

## DRAFT

### HIGHWAY COMMITTEE

October 6, 2011

A meeting of the Highway Committee of the DeKalb County Board was held on Thursday, October 6, 2011 at 6:00pm in the Conference Room of the DeKalb County Highway Department, DeKalb, Illinois.

Chairman Gudmunson called the meeting to order at 6:00pm. Committee members present were Vice-Chair Augsburger, Mr. Brown, Mr. Cribben, Mr. Deverell and Mr. Foster. Others present were Mr. Nathan Schwartz, County Engineer, Wayne Davey, Support Services Manager and Jim Quinn, Operations Manager from the Highway Department and Mr. Gary Hanson, Deputy County Administrator.

#### APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

**Motion made by Vice Chairman Augsburger and seconded by Mr. Cribben to approve the minutes of the regular September 1, 2011 meeting. The motion to approve the minutes as presented carried unanimously.**

#### APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

**Motion made by Mr. Deverell and seconded by Mr. Brown to approve the agenda as presented.** Discussion followed to move item 1 to 3d on the current agenda and add a new item 1 – Inspection of Equipment to the agenda. **The motion to approve the agenda as amended carried unanimously.**

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** There were no public comments.

The meeting moved to the Highway Garage to provide Committee members with the opportunity to inspect and gather information on equipment recommended for replacement by the Highway Department. Items recommended for replacement were: (1- 1998 4 x 4 Dump Truck, current hours of 2400 – reason for recommendation: age, box is not big enough to hold enough material for operator to make one complete round on his assigned snow plow route, requiring him to return to the garage and refill; low belly blade caused problems when crossing railroad tracks, has the potential to get hung up on tracks. This piece of equipment is currently on 20 year replacement cycle. Due to the reasons stated above we would move this truck up in the replacement cycle to provide a more efficient piece of equipment for the delivery of services. (2 – 1999 Dump Truck – One Ton, current mileage of 147,347 – reason for recommendation; age, high mileage and frequency of use. This vehicle is currently on a 12 year replacement cycle. (3 – 1996 John Deere Tractor, 1742 hours – reason for recommendation; age and not front wheel drive assist, low horsepower. We would also trade in an additional tractor (2000 John Deere with 2075 hours in exchange for one new mower tractor). Since the Highway Department has switched to all batwing mowers bigger tractors with front wheel assist are needed. By using batwing mowers the Department is able to cut back on two mowing crews plus equipment. (4 – 2006 Mower Deck (batwing) – reason for recommendation; age. Mower decks are currently on a five year replacement cycle for budgeting purposes. A question was asked if the Department is currently leasing

any equipment and the answer was no, not at this time. The meeting moved back to the Conference Room at 6:40pm.

**CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS:** Chairman Gudmunson stated he had no comments at this time.

**COUNTY ENGINEER'S COMMENTS:**

Mr. Schwartz presented his Transportation Improvement Progress Report for the month of September to the Committee. The projects listed continue to move forward and those making noticeable progress this month were: **East County Line Road Bridge** – this project is a Kane County project and will be funded in part with Federal Bridge Funds scheduled for 2013. Kane County is now in the process of obtaining the required additional right-of-way for this project. The **Gurler Road Bridge** was opened to traffic on time and the Contractor is continuing with dirt work and some clean-up. This project stands at 96% completed. The **Hortense Road Bridge** in the Village of Kirkland is getting off the ground. A determination will be made as to a total replacement or just a deck replacement in the near future. This decision will have a substantial impact on the total cost of this project. The Village is paying for all non-federal costs and the County Engineer will proceed in an advisory roll throughout the duration of this project. The **Old State Road Bridge** stands at 78% complete. The deck has been poured and is in place. Work continues on the approaches and dirt work. Bridge rail and guardrail should be installed this week.

Mr. Gudmunson inquired into the status of **Keslinger Road Bridge**. Mr. Schwartz stated a determination would be made by the end of the week and it looks more and more likely litigation will be the path chosen. Mr. Gudmunson inquired about **Waterman Road** and Mr. Schwartz stated this will be a major reconstruction of the current road. The project will take at least 2-3 years and the acquisition of additional right-of-way is currently underway. Ditch work will be the first stage and some work could begin during 2013 depending on the progress of other projects.

The County Engineer stated DeKalb County has been selected for participation in the Rural Sign Upgrade Program. This program was put in place in response to concerns from governmental bodies of mandated deadlines to have all signs meet a certain retroreflectivity requirement. The program is a Federal Program and offers up to \$25,000.00 per entity for the replacement of regulatory and warning signs only. Post and hardware also qualify for replacement. The County Engineer is the project director and will be handling the project for all 19 Road Districts as well as all Towns/Villages with a population of 5,000 or less within DeKalb County. Signs that do not currently meet this requirement are eligible for replacement. No reimbursement is allowed for signs placed on a system that happened prior to the approval of the Federal Agreement. Recent movement on the retroreflectivity requirement indicates the deadlines established might be rescinded however, the retroreflectivity standards would remain in place. There would no longer be a specified deadline for replacing signs that do not meet this new requirement but agencies would need to be able to justify why their signs were not upgraded if that need should arise, i.e. law suit.

Other projects the Highway Department is working on include the striping of cross walks, stop bars, railroad crossing, arrows and median lines. We are also seeding all areas where we have placed new dirt in and along our ditches. The dirt pile at the County Nursing Home has been removed and cleaned up.

## **REVIEW OF BUDGET APPEAL SUBMITTED FOR HIGHWAY BUDGET:**

The Highway Department received one appeal to its budget submission as follows: That the capital purchases totaling \$287,500 in the Highway Budget 3510 be postponed until the overall County Budget is in better shape and to levy these dollars in the general fund to reduce the amount of the spend down.

The County Engineer presented the Committee with a review of the property tax levies from 2008 to proposed 2012. The Highway Department has done what was asked of it last year and submitted a budget reducing revenues by 5%. However an additional 11% was taken from the Highway Department last year and was not replaced this year. This year the Department complied with the budget instructions to hold revenues to last years level (our 16% reduction). The County Engineer explained that at some point in time he would like to see the 11% returned to this Department. The County Engineer stated the focus on additional cuts should be directed to Departments who submitted requests for increases to their budgets and not this Department who complied with the budget instructions.

**Mr. Foster made a motion to accept the budget appeal as presented and that motion was seconded by Mr. Deverell.** Discussion followed. Mr. Foster stated that his review of the equipment leads him to believe the equipment is well maintained and could certainly be used for a couple of more years. Mr. Schwartz indicated that by postponing equipment purchases year after year you would be required to double up in future years when funds are probably going to be fewer than they are today. It was noted that all equipment would be postponed, where you would have a year or two of no purchases then pick up the replacement schedule again where it left off. That would eliminate the need for doubling any equipment purchase. Mr. Schwartz stated equipment needs for the Department does not get any less in the coming years and it is important to have reliable equipment for the services the Department provides. The work horse of our fleet is the tandem which works at its maximum level under the worst extreme weather conditions. Not only are you pushing a load in front of the truck you are also carrying a load – it is a push/pull action that is very demanding on equipment. Mr. Brown stated he was no expert on the need to replace equipment and does not want to micro-manage any Department however, he is concerned when looking at the price of new equipment that the cost is high making it an easy target to cut. Mr. Hanson stated that the \$900,000 being spent down from the general fund balance still leaves the County in sound fiscal shape for this year and for 2013 if needed. This has not been a pattern for the County to spend from the fund balance but has been necessary since the downturn in the economy. That is one of the reasons the County built a healthy fund balance.

Mr. Gudmunson inquired into the total spend down for all of the Highway Department's

budgets which amount to \$763,500. He stated he was concerned that this large spend down could not be sustained over a period of time. Mr. Gudmunson was informed that this spend down was approximately 9% of the current fund balances in all five Highway Department's budgets. The Department would remain in fairly good overall fiscal health as far as having the financial means to repair roads. However, the Highway Budget would suffer serve harm if the capital funds are levied to the General Fund. Those funds would most likely not come back to the Highway Budget, leaving no additional funds for equipment replacement in future years.

Mr. Foster asked Mr. Hanson if this budget appeal was approved in part and amended in part, would there still be opportunities to change what action was taken tonight on this appeal. Mr. Hanson stated the Finance Committee could still act on this appeal and so could the full County Board.

Mr. Cribben requested Mr. Hanson to explain the general fund spend down again. Mr. Hanson stated that he had hoped the economy would start to show signs of a stronger recovery by now, but that has not happened and next year does not look much better than this year. However, the County has built its General Fund Balance to handle the reduction in sales tax, property tax and new construction if that were to occur, which it has. Mr. Hanson stated that with the spend down in the General Fund of some \$900,000.00, the overall fiscal health of the County was sound. Mr. Hanson felt there was no need to reduce that number now. If the economy improves then further reductions in the fund balance can be avoided but if it does not, there is time to act at a later date.

**Mr. Foster made a motion to amend his motion to approve the appeal as submitted to as follows: Move to postpone the capital purchases in the amount of \$287,500 and keep the dollars in the Highway budget and not levy to the General Fund. This amendment was seconded by Mr. Cribben. Roll Call Vote taken – Mr. Foster – Yes; Mr. Deverell – Yes; Mr. Cribben – Yes; Mr. Brown – Yes; Mr. Augsburger – Abstained; Mr. Gudmunson – Yes. The motion to amend the original motion carried with 5 yes votes and 1 abstained. Acting on the original motion as amended roll call vote taken – Mr. Foster – Yes; Mr. Deverell – No; Mr. Cribben – Yes; Mr. Brown – Yes; Mr. Augsburger – No; Mr. Gudmunson - Yes. The motion to approve the appeal to postpone the purchase of capital equipment in the amount of \$287,500.00 and keep those funds in the Highway Budget was carried by 4 yes votes and 2 no votes.**

#### **ADJOURNMENT:**

Chair Gudmunson asked if there was anything further that needed to be discussed and hearing none asked for a motion to adjourn. **A motion was made by Mr. Foster and seconded by Mr. Cribben to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously and the October 6, 2011 meeting was adjourned at 8:40pm.**

Respectfully Submitted,

John Gudmunson  
Chairperson