

**MACON COUNTY BOARD  
FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING**

**MACON COUNTY OFFICE BUILDING  
COUNTY BOARD ROOM #514  
121 S. MAIN STREET    DECATUR, IL 62523**

**August 30, 2021    5:15 P.M.**

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Linda Little, Vice Chair  
Ryan Kreke  
Jim Gresham  
Marcy Rood  
Greg Mattingley  
Helena Buckner

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

Kevin Greenfield, Chair

**COUNTY PERSONNEL PRESENT**

Josh Tanner, County Clerk  
Mary Eaton, Recorder  
John Jackson, Treasurer  
Rocki Wilkerson, Workforce Investments  
Carol Reed, Auditor's Office  
Brandi Binkley, Health Department  
Kim Fowler, S of A  
Sheriff Jim Root  
Mike Baggett, State's Attorney's Office  
Scott Rueter, State's Attorney  
Jeannie Durham, County Board Office

**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order by Vice Chair Little at the Macon County Office Building.

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM PRIOR MEETING**

Mr. Mattingley made a motion to approve minutes of the 8/16/2021 Finance Committee Budget Hearing #2, seconded by Ms. Rood & the motion carried 6-0

**CLAIMS**

Mr. Mattingley made a motion to approve the claims, seconded by Mr. Gresham, and the motion carried 6-0.

**REPORTS**

**Audit Sub Committee –*No Report***

**Auditor –**

***Macon County Board Resolution to Approve Purchase of Copiers with ARP Funds for Auditor's Office, Treasurer's Office & Supervisor of Assessments Office***

Note: The correct title for the resolution is: ***Macon County Board Resolution Approving Appropriation of Funds for Copier Purchases for Auditor, Treasurer and Supervisor of Assessments***

Additional Note: ***The funds would not come from the ARP Funds, but will come from the Decatur Public Building Commission Lease Fund.***

Ms. Reed explained that several of the offices are in need of a new copier. The Auditor's is over 6 years old. The rates are going up as of September 1<sup>st</sup> by 7%. Instead of charging the general fund, the funds are being requested from the Lease fund, the excess funds that have been returned to the County. It is for 3 copiers for \$19,731.

Mr. Gresham made a motion to forward the resolution on to the full board with recommendation to approve, seconded by Mr. Mattingley and the motion carried 6-0

Ms. Reed went on to report that the checks have been prepared and processed for the ARP funds being used for premium pay for employees. Those are ready to go out tomorrow. The total was \$591,735. It had been estimated at \$750,000.

**Board of Review** – Ms. Fowler had no report

**Supervisor of Assessments** –

Ms. Fowler reported that they are looking to publish the 2020 / 2021 assessments within the next 4 weeks which is right on schedule with prior years. The last bit of field work is being finished up and working on the clean up that comes just before it goes to the newspaper.

**GIS** – Ms. Fowler had no report

**Treasurer** –

***Macon County Board Resolution to Execute Deed to Convey Property in Which Taxes were Delinquent***

Motion to approve forwarding on to the Full County Board's Consent Calendar for the September County Board meeting with recommendation to approve was made by Mr. Mattingley, seconded by Mr. Gresham and the motion carried 6-0.

**NEW BUSINESS** –

***Macon County Board Resolution Authorizing the Purchase of Metro Money to Incentivize Citizens to be Vaccinated***

Mr. Tanner explained that this had been presented to EEHW since it is a health related matter, but it was not on the agenda, so they were not allowed to vote on it. Technically, it is a finance purview because it has to do with the ARP funds. It is a program to do two things; one is to incentivize citizens to get vaccinated to increase the overall vaccination rate and, two, to distribute funds to the local businesses which it is assumed will be going through hard times again in the near future. The way the program works is that the County would purchase \$100,000 worth of Metro Money which is a greater Decatur Chamber of Commerce program where their members will accept Metro Money and then they exchange back in at the Chamber for real money. Each person that comes in to get vaccinated or get their booster when that time comes around will receive \$100 worth of Metro Money which can be spent with the local businesses. Then the businesses exchange the Metro Money for actual money. There are three places on the resolution, Macon County Health Department, Crossings Health Care, and Dale's South Lake Pharmacy. Those are the local businesses that would administer the vaccinations.

They would be distributing the money. The Health Department suggested at EEHW that SIU be added. Ms. Binkley also suggested adding both hospitals, St. Marys and Decatur Memorial Hospital. Chair Little asked if there was a contact person that would be willing to be in charge of this at those locations. Ms. Binkley explained that she could work with them and provide the contact info if they are interested. Ms. Little suggested the resolution be left as written and it can be modified on the board floor if something is established with the hospitals or others. Mr. Tanner agreed and said he could reach out to them in the meantime.

The final component is that it is \$100,000. If the \$100,000 is distributed before the end of 2021, then a purchase of an additional Metro Money in \$50,000 increments up to \$200,000 for a maximum outlay of \$300,000.

Ms. Rood asked what the rationale is for the boosters being included. Mr. Tanner explained that there are two points; one, to encourage people to get the booster since that is something the CDC is recommending, but two, you are going to get some pushback from everybody who already has the vaccination as to why they didn't get the \$100. This is to give you something in order to counter that argument. Mr. Tanner said that he has found that with ARP funds, it is really difficult to give money away without someone trying to pull from the funds.

There are probably better ways of getting money to small businesses, but in short order, all of these agencies and programs are already in place and up and running. We don't have to reinvent the wheel. We are just using something that already exists to funnel money into local businesses and encourage people to get vaccinated.

Chair Little asked if this would include people that would be getting the third shot. Mr. Tanner confirmed saying that he thought 8 months after the 2<sup>nd</sup> shot is the current CDC recommendation for the booster. Some people got theirs in December while others were later, so some people would be eligible while others would not. Ms. Little asked how it would work with it being a 2 shot deal. Mr. Tanner said his presumption of the best way to do that would be to give it after the 2<sup>nd</sup> shot. That is a technical thing on the administrative side that was not included in the resolution. With Johnson & Johnson being one shot, it would be different.

Ms. Rood asked if this was for any citizen. Mr. Tanner said it is for anyone getting vaccinated at those places listed. They do not necessarily have to be a resident of Macon County. The added advantage is that the money has to be spent here. In lieu of a VISA gift card where they could go on Amazon and spend the money, the Metro Money has to be spent here.

Mr. Gresham made a motion to forward the resolution on to the full board with recommendation to approve, seconded by Mr. Mattingley and the motion carried 6-0

### **Recorder**

#### ***Macon County Board Resolution Approving Increase in Appropriations in the FY21 Recorders Document Storage Budget***

Ms. Eaton explained that she is wanting to implement electronic recording (e-recording). She explained that this is where the documents, such as deed, mortgages, etc., will be sent to the

Recorders Office electronically. An account will be set up for the money exchange. There are several companies that will be the company to work with the Title Companies or Mortgage Companies. They will take the documents, forward via email to the Recorder's Office who will look over the documents to make sure all the signatures, legal descriptions & size are correct and then accept them. As soon as the Recorder's office accepts them, then that means the documents are there. The stamp will be placed on it and the information put on all documents will be put on them. The office will then send it back as recorded. This will relieve mail coming in, Fed Ex, UPS, etc... Copies will no longer have to be made so a small savings on paper will be seen. This will help during the pandemic when people do not want to come in to the office.

Chair Little asked about maintenance costs. Ms. Eaton explained that an annual fee is paid to the software vender which will include updates. That fee will be taken out of the document storage as well.

Mr. Mattingley made a motion to forward the resolution on to the full board with recommendation to approve, seconded by Ms. Rood and the motion carried 6-0

#### **Sheriff's Office**

##### ***Macon County Board Resolution Granting Permission to Dispose of Surplus Equipment***

Sheriff Root explained this equipment is two storage boxes that are no longer in service for vehicles. The Maroa Police Department is in need of those storage boxes and the department would like to donate them at no cost to the Maroa Police Department.

Mr. Gresham made a motion to forward the resolution on to the full board with recommendation to approve, seconded by Mr. Mattingley and the motion carried 6-0

##### ***Macon County Board Resolution Approving an Increase in Revenue and Expense Lines to Account for Justice Assistance Grant Funds***

Sheriff Root explained that this is a City of Decatur grant, a JAG grant, which is a two year grant with the first year being for \$7,357.50 and the second year being for \$8,524.75. These funds will be used to assist with the City of Decatur in combatting violent crime, especially gun crimes.

Mr. Mattingley made a motion to forward the resolution on to the full board with recommendation to approve, seconded by Mr. Kreke and the motion carried 6-0

##### ***Macon County Board Resolution Approving a Labor Agreement between Macon County and the Illinois FOP for Corrections Officers and Corporals***

Sheriff Root explained that this was negotiated by the committee and amounts to 2.75% raise over 3 years and has a few language changes in it.

Mr. Gresham asked about the language changes. Sheriff Root explained that they are considering a different schedule which is a 12 hour schedule to increase the ability of manpower. There are a few language changes to accommodate that with vacation days converting into something that is equal to what their current vacation schedule is in hours.

Mr. Mattingley made a motion to forward the resolution on to the full board with recommendation to approve, seconded by Mr. Gresham and the motion carried 6-0

***Macon County Board Resolution Approving an Agreement with Macon County Mental Health Board for Inmate Mental Health Services at the Macon County Jail for the Term of July 1, 2021- thru June 30, 2022***

Sheriff Root explained that this is a repeat of last month's resolution with a correction in the amount. The correct amount is \$104,401.

Mr. Gresham made a motion to forward the resolution on to the full board with recommendation to approve, seconded by Mr. Mattingley and the motion carried 6-0

***Macon County Board Resolution Approving the Purchase of an Inmate Transport Vehicle***

Sheriff Root explained that the current vehicle is a 2004 Chevy with a little over 200,000 miles on it and is getting to the point where it needs to be replaced. Funds from a restricted fund that was set up for body armor will be used. Body armor has not been purchased for several years. So, instead of using the general fund, permission is being requested to use the restricted funds for the vehicle. The purchase price of the vehicle is estimated at \$67,296.55.

Mr. Mattingley asked if there will be enough left in the account for when body armor is needed. Sheriff Root confirmed, saying it is an account that generates revenue every year. The amount generated is approximately \$7,000 depending on how many inmates there are and the amount that gets paid into it as a result of reporting to the Social Security Administration. Right now, the balance is well in excess of what would be needed for the next round of body armor.

Mr. Gresham asked if there was not also some other restricted money. Ms. Reed said there is some restricted money for personal patrol vehicles but it is in the LEST fund. Sheriff Root said that that money is used to replace squad cars. There is not a similar fund for jail vehicles and typically, the corrections division gets the hand me downs from the Sheriff's department with thousands of miles on them. He said he feels that it is time for them to have some better vehicles to transport prisoners for the safety of both the prisoners and the jailers.

Mr. Kreke made a motion to forward the resolution on to the full board with recommendation to approve, seconded by Mr. Mattingley and the motion carried 6-0

***State's Attorney  
Macon County Board Resolution Regarding the Purchase of Copiers for the Macon County State's Attorney's Office***

Mr. Baggett explained that the office has a total of 6 copiers and 5 of them have reached end of life or close to it. Originally, the thought was to include a lease option in the FY22 budget requests, but after discussion with Ms. Reed, this option to purchase using the lease fund and the surplus that is returned to the County from PBC every year in the Lease fund. From an economic perspective, this would be better for the County in terms of outright purchase. It would allow budgeting for only the maintenance as opposed to the lease and the maintenance going forward. It would also give the copiers needed now as opposed to waiting until they break before we get them. The request is for authorization to spend \$19, 667 in order to purchase the copiers.

Mr. Gresham made a motion to forward the resolution on to the full board with recommendation to approve, seconded by Ms. Rood and the motion carried 6-0

### **Citizen Remarks – Public Comment**

***Josh Shallenberger, President/ CEO of Shelby Electric Cooperative who will present on fiber optic options to Macon County residents whom they serve along with providing additional opportunities to partner with “others” to expand service beyond their current scope of work.***

Mr. Shallenberger explained that he had been in discussion with Treasurer Jackson about the ARP funding that has potential to help fund broadband in the Macon County area. He explained that they currently own and operate an existing internet service provider which is called Power Net. It is a wireless broadband provider.

Shelby Electric serves about 8,000 members with electric service in primarily 3 counties; Shelby, Macon & Christian counties. He said they touch into 8 counties, but have 2200 miles of electric distribution system in place at 20 substations which step down the voltage and they also have about 50 miles of transmission line across those 8 counties, primarily only serving Macon, Shelby and Christian counties.

There are 664 Macon County Shelby Electric members. He pointed out on a map where they reside and where they would be talking geographically to serve them with a fiber to the home solution.

He explained that they have been in business with Power Net, their internet service provider, since 2008 when the initial pilot study was done after receiving a member survey from their membership indicating that about 2/3 of the members desired a high speed internet solution for which they did not have a current solution. He said they had embarked on a pilot in 2008 taking advantage of grain elevators, etc. They started building their own towers and acquiring old AT&T towers across their system eventually building throughout the entire service area.

The reason they are at the table is because they have that 13 years of experience as an ISP already and are just looking to evolve the network into a fiber network. They have been looking at opportunities to do that for the past 3 or 4 years. A full backhaul network upgrade was done in 2016 after full deployment in 2010. So, it took about 6 years before they did a backhaul upgrade to accommodate the increased demand across the system. Over the next 3 or 4 years, the everything going to the home system was upgraded. He explained that their

experience has shown them that in the wireless broadband arena, there is a product life cycle to keep up with demand which is what exploded because of the pandemic, but typically 5 to 7 years is what is looked at for a product life cycle on a fixed wireless solution. He said they are having a difficult time right now with their Power Net solution in meeting peak demands. During the day, most traffic can be dealt with, but as the evening hours come along where people are trying to attach multiple devices, especially once the kids get home and stream Netflix on multiple devices, that is when you encounter issues on the wireless side.

There are 665 members in Macon County and they are primarily positioned in the southern part of the county. The continued improvements to the Power Net system demonstrates that they are committed to reinvesting in the system to try to keep up with the members' needs and they didn't just build it, let it sit, and go down hill. He explained that they had initially chosen the technology without any funding at the time was that it was something they could build and make a business case on their own. It was easy to deploy. There was an electric coop in the western part of the state that already had a project and they followed in their footsteps using a lot of their engineers and contractors to build out their system. It was a very low barrier entry when it came to ease of acquisition and utilizing those existing relationships.

Using the map, he explained that this is a depiction of the coverage area over Power Net with the caveat, the limitations being topography and vegetation challenges across the system because of the line of sight technology requirement. They run the 5 gigahertz spectrum. A lot of the cell communications run in the 2.3 gigahertz spectrum, so you do have a lot better propagation, but you don't have as great a throughput at those lower frequencies. The 5 gig is also a frequency that is largely unregulated, so about anybody can operate in that space. A licensed backhaul is utilized for all of the backhaul and the 11 gig so there is not a lot of interference on that.

Looking at fiber versus wire technology, in the future, they are advocating for a fiber to the premise for the rural members, especially Shelby Electric Cooperative for many reasons. The experience has demonstrated that the wireless broadband solution has about a 5 to 7 year product lifecycle. Because of the curve when it comes to demand versus what the technology is able to supply, they are probably not going to go through another product lifecycle at Shelby Electric with what they currently have. They will ride it out. To date, there are about \$8 million invested in the wireless broadband system at Shelby Electric Cooperative which has been depicted. They are about \$1.5 million from fully recovering that. Over the next 3 to 4 years, they will probably fully recover and say they're not going to do another investment in the wireless. However, because of the experience and existing relationships with the appropriate engineering firms, consultants, they feel like they are in the unique position to certainly go ahead and take the next step and involve the network in a fiber to the home type network.

Just to demonstrate that they have been active over the course of the past 3 years and its not just that Macon County got ARPA funds, they have been pretty adamant about looking at opportunities to involve the network over the last few years, in particular, they started building a hybrid business case for those areas that they couldn't serve with line of sight technology in 2019. In particular, around Pana, IL and by Neoga, IL where you get into some very terrain and vegetation challenged areas. It is not flat farm country like it is in southern Macon County.

They started looking at what it would take to do fiber to the premises in those areas. Then, they looked at partnering with a middle mile provider that is well known, well thought of, but they could not come to an actual partnership agreement. They did a joint partnership application with the USDA and the Reconnect Fund, but when it came to the partnership, they had a difficult time coming together. Then the RDOF Auction, most recently, this last fall, that the FCC hosted, which is the Rural Digital Opportunities Fund, had over \$20 billion available for distribution to the lowest bidder in the reverse style auction. The Shelby Electric Board was very aggressive in what they were willing to commit. This was to bring fiber to the home to every Shelby Electric member in the service areas, but unfortunately, the FCC did allow fixed wireless bidders into that tier that really was meant to be reserved for fiber to the home solution having gigabits and metrical service and politics won the day and it did not allow that to happen. Mr. Shellenberger said they have moved on and are taking a new look at it through a different lens and there is a big push to decarbonize the grid. There is going to have to be very robust communications at the substations to insure that they can be rotating blackouts on the feeders. We don't want to have to do that, but that is exactly what happened with the Electric Coop in Texas this past winter in February. That is how they were successful in keeping all of their members warm in those abnormal temperatures they saw. They did rotating blackouts every 30 minutes.

The Board has committed \$5.5 million to do 150 miles of utility fiber in our area. It is thought that that can be leveraged with the investment being made and hopefully get it to sprawl out and finger into the fiber in the home solution. It is being designed, the utility fiber sized appropriately so that can be done. Add equipment, add layers and go out into the home and serve to take advantage of the cost efficiencies that would be afforded to everyone.

A full business case of the whole system was done in 2020. Keep in mind that this was 2020 dollars and a lot has been seen since then when it comes to price inflation and supply chain issues. That was about a \$60 to \$65 million bill if fiber to the prem was to be done across the whole system. They have a \$77 million asset balance sheet as the electric cooperative stands right now. It almost doubles up the balance sheet to do a full fiber to the prem build. The payback, for good payback you need at least 8 consumers per mile and at least a 50% take rate at a decent average revenue per sub. \$80 to \$85 is probably what you need to hit those numbers to make a viable business case. That is where the utility fiber, knowing that to bite that off, there would be value added to the Shelby members because of distributing automations, metering . . . There are all kinds of applications besides that worst case scenario mentioned. Outside of that, they will probably be looking for other partnerships, grant opportunities and that is why Mr. Shellenberger said he was there today; to talk about how efficiencies and grant funding can be used to get fiber into the true rural areas. A lot of companies now see the writing on the wall. Money is coming our way, we're going to go out and start building in these communities and get a head start when Shelby Electric Coop has been doing it for 13 years and for the right reasons. They feel like the opportunities that are available to them, the USDA Reconnect round 3 is going to be coming out with \$1 billion coming out of the Infrastructure Investment Jobs Act. Connect Illinois is through the State of Illinois. There have been two rounds so far. The last application was due in April, 2021. Shelby Electric did not apply for that. At the time, they were just coming off the heels of the RDOF auction. The Consolidated Appropriations Act, NTIA most recently had opportunity of \$288 million and a broadband



infrastructure program. The State did a consortium with six other providers and did an application to that. Shelby Electric Coop did not participate in that. But now, with the American Rescue Plan Act with the local fiscal recovery funding, that is what they would like to try to leverage with Macon County as well as other counties. The Infrastructure and Investment Jobs Act is right around the corner. That has gone to the House and we are looking at \$42.45 billion in grants for funding for at least 120 mgs.

Why would you want to partner with Shelby as opposed to anyone else? Shelby has been serving numbers and has organizational alignment with them since 1938. They have been there and will be there. The motto right now for a lot of fiber providers is to build it and sell it. Shelby intends to build it, own it, and operate it. Because of the organizational alignment that they have with the members, because of the efficiencies that it provides the organization. They get high marks for local service. Storm recovery efforts, when there is a hard storm, it is in the organizational DNA to get out there as soon as it is safe and get everyone back on. There are existing relationships with Finley Electric. There is a preliminary engineering design specifically for Macon County fiber to premise that they went ahead with so a cost model could be developed. It gives fiber counts, equipment locations. They have a shovel ready project and would like to continue discussions with Macon County and have that opportunity to potentially get true fiber to premise out to the rural Macon County residents.

Mr. Jackson asked for more specifics on the opportunity to perhaps liaison with Decatur and / or beyond. Mr. Shellenberger explained that one of the unique opportunities they have is the connectivity or a handhold for the Illinois Century Network which was built out by the State and so it is located at the Training Center just south of town on 51. From that point, that handhold from the Illinois Century Network, Decatur owns the fiber out to Richland Community College. At Richland Community College, then, you can ride that back to the Data Hotel in Chicago. That is an old hotel that was repurposed to provide wholesale bandwidth. That is something they are looking to as a way to achieve some cost efficiencies by partnering with Macon County and working with the City of Decatur. To get back to the wholesale bandwidth, bandwidth is pennies on the dollar instead of dollars. It is a real cost efficient way to get that wholesale bandwidth into our system. There are two legs. Shelby would have an opportunity to buy an IRU through the City of Decatur. He said he has actually inquired about that but that is certainly a way, if there is a way to work together, that will benefit all of us.

Ms. Little asked how much money, in a perfect world, they would want out of the ARP fund. Mr. Shellenberger said that is just a conversation and he did not have a number in mind. He said he has an idea of what it would take to build the system out. He can say what the board is committed to through the RDOF funding, so he has a pretty good sense of where he thinks he could get it through, but could not speak on behalf of the board and does not have a pre-committed level to bring forth tonight. He just wanted to demonstrate that they are committed to the area, have done their homework and would certainly like to continue that conversation.

Mr. Jackson commented that they are subject matter experts of the entire area, even things they don't touch.

Ms. Rood said that it is her understanding that the northeastern part of the county is the area where there are no fiber optics that have been laid, so that would be where the greatest need is. That doesn't mean they couldn't consider more throughout the county. Mr. Shellenberger added that they have 3700 poles which they would attach to in this particular area. They would not have that advantage in the northeast section, but they would be able to work with potentially another coop in that regard. That is one of the big efficiencies in this, is the speed at which you can deploy because you don't have to put everything underground. However, owning those poles and having that benefit makes a difference. He said they are very open to working with others when it comes to that. They have close ties to Corn Belt Energy which is probably up in that area.

Chair Little asked if there was further public comment. There was none.

**CLOSED SESSION** *None needed*

**NEXT MEETINGS -**

9/7/2021 – Budget Hearing #3

9/13/2021 – Budget Hearing #4

9/21/2021 – Budget Hearing #5

10/4/2021 – Regular Finance Committee meeting / Prepare for Display of Budget

**ADJOURNMENT**

Ms. Little adjourned the meeting at 6:00 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Jeannie Durham, County Board Office