

OFFICE OF THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR
EVERLYN SANGUINETTI – LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

Local Government Consolidation and Unfunded Mandates Task Force
Meeting Minutes

Monday, October 19th, 2015
Auditorium
Peoria Riverfront Museum
222 SW Washington Street, Peoria, IL 61602
10:00AM

Name	Title	Organization	Present
Evelyn Sanguinetti	Lt. Governor	State of Illinois	Yes
Tom Demmer	Representative	90 th District	No
Mark Batinick	Representative	97 th District	Phone
Jack Franks	Representative	63 rd District	No
Emmanuel Chris Welch	Representative	7 th District	Phone
Dan Duffy	Senator	26 th District	Phone
Dale Righter	Senator	55 th District	No
Martin A. Sandoval	Senator	12 th District	No
Linda Holmes	Senator	42 nd District	Phone
Karen Darch	Mayor	Barrington	Phone
Karen Hasara	Former Mayor	Springfield	Phone
Brad Cole	Executive Director	Illinois Municipal League	Yes
Ryan Spain	City Council Member	Peoria	Yes
Dan Cronin	Chairman	DuPage County	Phone
Michael Bigger	Former Chairman	Stark County	Yes
Mark Kern	Chairman	St. Clair County	No
John Espinoza	Board Member	Whiteside County	Yes
Dr. Darlene Ruscitti	Regional Superintendent	DuPage Schools	Phone
Steffanie Seegmiller	Chairman	Arthur School Board	Yes
M. Hill Hammock	Senior Fellow	Metropolitan Planning Council	No
Char Foss-Eggemann	Trustee	Park Ridge Library Board	Phone
Warren L. Dixon III	Township Assessor	Naperville	Yes
George Obernagle	Chairman	Kaskaskia Regional Port District	Phone
Non-Voting Members			
Clayton Frick		Deloitte Services LLP	Yes
Mr. Aranowski		ISBE	Yes
Mr. Kersey		IDOL	No
Mr. Zigmund		IDOR	No
Mr. Perkins		DCEO	No

The Local Government Consolidation and Unfunded Mandates Task Force met for the tenth time on October 19th, 2015 with Lieutenant Governor and Chair Evelyn Sanguinetti presiding.

MEETING LOCATION

Auditorium
Peoria Riverfront Museum
222 SW Washington Street, Peoria, IL 61602

MEETING START

Meeting Scheduled Start: 10:00AM
Meeting Actual Start: 10:00AM

AGENDA

- I. **Call to Order and Roll Call**
 - a. Lt. Governor Sanguinetti called the meeting to order at 10:00AM CT and welcomed members.
 - b. Roll Call was taken. Quorum was met.

- II. **Approval of meeting minutes from September 30, 2015**
 - a. Lt. Governor Sanguinetti opened the floor for corrections to the September 30th meeting minutes.
 - b. Karen Hasera made two grammatical and spellings corrections concerning section IV and IIIb of the minutes.
 - c. Lt. Governor Sanguinetti motioned to approve the minutes as corrected.
 - i. Cole moved and Dixon seconded.
 - ii. The motion was approved by majority ayes with no nays recorded.

- III. **Chairman's Remarks – Lt. Governor Evelyn Sanguinetti**
 - a. Lieutenant Governor Sanguinetti welcomed Task Force members and elected officials present. She stated that the meeting would focus on Drainage Districts and Soil & Water Conservation Districts, and noted that there are nine different types of local government in Illinois specifically related to water. Additionally, she said that water specific districts represent one-eighth of all local governments in Illinois. She then pointed out that the Task Force would be voting on five proposals regarding townships, and said that if the proposals pass they will become official recommendations of the Task Force. The goal of proposal passage is introducing and passing legislation next session regarding the topics discussed.
 - b. Lt. Gov Sanguinetti also sought and received unanimous consent to move township-related public comment before New Business in the interest of hearing commentary before voting on the proposals.

- IV. **Presentations:**
 - Soil and Water Conservation Districts & Drainage Districts**
 - a. **Richard Lyons- Illinois Association of Drainage Districts and Board of Directors**

 - b. **Kelly Thompson-Executive Director, Association of Illinois Soil and Water Conservation Districts**

- c. Lt. Governor Sanguinetti opened the floor for questions.
 - i. Lt. Governor: There seems to be a lot of natural overlap between Soil & Water Conservation Districts and Drainage Districts. Both types of districts tackle similar problems directly related to water drainage. Do you see any value in the combination of these two types of government?
 - o Lyons responded that he does not believe they have the manpower, and it would require an increase in employment. He noted the Drainage Districts work for nothing, only to protect their local land. Combining the two types of government in his county would require increases in funding.
 - ii. Bigger asked Lyons to elaborate on the comment that local control of drainage districts is being eroded.
 - o Lyons commented that the local control lines are being built in agricultural areas, and that stormwater management is beginning to affect the drainage districts. He noted that most of the erosion being seen is in the northern collar counties and in the areas of urban sprawl like Peoria and Springfield. The erosion that he is discussing is not soil erosion, but the erosion of the activity of the drainage districts.
 - iii. Senator Holmes questioned how the number of drainage districts differs from the comptrollers estimates. She also asked if the drainage districts have taxing authority.
 - o Lyons said that there are 1500-1700, and noted the Comptroller's Office is having a hard time firming up the data on number of districts. They estimate 900 districts.
 - o Regarding her question on taxing authority, Lyons said that they have the ability to levy taxes on the landowners in their district.
 - iv. Senator Holmes: It seems that we need to be cautious in this area when we talk about consolidation because when it comes to drainage districts local knowledge is of paramount importance.
 - v. Spain: Kelly, you mentioned the \$50,000 grants to the SWCB and on the economic return an average of \$1.4 million. Is that net economic activity or is that tax revenue?
 - o Thompson: An economic return
 - vi. Frick: You mentioned that your funding has decreased and that there are some new revenue sources being explored by the districts. Could you elaborate on those sources?
 - o Thompson: For example, in Lake-McHenry counties, they're thinking outside the traditional box. They are providing services to people within the counties that are not always available to people in all counties. Some of the partnerships we've been talking about are working with districts in obtaining national grants to provide funding for employees and getting cost share dollars to use for conservation practices.
 - vii. Espinoza: At a recent meeting in Whiteside County, there was a woman from Soil and Water Conservation District that commented that because of the budget impasse they are not receiving money and so she has not been able to keep her staff. Staff are leaving and going to other jobs. Even if a budget is put

in place, and money starts flowing, they will have to start building the office back up again.

- Thompson: We are losing employees and we need the technical and administrative experience of those employees. When a budget becomes available, we will have to start hiring again, and it will take a while to recover that technical and administrative experience.

Task Force Report Update

a. Norm Walzer, Northern Illinois University

- a. See attached report
- b. Lt. Governor Sanguinetti opened the floor for questions.
 - i. No questions were raised.

V. Public Comment

a. Bryan Smith, Township Officials of Illinois

Good morning Lt. Governor and task force members

My name is Bryan Smith and I am the Executive Director of the Township Officials of Illinois.

I addressed the task force back in August in Champaign and I appreciate the opportunity to briefly comment to you today. I'm not going to address individually the proposals you have today because I haven't yet had time to study them but would like to make some general comments

The state of Illinois is indeed facing a fiscal crisis and there is not one person here that would disagree with that. The township officials of Illinois certainly endorse the idea of examining the status quo to determine if efficiencies are available that can save taxpayer dollars.

That being said, the intense scrutiny township government has faced, paired with a rush to judgment by some, has created some myths and fallacies that tend to paint an inaccurate picture of the important work indeed being performed by townships.

There has been an aggressive call for consolidation or elimination of township government or certain parts of it. But first, it is essential for people to understand the facts about what township government does and the important role it plays across Illinois while Illinois needs to fix its current financial pains, the executable plan needs to be based on measures that are proven to work. This will not happen by eliminating township government or parts of it.

If the core services townships provide were consolidated into a larger government unit, we run the risk of seriously decreasing effectiveness and efficiency when it comes to serving Illinois residents. Why? Because studies have shown that municipal spending increases as population increases. If townships and other smaller units of government are consolidated into larger units, the populations in which these larger units serve will drastically increase, thus raising, not decreasing costs.

Additionally, there are virtually no studies that connect the number of governments in a state and its taxation or spending per capita. If more units of government was the most expensive, Illinois would have the highest taxation per capita. It does not. Regardless of having a greater number of government units than any other state, Illinois ranks in the middle of states based on taxation per capita.

Discussion of any of the issues, such as the ones you will address today, should be accompanied by briefing papers and research stating facts. Anything short of this is a distortion of the public process. I urge you to not assume that consolidation or elimination of parts of township government will save the state money and improve any levels of service, because I simply do not believe that to be the truth. We would be happy to sit down in the future and talk to anyone from the task force to answer any questions you might have.

Thank you.

Roger A. Larson, Richwoods Township

- i. I want to thank the task force for taking the time to be scrutinous. I think when we look at township government; we need to consider what the real value of township government. That is what it comes down to when you look at any level of government. I know that township government has value because we are grassroots government. We can form meaningful partnerships and as a result we can develop programs based on the grassroots nature of our work. We are fiscally responsible and have a balanced budget year after year. Thirdly we show impact, not simply carrying out programs. We touch people's lives with our programs. We also have a leadership academy with a local Peoria high school and subsequent job fair. Last time, five high school students were hired on the spot by a restaurant. Our value as a township is shown by our grassroots nature, fiscal responsibility, and because we have impact.

Amy Benecke McLaren, Peoria County Highway Dept.

Spoke about the impact of what losing township government road and bridge districts. She also noted that if the townships were to fall under the county system, then her road miles would triple and she is not equipped to handle that length of roads.

VI. **New Business**

a. **Voting on Township Consolidation Proposals**

i. **Proposal #1: Consolidating townships coterminous with municipalities.**

- Lt. Governor asked Policy Director Brian Costin to read the proposal.
- She then motioned for approval. Dixon moved and Bigger seconded.
- She then opened the floor for discussion.
 - a. Dixon: Throughout the duration of this Task Force, we have spent a lot of time examining certain efficiencies, and as we move forward through these proposals, we must realize that there is not a proposal to eliminate township government per se. I believe voters should be given the opportunity to look at these townships and decide what is best for their community. There is not a one-size-fits-all in these proposals.
 - b. Cole: Just as some of us with municipal background would like members to look to us on municipal issues, many of us will be looking to our members with township expertise on these proposals. Additionally, I think it would be beneficial to the commission to have more opportunity to discuss these issues before we are asked to vote on them because these are new proposals.
 - c. Espinoza: We have a county board meeting tomorrow where we will be voting on a study regarding county and township government. Right now the consensus is that it would not be a good fit for our county.
 - d. Spain: I agree with the comments made, and I am looking to Mr. Dixon for his expertise on township issues. I believe that the point made by Mr. Cole is a good one. These matters are significant, and the ability for us to look at the language of the proposals we are voting on is valuable. Last week I had some questions from a township assessor regarding the implications of these proposals in Peoria, and it is key to have time for discussion with constituents about these issues. It's important to note that our mission is not to arbitrarily take away township government, but rather to empower voters to have local control and make decisions that best suit their community.
 - e. Senator Holmes: I cannot vote on a measure without seeing the language in bill form. To have something presented as a concept does not give a fair amount of detail. I would want to hear from the people of my district that I represent before I will go out and give a yay or nay on these items.
 - i. Costin: If you recall at prior meetings we did vote on other proposals concerning certain concepts. The role of the Task Force is not to write entire bills at this stage. We are making general recommendations as a group, it is not a matter of writing a bill. Ideally if the proposals are passed, we would like to work with legislators in the

next legislative session to write the bill and address the additional concerns at that time.

- f. Bigger: All of the comments have been very helpful and insightful. The reason I am supporting this proposal is that it is strictly about local control and empowering local voters. Anytime we can return decision-making to the voters, it is generally a good thing.

- o Roll was then called on this proposal- See attached.

ii. **Proposal #2: Removing 126 miles cap on township size**

- o Lt. Governor asked Policy Director Brian Costin to read the proposal.
- o She then opened the floor for discussion
- o Dixon: This proposal has been out there for a number of years and in certain instances there are good opportunities for township mergers. There are townships that may be larger than 126 sq mi to date. I talk about building value in township government and I think this allows for a situation where value is built and a door is opened for that purpose.
- o Cole: Is this also by referendum?
 - a. Costin answered that it is and it is in regards to McHenry County. If they proposed new borders, they would have to have do a referendum; every single township would have to agree with the consolidation.
- o She then motioned for approval. Bigger moved and Dixon seconded.
- o Roll was then taken on this proposal- see attached.

iii. **Proposal #3: Allow county referendums to dissolve township assessor position and create county assessor's position and office.**

- o Lt. Governor asked Policy Director Brian Costin to read the proposal.
- o She then motioned for approval. Foss-Eggeman moved and Dixon seconded.
- o She then opened the floor for discussion.
- o Dixon: This is a proposal for counties under 15,000 parcels. There are only 25 counties that are over a billion in EAV. We have difficulty finding assessors in those counties that are smaller. For reference, I worked in Lockport Township, a 23,000 parcel jurisdiction. There was an office open 24 hours a week and had fantastic employees, but I think in these cases, giving the opportunity to consolidate is good for an assessor's workload. I don't see a huge benefit to having 6 assessors per 15,000 parcels. There are many highly professional appraisers that do 3,000 parcels, so the professionalism among them is definitely there, but the ability to find those assessors is difficult.
- o Batinick: Why did we decide to do this majority county board vote instead of referendum?
 - a. Costin: In other states it is mandatory to go to the county-level. Originally, we thought about doing it the same. Having it done by a majority of the county board is slightly less rigorous than other states and gives elected officials some more say in the matter.

- Bigger: In some counties assessors are appointed by the county board, would this mandate that the assessors are elected in these smaller counties?
 - a. Costin: Yes.
 - b. Dixon: Most counties have an individual that is the supervisor of assessments, basically an arm of the Department of Revenue. I believe that the property owners of a county should have an elected official that is accountable to them.
- Roll was then taken on the proposal- see attached.
- iv. **Proposal #4: Allow counties to retain form of government following absorption of townships**
 - Lt. Governor asked Policy Director Brian Costin to read the proposal.
 - Lt. Governor motioned for approval. Espinoza moved and Dixon seconded.
 - She then opened the floor for discussion.
 - Dixon: This proposal does not take away the current qualifications for referendums. I have no problems with this proposal as a township official. This gives us more options if consolidation does occur.
 - Roll was then taken on the proposal- see attached.
- v. **Proposal #5: Hold taxpayers harmless from township consolidation**
 - Lt. Governor asked Policy Director Brian Costin to read the proposal.
 - Lt. Governor motioned for approval. Dixon moved and Obernagel seconded
 - Dixon: Like the proposal before it, this proposal does not take away the current areas of referendum. It says that each district will be held harmless in regards to property tax extensions.
 - Roll was then taken on the proposal- see attached.

Proposal Roll Call

Proposal #1: Consolidating Townships coterminous w/municipalities	Yay	Nay	Abstain
Lt. Governor EPS	X		
Rep. Demmer			
Rep. Franks			
Rep. Welch			
Rep. Batinick	X		
Senator Duffy	X		
Senator Righter			
Senator Sandoval			
Senator Holmes			X
Ms. Darch	X		
Ms. Hasera	X		
Mr. Cole	X		
Mr. Cronin			
Mr. Bigger	X		

Mr. Kern			
Mr. Espinoza	X		
Dr. Ruscitti	X		
Ms. Seegmiller	X		
Mr. Hammock			
Mr. Dixon	X		
Mr. Obernagel	X		
Mr. Spain	X		
Ms. Foss-Eggemann	X		
Total	14		1

Proposal #2: Removing 126 square mile cap on township size	Yay	Nay	Abstain
Lt. Governor EPS	X		
Rep. Demmer			
Rep. Franks			
Rep. Welch			
Rep. Batinick	X		
Senator Duffy	X		
Senator Righter			
Senator Sandoval			
Senator Holmes			X
Ms. Darch	X		
Ms. Hasera	X		
Mr. Cole	X		
Mr. Cronin			
Mr. Bigger	X		
Mr. Kern			
Mr. Espinoza	X		
Dr. Ruscitti	X		
Ms. Seegmiller	X		
Mr. Hammock			
Mr. Dixon	X		
Mr. Obernagel	X		
Mr. Spain	X		
Ms. Foss-Eggemann	X		
Total	14		1

Proposal #3: Allow county referendums to dissolve township assessor position and create county assessor's position and office	Yay	Nay	Abstain
Lt. Governor EPS	X		
Rep. Demmer			
Rep. Franks			
Rep. Welch			
Rep. Batinick	X		
Senator Duffy	X		
Senator Righter			
Senator Sandoval			
Senator Holmes			X
Ms. Darch	X		
Ms. Hasera	X		
Mr. Cole	X		
Mr. Cronin			
Mr. Bigger	X		
Mr. Kern			
Mr. Espinoza	X		
Dr. Ruscitti	X		
Ms. Seegmiller	X		
Mr. Hammock			
Mr. Dixon	X		
Mr. Obernagel	X		
Mr. Spain	X		
Ms. Foss-Eggemann	X		
Total	14		1

Proposal #4: Allow counties to retain form of government following absorption of townships	Yay	Nay	Abstain
Lt. Governor EPS	X		
Rep. Demmer			
Rep. Franks			
Rep. Welch			
Rep. Batinick	X		
Senator Duffy	X		
Senator Righter			
Senator Sandoval			
Senator Holmes			X
Ms. Darch	X		
Ms. Hasera	X		
Mr. Cole	X		
Mr. Cronin			
Mr. Bigger	X		
Mr. Kern			
Mr. Espinoza	X		
Dr. Ruscitti	X		
Ms. Seegmiller	X		
Mr. Hammock			
Mr. Dixon	X		
Mr. Obernagel	X		
Mr. Spain	X		
Ms. Foss-Eggemann	X		
Total	14		1

Proposal #5: Hold taxpayers harmless from township consolidation	Yay	Nay	Abstain
Lt. Governor EPS	X		
Rep. Demmer			
Rep. Franks			
Rep. Welch			
Rep. Batinick	X		
Senator Duffy	X		
Senator Righter			
Senator Sandoval			
Senator Holmes			X
Ms. Darch	X		
Ms. Hasera	X		
Mr. Cole	X		
Mr. Cronin			
Mr. Bigger	X		
Mr. Kern			
Mr. Espinoza	X		
Dr. Ruscitti	X		
Ms. Seegmiller	X		
Mr. Hammock			
Mr. Dixon	X		
Mr. Obernagel	X		
Mr. Spain	X		
Ms. Foss-Eggemann	X		
Total	14		1

XI. Adjournment

- a. Lt. Governor Sanguinetti announced the next meeting is November 3rd at noon in the village hall of Romeoville in Will County. Additionally, she announced meetings in Springfield on November 19th at 2PM and in Chicago on December 8th at 2PM.
- b. Lt. Governor Sanguinetti motioned to adjourn at 12:03pm. Dixon moved and Bigger seconded. All ayes with no nays recorded.