



The Cornpicker

Bulletin of Fairbury, IL Rotary Club

Fairburyrotary.com



2010 - 2011 Officers

President Charlie McDonald
 Pres. Elect Becky Whitfill
 Vice President
 Sec/Treas/Editor Leroy McPherson

DATE/TIME/PLACE: Dec. 28, 2010 - 12:00 noon at Dave

ATTENDANCE: 20

LOTTO: K. Bahler & M. Petersen

ACTION ON THE AVENUES

CLUB SERVICE

Programs:

- 01/04 - OPEN
- 01/11 - Rick Davidson
- 01/18 - P.C.H.S.
- 01/25 - Bob Nussbaum
- Feb. - OPEN



- 1/21 - Gary Huston
- 1/24 - Bill Munz
- 1/31 - Marge Mosier

Bit's & Pieces

Determination and perseverance move the world;
 thinking that others will do it for you
 is a sure way to fail.
 Marva Collins, Choosing to Succeed

AREA CLUB MEETINGS

Bloomington	12:00 Noon	Thurs.	Elks Club
Gibson City	6:45 a.m.	Wed.	The Country Kettle
Gilman	6:05 p.m.	Tues.	Gilman Lounge
Lincoln	11:50 a.m.	Wed.	Elks Country Club
Normal	12:00 Noon	Wed.	Bone Student Center

MANAGEMENT ALLIANCE

Calvin Jackson



In 1994 Calvin retired and began his next venture in Springfield with Management Alliance. He spends several hours and days with the Legis-

lation. He can sit in the House with his laptop and watch the Senate at the same time. Right now we are in a Lame Duck Session which requires only a simple majority to pass bills, etc. In Veto Sessions it requires 36 votes in Senate and 71 in the house. If you would like to spend a day, feel free to call him. With the changes in legislation, the House and Senate get a budget put in front of them one hour before they have to vote on it. They are looking at streamlining teacher dismissal. Basically, I put my pen down and listened.

Enclosed is the Capital Fax "*What a Freaking Mess*". Please take time to read it. Calvin distributed several other handouts also.

CAPITOL FAX

by Rich Miller

Voice 217.529.6811 Fax 312.896.9456 thecapitolfaxblog.com capitolfax@aol.com FRIDAY, May 7, 2010

WHAT A FREAKING MESS

BROKEN One of the things that became crystal clear last night during the Senate's debate over a new state budget was that the Democratic leaders have completely broken the appropriations process.

Over the years, more and more power has been concentrated into the hands of the leaders, which leads us up to today when they have it all. Long gone are the days when appropriations committees had any input. Also vanished is the "budgeteers" system, when approp experts from each caucus would sit down to hash out the budget's details. Instead, all of the work is now being done by staff at the leaders' absolute direction.

As a consequence, Senators barely had any idea about what they were voting for last night when they approved a budget for next year along party lines. The committee hearing before the vote provided precious few details and instead revolved around partisan bickering over a Democratic maneuver designed to embarrass the Republicans. Republicans repeatedly denounced the budget process as far too rushed and wholly untransparent and they were right.

This was without a doubt the most top-down, opaque budget product ever produced under the Statehouse dome. The Democrats and Republicans couldn't even agree on whether spending increased or dropped next fiscal year because there was so little time to analyze the data and the legislation itself is so obtuse that analysis was made extremely difficult, if not impossible.

The governor's new budget powers are the root of that difficulty. He's supposed to make the big cuts, and nobody really knows how much he will actually slash. The legislation includes a 5 percent reduction in personnel and operations lines, but Gov. Quinn would be given the power to hold back even more spending and make major changes to state mandated programs with the stroke of a pen. Nobody knows how far he will really go, so it's impossible to say just what the final spending level will be.

And now the stinking disaster moves to the House, where just about everything appears to be in doubt.

The Democrats are 10-15 votes shy of having enough votes to pass a cigarette tax increase, insiders say. The emergency budget powers given to the governor are also being viewed with extreme skepticism within the majority party. Few of them wanted to borrow in order to make the state's scheduled pension payments, so instead the state just won't make the payments until January, which will mean the systems will have to sell hundreds of millions of dollars in assets to cover checks to retirees - and that will cost the state billions in the long

term. Borrowing to make the payments would actually be far cheaper, but don't bother trying to explain that to anybody.

The only thing that appears close to being on track in the House is the move to bond the state's share of the national tobacco settlement. But that represents just a little over \$1 billion out of the original \$6+ billion revenue/ borrowing/ deferring/ reduction proposal.

Gov. Pat Quinn will meet with House Democrats behind closed doors this morning at 9:30. He'll definitely have his work cut out for him. The House Dems haven't caucused all year, and many have been itching to get some things off their chests about the way this autocratic railroad is being run. There's a move afoot by some to push for a vote on an income tax hike today, which Quinn has proposed twice in two years and abandoned both times. Quinn will have to justify not only the process, but the substance of this budget, and he's probably not up to the task to do either.

As always, there's still a chance that they'll scrape up the votes to pass this hideous monster by the end of the day. The liberal independents are hoping to "send a message" by withholding their support, but even they will have to admit that nothing much will improve by May 31st, and that things will only get worse for their cherished programs if the session goes into overtime and the GOP gets a seat at the table.

There's no way that a tax hike will pass this month. Even the lib indies have to comprehend that cold, hard fact. The House Democratic recalcitrants have proposed almost no cuts themselves and probably wouldn't support many if they were actually on the table. And with pension fund borrowing out of the picture - at their direction - there is just no other way to go.

Stomping their little feet and demanding they be delivered from this nightmare without coming up with a realistic, do-able, passable alternative looks more like the actions of spoiled children who've been shielded from unpleasant realities all their lives than legislators. They let their big daddy run things all year without uttering a single word, and now he's setting the table with one of the most unpalatable spreads ever and they're threatening to hold their breath until they turn blue. Nice timing, people.

Of course, the Republicans are no better. Some whined last night that recommendations from groups like the Illinois Policy Institute weren't included in the Democratic budget plan. But not one person from that side of the aisle ever bothered to walk the IPI budget ideas down to LRB and have them turned into an appropriations bill. The reason is obvious. Not even the Republicans were willing to go on record supporting such radical cuts.

Senate President Cullerton rightly pointed out last night that Sen. Bill Brady had introduced an appropriations bill at the beginning of the year. Instead of turning that bill into an alternative GOP budget, Brady gave up his sponsorship. The House Republican caucus proposed a little over \$5 billion in budget cutting "suggestions" earlier this year, but almost all of it was based on a goofy and fiscally impossible scheme to use nonexistent dollars from the capital plan to fund the budget. And when the HGOP higher-ups realized what they'd done, they backed away from it entirely.

Considering all the empty bloviating from the Republican side, it's difficult to blame the frustrated Senate Democrats for pulling their little stunt last night with a pot of unspent "member initiative" money.

Most member initiative capital money hasn't been spent this fiscal year, so it has to be reappropriated if it's to actually be spent next fiscal year. The projects of three of the four legislative caucuses were included in one of the amendments which contained the overall budget plan. But the Senate Republicans' \$100 million share was put into a separate amendment.

"You want your projects, you vote for them," was the Democratic message, since it was totally unlikely that the SGOPs would have voted for the larger budget amendment containing their pork projects.

The Democrats decreed that they planned to structure a roll call and put nine floor votes on the amendment to assure it passed, but that every single one of the Republicans would have to vote for it or they could kiss their projects goodbye.

The Republicans refused to go along and announced that they would all vote against the amendment as one. And the Democrats eventually backed down when it was pointed out to them that they had sworn a solemn oath to never play games with those projects if the Republicans put votes on the revenue streams to fund the capital bill last year. In the end, the Democrats had to approve the Republican project amendment without a single GOP vote.

What a mess.

* Meanwhile, the "slots at tracks" bill hit a major snag yesterday when Senate President Cullerton told House Speaker Michael Madigan that he wouldn't run it this spring.

Madigan took control of the negotiations late in the game and was prepared to move the bill through the House yesterday, but Cullerton was under pressure to spurn the measure by members of his caucus who have riverboats in their districts and who therefore didn't want the competition. Others who want boats in their districts also opposed the plan. Cullerton was also pushed by both parties in his chamber to stand up to Madigan and refuse to accept the ready-made meal the Speaker had prepared. The Senate bill Madigan chose to use as a vehicle was sponsored by a Senate Republican, and he refused to relinquish control, completing the circle of death.

Madigan has assigned the horse racing gaming bill to his Executive Committee this morning and word is it will likely be moved to the House floor, but don't expect a floor vote unless this can all be ironed out in a big hurry. And considering the other problems facing the majority party right now, that doesn't appear likely.

* Despite the ineptitude and the carnage, there was some progress yesterday. The McCormick Place reform was finished and passed by the House. An unconstitutional lobbyist registration law was revamped to lower annual fees from the original \$1000 to \$300. Nursing home reforms were approved. Universities will be allowed to borrow money to stay afloat. And the STAR bonds ("Worst Bill Ever") proposal wasn't called for a vote last night in the House as originally planned. They can do things right when they put their minds to it. It's just that they don't put their minds to it nearly often enough.

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