

**Approved 5/12/16**  
**COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE**  
**March 7, 2016**  
**@ 6:00 P.M.**  
**Peoria Riverfront Museum**

<b>COUNTY BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:</b>	<b>Jimmy Dillon</b> -Land Use and Infrastructure Chairperson, <b>Sharon Williams</b> -Land Use and Infrastructure Vice-Chairperson- <b>Robert Baietto, Brian Elsasser, James Fennell, Brad Harding, Allen Mayer, Stephen Morris, Thomas O'Neill, Rachael Parker, Michael Phelan, Phillip Salzer, Carol Trumpe</b> - County Board Members
<b>MEMBERS ABSENT:</b>	<b>Mary Ardapple, Lynn Pearson, Paul Rosenbohm, Andrew Rand, William Watkins, Jr.</b>
<b>STAFF PRESENT:</b>	<b>Scott Sorrel</b> - County Administrator; <b>Mark Rothert</b> - Assistant County Administrator; <b>Amy McLaren, Jeff Gilles</b> - Highway; <b>Shauna Musselman</b> - Assistant Director of Human Resources; <b>Eric Dubrowski</b> - Chief Financial Officer; <b>Steve Sonnemaker</b> - County Clerk; <b>Mark Little</b> - Chief Information Officer; <b>Jenny Fulton</b> - Communications; <b>Virginia Pearl</b> - County Administration
<b>OTHERS PRESENT:</b>	<b>Andy Kravetz</b> - PJS

**Call to Order**

Mr. Dillon, Chairman of Land Use and Infrastructure Committee, called the meeting to order at 6:05 pm.

**Approval of Minutes**

Minutes of November 9, 2015 Committee of the Whole meeting were approved on motion by Mr. Fennell and second by Mr. O'Neill. Mr. Dillon welcomed the group and turned the meeting over to Mr. Sorrel for the presentation.

**Discussion**

• **Transportation/Road Funding**

Mr. Sorrel stated the four primary agenda items for discussion: *(1) review of November 2015 Committee of the Whole (2) report of Citizen Engagement (3) further discussion of Project Funding, and (4) Policy Discussion.*

**Review of November Discussion:**

- The volume of roads in Peoria County that must be maintained by Peoria County total 315 miles
- Peoria County is the largest single entity across the County in terms of road network, comprising 17% of the total road network
- Peoria County contracts with Bradley University on an annual basis for the evaluation of the pavement conditions of the network; Bradley looks at 50% of the network annually. In 2015 the rating stood at 58.8. The remaining 50% will be rated in summer 2016. He noted that a consultant indicated that 70 out of 100 points would be ideal conditions in the Civil Engineering Industry. The rate of Peoria County in the next five years will be at approximately 49 points.
- 24 major County Highway Capital Projects have been completed within the past five years, totaling \$22.3 million. 50% are bridge projects, 50% are road related projects.
- Presented a map of grain elevator locations within the county and county highways impacted by those elevators.
- A graph of funding sources all-in shows the comparison between Highway, Matching Tax and MFT funding, and the decreasing proportion of the funding coming from Matching Tax over the years, as the Highway Fund has increased. The taxes resulting from the two levies were graphed to show dollars used for road maintenance, snow removal and materials.

- 26 miles of road are located within the corporate boundaries of municipalities across the entire county, with half that amount is located within the City of Peoria.

Mr. Sorrel summarized both tradition and non-traditional solutions discussed at the previous meeting:

**Traditional Solutions**

**Solutions - Currently Possible**

Federal Excise Tax on Gasoline  
 FAST Act (*Now Federal Law, and has 5 years worth of funding tied to it, approximately \$56 billion per year*)  
 Illinois Motor Fuel Tax  
 Property Tax with Current Statutory Limits

**Control**

Federal Government  
 Federal Government  
 State Government  
 Peoria County Government

**Solutions - Currently NOT Possible**

Local Option Motor Fuel Tax Municipal Governments  
 Toll Roads

**Control**

Municipal Governments  
 State Government

**Non-Traditional Solutions**

**Solutions - Currently Possible**

Take Roads to Gravel (*Decreases maintenance cost*)  
 Permanently Close Highways (*Must not take away access to properties*)  
 Project Bundling  
 Grants - TIGER  
 Grants - HSIP and Others  
 Public Transportation Sales Tax - Voter Approved  
 Bond Referendum - Voter Approved

**Control**

Peoria County Government  
 Peoria County Government  
 Peoria County Government  
 US DOT  
 State Government  
 Peoria County Government  
 Peoria County Government

**Solutions - Currently NOT Possible**

Public Private Partnerships (P3s)  
 Local Option Motor Fuel Tax  
 Special Service Areas / Special Assessments  
 Right-to-Work Zones  
 Extend MFT Collections to Farm Vehicles

**Control**

State Government  
 State Government  
 State Government  
 State Government  
 State Government

**Citizen Engagement:**

Mr. Sorrel advised that on February 2, 2016, several questions were asked of registered voters. He indicated that 15,000 households were called, with a response goal of 500 registered voters in the City and 500 voters in the County. The survey indicated that 1) the majority of respondents felt that the County was performing "acceptable" to "not good" road maintenance, 2) indicated overwhelming non-support of an increase in property taxes, 3) indicated overwhelming non-support of a change in state law to allow Peoria County to ask voters to begin charging a local motor fuel tax, and 4) nearly half of the respondents indicated support of a sales tax increase (with a nearly identical approval from both City and County respondents).

**Project Funding/Bundling:**

Mr. Sorrel presented a slideshow on the various methods and options of bundling projects, including bundling from an engineering perspective, a "City of Peoria & Old Galena Road Priority" bundle, an "All Municipal Road & Old Galena Road Priority" bundle and a "Grain Routes Priority" bundle.

**Policy Discussion:**

Mr. Sorrel advised that policy questions to consider include two potential solutions that require voter approval, those being property tax or sales tax referendums. He noted that the citizen's poll response indicated that a sales tax solution would be the more viable option.

Mr. Dillon asked the typical engineering cost for a project, and Ms. McLaren commented that 15% is budgeted.

Mr. Mayer stated that he supports compiling data to take to voters in November, explaining the reasoning behind a referendum. He advised that next steps would be determining going forward with a sales tax or property tax solution, rates, bond amount, and specificity in how the tax would be utilized. Ms. Trumpe noted that a large amount of education would be necessary in a short timeframe, and as there is likely to be a large turnout of voters in November, asked if there is sufficient opportunity to get information to the voters regarding a tax increase. Mr. Mayer advised that the general election is the better option, in part due to the large voter turnout. He added that many of the education efforts, if done through mass media, would be no more expensive than if it were done in April. He stated that an outside group would likely be recruited to educate the public about the need and reasoning for an increase.

Mr. Morris stated that although he is not opposed to a referendum, he is opposed to the concept that the County of Peoria would expend any money advocating for a position. Mr. Dillon stressed that the County cannot legally take a position, although individual County Board members may pursue the topic. Mr. Mayer commented that impartial data can be made available, and reiterated that an outside group would conduct that task. Mr. Morris emphasized that there should be no assumption on the part of the County Board of a positive vote. He also stated that based upon the responses to the questions asked in the citizen's poll, and the overall area economy, this is the wrong time to put forward the question of a tax increase.

Mr. Dillon commented that the timing of a referendum is not the main policy decision, but rather the decision to pursue a referendum at all. He stated that a referendum date can be determined at a later time.

Ms. Williams asked the appropriateness of Town Hall meetings for discussion and information, and Mr. Dillon advised that those types of meetings have been conducted in the past, and there is no issue with them.

Mr. Phelan advised that the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission will be holding a regional meeting on the challenges of rural funding, and stated that Peoria County should work with other government entities to find solutions to the challenges of funding roads. He also stated that a referendum should not be placed on the ballot without knowing the consequences, and advised that discussions should be held with the business community to receive their input on the impact of an additional quarter-cent sales tax. He stressed that a thorough review of the impact of both a property tax and a sales tax increase would entail. He commented that after due diligence has been performed, he could support a referendum, although he stated he cannot support it at this time.

Mr. Dillon agreed with reaching out to businesses, as well as the Peoria Public Schools and other stakeholders at a community meeting; however, he again reiterated that the larger question is whether or not to pursue a referendum. He commented that thus far, consensus and direction from the Board is to pursue a referendum, possibly of a sales tax.

Mr. Sorrel advised that a great deal of additional evaluation, study and information gathering is necessary in order to provide the County Board the ability to make an informed policy decision if and when a referendum is added to the ballot. In response to a question posed by Ms. Parker, it was noted by Mr. Sorrel that the educational process will include a comparison on the impact of no tax increase as opposed to an increase.

The meeting was adjourned by Mr. Dillon at 7:20 p.m.