

## **OPINION: Report to the People #16**

by Philip W. Chapman, County Board District Three  
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To aid with government transparency, I provide this Report to the People.

**SENIOR TAX EXEMPTIONS:** Many seniors express fears that spiraling taxes will make it impossible for them to hold on to their beloved homes. There are two (2) Senior Citizen Exemptions that might help you. First, the PTAX Application for Senior

Citizens Exemption (PTAX Form 320) provides possible savings for seniors owning their home or having a legal equitable interest in a residence or who had a life - care contract with a facility under the Life Care Facility Act. Your name must be on the Property Title and you must be 65 years or older as of January 1, 2017 to apply. The second opportunity is the Senior Citizens Assessment Freeze Form (PTAX 340 Form) which allows seniors 65 or older to have their home's assessed equalized value at base year value and prevent or limit any increase due to inflation. However, your household income must be \$55,000 or less. The last day to apply for this exemption is 7/31/17 so you might wish to get started now. . If you desire a PTAX 320 or 340 Form or have a question call 618-692-6270 (County Assessor's Office) for additional information.

**Transportation Committee April 12:** I moved the following Resolutions be approved. Seller Road(CH 52) Section 90-001600FP, 2017 County MFT Maintenance Road Oil material Proposal, Environmental Covenant, Parcel # 07-1-11-32-00-000-010 Former Nike SL 10 launch Area, Right of Way Acquisition Seller Road, Section 90-00166-00FP, Purchase of Yellow – White Marking paint, Jurisdictional Transfer Governors Parkway (CH75), Purchase of Good used John Deere Excavator. The Committee voted unanimously for these resolutions.

**Finance Committee/Facilities Management Issue:** In an effort to save money and streamline services in the Facilities Department I and County Board Member Don Moore (Troy) met with newly hire Director Rob Schmidt to discuss proposed changes. It appears that the following malfunctioning aspects of the current system Mr. Schmidt inherited need overhaul, Job Descriptions, Evaluations, Personnel Monitoring, Work Order System (Work Order Forms and Tracking System), and Preventive Maintenance. Cost effective asbestos removal issues remain. A more efficient system would assist with better jail maintenance. Cost cutting linked with more effective management would lead to a more effective system and provide sufficient numbers of personnel. For example, outsourcing of lawn mowing would save the county \$107,000 of cost annually while freeing county personnel to address the current backlog of approximately 270 work orders allowing for repair and for preventive maintenance.

**Tax Cycle Committee April 11-** I and Treasurer Chris Slusser arranged for Joseph Meyer and Associates to address the committee to explain tax sales. Meyer and Associates generate approximately \$130,000 in receipts annually while taking all the risk with delinquent properties. They ensure all taxes are paid and help prevent problems associated with dilapidated properties. Now properties are repaired or demolished and returned to the tax rolls. Prior to hiring them some taxes went unpaid while remaining in poor condition.

Amy Meyer, Recorder of Deeds, reported the upswing in Deeds of Conveyance. Madison County Real Estate figures reveal ‘more homes are moving’ and appreciating in value.

**Judiciary Committee-** Sheriff John Lakin’s alternative work program has an accumulated value of \$21,750 this fiscal year based upon jail cost of \$50.00 per inmate and \$12.50 per man hour. The Sheriff’s Department reported they are approximately \$123,000 over budget due to unforeseen costs of food and health care due to a high prison population. This is frequently the case in the field of jails and corrections. The alternative work program helps mitigate unnecessary costs.

**County Re - Appointments:** Chairman Prenzler asked I contact communities about the following appointments. Grantfork Fire Protection District, Hamel Community Fire Protection District, Prairietown Street Light District, Worden Fire Protection District, and New Douglas Fire Protection District. Folks seem happy with the appointed officials serving them. I look forward to meeting them.

Respectfully Submitted

Philip W. Chapman

County Board District Three

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