

# **BUDGET REVIEW SUBCOMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION**

## **Minutes of the 5th Meeting of the 2024 Interim**

**November 6, 2024**

### **Call to Order and Roll Call**

The fifth meeting of the Budget Review Subcommittee on Transportation was held on November 6, 2024, at 10:30 AM in Room 131 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 Co-Chair; Senator Jimmy Higdon Co-Chair; Senators Amanda Mays Bledsoe and David Yates; Representatives John Blanton, Josh Branscum, Stephanie Dietz, Thomas Huff, Shawn McPherson, Tom Smith, and Ashley Tackett Laferty.

Guests: Jim Gray, Cabinet Secretary; Mike Hancock, Deputy Secretary; James Ballinger, State Highway Engineer; and, Bobbi Jo Lewis, Commissioner, Office of Rural and Municipal Aid.

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

### **Approval of Minutes**

Representative McPherson moved to approve the minutes of the October 16, 2024 meeting. The motion was seconded by Representative Dietz, and the minutes were approved by voice vote without objection.

### **Winter Weather Preparedness and Cost Projections**

Secretary Gray presented an update on the repairs to the I-471 Daniel Carter Beard bridge in Campbell County. Last Friday around 3:30 AM, a fire started under the Cincinnati approach to the bridge. The source of the fire is currently under investigation. The fire damaged the steel girders on the southbound span, and as a result, Ohio is the lead agency in the recovery effort. It will be weeks before the bridge can be fully reopened. Co-Chair Higdon commented that it is a serious issue, and expressed his relief that there were no injuries.

Secretary Gray commended KYTC employees for their hard work assisting North Carolina with recovery efforts following storm damage and flooding.

Mr. Ballinger provided information on winter weather preparedness and cost projections.

Committee meeting materials may be accessed online at <https://apps.legislature.ky.gov/CommitteeDocuments/32>

In response to questions from Co-Chair Higdon, Mr. Ballinger said the increase over the years is due to price escalation and equipment costs. The current motor fuels tax rate is approximately twenty-eight cents per gallon. The KYTC practices efficiency in spending, with safety issues being the number one priority. Co-Chair Higdon commented that the formula is not working anymore, with the increase in miles being driven and no increase in consumption of gas.

Representative McPherson commented that as a former right-of-way agent for the KYTC, he understands. He expressed his appreciation for their work.

### **City-County Road and Bridge Program Update**

Commissioner Lewis provided an update on the City-County Road and Bridge Program.

In response to a question from Representative Branscum, Commissioner Lewis provided details of the process for evaluations and rankings of potential projects. She commended the Chief District Engineers for all their hard work.

In response to a question from Representative Blanton, Commissioner Lewis said notifications of ineligibility are sent out by email for all projects that are not eligible for consideration.

Chair Upchurch requested a written report of the recommendations, with the rationale included, for consideration by the General Assembly.

In response to a question from Chair Upchurch, Commissioner Lewis said amounts received in past years have not been as much, with approximately \$30 million being the average. Only a few submissions have come in under estimates, and only by a few hundred dollars.

In response to a question from Representative Smith regarding evaluations, Commissioner Lewis said the samplings show there is continuity across the state. Mr. Ballinger added that the same metrics are used and factors considered during evaluations performed throughout Kentucky. Secretary Gray added that recommendations are made based on funding.

In response to a question from Representative Blanton, Mr. Hancock said federal funding for infrastructure cannot be used for resurfacing projects. The cabinet attempts to do more with federal funds in order to save on state funds.

Co-Chair Higdon commented that the program works, and expressed his appreciation.

In response to a question from Representative McPherson regarding the difference between ineligible projects and those ranked with a zero rating, Commissioner Lewis said ineligible projects are rated below an eight, and the zero rating is for projects of a different nature than resurfacing. Representative McPherson expressed his concern that projects need to be let right now while there is record funding available. Secretary Gray agreed.

### **Adjournment**

There being no further business before the subcommittee, the meeting was adjourned at 11:47 AM.