

SHELBY COUNTY BOARD MEETING
CLOSED SESSION

July 13, 2023

The Shelby County Board met in Closed Session following a motion and roll call vote, for the statutory citation 5 ILCS 120/2 (C-2) Collective Negotiating Matters. State's Attorney Robert Hanlon, Sheriff Brian McReynolds, and Treasurer Erica Firnhaber were present during the Closed Session. Bruce DeLashmit, from Bellwether was also invited to attend the Closed Session by Chairman Orman.

The Chairman explained the County is trying to incorporate MOUs into budgetary confines for the County and had requested guidance from the County's budgeting company Bellwether.

Due to the pandemic ending, the FOP MOU has also ended which results in a \$6.00 per hour wage decrease (over the matrix) for Deputies and \$3.00 an hour wage decrease for Unit B FOP employees. These per hour increases don't include overtime hours, which are also coming out of ARPA. The Sheriff and State's Attorney are trying to work on some issues with FOP and before opening the contract need to have an idea of what the Board wants to do regarding the wages. They need to know what the board thinks the County can afford.

DeLashmit explained to the board members present that ARPA had guidelines initially that only allowed for Public Safety and First Responder's to be paid ARPA funds. Later the guidelines changed, which allowed for more and increased uses of ARPA funds. DeLashmit explained he had reviewed one deputy's salary with 10 years of service. The deputy had a 20.5% increase in their wages in 3 years, without ARPA funding this increase would have taken until 2030. DeLashmit stated Shelby County is a PTELL county (11/2000) and we can't levy enough money to meet the demands for the current salaries. Shelby County must decide "what's the best we can afford?" The comment was made that DeLashmit had tried to discourage the County from implementing an hourly wage increase at the time the FOP MOU was passed in 2020. DeLashmit stated that although the MOU's state at the end of the ARPA MOU the employees revert back but doesn't state what the employees revert back to. DeLashmit informed the board they were going to have to determine how much ARPA money they were going to hold back for labor before diverting more ARPA funds to any other projects. He encouraged the board to make a firm decision on how much money to hold back for labor. The FOP MOU stated once the pandemic emergency had ended, the ARPA funds were to cease for the FOP Union. The Governor ended the order to end the state emergency on May 13, 2023. The County is in the middle of negotiating with the Union at this time for other things. The County will need to take this extra pay from the General Fund if is going to continue to be paid. The question is, can the County afford to maintain the FOP increase and remain solvent?

DeLashmit stated it is currently costing the County 750,000 a year in ARPA funds for labor costs for both FOP and AFSCME, but AFSCME employees got a much smaller rate increase, and their ARPA increase runs through August 31, 2024. Non-Union employees were also able to get an increase from ARPA as well. These costs not only include the actual payroll expense, but also IMRF, FICA, and unemployment.

The County has been running about \$100,000 in new dollars every year under PTELL. DeLashmit stated the County can't levy their way out of the increased cost for labor. The county is currently working on the annual yearly budgeted to take effect on December 1, 2023.

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DeLashmit stated the county is looking at either dropping this increased wage scale or do a forced work reduction. FOP would have to reduce 7 employees and AFSCME would have to reduce by 3.

Hamilton County was able to pass a 1% Public Safety Tax that has allowed them to collect \$500,000 yearly to help fund their Ambulance service. Hamilton County is roughly the same size as Shelby County. Shelby County has tried 3 times in the past to pass a Public Safety Tax, twice in 2006 and the last time in 2008. PST referendum fail at a 5:1 ratio. Elected officials can't "politic for a referendum", but the county could find other people to encourage voters to approve a public safety tax referendum, as scare tactics don't work.

Shelby County could also petition to become a home rule County, which would get us out of PTELL. DeLashmit stated Shelby County would be the smallest counties in IL if they were able to become home rule. It was also suggested the County do some type of a lump sum payment for the FOP employees to see if this would satisfy those employees with the ARPA increase coming to an end.

DeLashmit suggested the Treasurer, State's Attorney and Sheriff do the math and come up with some figures so Bellwether can "run the numbers" to see how these figures would impact the General Fund and the budget overall.

There was no further business for the Closed Session.

There was no action taken in the Closed Session.

Jessica Fox
County Clerk and Recorder