

**PROCEEDINGS  
OF THE  
MACON COUNTY BOARD**

**DECEMBER 09, 2010**

**Jay A. Dunn  
Chairman**

**Stephen M. Bean  
Clerk**

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 7:15 p.m. with the Sheriff and State's Attorney present.

The Roll Call showed all members present at the meeting.

Mrs. Taylor led the members in Prayer.

All led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

## **A. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER 10, 2010 MEETING**

### **MOTION**

Mr. Smith moved, seconded by Mr. Wicklund to approve the minutes of the November 10, 2010 meeting.

There were no questions or comments from the board floor.

### **ROLL CALL.**

Ayes: Ashby, Baxter, Cox, Drobisch, Dudley, Dunn, Greenfield, Hogan, Jacobs, Little, McGlaughlin, Meachum, Oliver, Potts, Smith, Taylor, Westerman, Wicklund, Wilkins, Williams

Nays: (None)

**AYES = 20**

**NAYS = 0**

### **MOTION CARRIED.**

### **ZONING / SUBDIVISION**

1. Mr. Dudley presented Resolution Z-1105-12-10 which is regarding Case S-01-11-10, a petition submitted by the Izaak Walton League of America, Decatur Chapter for a Special Use Permit to allow the operation of a private campground in R-1 Single Family Residential District on property commonly known as 5179 Old Stagecoach Road in Whitmore Township. Staff recommended at the hearing that the petition be granted with 11 stipulations. After hearing the evidence, the Zoning Board of Appeals voted 4-0 in favor of recommending to the County Board that the petition be approved with 11 stipulations. The EEHW Committee met and reviewed the petition and recommended by a 7-0 vote that the County Board approve the subject petition with the stipulations recommended by the Zoning Board of Appeals.

### **MOTION**

Mr. Dudley moved, seconded Mr. Williams to approve Resolution Z-1105-12-10 by prior roll call vote.

There were no questions or comments from the board floor.

**MOTION CARRIED.**

## **B. CORRESPONDENCE**

A letter from Comcast regarding upcoming Comcast Channel Lineup changes and additions in Central Illinois

Two e-mail notices from AT&T U-verse regarding pricing changes and programming changes

A letter from Suddenlink Communications regarding rate changes effective January 2011.

A notice from Ameren regarding tree trimming that will be done in and around the Decatur area in the near future

## **REPORTS**

Sheriff's Report – November 2010

Coroner's Report – October 2010

Treasurer Fund & Investment Report – November 2010

Tax Collector Bank Report – November 2010

## **MOTION**

Mrs. Little moved, seconded by Mr. McGlaughlin to approve the Correspondence and Reports and that they be placed on file by prior roll call vote.

There were no questions or comments from the board floor.

**MOTION CARRIED.**

## **2. CLAIMS**

### **MOTION**

Mrs. Cox moved, seconded by Mr. Oliver to approve the claims that have already been paid by prior roll call vote.

There were no questions or comments from the board floor.

**MOTION CARRIED.**

**C. APPOINTMENTS**

**COMMENT:**

Mr. Dunn: Mr. Dunn said as you are aware Mr. Yoder resigned from the County Board when he was elected Treasurer. We do have an opening. The Republican Party submitted the name of Susanna Zimmerman. Mr. Dunn talked to Susanna because he was planning on appointing her tonight but she couldn't be here. In fact, she was gone during the organizational meeting too so we couldn't have done it then. He pulled it off of the agenda not realizing that we could have appointed her without her being here and then swore her in later when she could come. Mr. Dunn said it was his mistake. He had told her the board would appoint her on January 13, 2011 and unfortunately that is 3 or 4 days past the 60 day limit. He asked the State's Attorney if he would do jail time unless we had a special meeting on that. The State's Attorney assured him there weren't any penalties involved, but he thought he would let the board make the choice. Mr. Dunn is planning on appointing her on January 13, 2011 unless 1/3 of the board members want to call a special meeting for that appointment.

Mr. Wicklund: Mr. Wicklund asked if it could be done next Monday.

Mr. Dunn: Mr. Dunn said no because you have to get 1/3 of the board to request a special meeting and then the request is given to the County Clerk who has to have a notice printed in the paper so many day in advance; and there isn't enough time to do that. It also has to be on the agenda 48 hours prior to taking action. So, it is basically a special meeting before January 13<sup>th</sup> or we wait until then. Ms. Zimmerman can attend the committee meeting on Monday so she will be able to listen to the discussion regarding the sales tax for the schools because she would be voting on it during the January 13<sup>th</sup> meeting. None of the board members objected to appointing her on January 13<sup>th</sup>.

**3. Resolution G-3528-11-10 – Appointment to the Macon County Regional Planning Commission**

Bill Clevenger, 145 S. Woodlawn, Decatur, IL 62522  
Craig Coil, 101 S. Main, Decatur, IL 62523  
Steve Grimm, 10 West Dr., Decatur, IL 62526  
Terms Expire: November 30, 2012

Monty Cherry, 405 CR 2500 N, Mahomet, IL 61853  
Dave Horn, 205 Glencoe Ave., Decatur, IL 62522  
Chuck Hunsinger, 5 Allen Bend Dr., Decatur, IL 62521  
Kathy Merner, 130 N. Oakcrest, Decatur, IL 62526  
Kathy Wade, 25 1800<sup>th</sup> Ave., Mt. Pulaski, IL 62548  
Terms Expire: December 31, 2013

**MOTION**

Mr. Dunn moved, seconded by Mr. Meachum to approve Resolution G-3528-12-10 by prior roll call vote.

There were no questions or comments from the board floor.

**MOTION CARRIED.**

4. Resolution G-3526-12-10 – Appointments to the Macon County Historical Society Board of Directors

Karen Anderson, 1715 S. Albany Pl., Decatur, IL 62521  
Paula Cross, 1420 W. Sunset Ave., Decatur, IL 62522  
James Romano, 109 S. 44<sup>th</sup> St., Decatur, IL 62521  
Sandra Walker, 4631 Dogwood Ct., Decatur, IL 62526  
Edward Walker, 425 S. Henderson, Mt. Zion, IL 62549  
Terms Expire: December 31, 2012

**MOTION**

Mr. Dunn moved, seconded by Mr. Williams to approve Resolution G-3526-12-10 by prior roll call vote.

There were no questions or comments from the board floor.

**MOTION CARRIED.**

5. Resolution G-3525-12-10 – Appointment to the Emergency Telephone System Board

Matthew J. Sekosky, Fire Chief Decatur Fire Department, 1415 N. Water St., Decatur, IL 62526  
Term Expires: February 2013

**MOTION**

Mr. Dunn moved, seconded by Mrs. Cox to approve Resolution G-3525-12-10 by prior roll call vote.

There were no questions or comments from the board floor.

**MOTION CARRIED.**

6. Resolution G-3527-12-10 – Appointments to Macon Mosquito Abatement District

R.C. Smith, 3494 E. Fulton Ave., Decatur, IL 62521  
Robert Groesch, D.V.M., 1090 W. South, Decatur, IL 62521  
Terms Expire: December 31, 2014

**MOTION**

Mr. Dunn moved, seconded by Mr. Meachum to approve Resolution G-3527-12-10 by prior roll call vote.

There were no questions or comments from the board floor.

**MOTION CARRIED.**

There was nothing presented on the Consent Calendar.

**JUSTICE COMMITTEE**

**COMMENT:**

Mr. Baxter: Mr. Baxter advised the board members of the Sheriff's intent to replace two full time deputies. He appeared before the Justice Committee, and we said that was ok. These are in his budget. We advised the Sheriff that it was alright with us. The State's Attorney also informed us they would like to replace a full-time Assistant State's Attorney that took another job. That is in his budget and the replacement will be at a lesser rate than what the other assistant was.

7. Mr. Baxter presented Resolution G-3529-12-10 which is the fourth amendment to the Jury Parking Agreement with the City of Decatur.

**MOTION**

Mr. Baxter moved, seconded by Mr. Wicklund to approve Resolution G-3529-12-10 by prior roll call vote.

**COMMENT:**

Mr. Baxter: Mr. Baxter said this is a lesser amount than we are paying for jury parking than we had before because of the change in the jury calendar.

**MOTION CARRIED.**

8. Mr. Baxter presented Resolution G-3530-12-10 which is approving a transfer in the FY10 Circuit Clerk Document Storage Fund budget.

**MOTION**

Mr. Baxter moved, seconded by Mr. Williams to approve Resolution G-3530-12-10 by prior roll call vote.

There were no questions or comments from the board floor.

**MOTION CARRIED.**

9. Mr. Baxter presented Resolution G-3531-12-10 which is approving an increase in appropriations in the FY11 Probation budget for Juvenile Sex Offender Evaluations.

**MOTION**

Mr. Baxter moved, seconded by Mrs. Cox to approve Resolution G-3531-12-10 by prior roll call vote.

There were no questions or comments from the board floor.

**MOTION CARRIED.**

10. Mr. Baxter presented Resolution G-3532-12-10 which is approving an increase in appropriations in the State's Attorney's FY 10 Computer Tracking Project Grant.

**MOTION**

Mr. Baxter moved, seconded by Mrs. Wilkins to approve Resolution G-3532-12-10 by prior roll call vote.

**QUESTION:**

Mr. Williams: Mr. Williams asked if this deals with the ankle bracelets that the offenders wear, or what specifically does this deal with.

Mr. Ahola: Mr. Ahola said this Computer Tracking was the original name of the grant that allowed our office to share information with DOVE and court services. Now, it is including all the Domestic Violence and Violence Against Women Grants that our office administers.

**MOTION CARRIED.**

**EEHW COMMITTEE**

11. Mr. Dudley presented Ordinance O-87-12-10 which is amending the Macon County Zoning Ordinance in Section 3.2 Definitions, and Section 4.12 Penalties of the Macon County Zoning Ordinance.

**MOTION**

Mr. Dudley moved, seconded by Mrs. Little to approve Ordinance O-87-12-10 by prior roll call vote.

There were no questions or comments from the board floor.

**MOTION CARRIED.**

**OPERATIONS, PERSONNEL & LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE**

12. Mr. Smith presented Resolution G-3533-12-10 which is approving the FY 11 budget amendment for Workforce Investment Solutions.

**MOTION**

Mr. Smith moved, seconded by Mr. Meachum to approve Resolution G-3533-12-10 by prior roll call vote.

**COMMENT:**

Mr. Smith: Mr. Smith said he just wanted to point out that this is to help serve the dislocated workers from Mueller Company, Bridgestone-Firestone, and Mitsubishi.

**MOTION CARRIED.**

13. Mr. Smith presented Resolution G-3534-12-10 which is approving a FY 11 budget amendment for Workforce Investment Solutions.

**MOTION**

Mr. Smith moved, seconded by Mrs. Taylor to approve Resolution G-3534-12-10 by prior roll call vote.

There were no questions or comments from the board floor.

**MOTION CARRIED.**

14. Mr. Smith presented Resolution G-3535-12-10 which is approving a FY 11 budget amendment for Workforce Investment Solutions.

**MOTION**

Mr. Smith moved, seconded by Mr. Meachum to approve Resolution G-3535-12-10 by prior roll call vote.

There were no questions or comments from the board floor.

**MOTION CARRIED.**

**FINANCE COMMITTEE**

15. Mr. Ashby presented Resolution G-3536-12-10 which is authorizing the issuance of not to exceed \$14,000,000 in aggregate principal amount of Revenue Bonds; Millikin University Series 2010, and authorizing execution and delivery of all related documentation and approving certain related matters.

**MOTION**

Mr. Ashby moved, seconded by Mr. Dudley to approve Resolution G-3536-12-10 by prior roll call vote.

There were no questions or comments from the board floor.

**MOTION CARRIED.**

**NEGOTIATIONS COMMITTEE**

16. Mr. Oliver presented Resolution G-3537-12-10 which is ratifying the agreement between Macon County and American Federation of State, County and Municipal employees (AFSCME) Council 31, AFL-CIO on behalf of AFSCME Local 612 Highway Department.

**MOTION**

Mr. Oliver moved, seconded by Mr. Williams to approve Resolution G-3537-12-10 by prior roll call vote.

There were no questions or comments from the board.

**MOTION CARRIED.**

17. Mr. Oliver presented Resolution G-3538-12-10 which is ratifying the agreement between the County of Macon/Macon County Sheriff and Illinois FOP Labor Council representing Deputy Sheriffs.

**MOTION**

Mr. Oliver moved, seconded by Mrs. Cox to approve Resolution G-3538-12-10 by prior roll call vote.

There were no questions or comments from the board floor.

## **TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE**

18. Mr. Potts presented Resolution H-1748-12-10 which is approving an Intergovernmental Agreement for the sharing of certain costs related to improvement of that portion of County Highway 20 in Forsyth, Macon, County, Illinois, between the Village of Forsyth and the County of Macon, Illinois.

### **MOTION**

Mr. Potts moved, seconded by Mr. Williams to approve Resolution H-1748-12-10 by prior roll call vote.

There were no questions or comments from the board floor.

### **MOTION CARRIED.**

19. Mr. Potts presented Resolution H-1749-12-10 which is approving grant of perpetual easement across County Highway 63 right of way to Darren Winchester and Nancy Farmer.

### **MOTION**

Mr. Potts moved, seconded by Mrs. Little to approve Resolution H-1749-12-10 by prior roll call vote.

There were no questions or comments from the board floor.

### **MOTION CARRIED.**

20. Mr. Potts presented Resolution H-1750-12-10 which is appropriating funds for the payment of the County Engineer's Salary.

### **MOTION**

Mr. Potts moved, seconded by Mrs. Cox to approve Resolution H-1750-12-10 by prior roll call vote.

There were no questions or comments from the board floor.

### **MOTION CARRIED.**

## **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

Mr. Dunn: Mr. Dunn said the Executive Committee will meet Monday, December 13<sup>th</sup> at 6:30.

The Siting, Rules & Ordinance Sub-Committee had nothing to submit at the meeting.

The Building Sub-Committee had nothing to submit at the meeting.

**CITIZEN REMARKS – PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Mr. Dunn: Mr. Dunn wanted to say that he had said we would give this a half hour. We can give it more time if we need it. We are also going to have a meeting Monday night here at 6:30 to entertain other questions or issues that might not get resolved tonight. He wanted to stick to the agenda. Kara Demirjian Huss will come up and speak and introduce the different school boards. They will talk a little bit about what their proposals are and entertain questions after each one talks. They will entertain questions from the board. They also have a power point they will be running through at this time. He will then entertain anything from the audience and anyone who wanted to speak against it. They will finish with anyone who wanted to speak for it other than the first speakers. He would like to stick to the point. As everyone is aware, the State Legislature, for some unknown reason, mandated the County Board to be the lucky chosen entity to put this on the ballot. It passed, and now we get to see if we are going to implement the ordinance. So, we have these meetings and he would like to talk just about the implementation of the ordinance and whether people want it passed or not. He doesn't want to go into each individual school district and what problems people might have with those individual school districts; that is not what we are here for tonight. That is what school boards are elected to do, to take care of those problems. He hopes everyone will just talk about the passage or non-passage of this ordinance, tonight and Monday night. He plans on having it come to a vote on January 13<sup>th</sup>.

Kara Demirjian Huss: Mrs. Demirjian Huss said we truly appreciate the opportunity to be here tonight. We know everybody has put in a lot of time and energy into this vote. We also appreciate that you have kept this, both you as our County Board, and the community as a non-partisan issue, seeing that in the united stance that both labor and businesses take in, in the endorsement of this tax. In November, it was a very strong message that the voters sent to institute the 1% tax. Now, we are looking to you to give a little bit deeper insight into this tax and what the school districts plan to do with those funds. In an election cycle we were one of the only ones that passed this tax, and of the other major metro communities surrounding us, Decatur can be proud that they put their schools first in deciding to institute this tax as a better way to fund our schools. As the Chairman of our Economic Development Corporation for Decatur and Macon County, she understands firsthand how important education is to growing a prosperous community. We simply cannot continue to bring business and retain business without a solid educational system. This tax offers us fortitude to be able to have another way to fund schools than through property taxes. To her it speaks volumes of how strong the voters of Macon County feel about education for our kids and the impact it will have in our community. With us tonight you will see the list of superintendents from many of our school districts and that, again has created a unified effort here. We really want you to understand what their plans are with the allocations of the fund. We think it is important to you that you understand that they are accountable for the dollars that this tax

brings. They do have plans now and for the future of those funds to our taxpayers. This tax will conservatively generate nearly \$10,000,000 annually for our Macon County Schools Districts, for the 9 districts. These funds will impact each district differently and our superintendents will go through and explain those uses. But, before they do she thinks it is very important to emphasize the economic impact this is going to have on us today. We are looking at jobs just between the Decatur Public School System and the Meridian School System with the \$66,000,000 project we are talking about, almost 2,200 jobs in our community. That is incredible impact. That's just not on paper; that's actual. So, when we are talking about jobs in Springfield on paper, we actually in Decatur have an opportunity to have those in this Macon County area, jobs impacting us today. To give you a better explanation of how that is broken out, the direct jobs are construction; the ones that will impact our construct force, our contractors and labor union, the people that build the buildings. The indirect jobs are the suppliers and transporters, the people that are supplying product to our contractors and our unions to get the job done. The induced jobs are those that are created through those that the building and supplying. ... It is the ripple effect of what they're going to spend and the money that is going to fuel the other jobs in our community. It truly is a significant impact on us. You could see the numbers as you look and the impact it will have on us. On the next slide we will talk about Meridian. It is important to understand that if this tax does not pass \$6,000,000 could go out of our community. They will not have the opportunity for the matching State Funds. She thinks that is incredibly important that they understand that. This is an additional 172 jobs with the State Fund matching. You can see with just those two examples that doesn't even begin to explain the impact this will have as other districts begin to work on their jobs. We have \$86,000,000 just in Decatur and Meridian in personal earnings generated by these jobs. Again, this isn't a promise. It's not a paper promise; it's actual and the jobs are real and will impact us. We can see from Champaign, our neighboring community that over \$100,000,000 in work has been placed over there. That represents a significant amount that we see coming that will happen with us as a ripple effect if these other school districts start to utilize their funding. From an economic development standpoint we cannot afford to let this opportunity pass us by. What you more importantly want to hear from than her up here today, is from each of the superintendents. She introduced Gloria Davis from Decatur Public Schools.

Mr. Williams: Mr. Williams said he didn't quite understand from the slides what the induced jobs were.

Mrs. Demirjian Huss: Mrs. Demirjian Huss said the induced jobs are jobs that are trickle, which will ripple down. The people that are making the money from the jobs will go back into the community and spend more money on gas, more money at restaurants, fueling other jobs in those establishments.

Mr. Ashby: Mr. Ashby said they estimated the number of construction jobs. He asked what the period of time is that the construction will last, two years, one year, or three years.

Mrs. Demirjian Huss: Mrs. Demirjian Huss said the construction will last four years.

Gloria Davis: Ms. Davis said she is Superintendent of Decatur Public Schools. She first wanted to thank them for providing this opportunity for them to share their history of the high school tax initiative that they have had in place for the past 18 months. She would like to introduce the Board of Education members that are here. She sees Jan, Lavell, Dan Oakes, Terry and D.R. She wanted to thank them. We are here tonight to help you understand how over the last year and a half in Decatur we have had a high school task force that met as an entire community wide project. We had 100 plus members of the community continually attending meetings to discuss what they would like to see in terms of their high schools: new high school or renovated high schools. Basically, over those 18 months input from surveys and feedback, the citizens spoke loud and clear. They wanted to renovate MacArthur and Eisenhower High Schools and they wanted to do it with a sales tax. Thus, we as administration and Board of Education listened to the public and decided that is what we would propose to the public at large with the cooperation of the other communities and school districts in Macon County. The renovation of MacArthur and Eisenhower will be generated by over \$5,000,000+ in terms of the sales tax. The renovation will be used hugely to do major improvements to both high schools. We will look at improved safety and security that is essential and has not been in place in many high schools especially here in Decatur since the Columbine era. We will make sure primarily that renovated classrooms will be increased in terms of size, in terms of providing the kind of labs, science labs, foreign language labs, writing labs that our students direly need. We know that to do this and have 21<sup>st</sup> Century learning we have to have increased technology. In Decatur we have already instituted 21<sup>st</sup> Century technology in terms of Promethium Boards in all of our Pre-K through 8<sup>th</sup> grade classrooms. We can't do it in the high schools because we do not have the electrical capacity. All roads in Decatur lead to the high school, and we are not able to do the kind of things we have already generated in the lower levels in order to amass the kind of graduates for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century that we want to have. We know we need more energy efficient buildings. This renovation will allow us to go "green" to look at 21<sup>st</sup> Century "green" initiatives in terms of electrical capacity, heating and cooling, and allow us to have the kind of buildings that will withstand for many, many years to come. The improved building infrastructure and the improved classroom instruction will help to increase academic achievement. In Decatur academic achievement is paramount. We have made tremendous strides in terms of our improvement and achievement but we know we still have a way to go. Building facilities does help to increase achievement. Recent studies have shown that children who are going to school in air-conditioned 21<sup>st</sup> Century environments are able to have the kind of learning that helps to increase their academic capabilities. In Decatur, that is one of the major areas we are striving for. Health Life Safety issues are paramount for us. Over \$37,000,000 will be paid through property tax. If this is not implemented we will still have to have property tax increases that will not have to go to the voters. We do not want to do that. We have listened to the public. We want to have the sales tax, but we must in Decatur make huge Health Life Safety improvements that we know are direly needed. We need a roof at Eisenhower and boilers at MacArthur, and she could go on. We cannot obligate more than 80% of the projected sales tax revenue for the debt in order to be repaid. That is the maximum that we will be going for because that is the law and we are going to adhere to that. We know this sales tax issue is increasingly important to all districts but it is dire to the City of

Decatur. Our children deserve it. Our children need it, and we would invite each of you to come and visit at any time, either one of the high schools. You don't even need an appointment, just come, and the principals Mr. Schultz and Ms. Hicklin will gladly show you around. We know that once you enter our schools and see what our children are doing and be able to look at the facilities you will be more impressed first of all, with the academic learning and then also clearly understand the need. She thanked them for their time this evening.

Mr. Williams: Mr. Williams asked if as a result of some of the implemented improvements that they talked about, would there be a decrease in the number of employees in District #61. In other words, since you are going to have improved technology or have improved safety and security, would you possibly have to have less people assigned to that?

Ms. Davis: Ms. Davis said at this time we are not projecting that. We know that, first of all the increased technology in terms of security and safety will increase the safety of the students and the staff. In terms of people, we are not projecting to have any fewer people because of that. We just want to make sure everyone is in an environment that is safe and protected.

Mrs. Little: Mrs. Little said in the flier that went out during the election it kind of breaks down the school districts and what they want to say. Decatur indicates that it is not going to be actively pursuing property tax relief and she understands that because you wouldn't need bonds if you had enough property tax coming in. However, it indicates that you will be avoiding property tax increases. Mrs. Little asked how many years they anticipate being able to not raise property taxes if this levy goes through.

Ms. Davis: Ms. Davis said we anticipate having the sales tax to help us fund the projects that have been indicated for a good 20 to 30 years, for the life of the bonds. We know that the building project itself will be about 4 years, but the repayment will be for the life of the bonds.

Mrs. Little: Mrs. Little said so they would anticipate no property tax increases during the life of the bonds.

Ms. Davis: Ms. Davis said she could not speak to that in terms of property tax. The sales tax that we will have generated for these projects will clearly be instituted for these projects. Right now we are not projecting any increase to property tax; in fact the board is getting ready to pass a decrease in property tax.

Mr. Wicklund: Mr. Wicklund said the goals are great and the schools definitely need the improvements in the city. He understands that. His concern is longtime care and maintenance that has been neglected in the past. He asked if there is a plan to deal with that down the road.

Ms. Davis: Ms. Davis said we have a plan in place already. We have a 5 Year Facilities Plan that we have implemented and are ferociously utilizing. We already let \$9,000,000 in bonds about 3 to 3 ½ years ago to just improve lighting, flooring, parking lots, and to improve the infrastructure that has allowed us to put the 21<sup>st</sup> Century technology that she mentioned earlier in the Pre-K through 8 buildings. So, we have done a lot in terms of doing all of the things that we know are direly needed. We have done that without increasing property taxes to the citizens, and by being fiscally responsible and being able to take bonds that have matured and then re-let those in order to complete those. We also, even before this 5 Year Facilities Plan, had a facilities plan in place and that was before she arrived in the district. She does know the district has continually worked extremely hard to make sure that improvements are needed. We have to realize that when you are talking about buildings in Decatur explicitly, that are 50 years old plus that many of the things that need to be done have been done, but there are still a lot of things that we could not afford to do. She did want to emphasize that we have had some major facility improvements over the last few years with bonding capacity that we were able to do without coming to the voters at all.

Mr. Ashby: Mr. Ashby said Ms. Davis had mentioned 30 years or 20 years. He asked her what she anticipated as the life of the bond. Is it 20 or is it 30 or is it to be determined or what?

Ms. Davis: Ms. Davis said we are in the process of working with our bonding companies to determine that. We didn't want to do anything prematurely until the County Board has spoken. We know that bonds continually go anywhere between 20 and 30 years. That is what we said to the voters all throughout the High School Task Force Initiative. We had a Finance Sub-Committee that also looked at that total project. We know that between 20 and 30 years and we do not anticipate more than 30 years at all.

Mr. Ashby: Mr. Ashby asked when they would find out whether it was going to be 20, 25, or 30.

Ms. Davis: Ms. Davis said as soon as we can sit down with the bonding companies and work through what the actual architectural drawings will be and how much in terms of all the various components that we will need then we will be able to determine that. But, we do not want to stand here today and say it will be 21 years or 22 years because we did not want to be premature and start drawing our plans before we knew that we had the approval to move forward.

Frank Meyer: Mr. Meyer thanked them for giving him the opportunity to address the board. Mr. Meyer said he is Superintendent of Meridian Schools. Meridian stands to receive over \$630,000 per year from the sales tax alone. We would use the money for projects related to our recently adopted Meridian Facilities Plan. It was developed through public meetings in the community engagement process over the past year with over 300 of our residents attending and weighing in and giving input as to what they would like to see our schools look like. It was adopted by the board June 21, 2010. Part of that plan involves new school construction. These would be the things that we would

begin to do. First of all we would begin renovation of Meridian High School. In doing that we would start construction of Phase 1 of the conversion of the high school to become a middle school/high school. Secondly, we would look at food service, classroom and lab additions to accommodate the high school program needs. Third, we would remodel vacated high school spaces. Fourth, we would complete required Health Life Safety work in the remodeled spaces and in the building as a whole. We would remodel the gymnasium and complete other associated site improvements. This money would also allow us access to State construction money. This money would not be provided if we don't have our portion of the money provided by the county sales tax. This amounts to over \$6,000,000. We are at the top the 2003 list and have been waiting patiently. If this money is not generated through the sales tax we lose access and \$6,000,000 goes somewhere else besides Macon County. Finally, there is a lot of work to do in the district as a whole. Our buildings run in age from 1929 to 1957. So you can imagine and he doesn't have to say too much more about that, but it would help them in the future to complete necessary work. All of our building plans have been posted at our website [www.meridianhawks.net](http://www.meridianhawks.net), under Facilities Planning Process. He invited them to look at the people who attended the meetings, the scenarios we had and the plans, and how we ended up where we were. In addition, he would welcome them to come at any time to visit our schools. As Ms. Davis said, any time you would like, please come and visit. We would love to have you come and see what our schools look like and what we plan for the future. We are excited and hope you are.

Mrs. Cox: Mrs. Cox asked if Mr. Meyer knows how soon those grants would be available.

Mr. Meyer: Mr. Meyer said we have been told from several sources that the bonds have been sold by the State and the money is there, but it is just a matter of when they release it. We want to be ready when they do, to jump on it quite frankly.

Mr. Baxter: Mr. Baxter said he had a couple of takers who would be interested in going to see the high school this Saturday about 10:00. He asked if that would be possible.

Mr. Meyer: Mr. Meyer said any time is possible. He told them to just call him and he would make sure someone is there.

Mr. Baxter: Mr. Baxter said he went on a tour of the high school and was shown all of these deficiencies such as the floors they have the pipes in that they have to jack hammer through if they have a leak. Mr. Baxter was sure they would be shown that.

Mr. Meyer: Mr. Meyer said absolutely; you can't miss it. You have to step across it.

Mr. Ashby: Mr. Ashby asked if the \$6,000,000 would be part of the construction money, or how would it be used.

Mr. Meyer: Mr. Meyer said when the money becomes available it would be.

Mr. Wicklund: Mr. Wicklund asked if it is correct that their projects are “shovel ready” and all they are waiting for is the money because the plans are there.

Mr. Meyer: Mr. Meyer said the master plan is there. We have gone as far as looking at space needs for various subject areas, but the final design is not done.

Darbe Brinkoetter: Mrs. Brinkoetter is the Superintendent with Mt. Zion School District. She also had with her tonight their Board President, Phil Jacobs. She also wanted to thank the county board for the opportunity to present what the Mt. Zion School District would do with the funds that we are expected to receive. In Mt. Zion, it is estimated that we will receive approximately \$1,500,000 annually from the sales tax revenue. She wanted to point out that their school board unanimously approved a resolution a few months ago. Their first and foremost priority for the use of these funds is to abate a minimum of 33% of this new revenue for the remaining 10 years on our Intermediate School and air conditioning bonds. We would use this funding to reduce our tax rate to the taxpayers. It is important to note that any school district that chooses to abate property taxes can only do so for capital improvements, if those bonds were issued for capital improvements. Our bonds were issued to build a new Intermediate School about 10 years ago and air conditioning about 4 years ago. That is their first priority and they stated that as a minimum of 1/3. This would result in a property tax savings over the next 10 years of about \$5,000,000. It is approximately, if they abate just the 1/3, about .20 cents on the tax rate. Some other building projects they have identified, and it is important to note that our district like all of the others prioritize our building projects, our capital improvements each and every year, and revisit those each and every year. We have identified some projects that we would like to address in our district that we have been unable to. We have done some as we have gone along, but have not been able to accomplish all of these of course. We need flooring replacement district wide. We would also like to improve our security systems, and by that she means additional cameras. They would like to replace outdated cameras with new models, and possibly a buzzer entry system to increase security in our buildings. We need locker replacement and additional parking. We too have some aging buildings. She has an elementary school that is over 50 years old. It has a roof that is over 20 years old. So, in the next 5 years we know we are probably going to have to replace that roof, and possibly windows. We also have other buildings that are aging and will need some improvements as we go along. Each and every year we will prioritize our building improvements to see what is needed. She also welcomed them to come visit the Mt. Zion Schools or come in and talk to her. We would be glad to share our thoughts with you and answer any questions you might have.

Mrs. Little: Mrs. Little said the Mt. Zion Board was the only one who voted not to put this referendum on the ballot.

Mrs. Brinkoetter: Mrs. Brinkoetter said that was correct, by a 4 to 3 vote.

Mrs. Little: Mrs. Little asked if the board is unanimous now that they need the money, or was it just because they didn't want to be running for office and be in favor of a tax increase at the same time.

Mrs. Brinkoetter: Mrs. Brinkoetter said she could not speak for them personally. But, she could tell them that the board did, following that vote, unanimously approve the resolution on how they would use the funds if the voters approved it.

Mrs. Little: Mrs. Little said they didn't want to be responsible for getting the money.

Mrs. Brinkoetter: Mrs. Brinkoetter said she could not speak to that.

Mr. Williams: Mr. Williams said he sees the word minimum on a lot of the various school districts proposals. He asked what mechanism or mechanisms would the school board have to go through to abate more than the 33% sales tax. He is curious because it seems that all of the school boards with the exception of 2 that said they will abate school taxes seem to be stuck at the 33% level. He asked if there is some method to that we are not seeing.

Mrs. Brinkoetter: Mrs. Brinkoetter said she could not speak for the other districts but she could tell them what they looked at. You have to look at what your bond and interest tax rate is. Ours is about .28 cents, about \$500,000, 1/3 of what we would expect to receive is \$500,000 so that is how they arrived at at least a minimum of 1/3. They can't abate more than what they have authorized for those capital improvements, so that is why.

Mr. Williams: Mr. Williams asked what procedure the school board would have to do to abate 50% if they could abate that amount. Would it be any more than just a simple vote of the school board, or would it have to go through some type of hearing?

Mrs. Brinkoetter: Mrs. Brinkoetter said they would have owe that much money. Right now our bond payment isn't that much. It will continue to go up, so that is another reason that we set a minimum, because that bond payment increases.

Mr. Dudley: Mr. Dudley said Mt. Zion did vote this down, but how did they plan to make these improvements without this money. Did they have a way they were going to do it down the road, and how was that going to be done?

Mrs. Brinkoetter: Mrs. Brinkoetter said they would have had to do it with existing funds because they are very fiscally conservative and would not have wanted to go for a property tax increase. She thinks what would be most attractive to them would be reducing the property tax.

Damian Jones: Mr. Jones is Superintendent at Argenta-Oreana. He thanked them for the opportunity to speak tonight. Argenta-Oreana has the opportunity to receive approximately \$625,000 through the county sales tax. The Board of Education adopted a resolution to abate a minimum of 33% of the new revenue to pay off the remaining bonds

for our high school that was built in 2006 and the addition to the elementary school. That is a \$16,000,000 bond and we would be able to pay off approximately \$2,700,000 with the 33%. Some of the projects that were determined to be priorities by the Board of Education, and he wanted to thank Alan Hupp, their Board President for attending tonight, first and foremost our major concern is window replacement in our elementary and middle schools. These windows were installed in 1956 and 1963. They are extremely archaic and don't operate well. They are very difficult to open and you need to have a body builder to open up some of them. We have actually asked some of our teachers not to open the windows for fear that they would be injured. We have issues with asbestos as most old schools do that were built before the new codes. We have major problems with our ceiling tiles especially in the elementary school which is listed, although we have asbestos issues in our middle school and in the portion of the high school that was maintained which was the gymnasium and band room. We also need to remodel and update restrooms to make them handicap accessible, and frankly they are just past their prime and need to be updated. There are other facility and improvement needs as well which some major issues are roof replacement and repair. Every year that you neglect roofs you are going to have a larger cost down the line. This is something we always monitor every year and update as needed. He would like to repeat what the superintendents before him stated, please feel free to come visit Argenta-Oreana. He would be happy to give anyone a tour of the facilities, the campus at Oreana or the campus in Argenta to show you our needs.

Emmett Aubry: Mr. Aubry is the superintendent of Warrensburg-Latham. If you don't know where we are at we are the two little towns to the north and the west and we take in the western neighborhoods of Decatur as well as the countryside in between. He was here tonight with the president of his board Roger Edgecombe, and the vice-president Barb Ellis as well as some interested administrators. If this would be implemented, we would be looking at receiving about \$635,000 a year. Our board voted, because we are in a different situation, to do a minimum of 75% on abatement. The reason that is, and he thinks that is important to explain, our voters went out on a limb and maximized their bonding ability to pay for an addition to our schools and had Health Life Safety Bonds that were outstanding as well. So, we maximized our bonding rate to make that happen and they did it in the worst possible time in 2008. A promise that the board had made during the referendum was that when given the opportunity to channel money back to the property tax payers because that is who is shouldering all of this, they would take the opportunity to funnel back to them as much as they could. Obviously, keeping in mind the 25% we have significant costs. He has been at Warrensburg-Latham for 7 ½ years and we have had a Campus and Facilities Plan and been working on it every year. Just as you finish one thing, something else goes down. We have a lot of work but still have window issues. Our buildings go back to.... We don't have anything from the 1920's because those building were vacated when that district was formed as a unit district. But, we do have asbestos in floor tile and on ceilings. We have considerable amount of work to do with replacing the windows that are single pane windows. It is not good when you are trying to pay the power bill with that either. We have a significant roof replacement coming in our direction. We have a different situation and it kind of relates to Meridian, because our taxpayers went out on a limb in 2008 we have earned our building grant from

the State so we have our matching funds. We don't have them in hand as you know, but he was told by someone who has not lied to him so far, that we should have a check here before Christmas, for the first part of it. That is significant. You have to have your local issue and your share ready. We were on that list too. We were at number 38 out of 75 schools and we moved up to the top because we had our local share. So, he knows this tax will allow Meridian to get their local share. It would allow us to pay back to our taxpayers what they gave us in support when we needed it.

A gentleman from the audience asked if there is 1 bond or more than 1 bond and what is the time frame.

Mr. Aubry: Mr. Aubry said in our case our building construction bonds are 20 years. We refinanced and restructured some of our older bonds to fall in that 20 years, so all of our bonds are within 20 years.

Mr. Oliver: Mr. Oliver asked if there are plans for any "sunsetting" of these bond issues down the road someplace. Are we going to have a continuing rollover of the bonding issue or collection of the .01 cent sales tax in the future? Or are we just talking about curing the problem now? Is this a one shot deal? He said that question is not just directed toward Mr. Aubry, but to all of the other people who have spoken.

Mr. Aubry: Mr. Aubry said there is some language with legislation that probably needs to be looked at there. It does tell you what you are asking. He would tell them as a school superintendent, and he would also tell them that he is retiring this year, this is his 38<sup>th</sup> year and he has struggled his whole career to fix, fix, fix, and prioritize. Kids go through their whole school career and they are in a piece of junk. So, this will give the ability to all of the school districts in this area to keep things up where they need to be.

There was a representative from the bonding company for all of the school districts at the meeting.

Kevin Heid: Mr. Heid said once implemented the tax is in effect until such a time that the county board either reduces or eliminates it. The statute says something to the effect that the County Board can not eliminate or reduce so long as any district in the county has bonds out that are secured by the tax, and their ability to repay the bonds would be impaired by eliminating or reducing the tax.

Mr. Oliver: Mr. Oliver asked if Mr. Heid was saying that as long as there were outstanding bonds by any of these entities the tax will be collected.

Mr. Heid: Mr. Heid said as long as the bonds are outstanding by any district that are secured by the tax collections and reducing or eliminating that rate would impair the ability to repay those bonds then yes the county board is not permitted to reduce or eliminate the tax.

Mr. Oliver: Mr. Oliver asked if other districts would be able refinance any other work that they needed done while we are waiting for some other.... Would it be ongoing in other words? As long as there is somebody wanting to spend the money that is collected. Once their bonds are retired are they through and just waiting for the districts to get through with theirs?

Mr. Heid: Mr. Heid said there are many different types of bonds the school district can issue that would be for facility purposes some of which are subject to referendum, some of which are subject to backdoor referendum, and some of which are subject to no referendum. It would depend on the type of bonds the district is wanting to issue. If a district is going to issue Life Safety Bonds, those are not subject to referendum as long as the State Board approves the repairs. If the district was going to issue bonds to fund that and pay it back with the sales tax there would be no referendum.

Mr. Oliver: Mr. Oliver said that there would be no sunset either.

Mr. Heid: Mr. Heid said there is no sunset built into the law.

Mike Williams: Mr. Williams is the Superintendent of Maroa-Forsyth. He had with him Jim Peck, Board President. Maroa-Forsyth also plans to abate a minimum of 33% of the revenue that we would receive. To further explain how we came up with that number is that we have identified a number of projects and we are far enough along in the development of those projects that we know what those projects are going to cost. We know what our window replacement is going to be, and we know what some of the other issues that are listed here are going to cost. We know what we will be able to do to accomplish that in the next few years and still be able to give a sizeable property tax relief to the taxpayers. The minimum of 33% for the 10 years that we have remaining on high school bonds, would allow us to save the property tax owners \$2,350,000 over the next 10 years. Some of the building projects that we have identified include window and door replacement of the middle school. We're fortunate enough to have two pretty new facilities, but we are also dealing with a facility that was built in 1928 which had an addition in 1958. Obviously that building has a number of issues, and first and foremost are the windows and doors. That is one of projects that we would implement immediately. Another issue with that building is that we have quite a bit of asbestos in that building. We have tried to take care of it little by little as money has allowed, but we still have some issues that we need to address. One of the other things we would like to do is retrofit the high school with some geothermal heating and cooling. To be very honest, he was not very familiar with geothermal heating and cooling until we implemented it into the grade school. We are in our second year with it in that building. The property tax savings, the climate control, and the comfort of that building compared to the one in the high school, which is a few years older, is night and day. Another thing that really sold us on this is the cost savings. Our natural gas bill for the grade school, which is about a 90,000 square foot building, for last month was \$679.00 for the entire school by using the geothermal system. For comparison sake, the high school building which is a little bit bigger at 98,000 square feet, had a natural gas bill last month that was almost \$8,800. It is basically 10% of the geothermal. Geothermal is about 10% the cost

of natural gas for a conventional HVAC System. The high school is basically 5 or 6 years old, so that building is going to be around for 50+ years probably. If we are able to implement this upgrade and save the property tax owners and the ongoing maintenance costs or utilities cost of this over the next 50 years, it will definitely help us in the long run. Obviously, we are looking at eventually in the long term, he puts his goals into immediate, intermediate, and then long term, eventually 10 to 12, 15 years down the road we hopefully are able to do something with the middle school. We would like to be able to update the 1928 building with the 1956 addition. We would hope to be able to take care of some of those repairs that just come up on a daily basis. We had an issue the other day where we had a power surge and we lost a ton of equipment, some motors that were burnt up and things like that. Those are the things that you can't really budget for, but if you have a revenue source like this then you are able to make sure that you have that savings set aside for those repairs and it would be very beneficial. He invited any of you to come to the middle school or come to any of our buildings for that matter to take a look at what we have to offer. He thanked them.

Mrs. Little: Mrs. Little said she didn't understand how you could do a 33% property tax reduction and then you have a hearing Monday night to raise property taxes by 8%.

Mr. Williams: Mr. Williams said that basically how that works is that the property tax rate will not go up by 8%. The property tax revenue within Maroa-Forsyth district has grown in excess of the 5% for a number of years. Our population has also grown within the school district for 17 out of the last 18 years. When that happens, new development, new housing, new businesses come in, and we need to make sure we are getting the growth or tax revenue that has increased by the growth. In all actuality, our property tax rate was \$4.01 in 2004 when we issued the tax bonds, but because of the growth within the district our current tax rate is \$3.97. While we have gone through this process for a number of years, long before he was in the district, the property tax rate overall has gone down pretty consistently throughout the process. How that works is, our bond payment on our high school is currently about \$770,000 to \$800,000. In 2004, and he was just throwing numbers off the top of his head, they had 1500 homes and 200 businesses and they have to pay a certain amount to get to that \$770,000. Now, we've got 1800 homes and 300 businesses because of the growth over the last 10 years. By those people growing and contributing their part, the overall tax rate has continued to decrease. Any excess revenue we've got because of that increase is helping offset the increased cost of the increase in the attendance rate enrollment. He asked if that made sense.

Mrs. Little: Mrs. Little said no; he sounded very convincing, but she still didn't buy it.

Mr. David Williams: Mr. Williams said this is the district he lives in so he wanted to ask if any of this money would go for a new track for us.

Mr. Mike Williams: Mr. Mike Williams said at this point it is not on their 5 Year Facility Plan. We update our 5 Year Facility Plan every year typically in January. We tried doing that last year and it was just one of those things that the bidding climate was not great. The economic climate was even worse, and it was one of those things we put on

the back burner. Right now it is window replacement and getting rid of asbestos, and hopefully do some geothermal over the next few years.

Brett Robinson: Mr. Robinson is the Superintendent of Cerro Gordo School District. He thanked the board for the opportunity to speak this evening. Cerro Gordo Schools will be receiving a smaller amount. As you are probably aware that is in proportion to the number of students that live within the boundaries of Macon County and within each school district. We have just shy of 200 students that live in Macon County; therefore we are getting a proportionate amount. It would be an estimated \$111,000 each year that we would receive if the facilities sales tax is implemented. We also are looking at using 33% of that \$111,000 annually to abate for existing construction bonds. We built a new elementary building in 2003. We moved into it in 2003. The bonds were sold in 2001. They will expire in 2021. We have got roughly 10 years left on those. Over the course our property tax payers would see a reduction of \$367,000 if we were at that 33% minimum. Some of things we would be using the remaining 2/3rds for in our district would be roof replacement. In addition to the building he mentioned the elementary building, they have some older buildings too. They have buildings from 1929, 1956, 1958, and 1962. As those buildings continue to age upgrades are needed. We have already done a lot of ongoing maintenance which is a credit to his predecessors and the boards before me and our existing board for maintaining our buildings. Roof replacement and efficiency upgrades for things like electrical and HVAC and so forth are things that are priorities right now for Cerro Gordo Schools. He invited them to come visit any of their buildings. They are proud of their schools and welcome any of them to come and take a tour with him at any time.

Ernie Fowler: Mr. Fowler is the Superintendent of Sangamon Valley School District. We are in the same boat as many of the schools in Macon County in the fact that we have very old buildings that need repairs done to them. We are looking at roof replacement in each of our buildings at some point in time in the near future. We are also concerned about energy efficiency upgrades. You can walk in our buildings and on cold days like we have had the last few days you can see the window shades move as a result of drafts that are coming into the building, and that is with the windows shut. We need to replace those and do some lighting replacements. We always have boiler and furnace type issues that need to be taken care of, and then any of the other types of improvements that come up on a daily basis. Things break and go haywire and we have got to have the money to do that. Our board is very conservative in spending money so it won't be spent frivolously he could guarantee them that. Anything we do will be a much needed thing. He invited them to come to their campuses at Niantic, Harristown or Illiopolis and visit our schools and see what you think.

Mr. Dunn: Mr. Dunn asked if there was anyone who wanted to speak in opposition to the passage of the ordinance to come up and state their name.

Richard Pepin: Mr. Pepin lives at 3333 Fitzgerald Road and has since 1974. He is bus driver for the City Decatur. He drives a school bus. He has been in every school in the district, in the city. He had no doubt that there were many of them that needed some

drastic repairs. The problem he has is the way the money is going to be doled out. The way it is going to be divided up amongst the district is going to depend upon the percentage of students that each of the schools have. According to Matt Snyder's office the City of Decatur only has 48% of all of the students in Macon County go to a public school in the City of Decatur. He wanted to emphasize public school because all those that go to private school, those kids don't count. So, all the kids that go to St. Teresa, LSA, Decatur Christian and all of those other private schools are not counted in this equation. Macon County has about 108,000 people in it, and of that 108,000, 70% or about 76,000 of them live within the city limits of Decatur. It only stands to reason that Decaturites are going to pay about 70% of all of the money that goes into this pot, but the way it is going to come out they are only going to get 48% of their money back. What it comes down to is that the people of Decatur will be subsidizing these other school districts, some of which have already told us that they are in pretty good financial shape compared to us. He thinks the people that this good lady is trying to help are going to be hurt the most. The people who are on the lower income scale in the city who can afford the least to give up any of their money are not only going to have to give up their money, they're not even going to get it all back. Twenty-two percent of their money is going to go to some other district. He didn't think that was what we really wanted to do. He thinks if you implement this law you will indebt the people of Decatur and force them to subsidize other school districts forever. You heard the gentleman from the bonding company say there is no sunset law; this is going to go on forever and ever. The people of Decatur will be subsidizing these other school districts for as long as it goes on. He said if you had a simple question he would be able to answer it. He said to say he was nervous would be to say the least, and he hopes he still has a job driving a school bus tomorrow.

Jerry Stocks: Mr. Stocks said he resides in Mt. Zion. He is here individually and as Republican Chairman. You are well aware of the position he has taken in the course of this campaign. For those of you interested in politics, he recommends you take on the schools someday; it will steal you. From the outset there was a fundamental problem that we perceived with this approach. The fundamental problem is that the permanency of this tax is not decided by you the county board. Rather, it is delegated to whatever particular school board or school district decides to back bonds with the sales tax revenue, which effectively denies the citizens of all the other school districts any power, any representation or say as to whether this tax will be permanent. We start with that as who is representing many of the voters in the county when it comes down to determining whether this tax is permanent. Certainly, philosophically he would never find a tax that you would get him to applaud. There is nothing malevolent about any school board superintendent or school district doing what they can to maximize the revenues to their district. One, that is the superintendent's job; and he would expect every last one of them to stand up here and tell you good things that they would spend their money for. The ends they seek very well could be good ends in many respects. We are not here to evaluate whether we agree with each way they will spend their money. But, it is not accurate to conclude that this sales tax is the only way they could have achieved these ends. To the contrary, they all have within their own power, the means to raise this money and achieve the ends and serve their mission through their existing property tax

base through their existing revenue streams, or through hopefully getting money from the State of Illinois to help them. You have had a couple of Superintendents up here suggest, or explain how they took responsibility themselves from within their district, not reaching out to others to pay the bills that they were taking responsibility for; and it has worked out. It is a question of accountability. If the local citizens of that local school district want to do something in their school district, they take responsibility for it and they do it. The people of that district will always have the right to complain, to challenge, to petition that particular school board as to the wisdom or lack of wisdom in that decision. Under this scheme, that is obliterated. We want to collectivize the funding of our schools but they resist collectivizing decision making for those schools. In fact, they resist strenuously anybody on this county board actually expressing or having a say in how those dollars are spent. He knows what is inevitable and he knows there is going to be a sales tax coming. It is going to happen, but the control that we believe you can employ is one that controls the permanency of this tax. It is a control that allows you to say we want to pull the plug on it because either, economic situations have improved, Maroa-Forsyth continues to grow and doesn't need this brand new revenue stream when their existing EAV continues to expand and they can drop rates because that is taking place, or because Mt. Zion may not need the revenue from this new independent stream. It may be for any other reason that may prompt you to say, enough of this sales tax. Perhaps the sales tax renders a business anti-competitive in this county. Some of you have received information about the business of Brad Cleveland and you asked me to comment. He owns Cleveland Grain Sales and has paid in the last two years over \$400,000 of sales tax revenue for sales in this county. He will move that business where he can to Shelby County where his father in Tower Hill can provide him asides to conduct those sales in the future. That is anecdotal. He suspects that is not the only circumstance where business decisions will be made in competitive environment to move to another county. To get that 1% we trade away, well not all of it here is local, we trade away 2.5% or more. So, it becomes a losing game. We see the economic projections but we haven't really seen what is the opportunity cost of this tax, what is the deflection to this tax as business would leave the county. People will do that, and there will be that impact as well. If it is rendered permanent and we see that occurring or if we have such dependency on a sales tax generating revenue out north if a box store closes and the impact that will have or however it could manifest itself, we can't get out of it. Your power, your taxing power is taken from you the moment somebody backs this with a bond. We've suggested and met with the Republican County Board caucus to hammer out ideas early in November. They suggested the idea to consider an intergovernmental agreement that restricts the ability to back with bonds with the sales tax revenue. Mr. Ahola has indicated that in his opinion you cannot have an intergovernmental agreement to do that. Mr. Stocks disagrees and it may not be the path you take, but he certainly submitted it as an option or alternative that should be given due consideration because the taxpayer may not want to be locked into this permanently. The taxpayers of the county don't have the power to decide that question. Today is the last time, or in January when you vote on this is the last time all of the voters in Macon County will be represented on that question and represented by you. That is the very last time because once that bond is rendered permanent because a district backs a bond with it, as you all know you lose the power to ever intervene and do something again. Another suggestion that the State's

Attorney did say is possible is a sunset approach. Certainly, that ameliorates one of the concerns about permanency if there is a sunset provision. Certainly that would reflect some respect for the 15,000 plus voters in this county that said no to this, and some respect to what was a close vote, but a victory for those that sought the tax certainly. It was not a mandate of large proportion; it was a close vote. This is not like an elected office where only one person can occupy the elected seat. This statute accords to you a range of opportunities: .25%, 50% .75% or 1. You can consider the closeness of the vote in determining how you can respond to the concerns, not only of those who won the vote, but the concerns of the 15,000 plus that expressed their opposition to this tax. That is within your power to balance these concerns. The districts always have the means to raise their money; it doesn't have to be this sales tax. The Chicken Little argument that the sky will fall if they don't get this sales tax is not accurate. They have available to them other remedies and other taxing methods if they truly believe they should pursue them to do what they want to do. They can be accountable to their own voters and there will be no free ridership and the problems that arise when we make it a collective approach. Mr. Stocks committed to opposing this from the get go. He has heard nothing that would change his view. He recognizes that he comes from a perspective that is far more conservative than most. But, he submitted that they are starting down a path they will regret as time passes if we give them this permanent sales tax and we have no control over it after that fact. He asked that they consider the options and consider the interest of the taxpayer and the 15,000 plus that said; no we don't want this, because you don't have to make an all or nothing choice. You have options before you that can give credence to the interest of all parties.

Mr. Dudley: Mr. Dudley said he noticed that Mr. Stocks made mention of one small businessman that might leave town if this tax is increased. He asked if Mr. Stocks has done any projections on.... He knows being in real estate when people look to relocate to Decatur they look at the conditions of schools first. He asked if Mr. Stocks anticipated or had done any projections on any large box retailers or any businesses that may not come to Decatur because of the conditions of our schools.

Mr. Stocks: Mr. Stocks said he does not have any studies. He has talked to, in trying to get contributions in the campaign, retailers of certain size to get their view. It is a concern and he doesn't know that anybody of a big box is going to make the decision to leave town. His concern when he said that is more if economic circumstances are such that we can't support a big box store and they leave because their sales are not large enough, not that the sales tax is onerous. Materials and fuel distributors are people that when you place this tax you are making them anticompetitive particularly with their Sangamon County competitors. If I am selling bricks for a building and have to compete and am dealing with a 1% to 2% margin anyway, and because this is a tax on the retailer, whether the retailer passes it on to us or not is their choice. They all do. But, you are rendering some rather big ticket items anticompetitive when they deal with Sangamon County in particular that rejected the same approach in the same election cycle. Farmers have distributors that operate here out of Macon County and you will be paying that extra percent on that fuel. The sales tax integrates in cost of goods as it moves through the system. So, while you may be an exempt sale at the point of sale, if there is value added

in the cost of goods before that gets to you it has an inflationary, not radically inflationary, but you are going to experience the impact of this in many ways that are not readily apparent. He thinks it can deflect some business opportunity and move some businesses out of town, especially big ticket items where the margins are narrow.

Mrs. Wilkins: Mrs. Wilkins said Mr. Stocks had stated that the last time we would be able to represent would be when we make that decision. As the Chairman of the Republican Party, and he does have constituents, and each county board member has a constituent, she asked if he did not think that November 2<sup>nd</sup> was the last time we had to listen to what our constituents had to say.

Mr. Stocks: Mr. Stocks said he didn't because he was going to assume an informed voter and an informed voter would have been well aware of what the statute meant. The statute that enables this vote is an enablement, but the responsibility still is reposed in you as a county board at this point in time to make the responsible decision. By all means, if you believe that across the board this is respectful to all taxpayers and is a good deal and it is responsible to be locked into it long term, vote for it. If you have reservations and are bothered by the fact that after you impose this, and we know that Decatur Public Schools plans to move promptly to back bonds with it and we are going to trigger permanency. You won't be the county board forever. The next county board will have other folks sitting in these seats and they may have an opinion on the fundamental power of taxation and they can do nothing about it. They can't repeal it and they can't reduce it. Circumstances could be great. He doesn't anticipate that the State of Illinois is going to drop any cash on any schools in this county, but only ten or twelve years ago they were. He doesn't expect it, and he doesn't think they should plan on that immediately. But, if we are locked into something for 25, 30, 35, 40 years down the road a lot of things can change. The decision you are making is saying this is a permanent revenue stream. One of the questions pointed out that Decatur may be ready to retire their bonds and on the eve of that, Mt. Zion for example may start a project and back some bonds with this revenue stream and then extends it for another 20 years. With 9 districts currently eligible and potentially, 11 eligible or however many have land in the county, that is a lot of people to corral to make sure somebody doesn't issue a bond on you. You can't control what they do. That is the concern, and he doesn't think it is an illegitimate concern whatsoever. Specifically, we are entitled to representation not only on November 2 but for every time a county board meets and any time he is taxed year and again he is entitled to that continuing representation. When Republicans lose an election we just don't go home and wait for four years, we have the right to be at the table and to express our position and to be represented.

Max Pressgrove: Mr. Pressgrove lives at 2180 N. Maple in Decatur. He is retired and does not have a lot of money to spend for more taxes and more taxes. He would ask that they vote this down. No. Where were these people 20 years ago when they were letting their buildings go to hell? Why weren't they putting money into it then? Why do you have to have an air-conditioned building for kids for one month out of twelve? Then they go home and play out in the sun. Decatur School District has had a tremendous upsurge in busing of students. Down his street he sees 5 or 6 buses. When his kids went to

school we didn't have any. They had to either walk to school or walk three blocks away and wait in all kinds of weather for the bus. That is fine because they are tough. But then we wonder why the kids are fat. Well they don't do anything. You haul them every place. Then you can't have a candy bar at school and on and on. This tax, as Mr. Stocks brought up, do you want to really be tied into that for maybe 100 years, 500 years? He didn't really know. Most of you won't live that long. There are other things. This thing wouldn't have passed at all if the same set of rules is played. He saw his mailbox flyers and somebody paid for that, and he would suggest it was the taxpayers probably. They were supporting vote yes for this. He didn't see anything saying vote no. Maybe that was because nobody furnished the money for that part. If you did vote this in, about half of the people said no. If we take 1% and cut that in half, that is closer to half a percent. Look at a lot of things like this busing business it is a lot of money. Look at the salaries that some of these people like Ms. Davis make more than the governor.

Mr. Dunn: Mr. Dunn told Mr. Pressgrove that was enough. He didn't want to talk about specific school districts.

Mr. Pressgrove: Mr. Pressgrove asked if he could finish what he had to say.

Mr. Dunn: Mr. Dunn said if he wanted to stay away from being personal and just talk about the tax he would give him another 2 minutes.

Mr. Pressgrove: Mr. Pressgrove said that was fine. He was just telling them we need to do something toward correcting some of this spending. He would like to have someone just send him a lot of money. He would pick a high figure and you could send him money and he would spend it all and want more next time. What about the potholes somebody will say let's put another percent onto that? Pretty soon you are going to be paying more taxes than you'd planned to do. Some of this is probably a good thing. You need windows and roofs, but start thinking about that like you do at home. Nobody pays for that except for you. So, you plan it. That was all he had to say. He told them to think about this and either reject it or cut it in at least half or more.

Mr. Dunn: Mr. Dunn asked if there was anyone else who wanted to speak against it. There were no more opponents so he said they would ask those that wanted to speak for it to come up.

Gary Brennan: Mr. Brennan lives on E. Prairie Street. He hadn't planned on being involved in this and would let the professionals do it. He had a compelling reason after Monday night to be here. Approximately, 32 of us Monday and Tuesday night all over Macon County were at the Kroger's stores for the Decatur Trades and Labor Assembly to ring bells for the Salvation Army. While he was standing in the lobby at the Kroger store at Mt. Zion a 73 year old widowed woman that he happens to know through her husband who has since died, came in and was stocking those baskets that are just inside the door that have real estate literature and want ads in them. She got paid to come around and do that. She knew him and asked about an insurance rebate that he and her husband would have gotten yearly. She thought it should have come and wondered if she had missed it

in the mail. He told her it would come next month. She told him she really looked forward to that because she puts that money aside and it helps on her first installment of real estate taxes. Mr. Brennan said that really got to him that here was a 73 year old woman on her hands and knees stocking shelves, her car running outside, and she said something about having to buy some gas and she was hoping it wasn't going up any higher. He put all that together with what they were trying to do here and if she buys \$10.00 worth of gas which is what she will probably do, that would be .10 cents to go to the school district that she doesn't have to accumulate all year long and put aside in two installments on her real estate. She can pay as she goes and not have to be putting that aside. He wanted those who are inclined to be against this to think that here is a woman who has to budget her money for the next real estate way down the road; and she is out working for that. She can pay .10 cents or get .10 cents less of gasoline that night when she puts in \$10.00 worth. When you pull up to the pump do you put in \$10.00 worth or do you just fill it? Some people out there have to budget their money. He just wanted them to think about that. This is a good way to go for most people instead of having big bills every year that they have to pay. She is not going to notice that .10 cents on that gasoline.

Bill Francisco: Mr. Francisco thanked the board for allowing them the opportunity to speak. He is a resident of the City Macon. He comes here tonight wearing many hats and has many interests in this, all in support of it. He has two children currently in Mr. Meyer's district of Macon. He is proud parent and proud to send his children to Meridian School District. He wants them to have the best opportunity and the best learning opportunity. The only way to do that is to have the best facilities. The schools we have in Macon as Mrs. Cox knows have been there forever. It is definitely time for some upgrades. He comes here as a homeowner just as Gary mentioned. He also has to save as many of us do for his tax payments. He would much rather share that with people that are not homeowners or maybe rent or do come and visit as he does when he goes to other communities to visit and pays the sales tax or city taxes. He also comes here representing 14,000 members of this county, 14,000 community members that work and live here. The chairman of the Republican Party was up here and maybe he should speak directly to Mr. Stocks. The voters spoke, whether you win by 1 or you win by 10, or you win by 10,000, when the votes are counted at the end of the day, the victor is the one with the most votes. It is 50% + 1. It is time to put our community back to work with the jobs that will be created with this and the trickle down economy that was spoken of is going to go a long way. Not only will it pay for the services that were mentioned and the going out to eat, it will put new tires on their vehicles. It is going to help them pay their power bill. These are real life issues that need to be addressed today. These are shovel ready projects. He doesn't think there is any school out there that they have spoken with that is not shovel ready that has work scheduled on their agenda. He just hopes the county board members will stay the course. The voters have spoken. Please vote yes.

Christine Pinckard: Ms. Pinckard lives at 2090 Solar Avenue, Decatur, Illinois. She is here to represent the businesses of Decatur as the Interim President and Senior Vice President of the Greater Decatur Chamber of Commerce. She is not in fact in favor of taxes; but she is also not in favor of a fading community that needs industry and

population in order to grow, and in order to do that we need to have a strong education system. When you were asking earlier if there were any statistics that talked about what the issues are in Decatur, the number one issue that businesses are facing right now has nothing to do with what you are talking about; it has to do with worker's compensation, which is a State of Illinois problem. The number two issue we face here in attracting and retaining business is education. That is a fact. That is what every business person will tell you. We need this tax now. We, at the Chamber are Democrats, Republicans, Independents; we're 96% small businesses and 4% large businesses. It only takes one large business to leave because we don't have a good education system here. This tax is suitable, timely, and it's appropriate. She would encourage anyone here who has an issue with salaries for superintendents or anyone else who works in education, to work in education yourself, first before you pass judgment.

Mr. David Williams: Mr. Williams said we have heard a little bit about the some of the economic impact on business and things but he didn't have a good understanding about whether the larger ticket items such as cars and things like that are exempt from this tax. He asked what is exempt and what is not exempt.

He was told anything that has a title is exempt. A boat, a car, a mobile home or any of those things that are purchased with a title are exempt.

Mr. Williams: Mr. Williams asked about agricultural expenses.

Mr. Westerman: Mr. Westerman said some are and some aren't.

Mr. Williams: Mr. Williams said he didn't think everything is from an agricultural point.

Mr. Heid: Mr. Heid said he would clarify that. Nothing that is not taxed now would be taxed. If you aren't paying taxes on an item now, you would not pay taxes with this. Then, you subtract out certain things that you do pay taxes on now that you won't with this sales tax, one being licensed and titled vehicles. So anything that has a license like a boat, licensed and titled vehicles, and food and drugs, prescription and non-prescription medication.

Mr. Williams: Mr. Williams asked as far as food did he mean food purchased at a grocery store.

Mr. Heid: Mr. Heid said food purchased at the grocery store for home consumption. The things that basically are at 1% now in the grocery store would now be 2%.

John Phillips: Mr. Phillips said as of tonight he has a new hero in his life and he drives a bus for the Decatur school system. Mr. Phillips said it is interesting and whether his facts are all correct or not is not relevant. He did a good job of expressing himself. Mr. Phillips thinks that gentleman may have a view that is different than a large portion of the people the board represents because he thinks there is a belief out there that somehow that this is a subsidy program for the Decatur Public Schools; and in that gentleman's

viewpoint it is the Decatur population that is going to be subsidizing the schools in the outer districts. That is an interesting debate, but one that is probably not easily solved because you have to deal with individual incomes of the people involved and all of that kind of stuff and who spends money. He was not up there to talk about that but he thought it was neat that he discussed it. The reason he came up is because he knows all of them and respects all of them as a group and individually and has stood up here before to tell them why that is because he thinks they work together in an amazing way. He has personally worked on this project for about 2 years at as high a level as he could work, whether it be the individual meetings they had to tour the high schools and talk about solutions, or whether it was the finance committee to talk about what the options are of how to pay for this. That is why he can speak with some authority but not nearly as good as the man who stood up here about what is taxed and what is not taxed because he sat in on all of those discussions. Mr. Phillips said he feels obligated to do more than to have just put in that time and somehow convince you to vote favorably for this and then walk away and have nothing to do with it. He feels very obligated to see that it gets spent in a way that you would approve, that it is the objective that gets the real things done to make sure it doesn't get diverted into some other program. The laws are pretty specific. He would like to add his own personal oversight relative to doing the right thing here and while we are doing it, to have equal and parallel progress in academic achievement, because both of those things are critical. This only addresses one of them. It may help the other one, but we have got to work on both sides of that. Mr. Phillips knows the existing school board is behind this and many of them are sitting over there and he applauds their efforts that got this to this stage. He thinks no matter what you think of individuals or the board in total, the fact that they recognized when they were faced with \$40,000,000 in Health and Welfare things to improve they said wait a minute, stop before we spend that money let's talk about what the community really wants and what we really need to do. Not every one of them but a large segment of them would individually say to him that their preference was to consolidate the Decatur high schools and come up with one bigger more efficient one that we could manage better, but the public said different. So, the plan that is here is the one the public asked for and voted for. He didn't mean to change the tenor of what's been here but obviously he is a supporter. Mr. Phillips was also there to tell them, if they didn't already know, that as of Monday he is a candidate for the Decatur School Board because he expects to go there and be there and help cause what you want to happen, to happen there. He promised they would be proud of what's done there to the best of his ability.

Megan Glover: Ms. Glover lives on Westlawn Avenue. She is a Social Studies teacher at MacArthur High School, a homeowner, and a voter. As a teacher she works very hard to instill a sense of civic responsibility in her students, particularly the importance of voting. She teaches them that every vote counts in our elections. She teaches them about all of those that fought hard, enemies both foreign and domestic, for them to have that right to vote and to ensure that right to vote is not only enabled but their votes are counted. She had with her tonight two students who participated in the canvassing process with us on Saturdays. As a teacher, she was so excited for them to be able to see what participation in the democratic process can actually do and see the results come to fruition. With all due respect to Mr. Stocks, in this country it is the majority of votes that

determine the outcome of elections. How different our history would be if arbitrary percentages of majority were selected to determine the outcomes of elections or at least validate elections just because the opposition was dissatisfied with the outcome. The people of Macon County decided this issue on Election Day. It was determined by the majority of voters in Macon County that the 1% sales tax increase was the right thing to do for our schools and our community. As a teacher, as a homeowner, and as a voter she implored them to do the right thing and to stick with the will of the majority of voters in Macon County and pass this initiative without bureaucratic stipulations. We need this to happen. We need to make it happen and get it done just as the voters expect. To deny the will of the majority is to deny the validity of our democratic process.

Dave Weber: Mr. Weber lives at 445 Bay Shore Drive. He said he is not an educator; he is a banker and very concerned citizen. He has been involved with this process for roughly 18 months and he would like to speak to that. First, he thinks there are some questions that have been coming up and the group asked if he would try answering them. One of the first questions, and there are going to be more; and he knows they are getting back together on the 13<sup>th</sup> with some more interaction so he recommended if there are additional questions that you get them to the chairman and then we can discuss those. One of the questions we have heard is what happens if the sales revenue falls short. He thinks some of board members thought it was the responsibility of the county board to come back and raise the sales tax above 1%. We feel that is not the case. In fact through this process we took a look at it and looked at the previous 10 years of taxes for the county and did projections going out to 2035 or 2036. We looked at 100% of that tax revenue, 90% of the tax revenue, and 80% of the tax revenue. We took a very conservative approach and used the 80% of tax revenues. So, looking at the past history and what has happened with the sales tax going forward and predicting the future we don't think that is going to be a problem because of the conservative approach. If the worse case happened and even at the 80% something drastic happened where the sales tax revenue wouldn't support the bonds it is not the county's problem; it goes back to the school district and the school boards have to deal with it and they would deal with it with funding bonds. That is what would happen if it was short, but he thinks with the 80% approach there is enough cushion in there to make sure the bonds are paid. Another question was whether money could be moved through different accounts and different funds. The statute is pretty specific that they can't. They are designated and are collected here. They go over to the state and are segregated and come back to the Regional Office of Education and are dispersed to the schools and put in funds that can only be used for capital improvements, building, health life safety issues and so forth. One of the questions asked earlier is why aren't some of the improvements being done or why haven't they and so forth, when these funds aren't segregated and the state sometimes doesn't pay you for your busing and other mandated programs; you have to take the money from someplace. Over the years he thinks that sometimes the buildings were shortchanged; this prevents that. It is dedicated it is there, nobody can get it. It can't be used for raises. It can't be used for anything else; it's got to be used for buildings and capital improvements. The question regarding the sunset provision was answered by Kevin Heid from First Midstate and we could have more discussion on the 13<sup>th</sup> about that. A question was also asked about whether there could be an

intergovernmental agreement. He said Kevin was also going to mention that we had some legal opinion from Chapman and Cutler that the county board is not authorized to enter into an intergovernmental agreement. There are going to be more questions and they would like to have them funnel those through the chairman and they can hopefully address those on the 13<sup>th</sup> prior to the vote in January. He wanted to backtrack just a little. He said he has been involved for 18 months with this process. He started out as Decision for Decatur and happened to go to one of the meetings at the schools and got involved. We had the public there and 100 plus people. We asked the public to look at the schools and they looked at them in Decatur and made the decision that something had to be done. They were an integral part of deciding what needed to be done, how much it would cost, and what the options were. They came up with four options and we narrowed it down with what we could afford. We went out to the public and engaged the public and had public meetings. We kept asking the public what their ideas were. They told us 6 to 1 they were adamantly opposed to property tax. We had to cut the size of the projects back because the public said they would not want their property taxes raised. So, we had to do it within a sales tax effort. At that point in time we realized it was county wide. We came back in January or February and spoke to the county Finance Committee. We visited with all of the other school boards in the county and started working as a group together and went from Decision for Decatur to Citizens for Macon County Schools. We came down to one option in Decatur and in looking at the other school districts the opportunity was there to abate some property taxes which the public told us was their number one concern. We continued trying to educate the public and one of the things that was really satisfying, and he has been involved in a lot of community things and he has never seen anything that has had such broad based community support. Christine kind of alluded to that, but we had the endorsement of the Economic Development Foundation, the Central Illinois PAC Committee which is the Metro-Decatur Chamber of Commerce PAC, the Macon County Farm Bureau, and the Mayor of Decatur supported it, Decatur Trades & Labor, Decatur Building & Construction Trades Council, Painters & Glaziers District 58, Decatur Education Association, Village of Forsyth, The 501 Club which is a group of young professionals that are coming to town trying to retain and bring young professionals to town, and the The Coalition of Neighborhood Organizations. The community support was just absolutely overwhelming. The economic times that we went through to pass this in November were absolutely remarkable and quite satisfying. One of things that was talked about regarding the concentration of Decatur people paying more of the load and so forth, one of the things that really happens is that if we don't pass this he could guarantee you that 100% of the property owners will be paying for the schools some way. But, if we pass it not everybody from Decatur is going to be paying it because there will be people from outside that will be supporting it. So, anybody that spends money from outside of Decatur and Macon County, and you look at the Farm Progress Show we have here and have people from all over the world; they are going to be supporting our schools rather than the property owner that has to save for her property taxes. So, we feel this is a better way to fund the schools all the way around. He felt very good today because he got a call from the Springfield newspaper and they wanted to know what we did over here because they are jealous. We don't want to lose the opportunity here to make it work.

Kevin Breheny: Mr. Breheny said he is from Forsyth and is also one of the Tri-Chairs of the Yes Campaign along with David Weber and Julie Curry from Mt. Zion. What he had planned to say tonight he was going to have to defer for just as second because he felt compelled to tell them about a meeting he was called to yesterday by one of our largest employers in town. He was asked not to go public with the company's name or his name at this point in time. The gentleman did authorize Mr. Breheny to say that he would be willing to talk with each and every county board member and host you at their facility to express what Mr. Breheny was about to personally tell them. Mr. Breheny asked Dave Weber to attend the meeting with him yesterday. This top executive for this very large employer in town made it very clear under no uncertain terms that he would be very disappointed and is very concerned that if what he read in the newspaper on Sunday comes true. Not unlike what was said here this evening with regard to democracy, the concern about putting conditions or putting intergovernmental agreements in place that would limit this 1% to be utilized to its fullest ability, is of great concern. This gentleman said he could speak on behalf of his corporation. He said the very fact that this is a long term solution is the most appealing part of it to their organization. There are no sunsets in schools. There will always be needs. If this does not go through or gets voted down or diluted or limited, Mr. Breheny believed him when he said there will be consequences to any future growth of this organization in this community. This gentleman is very concerned about this community and its direction; and this was the brightest thing he saw happen in a long time with this referendum being passed. This is an individual who has invested through his corporation lots of money in education in this community and also people power. Mr. Breheny said that was as far as he would go but he did believe this gentleman and felt he also made his point clear at the chamber meetings as well so he felt Christine represented it very well. At the proper time if the chairman wanted to know the individual and the company he gave Mr. Breheny the authorization to line up a private meeting with all of them so he could talk to them directly about this so they would know that what Mr. Breheny said was true. Mr. Breheny said what he intended to say tonight was something about this great community. There are aspects that are very special. This community has embraced challenges and responsibilities in tough issues better than any other Central Illinois community that he has ever seen. He has traveled Central Illinois on a weekly basis for 32 years and he knows what other communities do and don't do. He has not seen anything close to the kind of character that Macon County and the Decatur area has. We house our homeless. We feed our hungry. We form education coalitions funded by corporations of the rich and the not so rich to help kids who are not getting enough education at home. We are a humble community and we let criticism roll off our back. We choose to fix our problems instead of blaming others for them. Our community once again chose to act. After months of debate the citizens voted to bite the bullet again and trust our community leaders to address our school issues with this 1% sales tax. He believes we have been blessed with great leadership in this community giving of their time, talent and treasures right here on this county board, in our cities and in our school boards. We as a Yes Campaign Group respectfully ask that you now vote yes and allow the school districts to do their jobs. The voters will have plenty of chances to hold them accountable. Mr. Breheny said he has worked for the last six months on this referendum with some extraordinary professionals that he would not have gotten to know if he had not been

asked to get involved. He is impressed. You have met and listened to many of them this evening. We believe the voters feel the same way as demonstrated by the acceptance of this referendum. We now hope that we can end the debate and you will vote yes, that we can shake hands Jerry and move on to the next challenges that await us. Please vote yes. He thanked the board.

Mr. Dunn: Mr. Dunn said he would not entertain any more comments at this time. He said they will be meeting at 6:30 on Monday to resume. He wanted to tell Mr. Breheny that if we get 3 or 4 county board members together we have an open meeting so if this gentleman wants to talk to us he better be able to tell us his name and his company and stand up in front of us and talk to us.

Mr. Breheny: Mr. Breheny said he would make that point clear to him.

Mr. Dunn: Mr. Dunn said he makes his decisions and the board makes theirs and are accountable for their votes and where they stand during each meeting they come to. If he wants to give us some advice or concerns then he needs to come address us.

#### **OFFICEHOLDER REMARKS:**

Mr. Baxter: Mr. Baxter: Mr. Baxter said he took a tour this week of MacArthur, Eisenhower, Meridian and Maroa high schools and anything he wanted to see he saw. He urged the other members of the board. The superintendents have outlined their deficiencies but you cannot believe it until you see it for yourself. He would not go into what they are. He has talked to Patty Cox and Kevin Meachum and they are going to see about touring Meridian and Mr. Ashby said he would like to see Eisenhower. Anyone else who would like to have a tour lined up, if he could help in any way he would be glad to.

Mr. Dunn: Mr. Dunn said he would like to go with Keith when he gets the meeting setup at Eisenhower to make sure there is somebody there from both parties.

Mr. Williams: Mr. Williams said he would be interested in touring Eisenhower as well.

It was asked if it is a violation of the Open Meetings Act if there are more than 3 people touring together.

Mr. Dunn: Mr. Dunn laughed and said if some of them are Republicans they don't really care about that rule. Mr. Dunn said if Gloria could get with Keith and Dave to set up something he would be there.

Ms. Davis: Ms. Davis said they would take care of that at the end of the meeting.

Mr. Oliver: Mr. Oliver said some Monday the 13<sup>th</sup> due to health reasons he may or may not be here, so he has something he would like to say tonight because of what has transpired. Since he has been sitting here he wrote himself some notes. Since Decatur is

the hub of all of Macon County and an economic and tax generator. For some 25 to 40 miles from its core we must do whatever it takes and is necessary to provide the utmost opportunities and facilities to educate and eradicate the impediment to education. We can only be as strong and successful as we choose to be. The money spent in Macon County will stay in Macon County in one district or the other. If we strive to improve our educational system we will draw in the people we need to make this community even stronger, those that are in the field of producing jobs, and those that are educators that would be happy to come into a situation that we can produce and provide. He thinks we will always remember this one thing that will guide us through and keep us going which is that there will always be a Decatur School District and all of the others that we talked about tonight. There will be one in Argenta-Oreana, Central A&M, Cerro Gordo, Maroa, Meridian, Mt. Zion, Sangamon Valley, and Warrensburg-Latham. This money will come in through this bond issue, through this legislation we are about to pass which will cause the bond issues to be serviced and it will be something we can stand proud of for a long, long time to come. It will mean so much to our future, not only to our children, but to our community. It will make us one shining light in the middle of a cornfield between the citadel in Springfield and the other one in Champaign.

Mr. Dudley: Mr. Dudley said not every day do we get to experience democracy at its finest. What we are seeing here in this little county of Macon County in the middle of Illinois is democracy at its finest. We see Republicans and Democrats. We brought the leaders of 8 or 9 school districts here tonight to speak about the problems with their schools. He could not say how honored he is to be on the county board and work with his comrades through the problems of this county. Like the history teacher said about how she teaches history to her students, what you are seeing right here is a great example of what we are all here for. He couldn't be prouder to be here to see it at work. He thanked everyone on either side of the fence for what they are doing.

Mr. Wicklund: Mr. Wicklund said some of the goals set out in some of the districts with the geothermal and the green everything, he is glad to see. He asked if after 100 years if they could get some ergonomical benches in their basketball stadiums and football fields please.

Mrs. Wilkins: Mrs. Wilkins said she kind of wanted to piggyback a little bit off of what Mr. Dudley was saying. She is very encouraged and excited about what has transpired here tonight. She also made some notes. She is excited and has always wondered what would be able to bring this county together, and the answer tonight is our children. We have each superintendent here from various parts of our county and they all brought at least 1 school board member with them; and they came for our children. She is encouraged and excited to be able to say that on January 13<sup>th</sup> she will adamantly vote yes! She is encouraging everyone of our county board members to vote the same and be able to stand up to what our constituents have asked us to do regardless of what the margin is because they have said they are willing to give 1% of their money in support of our children and our future and the future of this county. She wanted to say this is exciting and they should just go home and savor this and let's grow this because this is

just the beginning of what we can do in our county and what things can happen in our future.

There was no old business presented at the meeting.

There was no new business presented at the meeting.

**MOTION TO CLOSE SESSION**

Mr. Greenfield moved, seconded by Mr. Dudley to go into closed session for personnel and pending litigation issues by prior roll call vote

**MOTION CARRIED**

**MOTION TO OPEN SESSION**

Mr. Potts moved, seconded Mr. Drobisch to return to open session by prior roll call vote.

**MOTION CARRIED.**

**MOTION TO ADJOURN**

Mr. Oliver moved, seconded by Mr. Drobisch to adjourn until Thursday, January 13, 2011 at 7:15 p.m.

**MOTION CARRIED.**

Meeting adjourned at 9:35 p.m.