

*** Position Update ***

[Tazewell County Vehicle Policy](#)

In the coming months, the Tazewell County Board will be discussing and considering a Tazewell County Vehicle Policy concerning all of the vehicles operated by Tazewell County Staff. I have been pressing for this issue to come forward for the past several months and look forward to a healthy conversation concerning the usage, responsibility for and overall decision making of whom and for what reasons County Vehicles can, and more importantly cannot, be used. My goal is for more accountability and public oversight of these costly public expenses and I see this issue as a major advancement of more taxpayer oversight.

Currently, the Tazewell County Board does not have a policy concerning this subject. Individual Department heads are given vehicles after requesting them from the County Board as part of their budgets. Beyond this budget request, the County Board has had no involvement in the remaining and costly discussion of policy and risk management decisions concerning the fleet. As we saw in the Bass case with the Sheriff's Department, this lack of supervision and not having a solid policy governing all employees and vehicles can be costly.

Also bringing this to the forefront was an incident mid-last year when an off-duty Sheriff's Deputy received permission to take a Tazewell County Motorcycle to Memphis, Tennessee, on a personal/non-County Business trip for the St. Jude Motorcycle Run. While his supervisors authorized this personal use of a County Vehicle, and no action is or was planned because of this prior authorization and no policy concerning it, this case raised serious questions about what is an authorized use of a County Vehicle and who needs to be making these decisions. While he was off-duty and paying for the fuel himself, what about the maintenance cost of the vehicle, or the insurance and risk cost to Tazewell County and the taxpayers? These and other questions prompted me to look further into this issue.

On my website, www.JohnCAckerman.com, under "In The News", you will find the result of my investigation into this issue; the McLean County Vehicle Policy. It is my position that Tazewell County needs to implement many if not all of these items into our own policy. While I have posted it for your review, I want to point out several key positions I want to see introduced into this policy.

- A) Section I.A. is very important as far as setting the stage for this discussion and is vital to be added to our policy. It simply states ***"all vehicles owned or leased by the County are the property of the County and shall be assigned to specific departments by the County Administrator. The County Administrator shall determine the assignment of all vehicles based on demonstrated need as justified by departments. All vehicle assignments should be considered temporary and subject to periodic review by the County Administrator."*** While this sounds too simplistic to be an issue, currently we are not operating this way. At this time, as stated above, Vehicles are the responsibility of individual County Departments, many of which do not directly report to the County Board. Why is this important?

It makes sure that all employees are treated fairly. No one employee in one department can use a vehicle for one use while another employee in another department cannot. It set the stage so that the understanding is that these rules apply for all County Vehicles, not just a select few.

Also, it states that all vehicles are to be issued by the County Administrator. This simply means that the County Administrator, and in such the County Board and taxpayers, are the ones that assign the usage of all County Vehicles. This is important as to state who is accountable for the usage of these Vehicles.

- B) Section I.B. and Section I.D. concerning usage of these Vehicles clearly spells out that all of these Vehicles will be used for official County Business only. While this may again sound simplistic, as we have seen in the case of the County Motorcycle going to Memphis, that is not the case today. This section clearly states that no other property and/or individuals may be hauled in the Vehicles and also sets uses that are never to be allowed; Ethically important issues like no campaigning in Company Vehicles and no political functions may be attended in County Vehicles, ext..
- C) Section II. sets standards for individual departments to develop **"departmental policies in addition to the general policies"**. It states **"departmental policies must be reviewed by the County Administrator, the Property Committee and approved by the County Board."** Furthermore, it goes on to state **"No County Department...shall be permitted to acquire a vehicle until it has secured (County) Board approval of its departmental policies..."**
- D) Section II.C. concerning tracking of mileage. Here is where I would like to see some changes. I believe we are close to being ready so that we can require all future County Vehicles to have a GPS tracker on them. I do not want to go backwards and add these devices to current Vehicles, but moving forward all Vehicles would be required to have one. This would affect all future purchases including police cars, highway trucks, department heads vehicles, ext.. The cost for this would be minimal as this technology is already available in many of the Vehicles we purchase today.

This would also accomplish a stated request by the Sheriff from the Bass case that all Sheriff Vehicles have this safety devise. With the future 9-1-1 technology upgrades soon available, we can meet this request by passing this policy. A select few individual Vehicles may from time to time need to have this step disabled, as in the case of some investigations, and this could easily be done by including language giving the permission if signed off the Department Head and County Administrator.

The end result of implementing this new policy would be greater accountability by the taxpayers for the County Vehicle fleet and would also allow the County Board to implement much needed Supervision and Risk Management of what can and has been a very costly expense. I believe this is maybe one of the most important Taxpayer Accountability issues to come before the County Board in many years, followed closely by the improved County Website.

As always, I consider it an honor and a privilege to serve you on the Tazewell County Board and if I can be of any assistance to you, please do not hesitate to contact me.

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RESOLUTION TO ESTABLISH POLICY
ON
COUNTY OWNED OR LEASED VEHICLES

WHEREAS, in the course of conducting official business for the County of McLean it is required that certain county employee positions operate an automobile; and

WHEREAS, the County of McLean owns and provides certain employee positions of the county with an automobile for use in the course of conducting official county business; and

WHEREAS, the McLean County Board wishes to establish policies to govern the use and maintenance of county owned or leased vehicles, now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED that the following policies shall be established and applied to all county owned or leased vehicles:

I. GENERAL POLICY

A. All vehicles owned or leased by the County are the property of the County and shall be assigned to specific departments by the County Administrator. The County Administrator shall determine the assignment of all vehicles based on demonstrated need as justified by departments. All vehicle assignments should be considered temporary and subject to periodic review by the County Administrator.

B. County vehicles shall only be used to assist county employees in designated positions while in the performance of official County business. For purposes of this policy, official County business shall be defined as:

- 1) all duties as described within the position job description.
- 2) special duties as may be assigned by the employee's supervisor.
- 3) attendance at assigned educational/instructional programs or County related meetings.

C. All County owned or leased vehicles must be marked with the official County logo. Any exception must be justified in approved departmental policies.

D. The use of County owned vehicles is prohibited for the following:

- 1) personal use of any nature when the employee is in an off-duty status. EXCEPTIONS: a) where the vehicle is designated as emergency response vehicle, the employee is in an on-call status and written departmental policies have been developed and approved, b) where the supervisor authorizes the vehicle be used

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for transportation to and from lunch, c) where the employee is away from his residence overnight in the course of conducting official business.

2) attendance at political rallies, parties, or for political solicitation.

3) transportation of persons or goods not having a direct relationship to County business, except in an emergency situation and with the authorization of the employee's supervisor.

4) at any time when the operator of the vehicle has consumed any alcoholic beverage or any substance which might interfere with the safe operation of the vehicle.

E. General guidelines for County vehicle operation include:

1) All vehicles shall be operated in a safe manner and in adherence to all State, County and municipal laws, rules and regulations pertaining to the operation of a motor vehicle.

2) any employee operating a vehicle should take the most direct route to his destination.

3) County vehicles shall not be parked in proximity to any establishment which might cause discredit upon the County unless such action is pursuant to the performance of County business.

4) Fuel shall be procured at designated County fueling facilities except during emergencies or extended trips. When it becomes necessary to purchase fuel from other sources, receipts shall be presented for reimbursement purposes.

5) All employees shall be responsible for any traffic or parking citations issued to them while using a County vehicle. Any such citation received shall be reported to their supervisor within 48 hours.

6) Employees shall lock any County vehicle when it will be parked unattended. The driver of the vehicle will be held responsible for any stolen or missing item if the vehicle is left unlocked while unattended.

7) No employee shall be permitted to store a County vehicle at his/her residence or use it for personal business unless a provision is made in the Board approved departmental policies. To obtain approval, a department must justify the need or circumstances under which a position would be required to store a vehicle at his home or that such storage is in the best interest of the County.

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8) Under no circumstances shall a non-authorized employee or a person who is not an employee of the County be allowed to operate a County vehicle. For purposes of this policy, the Sheriff's Reserve shall be considered to be authorized persons.

II. DEPARTMENTAL POLICIES

Because individual County departments have unique circumstances and uses for County vehicles, any department which has a County vehicle assigned to it shall develop departmental policies in addition to the general policies cited above. Such departmental policies shall incorporate the general policies and clearly identify any possible exception to the general policies. Departmental policies must be reviewed by the County Administrator, the Property Committee and approved by the County Board.

No County department, not currently assigned an automobile, shall be permitted to acquire a vehicle until it has secured Board approval of its departmental policies.

Additional minimum requirements for departmental policies:

A) Utilization: There shall be a provision to assure that a County vehicle will be utilized fully. No department should authorize any employee to incur mileage claims when a County vehicle is not being utilized and is available.

B) Maintenance: All vehicles shall be kept as clean as conditions permit. All preventive maintenance including lubrication and oil change shall be made at County facilities or county designated facilities. Repairs beyond the capabilities of County staff shall be made at County designated sites. Department heads shall insure that the provisions of all warranty requirements are met.

C) Record-keeping: Accurate records shall be maintained by departments in the following areas:

1) Specific names of employees assigned to response vehicles or vehicles being stored overnight at the employee's residence.

2) Fuel usage and miles per gallon.

3) Detailed records of all maintenance and repairs including preventive maintenance logs.

4) Detailed records of any accident or damage to any vehicle.

D) Storage: The department shall specify the location vehicles will be stored at times when they are not in use by County personnel in the performance of official County business. Storage in other than a County provided location may be justified for the following reasons:

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- 1) The vehicle is designated as an emergency response vehicle and is assigned to a County position whose job performance would be significantly obstructed to the public detriment without the immediate availability of a vehicle on a 24 hour basis.
- 2) The vehicle is to be assigned to a County position during a time of impending emergency. Such assignment shall be for limited duration only.
- 3) With department head approval, a vehicle may be stored at an employee's residence when the employee's residence is a shorter distance from a temporary work site than the permanent storage and such storage shall result in a reduction in travel time to the benefit of the County.
- 4) At such times as storage areas designated by the County are not available due to construction, facilities maintenance or other cause, the department head may request that departmental vehicles be stored at the employee's residence until such time as County designated storage is available. Approval of any such temporary storage must be obtained from the County Administrator.

III. DISCIPLINE

Any violation of this policy shall result in disciplinary action as specified in section 10.68 of the McLean County Code.

IV. REPEALER

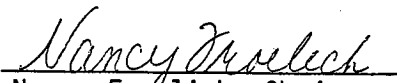
Any and all resolutions or ordinances previously adopted by this Board pertaining to the use and control of County owned or leased vehicles are hereby repealed.

V. EFFECTIVE DATE

This resolution shall take effect and be in full force from and after its passage as provided by law.

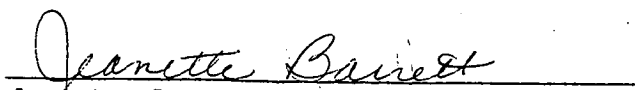
Adopted by the County Board of McLean County, Illinois, this 19th day of April, 1988.

APPROVED:



Nancy Froelich, Chairman
McLean County Board

ATTEST:



Jeanette Barrett, Clerk of the County
Board of the County of McLean, Illinois