

THE JANUARY 9, 2007 SPECIAL MEETING
OF THE
WALWORTH COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
AMENDED-Pages 2 & 4

The Special Meeting of the Walworth County Board of Supervisors was called to order by Chairperson Lohrmann at 8:10 p.m. in the County Board Room at the Walworth County Government Center, 100 W. Walworth Street, Elkhorn, Wisconsin.

Roll call was taken and all Supervisors were present. A quorum was established.

Approval of the Agenda

On motion by Supervisor Russell, seconded by Supervisor Downing, the agenda was approved.

Comment Period by Members of the Public

There were none.

New Business

Discuss the Board's course of action with regard to the petition to downsize

Supervisor Hilbelink addressed the Board. He said he had requested the meeting and he had a list of things to discuss with the Supervisors. Hilbelink said he does not want to get into the issue of whether or not the Board should downsize but rather to discuss what we are planning to do about it. He said in order for us to do things as a group, we have to register with the Clerk and we would be considered to be a special interest group. He said that if we were to form this group, we would have to fill out paperwork to register as such.

Supervisor Kilkenny said that if the County Board registered as a group, they would have to abide by open meetings laws, etc. Administrator Bretl addressed the issue of open meetings law. He said that if you want to take a position as a County Board and discuss the merits of a small board or large board and take a stand on that, it would be acceptable. He said you could register and be a political action committee either collectively or as individuals. Bretl said that if you decide at the end of this that you want to register as a Board, or if you want to discuss and pass a resolution on the topic, then you would not have to register.

Supervisor Van Dreser asked if we could put out signs, etc. Bretl said if you spend money you would have to register as a group. Clerk Kim Bushey said that if money is spent you have to register. There is a threshold and that is quite low.

Hilbelink said that he would like to have a unified folder that combines everything related to this issue – various newspaper articles, ads, opponents' ads, information regarding the issue, etc. Bretl said that gathering the articles and circulating that material to Board members would not

violate open meetings law unless you respond to the articles and distribute the response, then it becomes a violation of open meetings law.

Supervisor Kilkenny asked Bretl for opinions of what is allowable and what is not. Bretl asked what it is that the Supervisors want to accomplish. He said again that if you want to do nothing more than discuss the size of the Board tonight, that would be acceptable.

Supervisor Van Dreser said he wants to understand the Board's rights in putting out letters, signs, etc. Bretl said that direct mailing of letters would cost money and the best way to do that would be to form a group and register.

Supervisor Arnold said that the agenda for this meeting was to discuss the Board's course of action with regard to the petition to downsize and does not say anything about taking action. Bretl said the notice of this meeting was posted, so the Board can take some type of action tonight.

Supervisor Ketchpaw said she would like to see this Board take a position and react to a letter that Supervisors Russell and Ingersoll and she developed. She said the supervisors could each talk to their communities. Hilbelink said that the letter Supervisor Ketchpaw was referring to was distributed to everyone this evening. He said he would like the Board to vote on whether to support this letter and use this letter as a building block for information.

Supervisor Hawkins asked that if an organization were formed, how would that affect us as Supervisors. Bretl said that if there is a quorum of the County Board at any one meeting, just because you become a political action group, does not excuse you from open meetings law.

Supervisor Weber said he thinks that we should go and speak to some groups that hold forums. Weber said he thinks we need some information to get out to the public, and that could be in the form of strategically planned ads in the newspapers. He said that Supervisors Ketchpaw, Russell, and Ingersoll have done a good job of identifying bullet points that are outstanding for us to refer to regarding the value of the Board at a 25-member level. Weber said he thinks that going to these forums would be very effective and also running ads in the newspapers.

Supervisor Morrison said that a number of years ago there was a Blue Ribbon Committee that produced a report with good information regarding an optimum size of a Board for this County. Morrison said that he and other Supervisors, such as Tom Lothian and Ann Lohrmann, took part in preparing the report.

Hilbelink asked for ideas about where forums could be held. Town board meetings, Lions Club meetings, and press releases were suggested.

Supervisor Burwell said that in addition to the document the other three supervisors put together, she also distributed an article from Sonoma County in California, which shows that the supervisors get full-time salaries and benefits. Supervisor Burwell had one correction to the document she presented which is as follows: page 2, the number of aides should be ~~two and they~~

~~are part-time~~ five full-time equivalents. Burwell said that a Taxpayer's Alliance Report from 2003 states that smaller County Boards appear to spend more money than larger Boards.

Supervisor Stacey said that he would not support Hilbelink's list of items. He said the petitions were turned in to downsize the Board and the State representatives that spoke tonight said that it is their right to do so and we will find out in April.

Hilbelink said that he wants people informed before the vote in April. Kilkenny said he thinks that they should endorse the documents presented tonight as being appropriate. Kilkenny said he thinks that the real issue is "are people being over-represented." He said he has never heard any one from the public say that they are over-represented. He said there are issues of costs to the municipalities if we redistrict now, and then again in 2010 the municipalities would have to redraw their lines and reprogram their computers, and the public needs to hear about these issues. Kilkenny offered a motion to endorse this letter and Burwell's attachment, seconded by Wagie-Troemel.

Supervisor Polyock asked if an article is put in the paper could we sign it as County Board Supervisors. Bretl said that you would have to register first if you are paying for it and you would have to add a disclaimer.

On motion by Supervisor Ketchpaw, seconded by Supervisor Ingersoll, the list of the Board's Accomplishments was amended as follows: "The county board formation of the Criminal Justice Coordinating Committee, one of the most progressive and positive actions that has the potential to save tax dollars spent within the criminal justice system." The amendment was approved by voice vote. Supervisors Lohrmann, Stacey, and Arnold requested that their votes be recorded as "No."

Ketchpaw asked if there is a cost to municipalities if the Board is downsized at this time. Clerk Bushey said that the place where the municipalities would feel the impact is within the State Wide Voter Registration program. The redistricting would necessitate updating the State Wide Voter Registration program, and that would take additional staff time at a municipal level.

Ketchpaw referenced Jackson County's resolution to amend Act 100 that there is a potential for either over or under representation, thus denying citizens equal representation as set forth in the 14th Amendment. There is the potential for a lawsuit as a result. Bretl said that when redistricting you need to use the existing wards.

On motion by Supervisor Ketchpaw, seconded by Supervisor Weber, the following amendment was added as a bullet to the Downsizing Position of the 2006-2008 County Board document: "Given the fact that the Board is not downsizing by a multiple of 5, it raises the chance that or the problem that the County wouldn't effect equal representation." Supervisors Lohrmann, Stacey, Arnold, and Kuhnke requested that their votes be recorded as "No."

On motion by Supervisor Russell, seconded by Supervisor Guido, the Accomplishments were further amended to include: "The 2004 budget included 1020 FTEs and the 2007 adopted budget

included 915 FTEs, which is a reduction of ~~22%~~ 105 FTEs overall.” Supervisor Lohrmann, Stacey, Arnold, and Kuhnke requested that their votes be recorded as “No.”

Supervisor Van Dreser asked that the Supervisors receive a copy of the Blue Ribbon Commission Report.

Chair Lohrmann offered public comment at this time.

Del Gigante, N7791 Bell School Road, said that he was a County Board supervisor and he never spent time on how to save his job. He said the Board is looking at a new generation now. Mr. Gigante said that the Board runs on tradition and that isn't working anymore. He thanked those that supported him when he was on the Board. Mr. Gigante said that he wants the Board to think about what they are doing. He thinks the Board should be sticking with the facts and that is what is costing the taxpayers money.

Supervisor Kilkenny said that he believes the information provided by Supervisors Russell, Ingersoll, Ketchpaw was accurate information, and if not, he would like to know what is wrong from those that voted "No" earlier. If the numbers quoted from the budget book were wrong, then he would want the people to know.

Supervisor Arnold said that he thinks that an 11-member Board would be better than 25 members and if some are advertising this as action of the Board, he wants his name to be designated as not voting for it and that an 11-member Board is okay.

Supervisor Van Dreser said that the whole purpose of this meeting is to get accurate information out to the public when the voters go to polls. He said he thinks it is the Board's duty and responsibility to give the public the correct facts.

Supervisor Russell said she wanted to make it clear that we are not supporting a 25-member board but that an 11-member board is not the right number, and to also show accomplishments of the County Board. A roll call vote was held to endorse the documents presented by Supervisors Ketchpaw, Russell, Ingersoll, and Burwell. Total vote: 25; Ayes: 22 – Burwell, Downing, Grant, Guido, Hawkins, Hilbelink, Ingersoll, Ketchpaw, Kilkenny, Kuhnke, Kupsik, Lein, Lightfield, Morrison, Muzatko, Parker, Polyock, Russell, Schaefer, Van Dreser, Wagie-Troemel, Weber; Noes: 3 – Arnold, Stacey, Lohrmann; Absent: 0. Hilbelink said that the letter would be printed out so that all the Supervisors will have the same information to use as they talk to the public.

Supervisor Hilbelink said he appreciated the time and effort and the long day that the Board put in. He reminded the Supervisors to contact Clerk Bushey so that there are no violations in campaign laws.

Chairperson's Report

Adjournment

On motion by Supervisor Stacey, seconded by Supervisor Polyock, the Special Meeting of the Walworth County Board of Supervisors adjourned at 9:28 p.m.

Kimberly S. Bushey
County Clerk

STATE OF WISCONSIN)
)SS
COUNTY OF WALWORTH)

I, Kimberly S. Bushey, County Clerk in and for the County aforesaid, do hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the proceedings of the Special Meeting of the Walworth County Board of Supervisors for the January 9, 2007 meeting.

(These minutes are not final until approved by the County Board at the next regularly scheduled County Board meeting.)