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Kane County Government Center

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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COUNTY TASK FORCE TO ACCEPT APPLICATIONS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE METRA BOARD

Geneva, Illinois - Applications from residents interested in the next available Kane County appointment to the region's Commuter Rail Service Board, or Metra Board, will be accepted at the Kane County Board Office through Monday, June 13. A formal vetting process by a special County Board Task Force is scheduled to begin June 16, and a recommendation presented to the full County Board on July 12, according to Board Chairman Karen McConnaughay, the Task Force chairman.

McConnaughay is strongly advocating for the resignation of the entire, 11-member Metra Board of Directors, including Kane County's representative. There is no statutory provision for her removal and the County's representative has declined to resign.

In a May 16 letter to the County Board, McConnaughay said in light of the tumult at Metra over the past year, including the ongoing investigation into "the significant financial improprieties by the former (and deceased) Metra Executive Director...I have come to the conclusion that the future success of Metra would be best served by the resignation of the entire board."

McConnaughay is empowered by state statute to make the Kane County appointment with the advice and consent of the County Board but has opted, she said, for a countywide search, vetting and recommendation process as a proactive step "to reassess our Kane County representation on the Metra Board, not only during this time of crisis but for the future viability of the Metra system." She said she would make an appointment "at the first available opportunity."

Applicants must be at least 21 years old and a county resident to qualify for consideration. Although there appears to be no formal job description or set of specific qualifications or experience required for appointment to the Metra Board, the Task Force has indicated it will take into account experience that is relative or applicable to a public transit board, an availability to serve, and a convincing demonstration of why candidates consider themselves qualified. As part of the Task Force's vetting and interview process, each candidate will be asked specifically whether a change in compensation - the Metra post pays \$25,000 annually - pension or benefits would alter their interest in an appointment.

Under statutory changes made by the Illinois General Assembly in 1983, the Metra Board was charged with a broad range of responsibilities related to fare and service levels, budgeting, capital programming, long-range planning and strategic service expansion. The Board's current members include several business owners, a labor lawyer and a former county political chairman. Seven members are present or former municipal, county and state officeholders. Metra is the largest and one of the most complex commuter rail systems in the nation, with a proposed 2011 budget includes \$634.2 million for operations and a \$407.5 million capital program. Public hearings on the proposed budget will be held in November.

"One of the challenges here is to identify a job description," said McConnaughay. By design, the Task Force is made up of County Board members who serve on the Transportation Committee and represent communities serviced by the Metra suburban rail system, including Board members Mike Donahue, of Geneva; Drew Frasz, of Elburn; Cathy Hurlbut, of Elgin and Jesse Vazquez, of Aurora.

Applicants must submit a resume and cover letter to the County Board Office outlining their qualifications and explaining their interest in the position. Applications can be submitted in person, by mail, FAX or sent electronically to:

Kane County Government Center
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Copies of all the applications will be distributed to Task Force members for their review and ranking. A review of the rankings and details of the interview process, including decisions on which candidates will be invited to interview, is scheduled for the June 16 meeting. The Task Force will make public a list of all applicants as well as finalists.

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