

HOUSE BUDGET REVIEW SUBCOMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Minutes of the 1st Meeting of the 2024 Regular Session

January 29, 2024

Call to Order and Roll Call

The first meeting of the House Budget Review Subcommittee on Transportation of the House Standing Committee on Appropriations and Revenue was held on January 29, 2024, at 2:00 PM in Room 171 of the Capitol Annex. Representative Ken Upchurch, Chair, called the meeting to order, and the secretary called the roll.

Present were:

Members: Representative Ken Upchurch Chair; Representatives John Blanton, Adam Bowling, Josh Branscum, Stephanie Dietz, Thomas Huff, Shawn McPherson, Ruth Ann Palumbo, Tom Smith, and Ashley Tackett Laferty.

Guests: Jim Gray, Cabinet Secretary; Mike Hancock, Deputy Secretary; and, Bobbi Jo Lewis, Commissioner, Rural and Municipal Aid.

LRC Staff: Justin Perry, Savannah Wiley, and Spring Emerson.

Highway Construction Contingency Account

Bobbi Jo Lewis, Commissioner, Rural and Municipal Aid, provided information on the Highway Construction Contingency Account.

In response to questions from Chair Upchurch regarding the typical turnaround time if a project is funded, Ms. Lewis said it usually takes approximately two weeks. In emergency situations, it can take approximately four days. Regarding the typical annual request, Ms. Lewis said the average request would be approximately \$40 million. She will provide a breakdown of county roads versus city streets and the percentages, most of which are county roads. Ms. Lewis explained that pending roads that had not been previously funded were reconsidered upon request.

In response to a question from Representative Blanton regarding the amount of funding needed for 510 bridges, Ms. Lewis said that the requested amount of \$50 million would be adequate. Representative Blanton requested that a list of bridges by county and ranking be provided in spreadsheet format. Representative Blanton commented that landslides and slippage of roads are happening more frequently. He expressed his interest in the cost effectiveness of purchasing equipment and providing the crew to do these repairs as an alternative.

In response to a question from Representative Smith regarding use of the terms contingency and discretionary when discussing the funding, Ms. Lewis said they are the same thing. Representative Smith opined that cities have moneys, but counties do not. He expressed his concern regarding the time from the contract to installation of a guard rail in District 11, stating that timing is an issue.

In response to questions from Representative Bowling, Ms. Lewis said the \$38 million backlog is

for projects ranked as eight, nine, and ten only. For projects ranked as less than an eight, those applicants would be notified about other funding mechanisms that could be available. Pending requests are not automatically carried forward, but must be resubmitted.

Governor's Recommended Road Plan

Secretary Gray and Deputy Secretary Hancock provided information regarding the Governor's Recommended Road Plan.

In response to a question from Chair Upchurch regarding moneys set aside for matching federal grants, Mr. Hancock said he will provide the exact amounts for the three priority projects, which require a twenty percent match.

In response to a question from Representative McPherson regarding how the schedule is working now that the initial COVID-19 scare has died down, Secretary Gray said they are doing well and going according to plan.

Representative Palumbo expressed her appreciation and gratitude for the remarkable work being done in Fayette County on the Interstate.

In response to a question from Representative Tackett Laferty regarding federal grant funding, Secretary Gray said a hefty budget for the three top priority projects would be a great help in securing the federal funds.

In response to a question from Chair Upchurch regarding the minimum amount needed to acquire federal grants for the mega projects, Mr. Hancock said \$300 million will be needed for two projects consisting of the Mountain Parkway extension and the I-69 project. Secretary Gray added that there are Bridge Investment Program Funds still to be awarded as well.

In response to a question from Representative Branscum regarding the use of the Design/Build method of construction, Secretary Gray said it is being used on the Brent Spence Bridge, the Mountain Parkway, and others.

Representative Smith requested an estimate of what the one cent tax can do. Chair Upchurch commented that each penny is equal to \$32 million. Secretary Gray confirmed as much.

Adjournment

There being no further business before the subcommittee, the meeting was adjourned at 3:11 PM.