if an exception is granted for that particular position that there is no savings but it may be offset by savings of the plan. Mr. McCrady explained that it is on a department by department basis because you can't just micromanage one position in a department. You have to understand how the employees in the department interact with each other and work their skills and duties of those people and still save money.

Mr. Cahnman asked if this applies to all employees who are working on or before October 31, 2005. Mr. Palazzolo stated that it would apply to all employed on or before that date. Mr. Cahnman asked if the rate of 60% of the old person's salary conflicts with collective bargaining agreements. Mr. Palazzolo stated that the plan is within all contractual obligations the County has. Jim Grohne, Assistant State's Attorney, explained that all collective bargaining agreements would prevail over any plan the County would come up with. Collective bargaining agreements are a contract with the County and obviously those contractual obligations have to be honored.

Mr. Moore asked what they should expect from the Auditor's Office with respect to reporting requirements. Mr. Palazzolo stated they would respond to any inquiries and put forward any kind of information when they normally report quarterly. Any questions will be answered.

Mr. Moore asked if the office holders who report to the committees would receive reports or would they come from the Auditor's Office with respect to how the program is going. Mr. Palazzolo explained they would be kept updated as to what they need to do to replace someone if needed.

A motion was made by Mr. Cahnman to amend Resolution 1. He stated there was a similar plan in DuPage County and one of their problems was there was never any report done to document any savings to the County. The Finance Director of that County suggested it would be a wise idea to put into the plan a reporting requirement to report the savings one, two and five years out. This amendment would require a report be made by the County Auditor one month after those times so that there is time to prepare it after the period ends. Chairman VanMeter asked for a second to the motion to amend Resolution 1. There was no second to the motion, therefore, the amendment dies.

Mr. Palazzolo explained that this is not the same plan as DuPage County. There are different times and different networks. It could meet with different effectiveness. It could perhaps enhance effectiveness. This is a good plan for Sangamon County employees. It is not a lay off plan or an early retirement plan that targets certain segments of the population. It is good for Sangamon County citizens. The plan virtually pays for itself in Fiscal Year 2006 and has the potential to bring \$750,000 in savings starting in Fiscal Year 2007 and each year thereafter. It will be something positive, not just for the employees, but for the citizens who are served.

Chairman VanMeter asked for clarification as to whether the Auditor would be making periodic reports on the success of the plan as part of the regular statutorily required quarterly report to the Board. Mr. Palazzolo confirmed that he would.

Mrs. Turner stated she is glad the County is being proactive as one of the only governmental bodies that is not in a fiscal crunch all of the time. This is a monumental move to make sure it stays that way. She commended the Board for doing that and encouraged the Auditor to make sure he does incorporate that report in his quarterly reports. She stated that one thing she'd like to see would be to not give all of the responsibility to the department heads to make the decision on whether their employees participate. She suggested they might want to look at some restrictions or something along the line of job classifications and maybe at some time re-visit this point.

Chairman VanMeter clarified if the Board adopts the Resolution, all departments under the County Board will participate in this plan. The elected officials have the option to choose whether or not their departments will participate. That is statutorily mandated. The Board does not have the authority to require the elected officials to enter into the

program. The plan provides for the statutory fact that the elected officials have the authority to choose for their departments.

Mr. Goleman stated there has been no imminent financial crisis in Sangamon County because there has been a long history with the Board of having fiscal prudence and effective management of their financial situations. They continue to do long-term financial planning with cooperation by the Auditor's Office. This is a good voluntary plan and needs to be adopted.

Mr. Pace expressed that he likes the plan because it is voluntary and will not cost the County any money to implement.

Mr. Bunch explained that any contract this Board enters into has no bearing on this Resolution. The 60% rate would have no interference on any contract that is signed with the Union. Chairman VanMeter confirmed Mr. Bunch's statement. He stated that any contract with the Union would supercede any provision of this agreement. This was confirmed by the Labor Council who reports to the Finance Committee.

Ms. Cimarossa explained that she wants to dispel any rumor that this plan has anything to do with the Public Health merger. This was just the County's pro-active planning for fiscal prudence.

Mr. Cahnman agreed this would be a better plan than DuPage County's plan, because their plan gave too much of an incentive to the employees, but that does not diminish the need for reporting. He stressed his hope that the Auditor would give comprehensive reports periodically to see what kind of savings are achieved or not achieved.

Chairman VanMeter called for a roll call vote on the motion to adopt Resolution 1. Upon a roll call vote, there were 25 Yeas – 0 Nays.

Chairman VanMeter directed the staff to immediately prepare documentation to inform their staff of this plan and to set up informational meetings.

**MOTIONS CARRIED
RESOLUTION ADOPTED**

RECESS

A motion was made by Mrs. Turner, seconded by Mrs. Long, to recess the meeting to October 11, 2005 at 7:00 p.m. A voice vote was unanimous.

**MOTION CARRIED
MEETING RECESSED**