



Madison County Treasurer Chris Slusser Reports Record Gains In Investment Portfolio

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EDWARDSVILLE — Treasurer Chris Slusser reported to Madison County officials Wednesday on the explosive growth of its investments.

“We are on pace for record returns on county investments,” Slusser said. “We are projecting \$9.7 million in investment income this year, up from a previous record of \$5.1 mil last year.”

Slusser presented an investment report at the Madison County Board Meeting last week, showing the increase in investment income.

From 2011 to 2016 the county earned an average of \$747,000 annually, Slusser said.

“We took over in 2017, and since that time, we’ve averaged \$4.41 million per year,” he said. “That’s a \$31 million increase in the past 6+ years.”

Slusser said he used his 15 years of investment experience to overhaul the county’s portfolio since taking office in late December 2016.

“We focused on increasing income by diversifying the portfolio and actively managing the funds,” he said.

In 2016, there were only 86 investments in the county’s portfolio and 71 were CDs.

“Now we have 693 holdings, including a mix of municipal bonds, corporate bonds, mortgage-backed securities, federal agency bonds, CDs and treasury bonds,” Slusser said. “The Illinois Public Funds Investment Act doesn’t allow us to purchase stocks, mutual funds or junk bonds.”

Slusser said that the past five years Madison County has held the top performing investment portfolio in the state.

“We currently hold about \$60 million in cash between money market and government pool accounts, which is earning nearly 5% on average. This allows us easy access to funds to pay for bigger ticket items without ever selling any of our bond investments.”

Slusser said he employs a buy-and-hold strategy with the bond investments, so as interest rates fluctuate, the portfolio is protected from any losses. The big increases in income provide revenue to fund the county’s budget as an alternative to increasing property taxes,” he said. “It’s helped the county board to freeze the property tax levy during the past 7 years as well, saving our taxpayers millions of dollars.