

February 3, 2022

Good morning. This was a short week due to the inclement weather blanketing the state.

Below is a budget update and your committee notes from the week.

Thanks for your time and please let us know if you have any questions!

### **Your Committee Notes**

#### **Biweekly pay for state employees**

The House Workforce Development Committee met in executive session Monday afternoon to consider passage of HB 2090 sponsored by Representative Dave Griffith (R-Jefferson City). The bill allows state employees to be paid biweekly. After no discussion, the committee passed the bill by an 11-0 vote.

#### **Joint Committee on Transportation**

The Joint Committee on Transportation Oversight convened on Monday afternoon to receive the annual MoDOT report delivered by Director Patrick McKenna and approve pending applications for memorial highways and bridges and specialty license plates. Also present were three members from the Highway and Transportation Commission and several MoDOT staff members. Director McKenna stated the number one problem facing MoDOT right now is worker shortages from administration, IT, and CDL drivers to clear snow. Also, currently of its 3,500 employees 700 are out of the office with COVID-19. He noted during his presentation Missouri is slowly completing its budgeted bridge and work projects on time and under budget and are gearing up to reassess the current STIP due to the passage of SB 262 and the federal transportation bill. It was noted there is currently not a funding mechanism within SB 262 to fund multimodal projects and would like to see legislation addressing this shortage. Finally, Director McKenna stated their intention to support the passage of legislation banning texting while driving for all ages.

Upon the conclusion of Director McKenna's presentation, time was allotted for the committee to ask questions. Senator Justin Brown (R-Rolla) criticized the Director for making the decision to use funds to give direct raises to MoDOT employees without guidance or input from the legislature. He was also frustrated that major projects are not moving forward and there is no transparency in place on how the projects included in the STIP are chosen. He concluded his inquiry by stating there is no longer trust between the legislature and MoDOT.

Senator Cindy O'Laughlin (R-Shelbina) then began a line of inquiry to state there is major frustration in rural areas due to the lack of maintenance or any communication from MoDOT regarding when maintenance work will occur. She also expressed frustration that MoDOT does not provide clear distinction between minor roads and less-traveled roads and how funding is allocated by MoDOT to maintain these roads.

The joint committee adjourned the hearing after one hour. The full report presented by Director McKenna may be found [here](#).

### **Budget Update**

The emergency supplemental budget, House Bill 3014 is scheduled for executive committee on Monday, Feb 7 at 11:00 a.m.

As a reminder this is the budget bill that has Medicaid expansion, state employee pay increase, federal pass through money for DESE and a few other state agencies.

The House Budget and Senate Appropriations continued to hear from the departments on the governor's budget recommendations for FY2023. The weather created a shortened week and has delayed the presentations from five of the departments. The Senate heard from the departments of agriculture and conservation and the House heard from the departments of elementary and secondary education and the remaining divisions within the department of social services. Below are some of the highlights from these presentations:

#### Agriculture

The director stated \$296,000 in one-time funding is needed to replace a large-scale truck and weight buggy in the Scales Program. The condition of one of the 2008 Freightliner large scale trucks is poor. Replacing the most problematic truck will move the program closer to meeting its mandate. Large scale truck inspectors average 92 device inspections per month generating approximately \$8,261 in revenue per month. The loss of a large-scale truck for an extended period of time would result in a significant loss of revenue. This request will also provide funding to purchase a weight buggy used to move weights from the truck to the scales being inspected and assist in performing inspections. There were very few major changes to this budget.

#### Conservation

The director stated the department is currently engaged in a transformative effort to better align the organization to respond to the conservation challenges and opportunities. The department is working on strategic plan alignment and successful implementation/measurement; a customer focus in all aspects of work; and greater regional collaboration, including increased authority and decision making at the regional level; efficient delivery of program services; and better communications at all levels within the department. As the department of Conservation receives no general revenue the presentation was limited.

#### Elementary and Secondary Education

Commissioner Margie Vandeven stated the budget reflects the same priorities as last year: dealing with circumstances caused by the pandemic, day-to-day education operations and reimagining education. Vandeven said her organization continues to study the impact of the pandemic on students and the workforce. She estimated 15% of students in kindergarten through 12th grade and first- and second-year teachers haven't experienced a typical school year. She also reported the youngest and most vulnerable students were adversely affected by pandemic school closings and remote learning when it released the [2021 Missouri Assessment Program results](#). Finally, she pleaded with the committee to move on HB 3014, which contains \$2.1 billion in federal COVID-19 funds for DESE to distribute to the state's school districts. There were no questions from the committee following her presentation.

#### Social Services Divisions

The remaining divisions housed within the department of social services are the support division, family support division, children's division, and youth services. The division of MO HealthNet made their presentation to the committee last week. Committee members questioned division directors for more than an hour regarding improvements to the oversight over youth residential facilities. This includes background checks, software upgrades, and increased staff. Another area of interest included IT improvements, particularly the single-entry portal for those wishing to receive or already receiving state benefits, as RFPs are going to be issued for multiple projects to update and manage the large amounts of data the department receives and processes. Due to the impending weather, the committee cut the presentation short and will finish the department presentation next week.

### **Key Upcoming Dates**

- February 8, 2022 – State of the Judiciary
- February 21, 2022 – Presidents Day – No Session
- March 1, 2022 – Last day to file House and Senate bills
- March 14-18, 2022– Legislative Spring Break
- April 18, 2022 – Easter Holiday – No Session
- May 6, 2022 – State Budget finalized per Missouri Constitution
- May 13, 2022 – Last day of the 2022 Legislative Session per Missouri Constitution
- July 1, 2022 – First day of Fiscal Year 2023
- July 14, 2022 – Last day for the Governor to Sign or Veto Bills
- August 28, 2022 – Date most legislation takes effect (unless another date is specified)
- September 14, 2022 – Veto Session

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