

## **Minutes of the Transportation Committee**

The Transportation Committee of the McLean County Board met on Tuesday, October 5, 2004 at 8:00 a.m. in Room 400 of the Government Center, 115 E. Washington Street, Bloomington, Illinois.

Members Present: Chairman Bass, Members Owens, Cavallini, Dean, Hoselton and O'Connor

Members Absent: None

Other Members Present: None

Staff Members Present: Mr. John Zeunik, County Administrator; Mr. Terry Lindberg, Assistant County Administrator, Ms. Christine Northcutt, Recording Secretary, County Administrator's Office

Department Heads Present: Mr. Jack Mitchell, County Engineer;

Others Present: Ms. Karen Swick, Accounting Specialist II, County Highway Department; Mr. Lafe Epperson, Fleet Manager, County Highway Department, Mr. Mark Leake, Highway Maintenance Coordinator, County Highway Department; Ms. Jennifer Sicks, Regional Planning Commission; Ms. Christine Brauer, Regional Planning Commission

Chairman Bass called the meeting to order at 8:03 a.m. Chairman Bass asked Mr. Mitchell if he wanted to introduce the three members of his staff that were present at the meeting to help present the 2005 proposed budget.

Mr. Jack Mitchell, County Engineer, replied that Ms. Karen Swick is the Highway Department's Accounting Specialist, Mr. Lefe Epperson is the Highway Department's Fleet Manager, and Mr. Mark Leake is the department's Maintenance Coordinator.

Chairman Bass presented the Minutes of the September 7, 2004 meeting for approval.

Motion by Owens/Cavallini to approve the Minutes of the September 7, 2004 meeting of the Transportation Committee. Motion carried.

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Chairman Bass informed the Committee that the next item on the agenda is the payment of the September 2004 bills.

\*\*Mr. Dean entered the meeting at 8:06.

Mr. Hoselton asked what is the line item that was listed as "Independent Telephone". Mr. Mitchell responded that is the private firm that repairs the telephone system in the office. Mr. Mitchell noted that a lightening bolt hit the telephone box and it needed to be replaced. Mr. Owens asked if insurance would cover that expense. Mr. Zeunik responded that repair costs were likely below the County's insurance deductible.

Motion by Hoselton/Cavallini to recommend approval of the bills for September, 2004 as submitted by the County Auditor. Motion carried.

\*\*Ms. O'Connor entered the meeting at 8:13 a.m.

Chairman Bass stated that the next item on the agenda is the letting results from September 29, 2004 for the sale of surplus vehicles. Mr. Mitchell explained that every fall the Highway Department advertises and sells vehicles that the department no longer needs. Traditionally, the older vehicles are used throughout the summer when there is extra summer help and then they are sold in the fall. The department advertised two pick up trucks for sale. An old concrete saw that has been replaced was sold. Mr. Mitchell stated there was also an old press, which was not being utilized, and it was sold as well. Mr. Owens asked why the bids were so low. Mr. Mitchell replied that there was only one person bidding on the pick-up trucks, which is why they went so low. Mr. Mitchell explained that the fact that the trucks are safety orange in color makes them rather difficult to sell.

Motion by Owens/Cavallini to recommend approval of the bids as presented, from the September 7, 2004 bid letting for sale of surplus vehicles and equipment.  
Motion carried.

Chairman Bass asked Mr. Mitchell to present the next item on the agenda which is a Jurisdictional Transfer Agreement with the City of Bloomington for County Highway 26 and County Highway 28 (Ireland Grove Road). Mr. Mitchell informed the Committee that the proposed transfer of jurisdiction is for roads on the West Side of Bloomington to the City of Bloomington. The County is committed to improving Oakland Avenue from the new bridge that the County built to Euclid Street. That is shorter than originally proposed. The reason for the change is that the City of Bloomington is planning to bring Martin Luther King Drive down to meet Alexander Road. So the County will pick up Goose Creek Bridge and repair/resurface out to Six Points. In the future when the City gets the plans and Right Of Way (ROW) ready on Six Points Road from Morris to Oakland, the County will match 20% of the construction. The engineering and ROW the will be done by the City of Bloomington. Mr. Mitchell mentioned this project is being done in the same manner that Washington Street was done a couple of years ago. The City is using the Federal Aid Urban Funds for their portion of the match.

Mr. Hoselton asked if proposal eliminates the County's involvement with roads inside the City of Bloomington City limits. Mr. Mitchell replied that this transfer does eliminate the County's involvement with roads inside the City of Bloomington. The only exception being a small piece of Towanda-Barnes Road on the East Side of Bloomington.

Mr. Hoselton asked how much the Goose Creek Bridge resurface to Six Points is going to cost. Mr. Mitchell replied that the Goose Creek portion was added

because the stretch of Oakland Avenue that the County is responsible to resurface has been shortened. Mr. Owens stated that he thinks this proposal is much better than the original proposal that was made.

Chairman Bass asked when this agreement would go before the Bloomington City Council. Mr. Mitchell replied that this should be on the next City Council agenda on Monday, October 11, 2004. Mr. Owens asked what would happen if this agreement was rejected by the City Council. Mr. Mitchell responded that if that happens it will not appear on the County Board agenda for October.

Motion by Owens/Cavallini to recommend approval of a Jurisdictional Transfer Agreement between the County of McLean and the City Of Bloomington for County Highway 26 and County Highway 28 (Ireland Grove Road). Motion carried.

Chairman Bass stated that the next item for action is a Bridge Petition for 2004 Bellflower Non-Culvert. Mr. Mitchell informed the Committee that in Bellflower Township on 3900 East Road (Dairy Farm Road) ¼ mile south of the Dairy Farm, there are a couple of old culverts under the road that are not handling the water. They have been sized and some roadwork will be required in order to cover the twin pipes that will be put in place. Mr. Mitchell explained to the Committee that once a project is over .02% of the assessed valuation of the Township, the Township petitions the County for aid in completing the structure. The County must then meet the Township project.

Motion by Dean/Owens to recommend approval of the 2004 Bellflower Non-MFT Culvert Bridge Petition.  
Motion carried.

Chairman Bass stated that the next item on the agenda is the Linden Street Speed Limit Ordinance on County Highway 37. Mr. Mitchell informed the Committee that Ms. O'Connor had asked the Highway Department to check into the safety of the intersection of Northtown Road and Linden Street. Mr. Mitchell stated that he has had several conversations with the Town of Normal on this issue. Mr. Mitchell informed the Committee that the Town of Normal has jurisdiction over three of the four legs of this intersection. The County only has jurisdiction over Linden Street or County Highway 37 north of Northtown Road. Mr. Mitchell stated that, in talking with the engineers at the Town of Normal, there is a visibility problem as you travel from the west to the east on Northtown Road. There is a bank of weeds that is too steep to mow. The Town of Normal looked at the possibility of a 4-way stop at that intersection. Their concern with a 4-way stop is that there is a sharp curve on Linden Street coming from the north, and as traffic gets backed up at the 4-way stop, it could create a problem with cars being rear-ended with 55 MPH traffic coming around the corner.

Mr. Mitchell explained that the Town of Normal is proposing to change the speed limit on Linden Street. Mr. Mitchell noted that the law requires that the speed limit be posted for a distance of 500 feet in order for radar to be used. The speed limit will change from 55 MPH to 45 MPH 700 feet north of the intersection so that the Town of Normal can run radar in that area to help slow the traffic down. The Town of Normal is dropping their speed limit from Northtown Road into the Town of Normal to 45 MPH. It is currently 50 MPH.

Ms. O'Connor asked why the proposal is only to lower the speed limit to 45 MPH. Mr. Mitchell replied that in order to make a speed change, there must be a speed study. The study for this particular area showed that this area should be set at 45 MPH. Ms. O'Connor stated that she does not think that lowering the speed limit to 45 MPH is going to help this problem enough. Mr. Owens replied that most of road area is under the jurisdiction of the Town of Normal.

Mr. Mitchell informed the Committee that the Town of Normal will be presenting the proposal for their portion of the speed limit changes to their next Council meeting.

Motion by Owens/Cavallini to recommend approval  
of a Speed Limit Ordinance on Linden Street/County  
Highway 37. Motion carried.  
Ms. O'Connor voted "no".

Chairman Bass stated that the next item is the 2005 Departmental Budget Review. Mr. Hoselton asked if the Committee could go through the items for information before it went through the proposed budget. Chairman Bass agreed.

Chairman Bass stated that the first item for information is a complaint letter regarding runs/jogs on rural roads. Mr. Mitchell stated that he wanted to pass this letter along to the Committee so that they could understand that there are people who have problems with rural runs/jogs. Chairman Bass stated that if a permit is granted for such an event, it is up to the organization that holds the event to be certain that adequate supervision is in place for that event. Mr. Mitchell stated that those specifications are outlined in the permit application. Mr. Hoselton asked if it could be added in the application that these jogs/runs only use one lane of traffic. Mr. Mitchell replied that is a good idea, and that could be done. The Committee collectively asked Mr. Mitchell to respond to this letter. He stated that he would do so.

Chairman Bass stated that the next item on the agenda is the tax exemption on County Highway Parcel 22-03-100-006 and Illinois cash farm lease. Mr. Mitchell stated that at the last meeting, there was a question as to why the taxes went over the proposed amount and how the language in the lease read.

Mr. Mitchell stated that he has included a copy of the lease in the Committee's agenda packet. The certificate of exemption has now been issued for one of the two parcels. The portion that is being farmed is still subject to taxes. The portion that is being used for County Highway Department storage is tax exempt. Mr. Hoselton asked how much the taxes are on both parcels. Mr. Mitchell stated that the total tax bill is approximately \$900.00. The farm ground is approximately half of that total. Mr. Hoselton asked why this farm ground is only being rented at \$110.00 per acre. Mr. Hoselton stated that it should be rented for around \$150.00 per acre. Mr. Mitchell replied that Mr. Larry Durbin currently farms this ground and is an excellent tenant. Mr. Mitchell stated that the parcel is only 20 acres so it is difficult to rent for a high price. Mr. Cavallini asked how long has the Highway Department been renting this ground for \$110.00 per acre. Mr. Mitchell replied for two years. Ms. O'Connor asked Mr. Dean what he thought about the price. Mr. Dean responded that he thought that \$150.00 per acre was a little high, but somewhere in the middle would probably be reasonable. Mr. Mitchell stated that this lease was just extended for another year, but the cost can be renegotiated when the lease is up for renewal again next year.

Chairman Bass stated that the next item on the agenda is the road work status report. Mr. Mitchell stated that the Section V Bridge is now complete. That is the bridge that is out on Townline Road. This work was done one lane at a time with traffic signals. The only thing left to be done is the internal paperwork.

Mr. Mitchell stated that the contract work on PJ Keller Highway is complete. The Highway Department will be raising the guardrail and reinstalling the terminals at the beginning of the guardrail runs. Mr. Cavallini stated that he and his wife drove out to Lake Bloomington and they were pleased to see the improvements to the road. Mr. Cavallini added that the new rumble strips that were added are a big improvement.

Mr. Mitchell stated that last road to report on is Stringtown Road. The County Highway Department has cut the hill in front of Scott Brand's house and the dirt work is complete. Rowe is coming in to do the widening and paving of the road.

Mr. Mitchell advised the Committee that the monthly budget report can be found on pages 42 – 53 of their packets.

Chairman Bass advised the Committee that it is time to begin the budget review. Chairman Bass asked Mr. Mitchell to begin his presentation. Mr. Mitchell stated that Ms. Karen Swick, Accounting Specialist, has put together a slide show to help with today's presentation.

Mr. Mitchell stated that the first page of the presentation is the Highway Department narrative. The McLean County Highway Department maintains 377 miles of County Highway. McLean County is the largest County in the State. Mr. Mitchell asked if there were any questions from the Committee members. Hearing no questions on the narrative, Mr. Mitchell moved on to the summary of the levies in each of the three funds for Fiscal Year (FY) 2005.

Mr. Mitchell stated that the budget levy for FY 2005 for the 0120 Highway Fund is \$2,071,630.00. The projected tax rate is .07493 cents per \$100 of equalized assessed valuation. The budget levy in the Bridge Fund for FY 2005 is \$1,381,478.00. The projected tax rate is .04998 cents per \$100 of equalized assessed valuation. The budget levy for FY 2005 in the 0122 Matching Fund is \$1,036,442.00. The projected tax rate is set at .0375 cents per \$100 of equalized assessed valuation.

The next item to be reviewed is Fund 0120, County Highway Fund. Mr. Mitchell informed the Committee that the first page of the presentation lists all of the specific revenue accounts including General Property Tax, Transportation Planning, Construction and Maintenance, Engineering, Labor and Equipment, Interest Investment, Commodities, Unclassified Revenue and Sales of Assets. The total amount from all revenue accounts is \$2,680,063.00.

Mr. Mitchell informed the Committee that the next page is a list of the expenses in the 500 line items in Fund 0120, County Highway Fund. These expenses include: Salaries – Full-time, seasonal, overtime pay, incentive pay and employee medical. Mr. Owens asked why the salary line item is being decreased by 5%. Mr. Mitchell responded that salaries are paid out of three funds, County Highway Fund, County Bridge Fund, and Motor Fuel Tax Fund. Mr. Mitchell explained that the dollars were shifted slightly into the other Funds. Mr. Lindberg added the total number of employees at the Highway Department remains the same in 2005 as in 2004.

Mr. Mitchell stated that the next page of the budget hand out lists the expenses in Fund 0120's 600 line items. Mr. Mitchell stated that the total of the 600 line item expenses is \$384,900.00 compared to 2003 at \$368,300.00. Mr. Mitchell stated that he would answer any specific questions that the Committee may have regarding these expenses. Mr. Cavallini asked what is the line item "Group Purchase". Mr. Mitchell replied that those are things like culverts and other items that the County Highway Department purchases and resells when doing work on a Township or other such project. Mr. Dean asked why the "Printed Forms" line item is budgeted at \$4,000.00 for 2005 when it was only budgeted at \$1,000.00 in 2004. Mr. Mitchell responded that \$4,000.00 is a typographical error. It should be listed at \$1,000.00.

\*\*Mr. Cavallini left the meeting at 9:22 a.m.

Mr. Mitchell stated that the next page is a list of the expenses in Fund 0120's 700 line item expenses.

Mr. Mitchell advised the Committee that he would be happy to answer any specific questions that they have on any of these line items. Mr. Owens asked why the "Engineering Design" line item is budgeted at \$40,000.00 when the current expenses to date are only \$11,015.00 and were only \$4,119.00 total in 2003. Mr. Mitchell responded that line item is used for blanket surveying done for projects and engineering fees for drawing plats. Mr. Dean stated that the Committee should revisit this line item at its next meeting. Mr. Owens agreed. Mr. Mitchell stated that the total expenses for the 700 line items are \$410,800.00 which represents a 3% increase over FY 2004. Mr. Mitchell asked if there were any questions on any of the expenses in the 700 line items.

Hearing none, Mr. Mitchell informed the Committee that he would move on to the 800 line items in the 0120, County Highway Fund. Mr. Owens asked why the Machinery and Equipment Line Item is budgeted for \$554,000 for FY 2005 over FY 2004's budgeted amount of \$440,500.00. Mr. Mitchell directed the Committee's attention to the next page of the budget hand out which is a list of equipment to be replaced and/or added. Mr. Mitchell stated that Mr. Lafe Epperson, Fleet Manager, and Mr. Mark Leake, Highway Maintenance Coordinator are in attendance to help explain the equipment request. Mr. Mitchell informed the Committee that the Highway Department would like to change their snowplowing procedures. Over the years, the Highway Department has been plowing snow with 14 trucks and 4 graders. As traffic has increased salting has also increased. The four routes which are assigned to workers driving graders, have to be gone over a second time with a truck that can salt the road. It makes for extra trips, increases overtime and slows the overall performance. Mr. Mitchell explained that the Highway Department would like to trade in 2 of its older dump trucks for new improved models and add an additional dump truck. Over the next three years, the Highway Department would like to switch from plowing snow with graders to tandem dump trucks, and add an additional tandem each year. Mr. Mitchell added that this year is the only year that the equipment list will be this high. Mr. Dean asked why the Highway Department would be keeping all four graders. Mr. Mitchell replied that the graders will still be needed for other work during the summer. The graders will also last longer if they are not subject to the salt and chloride in the wintertime. Mr. Mitchell asked Mr. Epperson to expound on the troubles associated with using graders in the snow when the roads are salted.

Mr. Epperson stated that the John Deere models have problems with the cabs rusting off the unit itself. The brakes also tend to lock up on the John Deere's. Mr. Epperson stated that the Caterpillar Models have problems with the lift arms seizing up and twisting off. There have been situations where a grader has stalled in the middle of a road causing a traffic jam and public safety issues.

Mr. Dean stated that there is a lot to digest and a large amount of equipment that has been requested. Mr. Owens asked which item on the list of equipment that has been requested is the least necessary. Mr. Mitchell stated that the wood chipper at \$11,000.00 is probably the least necessary item requested. Mr. Owens asked why you could not just rent a wood chipper. Mr. Leake replied that the worker that goes out to job sites to clear brush and debris for sign placement could use a wood chipper on a regular basis. Mr. Hoselton stated that this list is very extensive. Mr. Hoselton asked Mr. Mitchell to prioritize what is most important and least important. Mr. Mitchell stated that the Highway Department feels that it is most important to make the switch from using the graders to using the tandem dump trucks for snow removal. Mr. Hoselton stated that every other department in the County having financial difficulties. Mr. Hoselton stated that he did not think this is sending the appropriate message. He added that this money could be better spent on the County's roads. Mr. Dean stated that he would agree. It is too large of an increase. Mr. Mitchell responded that it is around a \$150,000.00 increase in the equipment line, but reminded the Committee that it is a one-time increase. Next year, the equipment line will decrease to around \$400,000.00. Mr. Dean stated that the Committee should wait until next year to make the purchases then. Ms. O'Connor stated that if the Highway Department has the extra money and needs the equipment, the Committee should consider approving the request. Ms. O'Connor asked how Mr. Mitchell's 5-year plan would be affected if the Committee starts eliminating some of the items on this list. Mr. Mitchell stated that if the extra trucks are not purchased, it will affect the snow removal. In addition to less maintenance on the graders, the Highway Department will not have to purchase a grader every year because the old ones will last longer. Mr. Mitchell stated it will probably save the County money in the long run following this plan.

Chairman Bass stated that this is a one-time increase in the equipment line and that the Committee may want to approve it in order to save money in the long run.

Mr. Hoselton stated that there is no way to speculate on 20-year budget projections. There are too many variables that can change during 20 years. Ms. O'Connor stated that you can speculate getting 20 years of use out of the graders. Mr. Hoselton stated that is just a theory.

Motion by Owens/\_\_\_\_\_ to remove the 6" wood chipper bringing the proposed equipment added to \$543,000.00. The motion died for lack of a second.

Mr. Dean stated that he is not ready to approve that large of an expense at this time. Ms. O'Connor stated that she thinks the wood chipper should be left in the equipment request. Mr. Dean asked if this could be carried over to next month.

Mr. Zeunik responded that this could be considered at the Committee's regularly scheduled meeting next month since the budgets are due to be approved by the Executive Committee meeting in November. Mr. Zeunik stated that the Committee could also opt to hold a special meeting to review the budget. Ms. O'Connor asked if members of the Committee wanted to go out to the Highway Department to take a look at the equipment. Mr. Dean and Mr. Hoselton replied that they would like to go out to the Highway Department to take a look at the equipment.

Chairman Bass advised the Committee that a decision should be made or the issue should be tabled to the next Committee Meeting.

Motion by Hoselton/O'Connor to table the new equipment request to the next Committee Meeting.  
Motion carried.

Mr. Mitchell stated that he would go through the rest of the budget with the Committee. The next Fund for the Committee to review is Fund 0121 – County Bridge Revenue. The first page is the revenue collected into Fund 0121. The revenue accounts include: General Property Tax, Special Bridge, Interest Investment, and Unclassified for a total of \$1,496,478.00. The following page lists expenses coming out of Fund 0121. Mr. Mitchell reminded the Committee that Fund 0121 is one of the funds from which salaries are paid. Mr. Mitchell went through the expense line items and asked the Committee if they had any specific questions. Mr. Mitchell stated that the total expenses for Fund 0121 is \$1,496,478.00.

Mr. Owens asked if each fund had to be approved separately. Mr. Zeunik stated that each Fund needs to be approved with a separate motion.

Motion by Owens/O'Connor to recommend tentative approval of Fund 0121, County Bridge Fund for FY 2005 as submitted. Motion carried.

Mr. Mitchell stated that the next Fund to review is Fund 0122, County Matching Fund. The total revenue and expenses must balance in this fund. Mr. Mitchell noted that the total revenue and expenses are \$1,043,442.00. Mr. Hoselton asked Mr. Mitchell to explain what is the difference between the Road/Bridge/Culvert line item in this fund and in the County Bridge Fund-0121. Mr. Mitchell stated that the Road/Bridge/Culvert line item is used in all of the funds. In the County Bridge Fund-0121 the money is used mostly for bridges. In the County Matching Fund the money is used mainly for roadwork. The County Matching Fund-0122 is used to match Federal or Motor Fuel Tax dollars. Mr. Mitchell stated that he would recommend this fund for approval by the Committee.

Motion by Dean/Owens to recommend tentative approval of Fund 0122, County Matching Fund for FY 2005 as submitted. Motion carried.

Mr. Mitchell stated that Fund 0123 is the County's Motor Fuel Tax Fund. This is the County's share of the Motor Fuel Tax that is collected by the State through the sale of fuel. The total projected revenue in Fund 0123 is \$3,390,000.00. Mr. Owens asked Mr. Mitchell if the increased price in fuel should increase the County's share of Motor Fuel Tax dollars. Mr. Mitchell replied that the increased price does not legally change the County's share. Mr. Mitchell stated that traditionally, when fuel prices go higher, there is less usage. The County's share of Motor Fuel Tax is received based on vehicle registrations compared to other Counties. Mr. Mitchell stated that the next page is the expenses for Fund 0123, County Motor Fuel Tax. Mr. Mitchell noted that the total projected expenses are \$3,390,000, matching the projected revenue in this fund. Mr. Mitchell stated that he would recommend approval of Fund 0123, County Motor Fuel Tax Fund.

Motion by O'Connor/Owens to recommend tentative approval of Fund 0123, County Motor Fuel Tax Fund for FY 2005 as submitted. Motion carried.

Mr. Mitchell stated that the last few pages of the budget hand out is the 5-year plan and a list of the unfunded projects. Mr. Mitchell stated that the Committee can finish reviewing and approve the budget at their next regularly scheduled meeting.

Mr. Dean stated that he wanted to express his appreciation to the Highway Department for cleaning up the ditches on 2700 East Road in rural LeRoy. Mr. Mitchell stated that Mr. Leake's crew has worked on that projected. Mr. Dean reiterated that the crew did a fantastic job.

Chairman Bass thanked Ms. Swick, Mr. Epperson and Mr. Leake for attending the meeting and for their assistance with the budget preparation.

There being nothing further to come before the Committee at this time, Chairman Bass stated that he would entertain a motion to adjourn.

Motion by Hoselton/O'Connor to adjourn at 10:30 a.m. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine Northcutt  
Recording Secretary

