

## Minutes of the Transportation Committee

The Transportation Committee of the McLean County Board met on November 4, 2003 at 8:00 a.m. at the Law and Justice Center, Room 700, 104 West Front Street, Bloomington, Illinois.

Members Present: Chairman Bass, Members Dean, Hoselton, Owens and Cavallini

Members Absent: Member Rodgers

Staff Members Present: Mr. John Zeunik, County Administrator; Mr. Terry Lindberg, Assistant County Administrator; Ms. Lucretia Wherry, Administrator's Office; Mr. Mark Leake, Highway Maintenance Coordinator; Mr. Leif Epperson, Fleet Manager; Mr. Jack Mitchell, County Engineer

Others Present: Ms. Jennifer Sicks, Planner, Regional Planning

Chairman Bass called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m.

Chairman Bass presented the Minutes of the October 7, 2003 meeting for approval.

Motion by Owens/Cavallini to approve the Minutes of the October 7, 2003 meeting of the Transportation Committee as presented.  
Motion carried.

Chairman Bass presented the bills for approval. The Committee reviewed the bills. Mr. Owens asked what were the equipment purchases. Mr. Mitchell replied that energy absorption crash attenuators were purchased for the back of the trucks. The crash attenuators are a safety measure to protect employees while they work on multiple lane roads. Wings for snow removal are also listed under the equipment purchases line item account.

Motion by Hoselton/Cavallini to approve the bills for  
October 2003 as transmitted by the County Auditor.  
Motion carried.

Mr. Mitchell presented the Downs Bridge Repair Petition. The drainage structure is located at the intersection of 2350 East and 400 North. The Downs Road District is requesting that McLean County share the cost of this drainage structure repair. The County share of the repair is \$7,000.00. Downs qualifies for the bridge matching funds because the cost of the repair exceeds .02% of the assessed valuation for the Downs Road District. The bridge was rip wrapped, but damage has occurred due to the heavy rains experienced this spring and summer.

Motion by Dean/Cavallini to recommend approval of the Downs  
Bridge Repair Petition to repair the drainage structure located  
at 2350 East Road and 400 North Road in the Downs Road District.  
Motion carried.

Mr. Mitchell presented the Fiscal Year 2004 Recommended Budget for the Highway Department Funds. As requested, Mr. Mitchell provided the Committee with further information on the analysis of Loaders and Radios for the McLean County Highway Department.

The McLean County Highway Department's front wheel loader is nearing replacement time. The expected cost of the replacement has caused the Highway Department to look at the cost to replace compared to the cost of repair and expected life expectancy. The expected cost of replacement is nearing \$60,000.00. For a 5-year term, that relates to \$12,000.00 a year. The average life expectancy of a 624-H series John Deere is approximately 10,000 hours of operation. McLean County Highway Department's is currently 4 years old with 2750 hours of operation. It has been averaging approximately 60 hours of operation per month. The machine could run another 118 months or 10 years before expected rebuilding would need done.

The current prices for a complete power train rebuild is approximately \$51,000.00. The rebuild includes, both the front and rear axles, transmission, engine and hydraulic pump. A rebuild includes a 2-year warranty. The rebuild does not include cylinders, bucket, tires or hydraulic hoses. Also not included is the cost of renting another machine for 1 month while the loader is being rebuilt.

The total costs for keeping a loader for 15 years is \$177,990.00 or \$11,866.00. The trade-in value is \$60,000.00 or \$12,000.00 a year. The difference between purchasing new or rebuilding is \$144.00 a year. The Highway Department recommends continuing to trade the loader every 5 years. The \$144.00 per year cost difference is not enough to justify not having a new loader with a warranty for the 5- year term the Highway Department operates it. This is a very important piece of equipment that is crucial to

salt operations in the winter. The loader has also been very valuable in dirt work. If the loader is broken down, an entire job is shut down.

Mr. Cavallini asked what the warranty on the loader covers. Mr. Epperson replied that the warranty covers everything but the tires and hydraulics. Mr. Cavallini asked how the loader is serviced. Mr. Epperson replied that in most instances, the company that provides the warranty comes to the Highway Department to make repairs on the loader. There have been relatively few problems thus far. All of the components are internal and if the Highway Department had to make repairs themselves, a loader would have to be rented. Mr. Cavallini asked how fast the warranty company makes the repairs. Mr. Epperson replied that the time period depends on the severity of the repair.

Mr. Dean asked what is the brand the loader. Mr. Epperson replied that the loader is a John Deere 624H. There are currently 2950 hours on the loader. The loader was purchased in June of 1999. By next year, the loader will have an additional 800 hours. Mr. Owens asked if the Highway Department has kept a loader more than 5 years. Mr. Epperson replied that the previous loader was 7 years old at the time of trade-in. Mr. Dean asked how well the previous loader worked. Mr. Epperson replied that there was a lot of maintenance involved. Mr. Owens asked if the machines will last for 10,000 hours. Mr. Epperson replied that 10,000 hours is not guaranteed. County loaders have a lot of wear and tear due to salt and chloride use.

Mr. Hoselton asked if the maintenance work could be done in house. Mr. Epperson replied that there is a limited amount of work that can be done in house. Mr. Mitchell stated that this has been discussed in the past years with the Transportation Committee. In the past, the Committee agreed that trade-ins are the best option. If the Committee decides not to continue with this practice, the Highway Department would keep the loaders until 10,000 hours. However, there would be no trade-in value on the loader.

Mr. Hoselton asked how often the loaders are used. Mr. Epperson replied that the loaders are used everyday. In the summer, it is used to move dirt. In the winter it is used to load salt into the trucks and to move snow. Mr. Hoselton asked how many man-hours are used moving the loader from site to site. Mr. Hoselton wondered if it would be more cost effective to have two loaders. He suggested that keeping the current loader and purchasing a smaller loader. He asked what is the cost of a new loader. Mr. Epperson replied that a new loader is \$107,000.00. Mr. Hoselton asked if time is lost because the loader is working on one project and not available for another project. Mr. Epperson replied that it is possible that 2 loaders would be beneficial if there were more garage space for storage and Equipment Operators. Each loader requires to operators, one for the loader and one for the truck. There is other equipment that can do small jobs, such as the backhoes.

Mr. Dean added that some repairs, such as hydraulics are not expensive. Mr. Epperson stated that the loader is a critical piece of equipment that is used daily, all year round. Mr. Epperson recommended that the Transportation Committee support the request to trade in the current loader at 5 years or 5000 hours. It is difficult to do maintenance work on, and it is critical for the safety of the Highway employees that the loader be reliable. There is not enough space or employees to retain the current loader and buy a new smaller one.

Mr. Owens asked how often maintenance work is performed on equipment. Mr. Epperson replied that maintenance is performed every 250 hours. The loaders are washed down in the winter to remove the salt and chloride.

Mr. Hoselton suggested waiting to trade the loader until the loss of man-hours during transport from one job site to another could be evaluated. Mr. Epperson reminded the Committee that the Warranty would be void and the trade-in price that was agreed upon in the bid specifications would decrease by an estimated \$20,000.00.

Mr. Cavallini asked how many times a year a second loader would be needed. Mr. Mark Leake, Highway Maintenance Coordinator, replied that there are a few times during the year when a second loader would be needed. Rowe Construction or Stark Excavation has done work for the County at those times. If the County Highway Department were to purchase another smaller loader, it would be used. Mr. Leake recommended that the best way to go is to trade-in every 5 years. The salt and chloride cause abnormal wear on the loaders. The warranty is necessary.

Mr. Hoselton asked when is the current warranty up. Mr. Epperson replied that the warranty expires in the Spring of 2004.

Mr. Cavallini asked if the Highway Department would compile a long range cost estimate for a second loader including the cost for insurance, storage and manpower.

Mr. Cavallini asked if trucker drivers have different skills than the loader drivers. Mr. Leake replied that they have the same skills. However, an extra loader would require pulling staff away from other jobs.

Motion by Cavallini/Dean to recommend approval of the trade in of the loader as presented in the budget.

Mr. Owens voted "no".  
Mr. Cavallini voted "yes".  
Mr. Hoselton voted "no".  
Mr. Dean voted "yes".  
Chairman Bass voted "yes".

Motion carried on a vote of 3-2.

The two-way radios are McLean County Highway Department's primary form of communication from base to vehicle and between vehicles that are on the job. Radios contribute to better communication between people for both better job performance and safety. Radios are a reliable form of communication even in some of the worst weather conditions and can make contact with someone in areas that a cell phone may be rendered useless. A "public announcement" can be broadcast as well for informing multiple people at one time. A good example of this is when someone is stuck in a snowstorm and the closest person available would respond, instead of making multiple calls to a cell phone.

A complete radio inventory, including researching the original purchase prices and in service dates, is in the packet. The Highway Department has been rotating out the old radios to keep newer more dependable radios in all vehicles, especially the vehicles used for with snow removal. The Highway Department has a new VHF Repeater installed November 15, 2002. An Antenna was installed on February 4, 2003. The previous repeater and antenna were purchased in April of 1986.

On October 29, 2003 the Highway Department met with Mr. Steve Larkin of Hill Radio Communications. Mr. Larkin reviewed a list of all current radios the Department asked Mr. Larkin for his professional opinion of any changes or recommendations for the Highway Department radio system. Mr. Larkin suggested that the Highway Department get rid of all the old radios, which are difficult to acquire replacement parts. Those radios would be the Motorola Micors and the older GE Brand radios. Mr. Larkin also recommended an upgrade to the Highway Department's base station repeater antenna and, eventually, eliminating all radios older than 1998. These radios would be replaced to insure proper operation with the Narrow Band frequency that will be mandated by the FCC in the next 4-5 years.

Mr. Larkin's opinion was that the Highway Department has a good radio system in operation at this time. Mr. Larkin informed the Highway Department that there are UHF systems The UHF bands are the 800 MHz and the 900 MHz high frequencies. It would be an expensive conversion without significant increase in service or coverage. There are currently some townships that share the department's frequency for communication with the Highway Department. The current system has low interference, good range and dependable service. If more coverage were needed and McLean County Highway Department would provide the ground for an antenna at the County property on Route 9 West, an antenna could be installed and provide service to McLean County in exchange for land. An antenna could be at the current site for \$400.00 to \$500.00 that would improve the current system.

Mr. Cavallini asked if the Highway Department were linked to police radio system. Mr. Mitchell replied that MetCom can be reached through the Highway Department

System, but the Highway Department cannot speak directly to the police agencies. The Highway Department used its own frequency since the 1970's. Mr. Hoselton asked if the Highway Department could tie into the StarCom 21 radio system the police are switching to or if the Highway Department could use the Johnson radios the police are not going to use. Mr. Zeunik stated that the Johnson radios could not be adapted to the StarCom system. Mr. Mitchell added that the Highway Department does not have problems with their current system and does not wish to switch.

Mr. Owens asked if the radios proposed in the 2004 Budget would be purchased from Hill Radio. Mr. Mitchell replied that the radios would be purchased from the lowest bidder meeting specifications. Hill Radio was the lowest bidder in 2003 and radios were purchased from Hill last year.

Motion by Dean/Cavallini to recommend approval of the purchase of new radios as presented in the budget. Motion carried.

Mr. Dean asked what is the model year of the van to be traded. Mr. Epperson replied that he is not certain. The budget request is to sell the van, which is driven by one of the Engineers, and the Crown Victoria that Mr. Mitchell drives. The van is not practical for the Engineer, a pickup truck is more appropriate. The Crown Victoria has high mileage. A Sport Utility Vehicle (SUV) would be practical for field trips and for travel to and from work sites. The new vehicles would be purchased through a State bid. Mr. Owens asked if the vehicles have to be purchased through the State. Mr. Epperson replied that the Highway Department does not have to use the State Bid. However, the State usually receives the lowest bid available.

Motion by Dean/Owens to recommend approval of the purchase of a pickup truck and an SUV as recommended in the budget.  
Motion carried.

The Committee moved on to the next item listed under the equipment purchase, a crack router. The Department is currently using a propane torch to repair cracked asphalt. The propane torch is not the best equipment to do the repair. A crack router is used to make the crack a uniform width and depth for the repair.

The Committee discussed the purchase of a new grader. The graders have historically been traded every 4 years. The Highway Department has completed a 20-year analysis on graders. If the current trend continues, trading in graders is the most economical for years to come.

Mr. Hoselton asked how many miles of road the graders cover. Mr. Hoselton stated that many Township Supervisors envy the County's ability to purchase new equipment. Mr. Mitchell replied that some of the Townships trade-in equipment at the same rate the County does.

Mr. Dean asked what brand are the graders. Mr. Epperson replied that the graders are John Deere and Caterpillar.

Mr. Dean asked why is it necessary to purchase wings for the trucks. Mr. Mitchell explained that the trucks are more functional with the wings added. The wings push the snow back farther, which keeps the roads clear longer. The wings are a big purchase, but a good investment. These wings will not need to be purchased for 15-20 years.

Mr. Dean asked if the Highway Department could keep the trucks another year. Mr. Mitchell replied that the trucks could wait another year, however, the Highway Department tries to stay on a rotation cycle for new equipment so that there is not a year when several new pieces of equipment need to be purchased at once. Also the trucks already have 100,000 miles on them. If the trucks are kept another year, the trucks will have 130,000 miles on them. Right now the Highway Department is getting Kelly Blue Book value at the surplus operations sales. The trucks will not have much value with higher mileage.

Mr. Dean asked where Mr. Mitchell would cut his budget. Mr. Mitchell replied that he would not cut his budget. Building and maintaining roads requires a lot of money. The Committee already made a \$30,000.00 cut to the Bridge Maintenance Fund. Currently, there is \$4.7 million committed to projects. Another important consideration is the safety of the Highway Department employees. In the winter, reliable equipment is important. Mr. Epperson added that the garage is full keeping up with maintenance. If the department keeps equipment longer, trying to keep up with maintenance and breakdowns would be more difficult with only two mechanics. Mr. Dean asked if the drivers help with maintenance. Mr. Epperson replied that the drivers do not help with maintenance. Mr. Hoselton asked if that is because the truck drivers are in a collective bargaining unit. Mr. Epperson replied that the truck drivers do not perform maintenance because they are not trained mechanics. Whenever possible and practical, the truck drivers help where they can.

Chairman Bass reminded the Committee that the County Administrator's Office has reviewed and made changes to this budget. Mr. Hoselton stated that the Committee still has a fiduciary responsibility to review the budget for the taxpayers.

Mr. Dean asked if purchasing new carpet in line 801.0001, could wait another year. Mr. Mitchell replied that the carpet could wait another year. Mr. Dean asked if the fence on the Route 9 property is bid. Mr. Mitchell replied that the fence would not be bid, rather quotes would be taken. Mr. Owens asked if there is already a fence in place. Mr. Mitchell replied that there is a junk fence on one side. The budget request is to place a secure fence and gate along the front of the property. The fence is intended to deter thefts of materials. Mr. Dean asked if the Committee is willing to cut all the funding proposed in line item 801.0001. The Committee agreed to eliminate the request

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to purchase new carpeting and install a fence at the Route 9 property. Mr. Hoselton suggested posting No Trespassing signs and placing a cable across the entrance.

Motion by Dean/Owen to reduce line item 801.0001 in the Highway Department Fund 120 by \$30,000.00. Motion carried.

Mr. Zeunik asked the Committee if it is the Committee's intention to decrease the tax levy by the same amount. The Committee agreed to reduce the tax levy by \$30,000.00.

Mr. Dean asked if line item 833-0002 is for the purchase of computers. Mr. Mitchell replied that the line item is for computers. The computer purchase includes the GIS computers, which were intended for purchase in Fiscal Year 2003.

Mr. Dean stated that he is concerned that we only have one bidder for snow wings. Mr. Mitchell responded that last year there were 2 bidders, only one bidder met the specifications. The other bid was higher and did not meet the height specification.

Mr. Dean stated that he would be in favor of cutting one of the trucks. Mr. Epperson said that if a truck is cut, then, in a future year, the number of truck purchases would be double.

Mr. Owens stated that he is in favor of cutting more from the Bridge Maintenance Fund. Mr. Mitchell stated that the money remaining in the fund is committed to a large project, rebuilding bridge decks.

Mr. Dean suggested rejecting the request to trade in one of the 1993 Tandems Trucks. Mr. Epperson asked the Committee to consider that one of the tandem trucks has had a rebuilt engine and the other has had a rebuilt transmission. Both tandem trucks are used everyday.

Mr. Mitchell stated he would rather lose the crack router than any other piece of equipment.

Motion by Owens/Cavallini to reject the request for purchase of a crack router in the Highway Department Fund 120. Motion carried.

Mr. Hoselton asked what is line item 760.0001. Mr. Zeunik replied that line item 760.0001 is the Contingency line item. This line item is used for the transfer of funds in an emergency. Mr. Owens asked if the Contingency line item could be removed. Mr. Zeunik explained that if any emergency funds were needed and there was no Contingency line item, funds would have to be transferred from another line item. The Contingency line item has been removed from the General Fund Budgets.

Motion by Hoselton/Owens to reduce line item 760.0001 in the Bridge maintenance Fund by \$5,000.00. Motion carried.

Mr. Cavallini asked why there are no funds in the litigation line account. Mr. Mitchell explained that litigation funds are budgeted in the Tort Judgement Budget.

Motion by Hoselton/Owens to recommend approval of the Fiscal Year 2004 Recommended Budget as amended for Highway Department Funds and to reduce the tax levy by the same amount. Motion carried.

Mr. Mitchell presented the 5-Year Capital Improvement Plan for the McLean County Highway Department. The new garage is in the plan for 2006.

Mr. Dean asked if the 5-Year Capital Improvement Plan is to be presented to the Executive Committee. Mr. Zeunik replied that the 5-Year Capital Improvement Plan has to be approved by the Executive Committee and the County Board. Chairman Bass reminded the Committee that the 5-Year Plan is subject to change. All projects are submitted to the Committee before the projects begin.

Mr. Hoselton stated that the Property Committee has already turned down the garage. Mr. Mitchell said that the garage space is needed, whether the garage is built at the Route 9 property or at the current property. Mr. Hoselton stated that he thought the garage could not be built on the current site. Mr. Mitchell explained that if another garage were built, fuel tanks would have to be relocated. Mr. Dean asked if MFT funds could be used. Mr. Mitchell replied that they could be used.

Motion by Dean/Cavallini to recommend approval of the 5-Year Capital Improvements Plan for the McLean County Highway Department. Motion carried.

Mr. Mitchell presented the status of the ongoing roadwork being done by the McLean County Highway Department. Rowe Construction has completed of the contract work on the Stanford/McLean Road. The County is adding dirt to the shoulders, and raising and adding materials for the installation of guardrails. Billing has not been received from the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT.)

Rowe Construction is paving the binder on Randolph Road East. The Surface will wait until next year. The County has almost completed the dirt and culvert work. Cornbelt Electric is moving power poles.

Freesen completed grinding the frost heave bumps on Towanda Barnes Road from Route 150 to Ireland Grove Road. The project is complete once the final paperwork arrives from IDOT.

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The County essentially completed the dirt and culvert work for  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile of the new part of the road. Twenty-five percent of the shoulder and ditch work is complete. Rowe Construction widened the road and is ready to begin paving the binder. Rowe has finished shaping the gravel.

Chairman Bass thanked Mr. Epperson and Mr. Leake for their time and patience.

Mr. Hoselton asked how is the Lexington/Leroy Road. Mr. Mitchell replied that the project is finished. The road is a little rougher than planned. However, visibility has improved since the dust was cleaned up.

Chairman Bass directed the Committee to the hand out passed out at the beginning of the meeting. The fuel study is complete. Mr. Epperson stated that the Highway Department has used 2 tankers of Biodiesel Fuel this summer with no notable side effects. Fuel economy has not changed and there has not been any noticeable change in power from the equipment. Due to the tendency to gel in cold weather, the Biodiesel cannot be used in the winter. However, the Biodiesel may be used for summertime use in the future to provide the community with a cleaner environment. This summer the Biodiesel was provided to McLean County at no additional cost. However, next summer the County would need to budget for the additional cost of the Biodiesel fuel.

There being nothing further to come before the Committee at this time, the meeting was adjourned by Chairman Bass at 10:30 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lucretia Wherry  
Recording Secretary