



COUNTY BOARD REPORT

Highlights of Board Activities for 2021-2022

Changing the Way We Do Business

Board members embraced a philosophy of change over the last 2 years, allocating significant time and resources to improving county government and fundamentally changing the way we do business. Key examples:

- ✓ Reduced the Board size from 24 to 20 members
- ✓ Restructured and reduced Standing Committees from seven to five committees
- ✓ Approved digital approval process for payment of claims
 - Created Claims Committee which meets twice monthly
 - Significantly improved timely payment of claims and minimized claims paid in vacation
 - Increased transparency with comprehensive monthly reports of all claims, payroll, and revenue for Board agenda
- ✓ Transitioned from paper to digital meeting agendas
 - Purchased OnBoard Organizational software and tablets
 - Improved transparency of Board business with comprehensive agendas and supporting documents posted on the County website
- ✓ Hired a County Administrator, under and subject to the direction of the Board; responsible for the effective administration of policies adopted by the Board.
- ✓ Created an Employee Spotlight Program to highlight and recognize the contributions of employees
- ✓ Developed standardized forms such as the *Board Action Request* form and the *Request for Board Appointment* forms to gather relevant information for informed decision-making and a transparent process.
- ✓ Comprehensive revision of the *Financial Policies and Procedures* to address recent statutory changes and internal procedural changes resulting from the transfer of responsibilities from the County Clerk to the Treasurer's Office.
- ✓ Revised the *Board Rules and Procedures* to reflect changes in Board size, committee restructuring, and electronic voting.
- ✓ Revised the *Employee Handbook* to reflect statutory changes and internal practices.

“If you don’t
like something,
change it.”

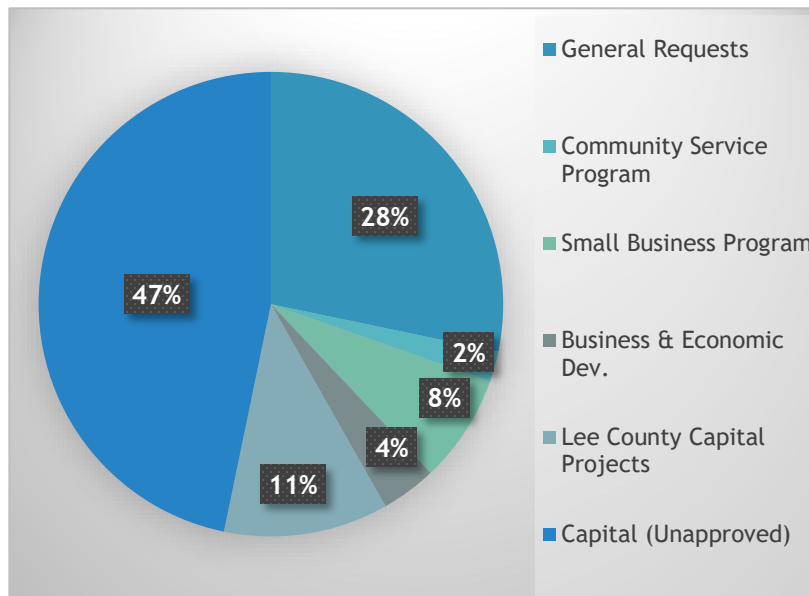
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Maya Angelou

Ad Hoc Committees

The Board created Ad Hoc Committees to tackle emerging issues. These committees spent hundreds of hours taking a deeper look at the issues, developing recommendations, and presenting them to the Board for consideration.

The **American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Committee** was charged with developing recommendations for distributing \$6,622,748 of ARPA funding targeted towards COVID relief. The process was led by Board Chair **Bob Olson** with the assistance of Grant Coordinator Sara Leisner, Grant Compliance Officer Patty Rudolphi, and Grant Consultant Paul Rudolphi. The Board participated in a strategic planning process to develop a list of priorities which included 1) Assistance to small business and the tourism/travel industry; 2) Assistance to households using community service agencies; 3) Job training programs; 4) Technology improvements to Board meeting rooms; and 5) improvements to County-wide broadband infrastructure. Over the year-long process the Board approved allocations in each of the Top 5 priorities.

In early 2022, the U.S. Treasury adopted its “final” rule, significantly changing the interim guidelines for eligible uses of ARPA funds by creating a standard allowance of up to \$10,000,000 in the Revenue Loss category which could be used for “government services”. The Board approved the recommendation by the ARPA Committee to take the entire ARPA allocation under the standard allowance which offered greater flexibility in eligible spending while minimizing the reporting requirements to the U.S. Treasury. Following this decision, the Committee adjusted its priorities to include some long-deferred maintenance of County facilities. The chart lists some of the ARPA funding allocations to date.



General Requests	
Fire Departments	\$100,000
SVCC Ag Program	\$100,000
Dixon Theatre	\$100,000
Abandoned Properties	\$100,000
Election Equipment	\$197,750
Lee Co Fairgrounds	\$236,000
Board Room Technology	\$250,000
	<u>\$1,083,750</u>
ARPA Programs	
Community Service	\$139,392
Small Business	\$499,988
Business & Econ Develop	\$255,000
	<u>\$894,380</u>
ARPA Capital Requests	
Old Courthouse	\$299,900
Court Services Boiler	\$209,800
Court Services Elevator	\$300,000
Former LEC Demolition	\$35,440
Old Courthouse Elevator	\$132,500
IT Server Rm Relocate	\$57,399
Board Chair Conf Room	\$24,000
	<u>\$1,059,039</u>

The **Renewable Energy Committee** was charged with strengthening renewable energy zoning ordinances, addressing solar energy, wind energy, battery storage, and private pipelines. The review and recommendation process was led by Committee **Chair Chris Norberg**. The Committee demonstrated a commitment to their responsibility, taking more than a year to develop comprehensive recommendations for the Board's consideration at the November 2022 meeting.



New renewable energy development was prohibited during this review period as a result of Board approved moratoriums. The Committee was assisted by consultants Chastain and Associates, and Lee County Renewable Energy Coordinator Alice Henkel.



The **Employee Health Insurance Committee**, led by **Chair Nancy Naylor** was charged with reviewing the existing employee health insurance plan to determine if other cost-effective options were available. The Committee, consisting of employees and Board members, was assisted by insurance consultant Brad Johnson, Assured Partners. The comprehensive eight-month review process included comparing the Lee County Plan to others in similar markets, identifying our underlying insurance cost drivers,

obtaining quotes from health insurance providers, exploring areas of potential improvement of the existing program, and finally, making a recommendation to the Board on the Committee's findings. In August of 2022, the Board ratified the Committee's recommendation to stay with the existing health care provider without modification to the plan.

The **UTV Committee**, led by Committee **Chair Jack Skrogstad**, was charged with exploring the viability of a County UTV Ordinance. The process included researching and developing a proposed County ordinance in compliance with the Illinois Vehicle Code which would allow UTV's to safely travel on local County roads. The viability of the County ordinance was largely dependent on the cooperation of townships and municipalities to provide the necessary network of UTV approved roadways. The Board ultimately voted down the proposed ordinance due to liability concerns and a lack of participation from other local governments. Despite the outcome, the Committee was commended for their time, energy, and due diligence. This serves as a positive example of the Board's commitment to developing good public policy.



In June of 2021, the Board approved a joint Lee-Ogle **Mass Transit District Committee**, charged with the responsibility of formalizing the creation of a Mass Transit District pursuant to the Local Mass Transit District Act. Rob LeSage to provide legal process. The adoption of a Mass Transit District, is on the agendas for their respective



LOTS contracted with Attorney counsel through the complex resolution forming the Reagan Ogle and Lee County Board November meetings. The goal is to complete the process before the beginning of Illinois' 2024 fiscal year.



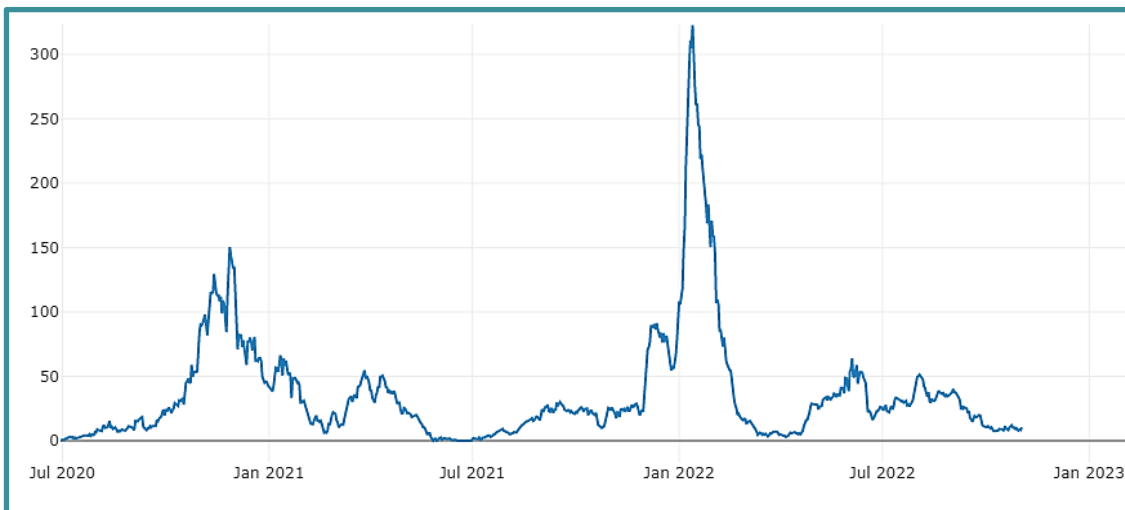
An informal advisory group consisting of Board members John Nicholson and Mike Koppien, Charley Boonstra (State’s Attorney), Dee Duffy (Zoning Administrator), and Jennifer Kolb (Health Department) addressed the topic of Abandoned & Unsafe Properties in Lee County. The advisory group reviewed the various known abandoned properties and prioritized them based on overall safety concerns and the legal and/or practical ability to remediate. Attorney Tim Zollinger was appointed as special counsel to assist in the legal process. The Board allocated \$100,000 of ARPA funds to pay costs such as legal fees, asbestos abatement, and demolition. As of this date, one home has been demolished, a second one has been purchased through the annual tax auction in preparation for demolition, and a third property is going through the legal process of seeking authority to remediate. Numerous other properties are on the radar for future consideration.

Adapting to COVID-19

COVID was a continued risk during the 2021 - 2022 term. The County adapted to changing CDC protocols as necessary to promote safety while maintaining operations. Measures for social distancing, quarantining, and COVID were developed and implemented. The Lee County Health Department devoted all available resources to provide contact tracing, vaccination clinics, free test kits, and general guidance to the public and County Departments.

The Board adapted to remote attendance, zoom meetings, and live-streaming to YouTube. Following the expiration of the Governor’s Executive Order, the Board codified the practice of remote attendance into its Rules and Procedures for the first time ever outside of the pandemic. This new way of doing business galvanized the Board to invest in new audio/video technology upgrades to the Board meeting room.

Lee County COVID Case Rate - 7 day Rolling Average
July 2020 - November 2022



County Facilities

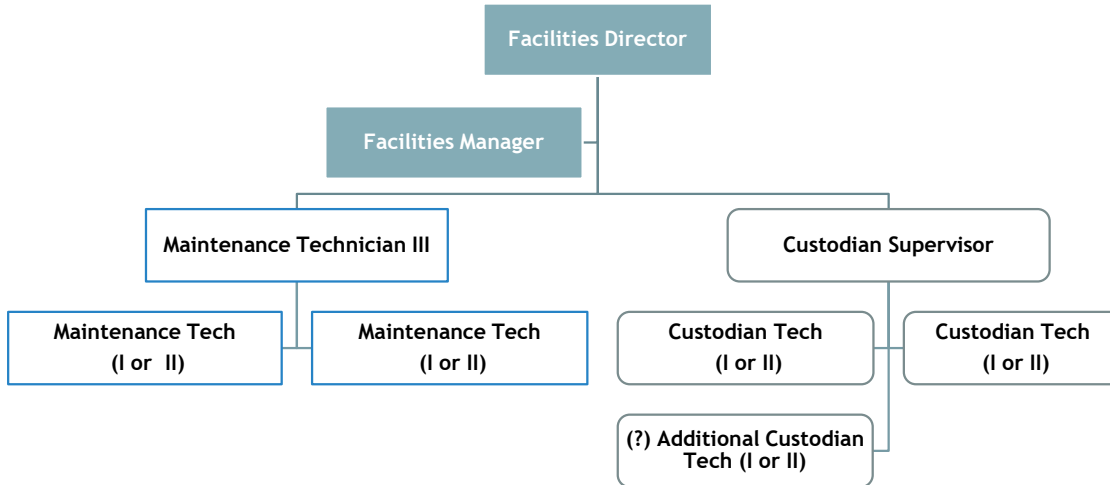
Capital Projects

Additional revenues from ARPA, sales tax, and other County revenue sources provided the Board an opportunity to address long-deferred maintenance to County facilities. A standardized bidding process was implemented in compliance with applicable state laws and Lee County policies. Projects completed or currently in-progress are listed in the chart below.

Old Courthouse	Court Services Bldg	Former LEC
Tuckpointing	Elevator Replacement	Interior Demolition
New HVAC System	New Boilers	Asbestos Removal
Backup Generator		Lead Abatement
Board Room Audio/Video		
Board Chair Conf Room		

Maintenance Step Program

To address the much-needed maintenance to County facilities, the Board also approved a strategic plan for restructuring the maintenance department, including an employee step program designed to hire and/or develop a skilled maintenance workforce to perform the critical facility maintenance functions.



Board Member Changes

Over the 2021 - 2022 term we regretfully said goodbye to some veteran Board members...which opened the door for us to welcome new members. (Apparently member Tom Kitson discovered the revolving door!)

Effective Date	Member Name	Action	District
12/17/2020	Jack Skrogstad	Appointed	District 4
04/15/2021	Dave Bowers (2016 - 2021)	Resignation	District 3
05/20/2021	Tom Wilson	Appointed	District 3
06/25/2021	Jim Wentling (2007 - 2021)	Resignation	District 4
08/16/2021	Tom Kitson	Resignation	District 3
08/19/2021	Tom Kitson	Appointed	District 4
10/21/2021	Nancy Naylor	Appointed	District 3
09/22/2022	Bob Gibler (2012 - 2021)	Resignation	District 4
10/21/2021	Michael Book	Appointed	District 4
01/03/2022	James Horstman (2019 - 2022)	Resignation	District 3
01/22/2022	Tim Bivins	Appointed	District 3
10/14/2022	Doug Farster (1998 - 2022)		District 3
10/14/2022	William "Bill" Palen (2008 - 2022)		District 4

Changes of County Officials

We also welcomed some new County Officials during 2021 - 2022, most of which were already Lee County employees taking on a new leadership role:

Effective Date	Name	Status	Position
12/07/2020	Amy Johnson	Elected	Circuit Clerk
02/01/2021	Nancy Petersen	Appointed	County Clerk
02/02/2021	Paul Gorski	Hired	IT Director
07/01/2021	Chris Tennyson, ROE	Appointed	Regional Sup of Schools
07/12/2021	Jennifer Boyd	Appointed	Assessor
07/12/2021	Wendy Ryerson	Hired	County Administrator

Next Reporting Period

Changes will continue into the 2023-2024 reporting period as a result of the 10-year reapportionment cycle, reduction of Board size, and the restructuring of committee responsibilities, among other things. Emergent topics for the Board's consideration include:

- Orientation of new members
- Finalize the creation of the Reagan Mass Transit District
- Implementation of the Safe-T Act
- Implementation of the Maintenance step program
- A comprehensive review of zoning ordinances, policies, and procedures
- Review of existing property/liability insurance provider
- Prioritize and address abandoned, unsafe property

Future Capital Needs

Another emergent topic is to develop a strategic financial plan to address aging County Facilities and long-deferred maintenance by prioritizing more than \$11,000,000 of capital projects on the horizon in the next 1 - 5 years. Examples include:

- County Highway Facility Maintenance & Modernization **(\$4,000,000)**
- Court Services Building
 - Replace HVAC ground & rooftop units **(\$1,800,000)**
 - Replacement of original boiler **(\$270,000)**
 - Upgrade Generator **(\$377,000)**
 - Additional Courtroom (unknown)
 - Roof **(\$118,000)**
- Old Courthouse
 - Plaster Repair **(\$144,000)**
 - Elevator Repair **(\$121,000)**
 - Roof **(\$135,000)**
- Former Law Enforcement Center (LEC)
 - Demolition & Repurpose **(\$2,000,000)**
 - Maintenance Department
 - Secure Storage
 - Secure Parking (Judges)
 - Holding Cells
- Broadband (grant match commitment) **\$1,800,000**

These capital projects are in addition to the typical annual capital requests totaling \$280,000 for IT Hardware and squad cars (related equipment). Sheriff's Department body cameras, estimated to cost \$280,000 have also been identified as a capital expenditure for FY 2024.