

**Winnebago County Board**  
**Legislative & Lobbying Committee Meeting**  
County Administration Building  
404 Elm Street, Conference Room 510  
Rockford, IL 61101

Tuesday, July 8, 2025  
5:30 PM

**Present:**

Paul Arena  
Angela Fellars  
Valerie Hanserd  
Tim Nabors  
John F. Sweeney

**Others Present:**

Joseph Chiarelli, County Board Chairman  
Marlana Dokken, Director, Chairman's Office of Criminal Justice Initiatives  
Karen Elyea, Chief Strategy Officer  
Aaron Booker, County Board Member  
Dr. Sandra Martell, Public Health Administrator **(via Zoom)**  
Nick Bustos, Mercury **(via Zoom)**  
Christian Flores, Mercury **(via Zoom)**  
Patrick Barry, Fulcrum Government Strategies **(via Zoom)**

**Absent:**

John Penney

**AGENDA:**

- A. Call to Order
- B. Roll Call
- C. Approval of September 23 and October 22, 2024 Minutes
- D. Public Comment – This is the time we invite the public to address the Legislative and Lobbying Committee with issues and concerns. We ask you to limit your comments to three minutes. Personal attacks or inappropriate language of any sort will not be tolerated. We will allow a maximum of five speakers on a first come basis with sign up at the meeting. Speakers may not address zoning matters which are pending before the ZBA, the Zoning Committee or the County Board. Personnel matters or pending or threatened litigation may not be addressed in open session. An individual may speak a maximum of three times per calendar year on the same topic. This prohibition shall include the repetition of the same topic in a statement on what is purported to be a different topic. After acknowledgment by the chair, please stand and state your name. Thank you.
- E. Legislative Update from Mercury
- F. Legislative Update from Fulcrum
- G. Review The Ferguson Group (TFG) Grant Writing Services Agreement
- H. Strategic Plan Discussion
- I. Future Agenda Items
- J. Adjournment

**Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 PM.

**Roll Call** – Paul Arena yes, Angela Fellars yes, Valerie Hanserd yes, Tim Nabors yes, John F. Sweeney yes.

**A quorum is present.**

**Approval of September 23 and October 22, 2024 Minutes**

Chairman Chiarelli called for a motion to approve the minutes of September 23 and October 22, 2024.

Motion: Mr. Nabors. Second: Ms. Hanserd.

Chairman Chiarelli called for any discussion.

The motion passed by a unanimous voice vote.

**Public Comment**

Reading of the Public Comment Section of the Agenda was omitted due to no one present to speak.

**Review The Ferguson Group (TFG) Grant Writing Services Agreement**

Ms. Elyea reviewed The Ferguson Group's contract for grant writing services and discussed the possibility of reducing the tier level of service. The agreement requires a 30-day notice for any changes in the level of service. There was a discussion about the Highway's use of the Ferguson Group's grant writing services. Further discussion focused on tier levels of service and their utilization. The committee was asked to review the contract and consider different tier options. Chairman Chiarelli then called for any further questions.

**Legislative Update from Mercury**

Mr. Bustos provided a legislative update highlighting the three federal funding projects secured for Winnebago County. He gave an overview of federal funding projects, legislative initiatives, and the financial implications for Illinois and Winnebago County, based on the most recent Federal legislation and the Reconciliation Bill passed on July 4, 2025. Mr. Bustos called for questions. Discussion followed.

Mr. Flores discussed the programmatic requests and some programs affected by the President's proposed federal budget.

**Legislative Update from Fulcrum**

Mr. Barry introduced his colleagues, Jake Butcher, Aaron Holmes, Jessica Nardulli, and Brandon Phelps. Mr. Barry discussed the focus of the General Assembly during the spring session and Winnebago County's initiatives. Mr. Barry called for questions. Discussion followed. Various legislative and funding matters were discussed, including noise ordinances, solar energy legislation, and concerns regarding ComEd's utility connection requirements, as well as new Federal Medicaid legislation affecting nursing homes. Additional information will be obtained about the Medicaid bill's impact and will be communicated to lawmakers.

**Strategic Plan Discussion**

The committee discussed updating the County's Strategic Plan, with plans to facilitate a review session with board members.

The committee addressed concerns about the effectiveness of lobbyists, the water security assessment strategy plan, and exploring alternative methods for handling municipal waste, while considering potential new landfill sites.

**Future Agenda Items**

- None reported.

**Motion to Adjourn**

Chairperson Chiarelli called for a motion to adjourn.

A motion and a second were made.

The motion to adjourn was passed by a unanimous voice vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Bleile  
Executive Assistant