

Minutes of the Transportation Committee

The Transportation Committee of the McLean County Board met on Tuesday, December 4, 2001 at 7:30 a.m. in Room 700, Law and Justice Center, 104 West Front Street, Room 701 Bloomington, Illinois.

Members Present: Chairman Bass, Members Hoselton, Emmett, Owens, Selzer

Members Absent: Member Johnson

Staff Members Present: Mr. John Zeunik, County Administrator;
Mr. Terry Lindberg, Assistant County Administrator;
Ms. Martha B. Ross, County Administrator's Assistant,
County Administrator's Office

Department Heads/
Elected Officials Present: Mr. Jack Mitchell, County Engineer, County Highway
Department

Others Present: Ms. Jennifer Sicks, Transportation Planner, McLean
County Regional Planning Commission;
Ms. Christine Brauer

Chairman Bass called the meeting to order at 7:33 a.m. Chairman Bass presented the minutes of the November 6, 2001 meeting for approval.

Motion by Emmett/Owens to approve and place on file the minutes of the November 6, 2001 meeting of the Transportation Committee. Motion carried.

Chairman Bass presented the bills as prepared and recommended for transmittal to the Transportation Committee by the Auditor's Office.

Mr. Hoselton noted, with regard to the bills, that some companies receive more than one check for payments due from the same account. He inquired what is the rationale for this procedure. Mr. Mitchell responded that this procedure could be identified throughout the billing for Highway Department. Individual itemizations are recorded on the monthly Statement of Expenditures, but checks are cut to reflect a combined amount for the monthly debits.

Mr. Hoselton asked, in the event that a bill is submitted for payment on a specific project, does the County submit payment in full for that bill, or does the County keep retainage. Mr. Mitchell stated that retainage is kept on all bills. To cite an example, the Towanda-Barnes project is a Federal project. Therefore, the State is making the initial payments

and will, in turn, bill the County for the local share. Mr. Mitchell noted that, to date, the County has not received a bill on this specific project.

Mr. Owens asked why the amount of overtime reported in all three (3) funds, Highway Department, Bridge Matching Fund, and Motor Fuel Tax, appears to be occurring on a regular basis. Mr. Mitchell responded that salaries are paid out of all three funds. Therefore, the employees who are working out of those funds are paid any overtime due directly out of those funds. Mr. Mitchell stated that overtime amounts of \$1659.07 and \$1,015.67 noted in Fund 0120-0055 (the Highway Fund), and \$563.35 and \$602.74 in Fund 0121-0055 (the Bridge Matching Fund), were incurred when County employees, working in conjunction with contractors, must adapt to the contractors' schedules for the projects at hand. Mr. Mitchell further stated that Fund 0123-0055 (the Motor Fuel Tax Fund) often incurs personnel overtime charges when County employees are in the field with road work that must be finished.

Mr. Owens asked for clarification on the expenditures noted for account #0621.0004, Group Purchasing. He cited four (4) prepaid expenditures to Contech Construction during the month of November 2001, which totaled \$11,063.05. Mr. Mitchell explained that culvert stock that is stored on the east end of the Highway Department's physical plant facility, is purchased over the course of the year. This is in anticipation of the needs of the County's townships, small towns and villages, who purchase culvert materials through the Highway Department. He explained that since the County does not make large use of this stock, it is recorded as "Group Purchase" so that it is not recorded against the County's usage. He noted that, while the County does utilize the culvert stock, its usage is minimal. The bulk of the stock is utilized by townships.

Motion by Selzer/Hoselton to approve the Bills as presented and recommended by the Auditor's Office. Motion carried.

Chairman Bass presented the Resolution for an Altered Speed Zone for County Highways 12 and 37. Mr. Mitchell explained that in the event that a speed zone change is requested, the Highway Department performs a study pursuant to the Ordinance approved by the County Board. That Ordinance is reflective of State policy. In this instance, the Village of Hudson approached the Highway Department and requested an examination of the speed limit in two (2) locations. The first is at the south end of town on Linden Street, and the second is on the Hudson Road near the west side of the overpass on Interstate 39.

Mr. Mitchell explained that both studies were performed. Based upon the results of the study, it was determined that speed limits should be changed in both locations. Regarding County Highway 12, in the Village of Hudson at Turner Drive, to 500 West, there currently exists a 30 mile per hour speed limit. That limit covers the Village itself and proceeds to the far side of the overpass. He explained that a change from the usual and customary speed rates of 55/30 mph require changes in 10-mph increments. Therefore, a speed zone of 35 mph had to be added in order to then change the curb and gutter area beneath the Interstate to a 45-mph zone. Curb and gutter adjacency requires a 45-mph speed zone.

Mr. Mitchell remarked that, on the south side of the Village, there are new annexations of property that are intended for use as subdivisions. In view of the proposed use, it was felt that the speed zone should be changed. Again, a speed zone study was conducted and the results determined a need for a speed zone change. Initially, the existing zone had to be lowered to a 40 mph zone in order to change to the final 30 mph designation, due to the 10 mph increment requirement.

Mr. Hoselton asked whether the speed zone changes were requested by the Village of Hudson and are they aware that changes are proposed. Mr. Mitchell responded both requests originated with the Village. Mr. Mitchell has attempted to contact the Village since the study was completed and will continue to do so until contact is confirmed. He anticipated that such contact would be accomplished prior to the December County Board meeting.

Mr. Owens asked what the speed zone survey entails and how much does such a study cost. Mr. Mitchell explained that a survey is conducted in the target location, wherein the passage of a minimum of 100 vehicles, or the elapse of a three hour time period is measured, whichever is the lesser measurement. The analysis of the data produced by the measurement is to determine what the prevailing speed is for 85% of the vehicles measured at the time and location of the study. Additionally, speed regulations required for curb and gutter locations and the 10 mph increment requirement must be considered, where applicable.

Mr. Owens asked who performs a speed zone study. Mr. Mitchell responded that Highway Department personnel conduct the study. A device called a Counter/Classifier must be placed in appropriate locations to measure traffic flow and speed. Then either the prescribed time of three hours, or the passage of a minimum of 100 vehicles, must elapse while data is collected. The full time of the survey depends upon how quickly the necessary data can be collected.

Chairman Bass noted that such a study is generally quite cost-effective because the employees involved are already available through the Highway Department.

Motion by Selzer/Owens to recommend approval of the Altered Speed Zone Resolution for County Highways 12 and 37. Motion carried.

Chairman Bass presented the result of the bid for a 1991 Peterbuilt truck. The unit did not sell during the previous bid process. Mr. Mitchell explained that the item was not an action item in the sense that the Committee needed to take immediate action. However, he stated that he would like to have the Committee's concurrence on the fact that the bid was not accepted and the sale was not executed. Mr. Mitchell further explained that the Peterbuilt should be worth approximately \$13,500.00. However, the sole bidder raised his bid to \$9,000.00, which was considered inadequate. Since the truck was not sold, the Highway Department has deemed it appropriate to retain it through the winter in the event that it could be placed into service as a replacement for an inoperable vehicle.

Chairman Bass asked for clarification on whether Mr. Mitchell was asking for the Committee's action on this item. Mr. Mitchell responded that action was not needed on this item. He only sought the Committee's concurrence with the proposed action to retain the Peterbuilt truck through the winter season, to be utilized as a replacement vehicle.

Mr. Owens asked when the Highway Department planned to put the Peterbuilt truck out for bids again. Mr. Mitchell stated that in the spring of 2002, the market would be studied for favorable conditions. Placing the truck out for bids would be reexamined at that time, in light of market conditions.

Chairman Bass presented the Fiscal Year 2002 County MFT Maintenance Resolution. Mr. Mitchell remarked that annually in December, a resolution is presented for approval, which appropriates the Motor Fuel Tax ("MFT") monies, which pays for maintenance for the upcoming year. The proposed amount this year is \$1,600,000.00, which covers a portion of the maintenance salaries, equipment rental, seal coat program, and most of the

materials used throughout the course of the year, such as gravel, cold mix, hot mix, and the like. Those items will all be bid out during the year.

Mr. Hoselton asked how the proposed amount compares to the previous year's amount. Mr. Mitchell commented that the previous year's amount was \$1,400,000.00.

Mr. Owens asked to what extent the expenditures have exhausted last year's appropriation. Mr. Mitchell explained that typically, the expenditures for this fund come in under budget. Mr. Owens then asked whether the unspent funds carry over into the next fiscal year. Mr. Mitchell responded that they do carry over and are available for use after the end of the fiscal year.

Motion by Selzer/Emmett to recommend approval of the Fiscal Year 2002 County Motor Fuel Tax Maintenance Resolution.

Chairman Bass asked whether the Highway Department ever makes purchases in escrow, in the event that there would be funds left over at the end of a fiscal year. Mr. Mitchell explained that unspent Motor Fuel Tax funds are credited back into the unobligated fund balance at the end of the fiscal year. The Department does not purchase materials to augment existing supplies with surplus funds.

Chairman Bass asked whether it would be appropriate to take advantage of an especially good deal for some needed item, by utilizing surplus funds at the end of a fiscal year. Mr. Mitchell stated that most of the major purchases are through bids. Those prices are established for the fiscal year. Many materials are bid in February of each year, and those prices are good throughout that year.

Mr. Hoselton asked whether a lump sum appropriation given at one point during a fiscal year is the most appropriate way to handle such funding. He explained that the Committee, and subsequently the full Board, experiences a loss of control over where monies are spent, when this method is employed. Mr. Selzer remarked that the itemization of proposed purchases for the upcoming year was delineated in the Fiscal Year 2002 Recommended Budget.

Chairman Bass asked if the Committee members had any further questions. Hearing none, Chairman Bass called for a vote on the previous question.

Motion carried.

Mr. Mitchell proposed that the remaining Items for Information could be addressed by the Committee, prior to its going into Executive Session.

Mr. Mitchell stated that the Township Commissioners have come into the Department to set up their programs for the upcoming year. The Department is stockpiling chips in several different townships, but would like to take the bids for that stockpile as soon as possible. Since the bids will be accepted during the upcoming week, a Stand-Up meeting immediately prior to the December County Board meeting will be required to consider the bid results.

Chairman Bass asked for the status on the construction project on the Towanda-Barnes Road. Mr. Mitchell responded that it had been anticipated that the road would be fully open by Thursday, December 6, 2001. However, heavy rains experienced during the last week in November have placed the project slightly behind schedule. The railroad continues to work on the crossing located just south of Ireland Grove Road. Once the railroad completes its work and the asphalt work is finished, the road can be fully opened. However, continued inclement weather, which is always a possibility, could alter the proposed schedule unexpectedly at any time.

Chairman Bass announced that the section of Towanda-Barnes Road from Illinois Route 9 to Ireland Grove Road is now open to four-lane traffic. Mr. Mitchell reiterated that the section from Ireland Grove Road to U.S. Highway 150 is the section that remains under construction and only partially open. It is expected that this section will remain open only as a two-lane road through the winter.

Chairman Bass stated that he has received only one citizen comment regarding the Towanda – Barnes Road at Ireland Grove Road. It was asserted that no detour signs were apparent at the time that the citizen was using the road, resulting in confusion. Mr. Mitchell assured the Committee that detour signs were clearly posted along the roadway. The signs are on stands along the edge of the road.

Chairman Bass introduced the Illinois Tomorrow Corridor Planning Grant Program for the Access Management Plan for a status report. Mr. Mitchell reported that the grant applied for was accepted. It was a joint application from both the County and the City of Bloomington (“the City”). Mr. Mitchell stated that this grant is not to be confused with similar grant applications, that were submitted at the same time, by both the City of Bloomington and the Town of Normal (“the Town”) for other purposes. The City’s grant application was approved. However, the Town’s was not. Mr. Mitchell explained that the grant is for the purpose of studying access to roads within the City and County’s jurisdiction.

Mr. Owens asked for the amount of the grant award. Mr. Mitchell responded that the grant award was in the amount of \$40,000.00. Mr. Owens then asked for the amount of the City’s grant. Ms. Jennifer Sicks, Land Use and Transportation Planner, McLean

County Regional Planning Commission, responded that she believed the City's grant award to be in the amount of \$60,000.00, but that amount was unconfirmed at this time.

Mr. Emmett asked why the Town's application was not accepted. Ms. Sicks responded that the Town had requested an amount in excess of what would be considered appropriate by the State of Illinois Department of Transportation. She stated that the Town had requested \$130,000.00, and that Illinois Department of Transportation officials had rejected the application as being too aggressive in the amount requested.

Mr. Owens asked how the grant award for the joint study between the County and the City would be disbursed. Mr. Mitchell explained that the specifics of moving the grant process forward have yet to be determined. It is speculated at this point in time that a consultant might be hired.

Chairman Bass asked what the Town's reaction would be to having a consultant hired. Mr. Mitchell noted that the Town had applied for a completely unrelated grant to the joint City and County grant currently under discussion. That grant application had been rejected. In the interest of clarification, Mr. Mitchell reiterated that one grant was joint between the City and the County. That grant application was accepted in the amount of \$40,000.00. A second grant application by the City of Bloomington was also accepted in the amount of \$60,000.00. A third grant application submitted by the Town of Normal in the amount of \$130,000.00 was rejected. Each of the three (3) grant applications addressed different projects.

Mr. Owens asked whether the \$40,000.00 grant award would be the sole funding for the project. Mr. Mitchell commented that there would also be \$4,000.00 of local money invested into the project. An Intergovernmental Agreement would need to be drafted and approved to govern the use of the funding from all sources.

Chairman Bass asked whether there had been any further developments regarding the meeting that recently took place between representatives from the Illinois Department of Transportation ("IDOT") and State Representative Dan Rutherford. Mr. Hoselton noted that he has recently spoken with State Representative Dan Rutherford about the issue of jurisdiction for maintenance of certain portions of Interstate highway and overpasses within the County. He noted that Rep. Rutherford is continuing to broach the subject of such jurisdiction with IDOT representatives in an effort to establish more equitable jurisdiction.

Mr. Mitchell stated that the January Transportation Committee meeting would need to be rescheduled, due to the New Year's holiday. Mr. Selzer suggested that the Transportation Committee meet on Thursday, January 3, 2002 at 3:00 p.m., just prior to

the Property Committee meeting. Since the Transportation Committee has members in common with both the Property Committee and the Land Use and Development Committee, that would be an efficient date and time in order to consolidate meeting times for those members in common.

The members of the Transportation Committee concurred that the January Committee meeting would be scheduled for Thursday, January 3, 2002 at 3:00 p.m. in Room 700 of the Law and Justice Center, Bloomington, Illinois.

Mr. Mitchell announced that one of the Highway Department's maintenance workers has been called up by the National Guard to report for duty in the Quad Cities. He is expected to be gone for 240 days. Discussions with Mr. Lindberg regarding a temporary replacement for this employee are ongoing.

Mr. Selzer asked what the difference in pay is for the employee between his County salary and what he earns through service in the National Guard. Mr. Mitchell responded that he did not know what is the National Guard's compensation rate.

Mr. Lindberg explained that, upon recent review, the County's standing policy on military leave for training and active service was not in compliance with either State or Federal law. Such compliance is currently being addressed in order to appropriately update the policy. Mr. Lindberg noted that Federal law does not require any make up of the difference between military pay and civilian pay for National Guard members. However, State statute requires that an employer pay the difference in civilian-based pay and military-based pay for the duration of a call-up by Presidential Order. Therefore, the County is currently required to pay its employee the difference between the two rates, unless and until 20% of the County's total employee workforce is called up for service. In that event, the County, as an employer, would be exempted from meeting the compensation differential.

Chairman Bass asked what the options would be for the County, as employer, in the event that Civil Assistant State's Attorney Brian Hug were to be called to active duty. Mr. Lindberg responded that Mr. Hug would be eligible for the same compensation program in the event that he submitted his military pay information, once the changes to the policy become effective. Currently, the County's policy states that the employer will pay for two weeks' time while in military training, which is inadequate.

Mr. Lindberg noted that State law requires the civilian/military pay differential be reimbursed. Federal law provides for the preservation of seniority benefits and rehiring

preference, in the event that an employee returns from extended active duty and asks to be rehired. These benefits currently extend for a full five (5) year period.

Mr. Hoselton asked whether the Highway Department's employee would continue to receive his Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund ("IMRF") benefits, as well other County benefits. Mr. Lindberg responded that the County is required to maintain those benefits for its employee at this time.

Mr. Selzer stated that the County should maintain this policy for its employees who give their service to the National Guard.

Motion by Hoselton/Owens to move into Executive Session to discuss personnel matters. Those participants to remain for the Executive Session are: Members of the Transportation Committee; Mr. John Zeunik, County Administrator; Mr. Terry Lindberg, Assistant County Administrator; Ms. Martha Ross, County Administrator's Assistant.

The Committee moved into Executive Session to discuss personnel matters at 8:12 a.m.

The Committee came out of Executive Session at 9:15 a.m. and returned to regular session.

Motion by Hoselton/Selzer to accept the County Administrator's Assessment of the annual performance review for the County Engineer. The recommendation is for a 6 step merit increase, with the specific text of the of the Resolution to be provided by the Administrator's Office. Motion carried.

Motion by Owens/Hoselton to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried.

There being nothing further to come before the Committee at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 9:17 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Martha B. Ross
Recording Secretary

