



Madison County administration torn regarding validity of Monday meeting

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer
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EDWARDSVILLE - A special meeting called Monday, Dec. 5 by newly-elected **Madison County Board Chairperson Kurt Prenzler** may not be legally valid, **Madison County State's Attorney Tom Gibbons** said.

Gibbons said the meeting was not legally valid because it was conducted by outgoing **Madison County Board member Stephen Adler** instead of Prenzler or an interim board chair selected by the rest of the board. Prenzler said Adler was only helping him conduct the meeting. If that meeting was invalid, Gibbons said all action taken at it, including the appointment of **Candace Gilstrap** as interim **Madison County Treasurer** and the swearing-in of all newly-elected board members, are not legally binding. Gibbons said this could wreak havoc on future issues with the county. Prenzler insists the meeting was both properly-conducted and legitimate.

"The way I see it, the Dec. 5 meeting was validly called," Prenzler said in an emailed statement. "There was a quorum, and it was a valid meeting, and the board had all authority to conduct the business in the meeting."

As soon as 10 minutes before Monday's special meeting was held, Gibbons said he warned Prenzler about allowing Adler to conduct the meeting. Prenzler said Gibbons did not object to the meeting whatsoever.

"First, the state's attorney was sitting right next to me during the entire meeting, and never raised any objections about the way the meeting was convened and never made any objections to any of the actions taken by the board," Prenzler stated in an email. "In fact, when specifically asked by one of the board members whether there was proper notice given so the board could approve the department heads, the state's attorney said yes. In fact, the state's attorney during the meeting specifically reminded me to get the board to approve the appointment of the interim treasurer before we adjourned."

Following the meeting, Gibbons said he was approached about the validity of the meeting, which seemed to have been conducted by Adler acting as chair, throughout the day on Tuesday, Dec. 6. He said he contacted the Illinois Attorney General's Office who he said agreed the meeting was invalid. Gibbons said he was acting on behalf of the county as its attorney. He suggested the board call a special provisional meeting through the county clerk's office as soon as possible to perform a "re-do" on Monday's decisions. Prenzler said such a meeting would not be necessary.

"I don't think a new meeting is necessary," he said in a statement.

In order to get that provisional meeting, one third of the sitting county board members must approve it and ask for it through the county clerk's office. One third of the board is a different number to Prenzler and Gibbons. Prenzler believes the board is currently a full board. Gibbons recognizes only the nine members who were not up for reelection, because all actions taken Monday are legally invalid, he said.

"I've been on the phone with eight of the nine sitting board members all day," Gibbons said Tuesday evening. "I told them of this option."

Madison County Clerk Debra Ming-Mendoza said she was advised by Gibbons the meeting was not legally binding, and said she has not received any requests from any member of the Madison County Board. She said a special meeting to be held Thursday evening at 5 p.m. was called by a majority of the board members and proper notice was filed in a timely fashion for that meeting.

The purpose of Thursday's meeting is transparency, Prenzler said. Several county office head appointments were tabled during Monday's meeting. Prenzler said he wanted to ensure each member of the board approved his appointments, which have been tabled until the regular Dec. 21 meeting of the Madison County Board. On Thursday evening, however, Prenzler said he wanted to ask the board's approval for two appointments he deems to be essential - county administrator and IT director. Prenzler said he provided board members with a complete resume for each of his appointments and their job descriptions.

"We're trying to do it better," Prenzler said Thursday afternoon. "Formerly, the position would be on the agenda and the person's name would be announced at the meeting. They were hardly ever objected to, and they had nearly unanimous approval. We're not going to do that. Being transparent is a little more messy, but that's what we are committed to do."

Douglas Hulme is Prenzler's choice for **Madison County Administrator**. Hulme has served as Prenzler's chief deputy treasurer since 2014. **Rob Dorman** was chosen for IT

director. Prenzler described that position as the "information backbone" of the county, saying it was required 24/7 for county administration and public safety. Dorman worked as an IT director for **DB Schenker** and **UTi Integrated Logistics**.

Thursday's meeting will be held in room 203 of the Madison County Administration Building at 5 p.m.