

## Minutes of the Transportation Committee

The Transportation Committee of the McLean County Board met on Tuesday, August 4, 2015 at 8:00 a.m. in Room 400, Government Center, 115 East Washington Street, Bloomington, Illinois.

Members Present: Chairman Soeldner, Member Buchanan, Harris, Metsker, Robustelli and Martin

Members Absent: Member Finch

Other Members Present: None

Staff Members Present: Mr. Bill Wasson, County Administrator, Mr. Don Knapp, First Assistant State's Attorney, Civil, Ms. Diana Hospelhorn, Recording Secretary

Department Heads Present: Mr. Eric Schmitt, County Engineer

Others Present: Mr. Jerry Stokes, Assistant County Engineer

Chairman Soeldner called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m. He stated that the first item for action is approval of the minutes from the July 7, 2015 Transportation Committee Meeting.

Motion by Metsker/Harris to recommend approval of the minutes from the July 7, 2015 Transportation Committee meeting.

Motion carried

Chairman Soeldner asked the Committee to review the bills and transfers for July 31, 2015. The prepaid total is \$1,387,860.32.

Mr. Schmitt advised that the transfer is to cover the replacement of two fuel dispensers at the Highway Department Facility.

Motion by Harris/Buchanan to recommend payment of the July 31, 2015 bills and transfers as submitted by the County Auditor.  
Motion carried.

Chairman Soeldner presented the Bridge Construction Petition for Funk's Grove Road District – Joint Culvert.

Mr. Schmitt reported that rain washing across the road has washed out 200 feet of shoulder and rusted the undersized culvert. The existing 30" arch corrugated metal pipe will be replaced by triple 30" arch precoated corrugated metal pipes. He advised that the project should take about one day to complete. The estimated cost of the project is \$8,000 with the County's share being \$4,000. Funks Grove Road District is taxing above 0.125% in their Road and Bridge Fund and the project cost is more than 0.02% of their EAV.

Motion by Harris/Martin to recommend approval of the Bridge Construction Petition for Funk's Grove Road District – Joint Culvert.  
Motion carried.

Chairman Soeldner continued with the Engineering Agreement with Cummins Engineering Corporation for the Ellsworth Culvert, Sec 15-00134-09-DR on the Ellsworth Road, CH 17.

Mr. Schmitt stated that the culvert located on North Street in the Village of Ellsworth on County Highway 17 is planned for replacement in 2016 as a County Bridge Fund project. The current structure is showing some structural issues. The project will allow for a sidewalk to be placed on the east side of the road over the culvert. The Village of Ellsworth is working on a drainage project and will allow for us to modify the flow line of the culvert to fit their planned work. He advised that the cost of the engineering services agreement is \$19,500 which will be funded 100 % by the McLean County Bridge Fund. The Department will use staff to install the aluminum box culvert.

Chairman Soeldner asked if Cummins Engineering Corporation is a new firm. Mr. Schmitt responded that Cummins Engineering Corporation has been in existence for 10-15 years. They are new to the County and come with a reputation of doing very good work. This will give the Department an opportunity to use another engineering firm.

Motion by Buchanan/Robustelli to recommend approval of the Engineering Agreement with Cummins Engineering Corporation for the Ellsworth Culvert, Sec 15-00134-09-DR on the Ellsworth Road, CH 17.  
Motion carried.

Chairman Soeldner presented the Special Event Road Closure Permit – New Event for Danvers Days Neon Nights.

Mr. Schmitt Indicated that this is a new event and therefore comes to the Transportation Committee for approval. After this, the permit will be administratively approved by the Department. The Danvers Days Neon Nights Bicycle Ride / Run / Walk will not require complete closure of CH 18 and CH 53, but traffic control by the McLean County Sheriff's Department during the event.

Motion by Martin/Robustelli to recommend approval of the Special Event Road Closure Permit – New Event for Danvers Days Neon Nights.

Motion carried.

Chairman Soeldner stated that the next items to be presented to the Committee are items of information. He presented the project summaries.

Mr. Schmitt advised that the Towanda Barnes widening project has been moving along much better. The dirt is in place and the storm sewer will be installed this week. He advised that the schedule is significantly behind due to the weather, however they are making progress.

Ms. Harris asked if the County is experiencing problems similar to the City of Bloomington with the public crossing barricades on closed roads. Mr. Schmitt responded that on occasion the County does have this, especially with bridge closures.

Chairman Soeldner stated that the Transportation Committee will meet next on Tuesday, September 1, 2015.

Mr. Schmitt noted that the field trip will begin immediately following the Transportation Committee meeting.

Chairman Soeldner asked if there was anything further to come before the Committee.

Mr. Wasson informed the Committee that we have been advised that the State is currently not providing Motor Fuel Tax allotments to local governments due to the lack of a budget. We continue to monitor the situation and talk with the departments to assess if there are needed actions to be taken. He reported that the County is in a good financial condition and can sustain for a period of time.

Ms. Metsker asked if the lack of MFT allotments will limit the townships projects. Mr. Schmitt responded that the Department is in touch with the townships. A majority of the township work is done with the oil and chip program. There is currently enough funding to cover the township and County work scheduled through the end of the year.

Mr. Robustelli asked if there are specific projects scheduled for this year that will be delayed due to the lack of MFT allotments. Mr. Schmitt responded that at this point, all scheduled projects are funded.

There is talk in the southern counties of going back to gravel instead of oil and chip. The Committee discussed the costs involved with rock compared to oil and chip noting there are advantages to both.

Mr. Robustelli thanked Mr. Schmitt for his comments in the Pantagraph on the challenges the County faces in maintaining the County Highway system. He would like to know more about what could be done within the options we have to fund the County Highway maintenance program. Mr. Robustelli is aware a \$500,000 increase is needed. What would it look like to increase the general levy to fully fund the highway maintenance program? He would like to see this come back as an option in the budget process. Residence of McLean County expect the County to maintain the highway system. Chairman Soeldner advised that there is a maximum rate amount that can be levied.

Mr. Schmitt stated that there is cap on the Highway Fund and the Matching Tax Fund, the two funds we can use for maintenance and resurfacing. If the rates were increased to the maximum for FY 2015, it would have generated about an additional \$200,000. We would still be \$300,000 short.

Mr. Robustelli asked if the General Fund levy can be increased and used for the Highway system. Mr. Wasson responded that there is little room in the General Fund levy.

Ms. Metsker asked how far we are from the maximum rate for the Highway Fund and the Matching Tax Fund. Mr. Schmitt responded that the rates are:

	Max rate	Current taxing rate
Highway Fund	.075	.071
Matching Tax Fund	3.75	3.50

Mr. Wasson advised that, under the current structure, with the existing limits in the levies, we do not have the taxing capacity in in property tax levies. He stated that it has been suggested to the Task Force on consolidation and restructuring of local government to allow for a consolidation of aggregate levies. This would give public bodies more choice in determining the highest need of funding.

Mr. Schmitt added that it would benefit the County most if the bridge fund, which is taxable at 0.50 was rolled into the other funds. The funding could then be used for road work. McLean County's bridges are currently in good condition.

Chairman Soeldner asked if there is currently statutes that would allow the County to do this. Mr. Wasson responded that there are not.

Mr. Buchanan noted that not being home rule does limit the County. He asked if the County has ever explored the possibility of home rule. Mr. Wasson responded that with the

challenges relative to funding over the past two years, there have been casual conversations concerning home rule. There has been no successful attempt to initiate a County home rule in Illinois. The only county with home rule status is Cook County, which was provided legislatively. He added that the status of home rule allows municipalities to reduce or maintain their property tax levels by instituting other fees or sales taxes to generate additional revenue.

Mr. Buchanan added that if all the Counties in Illinois were home rule, this would benefit the State.

Mr. Robustelli stated that locally we may not be able to tax our way out, however, it is the only way we are able to fund roads. There is no way to maintain our County Roads without additional revenue. The additional \$250,000 a year over ten years is the difference between \$5,000,000 worth of maintenance that was not done and \$2,500,000 worth of maintenance not done. This is substantial. He believes that the County needs to at least consider an increase.

Ms. Metsker noted that her frustration is that we have no control over commodity costs that have doubled in a short period of time.

Chairman Soeldner asked if there was anything further to come before the Committee. Hearing none, he recessed the Transportation Committee Meeting for the field trip at 8:42 a.m.

Chairman Soeldner reconvened the Transportation Committee meeting at 8:52 a.m.

The field trip began traveling down the newly paved Towanda Bares Road from Ireland Grove Road to Route 9. Mr. Schmitt noted that there is no center line joint. He pointed out the advantage of over laying the lanes with now center joint. The road was closed two Saturdays to complete the project. This is part of the Department's pavement preservation. This process would not be practical on the rest of Towanda Barnes due to the amount of daily traffic.

The trip continued to the start of the three lane widening project on Towanda Barnes. Temporary traffic lights have been installed for safety reasons. The lights will be adjusted when school starts to help with the traffic going to Normal Community High School.

The trip continued on Old US 66. Mr. Schmitt pointed out the location where the bike trail will cross over Old US 66 at the park in Towanda and continue to Normal.

Mr. Schmitt stated that Enbridge Pipe line will bore under Old Route 66 and the Interstate. We continued to an Enbridge site and saw how the pipe line is pushed through after boring under the road. Enbridge damage to County Roads is County reviewed and repairs are quickly done with temporarily spray patch. Once the project is completed the County will hot mix patch all roads bored under and bill Enbridge.

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We traveled to the Gridley Bridge. Mr. Schmitt stated that expansion work will be done next year. A new bridge would cost \$5,000,000. He pointed out that the Gridley Road is showing significant deterioration. The five mile section of road will be resurfaced as part of pavement preservation in 2016.

We traveled to the Mackinaw River Bridge where Enbridge is boring 35 feet below the stream bed under the Mackinaw River to install the pipeline.

We continued to the Lexington East Bridge. Mr. Schmitt pointed out slag work that was recently completed on the Lexington LeRoy Road and the Ellsworth Road.

Motion by Robustelli/Martin to adjourn the Transportation  
Committee Meeting  
Motion carried.

Chairman Soeldner adjourned the Transportation Committee meeting at 11:21 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Diana Hospelhorn  
Recording Secretary