



Letter To The Editor: Hulme Letter Read To Madison County Finance And Operations Committee

October 14 2020 10:01 AM



**(This letter was read during the October 14, 2020 Finance and Government
Operations Committee Meeting)**

Chairman Don Moore and County Finance and Government Operations Board
Members:

It has come to my attention via a Freedom of Information Act request of the Madison County Board that potential evidence of multiple Open Meetings Act violations may have occurred during the April 16th, 2020 County Board meeting.

I am specifically concerned about text messages that were sent between board members during the virtual county board meeting. I am shocked that the county board is openly violating the Open Meetings Act with secret communications.

The texts are being sent behind the back of Chairman Prenzler and County Clerk Debbie Ming-Mendoza, and therefore bypassing the official public record of the meeting.

County Board meetings are public meetings and secret electronic communications sent to intentionally to subvert the conduction of public business is wrong and should not be tolerated.

As you already know, elected county officials are required by Illinois Law to complete Open Meetings Act training provided by the Illinois Attorney General. There is no excuse for violations of the Illinois Open Meetings Act.

Text messages between board members during a public meeting are public documents and the destruction of these texts would also be the destruction of public records.

Public meetings and the public's right to public documents are fundamental pillars to American Democracy and I urge you to take all appropriate actions to end this violation of Illinois Law, report it to the proper authorities, investigate where the evidence may lead, and to make the findings public.

The text evidence gathered so far appear to show that secret texts of deliberations were sent by Chairman Pro-Tem Mike Walters, Ray Wesley, Mike Parkinson, Erica Conway-Harriss, David Michael, Tom McRae, Chrissy Dutton-Wiley, and Jamie Goggin during the [April 16th](#) meeting.

I urge the county clerk to immediately add these secret deliberations to the public meeting minutes of the [April 16th](#) board meeting so that it is apart of the public record.

I also suggest that the clerk search for additional texts from board members and county officials that have not already been discovered and make them public, as well as self-repoting the incident to the Public Access Counselor of the Illinois Attorney General's Office.

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