



Kane County

KC Finance and Budget Committee

Meeting Minutes

Government Center
719 S. Batavia Ave., Bldg. A
Geneva, IL 60134

BERMAN, Lenert, Juby, Lewis, Sanchez, Surges, Tepe, ex-officios Roth (County Vice Chair)
and Pierog (County Chair)

Thursday, May 1, 2025

11:00 AM

Auditorium

*****SPECIAL MEETING*****

1. Call To Order

Chairman Berman called the meeting to order at 11:02 AM.

2. Roll Call

PRESENT	Board Member Dale Berman Board Member Bill Lenert Board Member Leslie Juby Board Member Vern Tepe Ex-Officio County Board Vice Chair Bill Roth Ex-Officio County Board Chair Corinne M. Pierog
REMOTE	Board Member Jarett Sanchez
ABSENT	Board Member Anita Lewis Board Member Clifford Surges

Also present: Co. Bd. Members Allan, Bates, Penesis, Strathmann; Fin. Exec. Dir. Hopkinson; KCHD Exec. Dir. Isaacson; SAO Chief of Civil Frank; KCSO Chief of Admin. Catich; ITD/ BLD Exec. Dir. Fahnestock & staff Peters; KaneComm Dir. Guthrie; and members of the press and public.

3. Remote Attendance Requests

Chairman Berman announced the remote attendance requests for today's meeting. He asked the Committee if there were any objections to Committee Member Sanchez attending today's meeting remotely. There were no objections.

4. Approval of Minutes: None

5. Public Comment

Kane County resident, Jenine Mehr, stated that she understood that not all County Board Members voted for the FY2025 Adopted Budget. To those that didn't, she apologized that they have to be involved with the fall out and ramifications. (Committee Member Sanchez arrived remotely 11:03 a.m.) She stated that her comments are directed to those Board Members that did vote for the FY2025 Budget. She explained that the time for delay is over and that the budget must be balanced on fiscal reality. The law requires a balanced budget and the taxpayers demand it. Mehr stated that Kane County cannot operate on wishful thinking. The reserves are nearly exhausted, the COVID Relief Funds are gone, and taxpayers rejected new taxes. The County will

no longer have any bailouts and no more blank checks. Mehr explained that balancing the FY2026 Budget is not going to happen with new taxes. Illinois citizens are among the most heavily taxed in the nation. They cannot afford more. The Board must live within its means. Mehr stated that the County needs leadership grounded in discipline. Every department must be prepared to prioritize, justify every dollar, and cash flow and County operations must be stable, anything less will threaten essential services. Mehr urged the Board to bring in financial professionals and citizens that understand budgeting and to work together, line by line, to bring spending in alignment with revenues. Mehr stated that this is just about numbers. It is about transparency, ethically responsible, trust, and whether the Board wants to lead with integrity, or continue to govern by crisis.

Brian Anderson, Sugar Grove, stated that at the Kane County Finance Committee meeting held on April 23, 2025, there was no plan in place to address the financial crisis. About an hour and 15 minutes into the April 23, 2025 meeting, the Finance Executive Director, Hopkinson, spoke on the sense of urgency of having direction for the budget. Anderson stated that he does not know the status of the consulting group that the County hired for \$127K. If this resolution and contract was passed, the only job for this consulting group is to work with the County Board on balancing the budget. Anderson called for radical change to fix the County's fiscal problems. He spoke on Madam Chairman Pierog's statements addressing the need for the County Board to be a team, transparent, and collaborate. Pierog allowed the County Board to vote on a new Finance Committee Chairman, which was Jarett Sanchez. However, Berman remained chairman. Anderson stated that it is time for a new Chairman of Finance to be chosen. If this cannot happen, Anderson called for Chairman Berman to resign as the Finance Committee Chairman and appoint Sanchez. Referencing the April 23, 2025, Finance meeting, Anderson stated that at the hour and two minute mark, Committee Member Tepe stated that the financial process needed to begin in January 2025. However, Anderson explained that he has been coming to the County Board meetings for two years encouraging the Board to become financial stewards and balance the budget.

Michelle Bettag, St. Charles, commended Chairman Berman for his many years of great service. However, it is obvious that the Finance Committee lacks leadership. When the Committee meets every month and discusses the same issues and has the same lack in leadership, it is ridiculous. Bettag stated that Kane County residents have clearly told the County Board that they cannot afford more taxes. She explained that Kane County is the 28th highest taxed county out of the approximate 3,300 counties in the nation. She noted that people are being taxed to death. She spoke on the possible increase to the Motor Fuel Tax. Bettag stated that the leadership needs to change. County Board Members look deflated with no strategy or energy. She stated that residents want to see County Board succeed and has requested new leadership.

Kane County resident, Virginia Romano, stated that she attended the April 23, 2025, Finance Committee meeting. She noted that Committee Member Tepe did not receive the memo that 75% of residents voted no to new taxes. Kane County residents pay the highest taxes in the country. Romano explained that the Illinois governor has increased

the Motor Fuel Tax every year. In July 2025, an additional \$0.48 a gallon will be added to the price of a gallon of gas, plus the \$0.04 the County inflicts. This is a total of \$0.52 added to each gallon of gas. Additionally, property taxes are being increased. Romano spoke on the COVID Relief Funds. She noted that with this funding, the County was able to address major expenses. She stated that she does not understand why the County budget needs to be so large. She explained that residents did not say no to the public aspect of the Sales Tax Referendum. They said no to more taxes. Romano suggested that the County cut the Ride-in-Kane Program due to the lack of residents utilizing the service to cut costs. She stated that it seems that Kane County Health Department continues to hire. Lastly, she agreed with the development of a financial citizen task force.

6. New Business

A. FY2026 Budget Discussion

Chairman Berman introduced the FY2026 Budget discussion. He stated that the mandate has been set forth by the residents to the County Board that there will not be any new taxes. Therefore, the County's only option is to cut expenses. He expects those that did not work diligently on the passing of the County Board's request for the Sales Tax Referendum, be the ones that work the hardest on the FY2026 Budget. So far, the only thing that has been done, outside the conversations had with the Finance Department Director and others, is County Board Member Bates has preformed a study to determine what the County is spending and the services/programs provided by each department. From this study, the Finance Committee can make decisions on what is important and necessary for the County versus what is not.

County Board Member Bates presented a budget presentation. She reviewed the Finance Committee's goals: to help solve the County's budget crisis by talking to various stakeholders, including department heads and chairs of the standing committees to find out ways to reduce spending and support services. She listed the numerous programs the County has, such as mandated programs, grant funded programs, and interest funded programs. She spoke on the mandated programs. She stated that these programs are required by state statute. Some are funded by the state, while others are funded by the County and/or grants. Bates stated that there is a lot of discretion about how the County implements mandates. She noted that the County has the power to determine the reasonable levels of service for every program. She explained that most non-mandated programs come from County ordinances. Most are funded by the County, while some are funded by grants. Bates spoke on grant funded programs. These programs are funded through grants and do not take funds from the County's General Fund and are outside the scope of the General Fund budget. Bates reviewed interest funded programs. These programs' interest comes from encumbered reserves and can be utilized to fund these programs. The revenue generating programs produce revenue for the General Fund, such as the County Clerk's Passport Program. These funds are outside the scope of the General Fund. Bates spoke on the 2025 Budget for the General Fund - General Account for Public Safety/Judicial. Public Safety/Judicial had a total of \$109,615,123 in revenue and expended \$138,915,923, which caused a \$29,300,800 deficit that was covered by County reserves. She shared a graph that depicted the 2025 Budget for General Fund - General Account - Expenses

by Functional Area. It showed that 69% of the County's budget is utilized by Public Safety/Judicial. Bates spoke on the decreases due to COVID and increases to Public Safety and Judicial, such as raises and inflation. This shows growth that has happened over the years. Bates spoke on non-General Fund programs. She stated that the Kane County Division of Transportation (KDOT) and the Kane County Health Department (KCHD) receive no funding from the General Fund. She spoke on programs that are saving the County money. Sustainability programs are providing savings, such as the \$5M savings from the Kane County Judicial Center solar field. Bates reviewed the information gained when she spoke to Kane County Departments, such as the Development and Community Services, KDOT, KCHD, Information Technologies (ITD), Building Management (BLD), and the County Clerk's Office. She shared each departments' mandates and funding. Bates explained that the County Board must talk to the elected official offices to find out how they can help the County reduce expenses. She spoke on the Grand Victoria Riverboat Fund. She explained that the County should consider ending external grants, which would save approximately \$1M. Additionally, the County should consider it's internal grants. Find out if this funding is being used for outside causes, if the money could be used for internal uses, or if General Fund salary funds could be shifted to the Riverboat funds. These changes could potentially save the County \$3.5M. Bates listed numerous miscellaneous ideas for savings, such as the Recorder becoming a part of the County Clerk's Office, reduce the number of Zoom licenses, cut vacancies from annual budget, reduce number of County Board Members, and review County contracts.

Bates presented a recommended reduction of expenses over the next three years. She spoke on the General Fund - General Account #001 Forecast without the Consumer Price Index (CPI) and Property Tax (PT) increase. In this option, the percentage cuts throughout the three years is 7%, 6% and 6%. Bates presented the recommendation with a CPI and PT increase. The property tax increase would be kept within the rate of the CPI. With the property tax increase, the County could decrease the percentage cuts through the three years, while staying above the 90-Day reserve target. Bates provided a recommendation with the CPI, PT and the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) sales tax. In this recommendation, the percentage taken over the next three years would be 5%, 5%, and 2%. Lastly, Bates provided a recommendation with the CPI, PT and RTA 2025 sales tax. This would allow percentage cuts over the next three years of 4%, 4%, and 4%. Bates noted that with this recommendation, by 2028, the County's reserve amount will begin to increase. She suggested that the County look at reducing expenses over the next three years to lessen the impact on County departments.

Berman opened up the discussion to hear the Committee Members suggestions on how to reduce expenses. Much discussion ensued.

The Committee provided a consensus to establish an Attrition Program that would be effective immediately, along with grant position accountability, and investigate the outsourcing of payroll for efficiency.

7. Old Business

None.

8. Reports Placed On File

There were no reports to be placed on file. No vote was taken.

9. Committee Chairman's Comments

None.

10. Executive Session (if needed)

None.

11. Adjournment

RESULT:	APPROVED BY VOICE VOTE
MOVER:	Bill Lenert
SECONDER:	Dale Berman

This meeting was adjourned at 12:49 PM.

Savannah Zgobica
Sr. Recording Secretary