



ANDREW MANAR
CHAIRMAN

MACOUPIN COUNTY BOARD

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June 14, 2011
Macoupin County Enquirer Democrat
Letter to the Editor:

For the second time in two weeks, I would like to respond to a letter to the editor critical of the 2008 voter approved referendum to reduce the size of the Macoupin County Board.

Mr. Tom Stoecker advocated in a letter to the editor last week that the County Board should not implement the wishes of the voters of Macoupin County. Mr. Stoecker stated, rather, that the County Board should reject the will of the voters and cut their pay as an alternative.

As I stated in a letter to the editor last week, the choices of either reducing the size of the county board or reducing the pay of county board members are not mutually exclusive; the county board should do both in my opinion given the sizeable fiscal challenges that lie ahead.

Mr. Stoecker stated in his letter that "the problem is that the Board has allowed their pay and reimbursements to get out of control." County Board pay has not increased during my tenure as Chairman.

Mr. Stoecker also stated that "Cutting the number of Board members would make it easier for corruption to happen". While I appreciate his opinion, I respectfully disagree. The size of the county board has nothing to do with the purveyance of corruption. Since when has smaller government led to corrupt government? Illinois has 102 counties. Only 5 counties have a larger County Board than Macoupin County. The critical question in front of the County Board is not about corruption. The critical question is all about doing more with less.

Mr. Stoecker and I agree that the County Board should hold its meetings during evening hours. But while advocating this in his letter, Mr. Stoecker, perhaps inadvertently stated that "A review of the last two years meetings show that he (Andy Manar) has missed an overwhelming majority of the meetings." While I welcome advocacy and support of my position of evening county board meetings, Mr. Stoecker's statement regarding my attendance is false. Attendance records of County board meetings are posted for the public on the county's website and are accessible to anyone.

Mr. Stoecker concluded his letter by saying that "its time to open up the Board to the public." During my tenure as Chairman, the County's website has been expanded to include audits, budget documents, resolutions, ordinances, meeting minutes, committee meeting posting notices, court documents, press releases, property records and more. While there is always more transparency that can be achieved,



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this County Board has made and will continue to make transparency a cornerstone of its proceedings.

As our Nation's democracy was taking root, Thomas Jefferson advanced the idea of the importance of an informed electorate. A functioning democracy relies on informed citizens. I am of the belief that public officials should be criticized regularly. Those criticisms should be based on facts. Arm a citizen with facts and he or she will hold public officials accountable. While I welcome Mr. Stoecker's opinion and his willingness to go on the record and engage in a public discussion as an active and interested citizen, the facts presented in his letter fall short.

As I stated last week, partisanship plays little if any role in fashioning the actions of the Macoupin County Board. In the coming months, the County Board will be making these decisions not behind closed doors but in public. I am confident that these critical decisions will be made by the individuals serving on the County Board not as partisan democrats or republicans, but as elected representatives who have chosen to serve their County.

Andrew Manar
County Board Chairman