



**MINUTES**  
**County Board Finance Committee**  
**MONTHLY MEETING**  
**Monday, October 9, 2023**  
**at 6:00 p.m.**  
**Adams County Board Room**  
507 Vermont Street  
Quincy, IL. 62301  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor

Chairman Austin convened the meeting at 6:00pm on October 9, 2023.

Members Present: Austin, Cooley, Finlay, Poulter, Callaway

Members Absent: None

Others Present: Marvin Kerhoff, Ryan Niekamp, Anthony Foster, Todd Eyler, and guests

The Committee reviewed the bills, and they all appeared to be in order.

The Committee reviewed and approved the minutes with the correction of Mr. Finlay's name spelled incorrectly in the second paragraph. Motion to approve the minutes was made by Mr. Poulter, seconded by Mr. Cooley. The minutes were approved by unanimous acclamation.

Mr. Ehrhart was unable to attend and speak regarding the Riverfront Development Board. Mr. Austin provided a brief overview of the project and goes into more details of it later in the meeting.

#### Resolutions

Chairman Austin presented two tax sale resolutions. Clerk Niekamp stated that they were good and correct. Motion to approve Tax Sale Resolution Number 10-23-001 and 09-23-001

- i. Tax Sale Resolution Number 10-23-001 for Parcel Number 23-2-0147-000-00 Located in the Quincy Township – Motion made to adopt by Mr. Finlay and seconded by Mr. Cooley. The motion was approved unanimously.
- ii. Tax Sale Resolution Number 09-23-001 for Parcel Number 23-1957 Located in the Quincy Township – Motion made to adopt by Mr. Finlay and seconded by Mr. Cooley. The motion was approved unanimously.

#### 2) Finance

- i. Additional Fund Appropriation from Jerrod Welch – Adams County Health Department – in the amount of \$50,000 to Expense Account Line 001-001-XXXX – Personal Property Replacement Tax for a Revised Budget Amount of \$50,000 – Mr. Austin states that no action to take – final action should be ready by tomorrow's board meeting. Austin explained the PPRT funds between the County and the Health Department. Mr. Austin did ask for a motion to transfer the money. Motion made by Mr. Finlay, Seconded by Mr. Poulter. The motion carried unanimously.

#### 3) Budget/Levy

- i. FY23-24 Budget Discussion. Mr. Austin stated that they are slightly behind the timetable, and that is mainly his fault. Mr. Austin states that there is now a budget-only e-mail, so everything is in one place. Mr. Austin asked the Treasurer's Office to help – two

employees are helping and getting a one-time stipend. Mr. Austin says that by tomorrow the September numbers will be imported into the Budget. Mr. Austin says that a rough draft of the proposed budget will need to be ready by the end of this week for the 30-day publication. There will be still some minor tweaks after that. Mr. Austin says that EAV's increase of slightly over seven percent is very helpful due to a severe increase of inflation and a significant lack of available homes. Mr. Austin says that this is the most significant EAV increase in 30 years. Mr. Austin says the increment that we change in the tax lines will be helped by the increased EAV; however, even though the tax levies may not increase, since the EAV increase is happening, it will not appear as a low tax increase. Mr. Cooley stated that regarding the budget itself, the most differential line items are salaries — some are 3%, some others are 10%, others are 4 and 5% — at what point do we just say we will do this amount across the complete board? Mr. Austin stated that it would be great to have a common factor — we deal in two factors — union and non-union and also exempt and non-exempt — Mr. Austin states that he doubts we will ever get to a point where we just say blank percentage across the board. Mr. Austin states that a vast number of employees are within a union. The non-union and exempt / non-exempt will be all over the board and will fluctuate depending on the skill set the employees are in — provided examples of different offices and types of employees. Mr. Austin said the biggest categories, for example, are what we just saw with EMS. Mr. Austin says that we must get right to recruit the right talent. Mr. Austin states this is one of the reasons why the committee asked for separate budget salaries. Mr. Finlay followed up with Travis' comment — he said that part of the question is challenging ourselves on how we become more efficient — and all of the department heads that Mr. Finlay saw are doing great — Mr. Finlay says in the private world, the challenges are come back with a lower budget or could you work without filling that position? Mr. Finlay says at some level, ask yourself, how do you become more efficient at a reasonable rate? Mr. Finlay says everyone is in the same boat. Mr. Austin stated that it has been an interesting last couple of years as the last few years have exposed the weaknesses for pay, remote work, automation, etc., but to Mr. Finlay's point that there is always one or two departments that are playing catch up and other are trying to keep moving forward (EMT example) — Mr. Austin stated that he agreed with Mr. Finlay because we have to be mindful of our taxpayer by looking at keeping balance. Mr. Callaway stated that with his departments — he said all his departments were efficient, knew their revenue sources, and knew what they were talking about. Mr. Callaway noted some other comments he noticed during his budget meetings and what is all needed within the departments, Mr. Callaway says they looked at ways to find new revenue sources. Mr. Callaway says that the SOA needs extra money for different projects and salaries. Mr. Callaway said that ROE looked okay as they are in mid-season. Mr. Austin said to that point, even with the small offices asking for \$50,000 more goes across the board. Mr. Austin stated that once's ClearGov software gets up and moving, it will drastically improve the Capital Improvements by pre-planning on what projects are on the horizon. Mr. Austin further explained the importance is that the Board starts looking more closely by prioritizing and categorizing capital improvements within the County. Mr. Callaway asked what he tells his departments — Mr. Austin said we are not ready yet, we need a couple of more days to review the data and input more data. Everything that was submitted is currently in the budget so the committee can review it all globally but also look over the revenue which is the one area a lot of people forget about but it's greatly important to what we can afford, or not.

- ii. Truth-in-Taxation Hearing. Mr. Austin provided a timetable of truth-in-taxation to the committee that the Clerk had prepared. There is a very stringent timeline that must be

followed. Some of the heavy hitters are salaries, capital increases and inflation. Mr. Austin thinks the levy might be lower, but EAV is carrying the increase. Mr. Austin says it is hard to have that discussion with the public, but it's one that we must have a streamlined messaging on – and an explanation as to why everything is going up. The first step is to have the publication by October 15<sup>th</sup> for the proposed budget. Mr. Finlay asked for a point of clarification as the spending budget will increase by 5%, and because of that, we must go through the TIT process? Mr. Austin stated yes, that is correct — it's a checks and balance system. Mr. Austin continues to discuss the timetable for the levy and budget going forward. November 7<sup>th</sup>, or so, Mr. Austin, says the budget should be locked down unless there is a math error, or something to that affect. Mr. Austin proposed using seven percent increase and then we will be able to back down after that. Mr. Callaway asked how much money we will be over, or under in revenue. Mr Austin stated that globally he doesn't believe we will be over/under much. Mr. Austin stated that Cannabis, for example, is down a lot for different reason. Mr. Austin stated that the retailers tax has plateaued, it's solid and hopefully it will bump up, but we cannot count on its rapid increase during COVID. Mr. Austin stated that the PPRT was \$500,000 over, but then we had other things come forward in unexpected work — globally though, Mr. Austin, does not believe it will trend too much either way. Mr. Callaway mentions what his three departments are needing. Mr. Austin stated that the numbers presented are the ones that are in the global spreadsheet right now. Mr. Finlay asked if there was anything Mr. Austin needed from the committee. Mr. Austin stated no, not at this time — once the dataset is finalized, the following three weeks will be crunching the budget out to make everything work.

4) Old Business

- i. None

5) New Business

- i. Quincy Riverfront Utility Line Burial Funding Request. Mr. Austin stated the committee had some issues making it to the committee to speak about the project. Mr. Austin went over the overview of the project. Mr. Austin stated the county paid into the first plan for \$250k to help build out the plan. The County currently has \$250k invested in the riverfront. The COQ has about \$200k in engineering work planning. The Park District has put no dollars into this project. Mr. Austin states that there are three things 1) utility lines 2) land elevation 3) shoring of the edge of the land. Mr. Austin said that if you don't do this know, it's like building a house four feet into the air, and trying to build the foundation later. Mr. Austin stated the reason the utility line was chosen first, it's the first fundamental project as everything else builds on top of this. Mr. Austin provided data from a grant from Senator Tracy, and the work Ameren will be helping with their transmission lines. Mr. Austin said that the COA would allocate \$200k out of ARPA, the city would put in \$53k in engineering and \$150k in TIF funds. Initially, between the COQ, COA and the Grant, the money would be able to fund this project — or the Park District would be able to help out. The bid comes in and it's \$1.3M so then there is a \$550k deficit in the funding of the project. Mr. Austin said that if you add a contingency, it should probably be around \$1.4M so they are really about \$650K short . QRDC is asking if the COQ can put in an additional \$150k, the COA \$150k, and the Park District putting up the remaining amount of the money. Mr. Callaway asked what the potential square footage is of the affected area. Mr. Austin said Clat Adams three feet higher. Mr. Callaway asked about the water in Bay. Mr. Austin stated this is before the Bay, and he is not sure how deep the water needs to be for the boats — he thinks about eight or nine feet. Mr. Austin said that the plan is to raise the land so it can be better used and out of the flood plain. Mr Austin does not need any action out of committee but wanted to discuss it with the

committee. Mr. Austin said that this project would be dead in the water if the park district does not put in \$350k and the city of Quincy does not put in \$150k. Mr Callaway asked if anyone has asked the Corp of Engineers about dredging. Mr. Austin stated that the Corp was working on it, but it appears that politics is at play currently and it does not appear that it will be moving much — elections have consequences. Mr. Austin stated that the Corp has approved the project, but it is being held up in red tape. Mr. Callaway stated that he has lived in many coastal communities – he has heard the water is too shallow to do anything — so he does believe that maybe we should wait until the bay is dredged until we work on riverfront. Mr. Austin stated that if we wait for the politics, the Riverfront project might as well stop now. Mr. Austin explained that the Riverfront project is south of the north bridge piers, after the north is the Quincy Bay Restoration. Mr. Austin provided several examples of riverfront developments. Mr. Finlay asked a couple of questions. Mr Finlay stated that the concept and project itself are very good. Mr. Finlay stated at the County and City put into the same amount — how is the balance of benefit between the COA and COQ between taxes, etc — so how, or why, is the County at the same level? Mr. Austin believed that was a good question and you could also throw it further and ask about the Park District — it's their property right? Mr. Austin stated that it's the initial lions share to get the project off the ground and going. Mr. Austin said that perhaps we look at service fees, riverfront fees, etc.. Mr. Finlay stated it would be helpful to see the overall plan to see the commitment and the request so he can see a, b, c, so then he can see d, e, and f. Mr. Austin stated that he will e-mail the plan to everyone on the committee in the morning. Mr Poulter stated it would be helpful to see the financial gains to the county. Mr. Austin agreed. Mr. Finlay stated that he would guess we all have went to a riverfront town and had said “It would be nice of Quincy had something like this”. Mr. Callaway asked why we have to help pay to have the private utility lines moved. Mr. Austin stated that Ameren is kind of a monopoly and the towers are approaching around 100 years old and Ameren will be putting in significant money and the actual work. Mr. Austin stated that Ameren committed to making it work, if we are able to make the conduit happen — would it not be nice if we could just ask them to do this for us? Mr. Finlay stated an additional compliment — it would be helpful to know how the other riverfront groups funded their projects.

- ii. Review of Employee Health Insurance Renewal Mr. Austin states that the unions and department heads had asked for a meeting and only a couple of people showed up. Mr. Austin said the benefit of it was digging into the numbers of the insurance and we paid a lot of attention to whether or not we should make the switch, or not and in hindsight, it appears to have been a good call. Mr. Austin said that it was decided to do small incremental changes instead of a plethora of changes in the front. The health insurance renewal meeting was a great process of review. Overall the premium is increasing 11% and the employees will have to pay 3% increase. Mr. Austin said that they would probably be changing small parts in the county's side — everything for the employee will remain the same. Employees are at a 90% / 10% split with families at 25% / 75%. Mr. Austin stated that he has noticed more of the union groups have been looking at their own insurance pools and if that happens, we would not have the same level of leverage with BCBS. Currently the COA is about \$300k under budget for the year. Mr. Austin stated that they are looking at switching the stop-loss coverage from \$80k to \$90k and at this point in our year, we have had about four cases when typically we are at 7-8. Mr. Austin stated that we are funding our insurance pool correctly and this next year we should only see 7-8% increase which is good. Mr. Callaway asked for clarification on the stop-loss deductible. Mr. Callaway asked who the carrier is. Mr Austin stated it is BCBS and our agent is Cottingham and Butler and there are not very many options in



- Illinois. Mr. Finlay asked if we have a self-insured. Mr. Austin stated yes. Mr. Finlay asked about our current insurance reserve. Mr. Austin answered his questions.
- iii. Approval of Strong Communities Program, Round 2 (SCP) for the Amount of \$162,000. Mr. Austin introduced the grant overview citing it's through the state through the department of housing. This specific grant is for the acquisition and demolished of derelict properties. Mr. Austin states the density is what causes a lot of issues (i.e., Quincy). This specific \$162k will go where the first grant went into. This money will go to help fund the land bank with the hopes to create a 7-8 county region so everyone can the same legal representation, forms, trustees., etc. Mr. Austin noted that he forwarded an invoice along to be paid to pay for the COQ for some demo work at the cost of \$60,000 which is paid through this grant. Mr. Austin states the goal is to get these types of properties out of the three-year tax cycle and back into the regular tax cycle. Mr. Austin states that the COQ also received money from this grant and a small portion of the grant can be used to pay administration; however, there is still some portion of administrative expenses, the county will need to be picked up and that will be reflected in the budget. Mr. Austin reminded the committee that this grant is for the entire county. Mr. Kerhoff asked if this could be used similar to a RLF. Mr. Austin stated that there is a grant they are looking at that would help with financing and this grant is specifically aimed at derelict or abandoned properties. Mr. Finlay asked if legal council has looked over the "conditional letter". Mr. Austin stated yes, through a Chicago attorney and we have also used local legal representation as well. **Motion to approve Callaway, 2<sup>nd</sup> Cooley. Approved unanimously.**

Adjourn at 7:34. Motion by Cooley 2<sup>nd</sup> by Finlay.