March 22, 2018

MOBILE COUNTY COMMISSION

The Mobile County Commission met in regular session in the Government Plaza Multi-Purpose Room, in the City of Mobile, Alabama, on Thursday, March 22, 2018, at 1:30 P.M. The following members of the Commission were present: Connie Hudson, President, Jerry L. Carl, and Merceria Ludgood, Members. President Hudson chaired the meeting.

AGENDA #1

APPROVE CONDUCTING INTERVIEWS BY SKYPE/
PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR AND COUNTY
ENGINEER POSITIONS

The interviews were conducted by skype: James Crane, applying for County Engineer and Public Works Director, Kenneth Bradley, applying for County Engineer and Public Works Director, and Jerry Stokes, applying for County Engineer. Court Reporter’s Transcripts (Freedom Court Reporting) attached.

AGENDA #2

COMMISSION ANNOUNCEMENTS
AND/OR COMMENTS

There were no announcements and/or comments.
March 22, 2018

AGENDA #3

ADJOURN

Commissioner Carl moved, seconded by Commissioner Ludgood, that the Board approve a request for motion to adjourn until March 26, 2018.

Motion carried unanimously.

Connie Hudson, President

Jerry L. Carl, Member

Lesheria Ludgood, Member

ATTEST:

John Paffenbarg, County Administrator
1 MOBILE COUNTY COMMISSION
2 MOBILE COUNTY COMMISSION
3 205 GOVERNMENT STREET
4 MOBILE, ALABAMA 36602
5
6 THURSDAY; MARCH 22, 2018
7 1:30 P.M.
8
9 IN RE: MOBILE COUNTY COMMISSION MEETING
10 MINUTES
11
12 INTERVIEWS FOR THE POSITION OF COUNTY ENGINEER
13 AND/OR PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR
14
15 CONNIE HUDSON, COMMISSION PRESIDENT
16 MERCERIA LUDGOOD, DISTRICT 1
17 JERRY CARL, DISTRICT 3
18
19 REPORTED BY: PATRICIA TAYLOR, CCR
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Freedom Court Reporting, A Veritext Company 877-373-3660
1:20 p.m.

INTERVIEW OF JAMES CRANE

MS. HUDSON: This meeting is now called to order. And the purpose of today's meeting is to continue with the interviews that we've been conducting for the County Engineer and Public Works Director and Chief Engineer of the Division of Public Roads.

And today we have three candidates.

(Skype call ringing.)

MS. HUDSON: Hello.

MR. CRANE (VIA SKYPE): Hello. How are you doing?

MS. HUDSON: Doing very well.

Thank you. For the record, our first interview today is Mr. James Crane. And he is interviewing for the position of County Engineer.
and Public Works Director.

Mr. Crane, good afternoon.

MR. CRANE (VIA SKYPE): How are you doing today?

MS. HUDSON: We're doing great. Thank you. I am Commissioner Hudson. To my right is Commissioner Jerry Carl. To my left is Commissioner Merceria Ludgood.

We appreciate you joining us via Skype this afternoon. We thank you for your interest in these positions.

And the way we will conduct this interview is to begin with, we will ask you to introduce yourself and give us any information that you would like for us to know about you and then we will go through a series.

We'll take turns asking you some questions and give you an
opportunity to respond.

At the end of the interview, if you have any questions of us, we will save time for that as well.

MR. CRANE (VIA SKYPE): Okay. Sounds good.

MS. HUDSON: Okay. So we will go ahead and move forward and just allow you a chance to introduce yourself.

MR. CRANE (VIA SKYPE): Well, I appreciate the opportunity to interview with you folks. I'm excited about the opportunity.

The -- my -- my personal life, I -- I was born and raised in the area. I went off to a small high school not too far from a little town. I went to a university and studied civil engineer. I went to the University of Illinois and graduated with a Bachelor of
Science in civil engineering in 1996.

From there, I -- to kind of round out my professional career to go Illinois Department of -- or Indiana Department of Transportation.

My full first-time job prior to that, I was a -- spent three months at the -- at a work study co-op program with the Illinois Department of Transportation, Illinois.

So from Indiana Department of Transportation, I worked up in the Chicago Lake area in Gary and Hammond up in the northwest region of Indiana, which is heavy industrial, lots of traffic. At the time, Indiana was doing a lot of rebuild projects.

I spent three years there.

Decided that -- I was in the
Illinois Army National Guard and I was gaining rank and I was getting promoted to Master Sergeant. So I thought it would be good to get back towards central Illinois because I was coming down every weekend for drill and I had a specialty at work, so I decided to come back in the -- and worked at a couple of different firms in central Illinois. The first one being Sader for about ten months. And then I went and worked for a firm for three years, Champagne Daily Associates, which has been bought out a couple of times since then.

And from there the -- the old home town county engineering job came open. So I put my hat in the ring a little over 15 years ago and was selected as the county engineer for Douglas County and
I've been here ever since.

Privately, personally: I'm married for 18 years. I have two sons. One is a senior getting ready to graduate. I've got another son who's a sophomore. My -- my son is a senior right now. He's, you know, doing the old college selection process, trying to figure out where he wants to go. He has an appointment to West Point if he chooses to take it.

MR. CARL: Nice.

MR. CRANE (VIA SKYPE): And probably for a couple of weeks if he decides to go off to New York for four years. So it's a pretty exciting time in the Crane household.

MS. HUDSON: Well, excellent.

Very good. Okay. I think Commissioner Carl will start us
BY MR. CARL:

Q Thank you for your service and congratulations on your son talking about West Point. That's big.

A Yeah. It's -- it's -- it's pretty humbling. It's -- he's worked his rear end off for it, so it's -- it's all his decision to go where he wants to go. Thank you very much.

Q All right. Fantastic. We've got a list of just stock questions that we were provided. If you see us looking and reading straight off of it. We try to ask everyone these same questions although we can vary off if we hear something that we want to explore a little deeper. We can ask questions off it. But let me start on some leadership questions.

How would you describe your leadership style? And give us an example of how that style applies?

A So my leadership style is kind of a
hybrid of, you know, all the successes and failures over my career; multiple facets. With my military experience in -- in leadership in those roles is different from civilian roles obviously. But there's a lot of things that are pretty intertwinnable.

But I don't really demand respect; I kind of try to earn it. I will never ask any employees or subordinates to do something that I wasn't willing to do.

I -- I, you know, really try to make a collaborative effort and -- and build teams. Anything I'm in, whether it's coaching basketball, football or being a county engineer or a consulting engineer or, you know -- you know, a military member in the for that matter. So a leader is only as strong as its supporting staff. And the better trained and equipped they are, the better off you are and as a team in general.

I try to be a subject matter expert in everything I do. And if I don't know an answer, I will try to find an answer that I
can convey that to who I'm working with.

But, you know, for example, I -- I
spent a lot of time -- we were a small shop
and we -- we're -- we do a lot of things
together with my technicians, my interns, my
IT staff. We -- you know -- you know, if
there's a storm surge and somebody needs to be
involved, I'm the guy at the bottom of the
hole with water up to my waist, you know,
slopping mud or, you know, putting stuff in,
working together, and just trying to do what
needs to be done to get the job.

Q How cold is it up there right now?
A It's actually not too bad. We're
about 50 degrees. But they're forecasting
snow for the weekend. So we may have taken
the truck -- plowed the trucks a little soon.

Q Well, it's beautiful down here. We're
talking about going to the beach. So --
A Oh, yeah.
Q Yeah. Well --

BY MS. HUDSON:

Q Mr. Crane, as a follow-up question to
that: How many employees do you currently supervise in your department?

A So -- so right now I supervise -- I have basically three branches, you know, in Illinois. I don't know if you watch the news but it's not real good at the moment. So we actually contract a little bit.

But currently I have one technician as my senior tech. I've got two IT folks and an administrative assistant. I do have a couple of contractual employees that we utilize for some of our federal bookkeeping to help us with the burden and as well as some, you know, construction inspection, some survey work use, primary consultants on our various, various contracts to help with some of those functions.

We're in the process in the next year or two, and hopefully sooner, we've got some pretty large projects coming up to where we're going to have to expand again and get some head count put in place.

And then -- so we -- we -- we kind of
self -- in the meantime in Illinois and in the
country in general, but more so in Illinois,
just try to get through the hump and still to
great things. But then, you know, we're
coming to a time where we have to -- we're
going to have to staff up -- staff up and make
sure we can meet our needs.

Q Okay.

BY MR. CARL:

Q And what's the population of that
county?
A We're just shy of 20,000.
Q Okay.
A And -- and one of the unique things we
do have -- I'm kind of back to the staffing.
We do -- we're one of four counties in the
state of Illinois -- pretty much every county
is under county and township jurisdiction, so
everything is pretty well centralized. We're
-- our state and federal funding is funded
through IDOT and -- and the Illinois
Department of Transportation, from that
direction. But a lot of our roads, township
roads, are maintained by Township Highway elected highway commissioners.

So we have the agreement in place where we actually contract our maintenance. Our county highway system is actually, you know, field work that we -- you know, patching potholes, mowing, culvert replacement, things like that with them.

So, you know, I have direct, you know, four or five employees from time to time. I've got nine highway commissioners that are under contract with my maintenance department.

The county decided about the first year I was here -- they were in the process of doing it -- to eliminate the maintenance department at the highway level. It was very ineffective unfortunately. It could have been fixed but was literally too far down the path. So we went ahead and made the transition and we moved all of maintenance to -- to the townships.

Q Okay. Thank you.

MS. HUDSON: Commissioner
Ludgood?

BY MS. LUDGOOD:

Q How do you currently develop key employees, those people who you identify as being potentially strong, you know, who are going to probably do a really good job? How do you develop them?

A So that's a great question. So, you know, I'd have to go back three or four years in my memory bank to -- to answer the second part of that.

But, you know, we -- okay. We -- we are very cross-trained in my department out of necessity. So I try to afford any opportunity I can to get them into a -- to any kind of training that's available anywhere in the state, whether it's nuclear density training, whether it's any kind of inspection training or, you know, written inspections, you know,
for the federal standard.

So, you know, we -- we always, you know, try to make sure everybody is current in their training.

I -- I employ -- I was afforded the opportunity of being -- afforded the opportunity to be an intern and really get the jump on my career working at the co-op for the state of Illinois.

I always try to employ one or two college engineering students every year to get them some field experience in practical mileage and application, get them some design time. They have to put a proposal together, maybe manage a small, you know, construction project under my guidance.

And then I -- and those ones that are successful and capable that look like they'll become great engineers at some point, we bring them back year after year until they graduate.

And the ones that don't then, you know, maybe it's not going to work out. We always -- it probably means working with them
longer than I probably should. But they're young, they need to learn.

As far as handling an employee who's maybe not performing, not -- not a rising star, or maybe abusing the system, I had one instance when I had an employee that I actually went to high school with that was kind of abusing the system and -- and -- and built the case against him. A great guy and still -- somehow still friends through it all. But we ended up having to release him because it just -- you know, gave him the opportunity to grow, taught him how to survey, became one of my main survey techs. But then he just kind of got lazy and started, you know -- so, you know, a tough decision, but it had to get -- had to make it happen.

So, you know, you try to remediate as much as you can. But -- but sometimes, you know, it's hard in government situations. But sometimes you've got to cut the cord and let people go. And sometimes that process -- in this case, we were able to bend the -- the
unemployment case and -- and all the money that the county had to pay on that behalf was reimbursed back. So --

Q All right. Thank you.

A But always try to develop. Always try to develop first and give every opportunity, make a decision, you know, that they -- it's not going to work.

Q Okay.

BY MS. HUDSON:

Q Mr. Crane, I'm sure you will agree that building a rapport with others is an important component, and especially in a job as either a county engineer or a public works director.

What we have here in Mobile County, a much larger department. Engineering is approximately 50 people; public works, about 250. And for someone to come in, it would be important to establish rapport, not only with employees but with other department heads, with commissioners. What is your style? How would you go about doing that for each of
these entities?

A I think it's pretty simple. It's just being -- being a human being to begin with. You know, unfortunately some people, when they get into positions of power, as you -- as you -- I'm sure you've all seen in different aspects of life, you know, sometimes power goes in the wrong way and people take it the wrong way.

It -- what it really comes down to, you know, if -- if I was selected for this position and was -- and was hired, I mean, I will answer to you folks.

So my job, you know, just like in Douglas County, I have seven county board members. My job is to make them look good. And for -- for me to make them look good is that I have to make sure my people around me and the surrounding people look good.

And, you know, it -- if a citizen has an issue with something and I don't address it, there are people they're going to call on here. And then that doesn't make them look
So it's -- it's very important to build up relationships within the department, and especially the community because that's who we're serving is the public and it's their tax dollars. We've got to be good stewards of their money and we have to do what's right for them to get them, you know, to work, school, to the beach, to wherever in a safe manner.

But then, you know, you also have to -- here in Douglas County, unfortunately, we -- we're right at the tail end of the -- the election season for the primary elections. And we had some -- some ugly races against people from state departments trying to get that sheriff's job and such.

But we -- we would -- we would always meet, you know, every month or so, sometimes more as department -- as department heads to discuss -- or each department to -- what our needs are, how we can share.

For example, the county IT staff is under my umbrella. And -- and is it the best
fit? Probably not. But I'm -- I'm the only department that has the budget that can support them. So, you know, they -- they work in the majority of other offices. You know, they spend more time in other offices doing IT work than they do working for me.

But it's -- it's a good relationship to be able to know what each department's needs are, you know, what the common equipment, common software, common platforms.

And then -- and then outside stakeholders is -- is definitely, you know, a key. We're -- we're unique in Douglas County. The county has 20,000 people. In -- in the south part of -- the southwest part of the county, we have a very large Amish community. And when you're talking Amish community and transportation networks where a large part of the population, large amount of, you know, buggy traffic, horses, horse and buggy, slow-moving vehicles and the fast-moving traffic stream with, you know, the modern farming, huge equipment like you see down
there, too.

But it's -- it's a hazard at times. So, you know, I have a pretty good working relationship with the Amish community. But it took me sitting down in the front yard for a major road improvement project in their community, drinking iced tea and lemonade with the Amish bishops and make sure that they're okay with what we were going to do.

So it really boiled down to being a good decent human being and honest and -- and, you know, the goal is, you know, treat others as you want to be treated. So --

Q Okay.

A But, yeah, that -- I'm sure I can speak for -- I just try to do what you would want done to you. Make sure that everybody has a say. Sometimes the answer is no. And a lot of times the answer is no. And the unfortunate job is for the county engineer and I'm sure the public works director, you know. Like my umbrella is permitting, oversight, flood plane, you know, stuff and
things like that. Well, I have to say no a lot. I had to say no to a guy again today. And, you know, it's just the way it is. And, so -- but you explain why it's no and what you can do to rectify it after the variance or what have you, what the law is and what the ordinances say and let them make that decision on how they want to proceed. So --

Q Okay. Thank you.

BY MR. CARL:

Q Have you ever been in a situation where you were less successful as a leader than you wanted to be of course? And what did you learn from that experience?

A Oh, I mean, absolutely. Many times. I -- you know, I think -- I think one of the strong traits of a -- of a leader is to understand that you're not perfect and that you're going to make mistakes and that you understand that, you know, you have to learn from those mistakes.

You know, there's a saying, you know, the definition of insanity is doing the same
thing over and over and over again and hoping for a different result. So, you know, if you keep doing the same thing, making the same mistake, you're not going to, you know, correct yourself. You can't expect somebody else to, you know, correct the problem for you.

So, I -- I make mistakes every day, and I learn something every day. So, you know, sometimes you make the wrong decision. I -- I'm a school board member. And sometimes we have to make tough decisions that you second guess yourself. But you have to stand by them. You know, you may get calls or you get political heat and public heat because you fired that favorite coach, you know. But I know why he was fired. Nobody else will ever know, but you know. You just have to stand by that and -- and then be -- with some of those things, though, you have to be completely transparent, especially in the government setting, to make sure that, you know, there's no hidden agenda. Everything is done in the
open. But your decisions are public and you have a good standing of why you made the decision.

Now, if it wasn't the right decision, then you -- you know, you fix it and go to the next one. And hopefully you won't repeat it.

Q Thank you.

BY MS. LUDGOOD:

Q Either in your current role as a county engineer or even in your role as part of the Guard, what strategies do you use to try to build morale among those you supervise? And I think in Illinois, y'all haven't had enough budgeting in, what, a year?

A Oh, yeah.

Q Well, we won't even go there.

A I know. We -- I -- I mean, and that's a big deal. And I think we're -- I think it's going to happen to us again. So morale in Illinois is low. Morale at the Illinois Department of -- Department of Transportation is low. They -- they reorganized again to try to save some money and -- and save money that
the state does have.

At one point in time, I think it was behind like six or eight million dollars, our pension payments at the Illinois level. And -- and -- and that -- we went through eight months two years ago of not receiving any of our state -- state money. And they were shutting down state contracts and federal contracts because they couldn't pay the contractors.

So the best I can do is -- is control my little 40 acres, you know. There's bad stuff that happens that's above you. And I just -- I -- it's my job as -- as the department head to make sure that my people are taken care of. And that if they're having a bad day, that, you know, they're allowed to have a bad day. But I can't let my actions all the time, you know, make -- make the climate bad for -- for the -- of the department.

Am I perfect? No. Because sometimes you get bad and sometimes you can't shield
your emotions all the time. But, you know, it's my job to make sure that, you know, we work through any issue and try to deflect any outside problems that could affect us locally. And when you're talking money and the state of Illinois not giving us money we're supposed to get by statute, sometimes that's pretty difficult. But, you know, it -- it -- morale is -- is -- you know, it's a serious thing, no matter if you're in the military or in a government agency or wherever you're at, if it's, you know, a school setting, whatever, if morale is bad, you can't get anything accomplished.

So, you know, sometimes, you know -- and every employee is different. Sometimes it takes a pat on the back. Sometimes it takes a little bit of pressure as to, you know, hey, you need to get back on track and do what you need to do. Sometimes we'll step back away, take a breath, and we'll work through this together. And sometimes it's just, you know, I have to step in and -- and show them: This
is what we need done.

And, so, sometimes it's just the understanding of what needs to be done in that circumstance. So, you receive some training so they have the knowledge and the ability to go on from there.

Q Okay. Thank you.

BY MS. HUDSON:

Q Mr. Crane, with your employees, what type of key performance measures do you use to monitor their performance and to make sure that whatever direction you give them or whatever responsibilities they have, they're actually following through? How do you monitor that?

A So it's a small shop. You know, it's -- it's -- I don't really -- I don't have a formal process of like, you know, documentation of -- of what -- you know, how to track that as -- as performance goes.

But, you know, I -- for example, during the winter we do most of our bridge inspections. So my -- my chief technician, we
a have deadline. I -- you know, we have to do
each one by a certain inspection date.

I have to, in turn, upload those in
the state database by the inspection date.
And it'll be reports on the district level,
then on to the state level.

So, you know, things like that, just
day-to-day operations, you -- I can -- I know
where they're at in their process. We're so
close knit. I -- I see my -- all of my
employees every day for multiple hours every
day. And, so, I know that they're actually
engaged. I know when they -- when -- if
they're getting their work done or not. You
know, from time to time we have -- I have a --
my administrative assistant has been at the
county for like 35 years. She retired three
or four years ago, and we hired a new lady to
replace her.

And it's -- it's not an easy task with
the government county and -- and, you know,
with the change in -- in state laws and
regulations. And sometimes she struggles.
And sometimes she goes down the rat hole and -- and doesn't get what needs to be done in a timely manner. And I'm always there. I can, you know, reel her back in and say: You need -- you're over-thinking it. It's easy. It's just -- just do this and we're good. You don't have to worry about all of this other. So it's -- it's easier in my -- my position now to manage productivity because I see it every day.

Q In an operation that's not so small, such as ours, how do you --

A Right.

Q -- envision going about monitoring and ensuring productivity?

A So I have an organizational chart, a revised charge. So I am assuming that's what's operating under now. You know, every -- every level of leadership, one leader can only control so many people. So -- or the public works probably has four people to report to him, a county engineer that had six people to report to him.
The need of the job of -- of managing
those folks and giving them clear guidance of
what needs to be done and what the priority of
work is and timelines and deadlines are and
then follow them up with that. And then
giving them the tools to be successful if
they're not.

So, you know, as far as going down to
the -- the guy putting patch material on a --
on a state route somewhere or on a county
route somewhere, you know -- you know,
that's -- that's hard to judge, you know,
it's -- at -- as upper level. But his
superior, his -- that's his person who he
reports to, their job to make sure. And it --
and it builds up the tree, you know. That's
how it would work.

I mean, it would -- it would take
clear guidance from a guy like me or whoever
you would hire to make sure that happened.
And -- and -- and performance levels will
change over time just based on your
technology, based on, you know, your
capability, your manpower, budgets, weather. You know, you guys don't have to worry about pre-thaw weather like we do. But it's possible that you can lose a car pretty quick on some of our roads. And, unfortunately, we can't fix things like that when it's below 50 degrees. So -- you know, so, they're -- they're different challenges. And it's something I would definitely have to grow into.

Q Thank you.

BY MR. CARL:

Q Tell me about the biggest change in a work situation that you had to manage. And how did you cope with it?

A I was the change from the -- our -- our having a three-person maintenance staff to transitioning that to the township control for maintaining our highways. And it -- it was such a big deal at the time, I've actually been across the state giving presentation to different units and different townships and -- and different organizations on how we make the
Because the transition wasn't -- was
difficult in its own right, you know, getting
rid of the surplus equipment, you know, make
notes. Those relationships work where if we
had problems that we were, you know, able to
address them. Is it a perfect system? No.
But it -- it gives better service to our
citizens.

But it's -- it's a process that it was
two years in the making before I took the job.
And it took two years of me being here before
we finally got it done. And it was a -- it
was a big change.

I -- I know one big change in the
department when I came is -- and I will take
on lots of -- lot of roles. And I -- I do all
the highway designs, flood plane analysis, the
hydraulic stuff that I can do in-house to save
taxpayer money. And I've been able to do that
in a smaller department. But then I still
have that knowledge. We can do it. And
that's been a change that some of my -- my
technicians -- because, you know, they don't like doing it. But they were able to do more work.

So the -- the biggest change is probably the transition of the -- of the township maintenance back -- the county to the township. And we would go back the other way, I don't know why, but...

Q Thank you.

MS. HUDSON: If we can just take a few moments, Mr. Crane, we need to break for just a minute.

MR. CRANE (VIA SKYPE): Okay.

MS. HUDSON: Can you hang on?

Okay.

MR. CRANE (VIA SKYPE): I'll hang on.

(Recess taken.)

MS. HUDSON: I think we are ready to resume the questions --

MR. CRANE (VIA SKYPE): Okay.

MS. HUDSON: -- for the position. Commissioner Ludgood,
it’s your turn.

BY MS. LUDGOOD:

Q  I have a few questions about
budgeting. Would you describe your role in
developing your budget implementation and
administration? If you're the person who has
to monitor it, if you could talk to us about
that process and how involved you been in it.

A  Yes. So it's -- it's 100 percent my
responsibility in both the development, the
implementation. And -- and -- and -- and I
guess the -- the county board ultimately
approves it. But once they approve my budget
that I present to them, then I manage it 100
percent, line item by line item, approving
every expenditure for the county's side of
the -- the county money.

For our state -- state money funding
projects, the same thing happens. I develop a
cost estimate. I generally put a proposal and
the contract together with the county board
approval and then the -- the actual project
itself through my employee. But then I'm the
final signature on -- on everything that comes through the office.

So anything that comes in that requires -- you know, even if it's a penny in, we track. And if it's a penny out, we track it. It's deposited. But -- but 100 percent of the budget process is -- is my responsibility. And I --

Q  What is your budget?
A  Right now this year, my general highway budget is about -- I believe it's $750,000 for my general highway.

We have a county township bridge fund that we bill to help cost share a project. It's at 500,000 this year.

We have a matching account that we use. That's at 400,000.

And then our general maintenance budget for the county and the townships together is roughly about 1.5 million.

And then depending the workload and funding from the federal and state grants, you know, we -- last year we did 3.8 million
dollars' worth of resurfacing work and $600,000 patching jobs.

So for our standards, you know, four to five million dollars in a year is a big construction season with the manpower we have.

So last year, you know, probably total budget of about six.

Q Okay.

A And -- and I've been here going on 15 years. And I've -- I've been in the black every year. And we actually -- I've -- I've grown my fund balance from about 600,000 to about 900,000 over the last 15 years. Which, you know, again, I -- I'm short staffed some folks and what have you, doing a lot on my own. And it helps offset those costs. But for a small county, we're in pretty good shape.

Q And what's the size of the county's budget, the entire?

A So the -- the entire county budget -- so the general fund has got some problems. So they -- they pretty well -- we're on a hiring
freeze. We have not -- we have not -- no
does away except for their -- the sheriff's
union got a pay increase. A couple of other
agencies got pay increases that probably
shouldn't have. It's causing strife within
the county government system here.

But I think they -- overall, I think
the sheriff's department is about 1.5 million.
The health department is about a million. And
then you have the treasurer's office at
courts, about 600,000. So, I think the grand
total on the operational side, probably seven,
eight -- eight million dollars for them.

Actually cash on hand, most of the

cash on hand is what my funds are for that as
far as our motor fuel tax, my tax county
highway funds and all of my reserves.

Q Okay. Thank you.

BY MS. HUDSON:

Q Well, as a follow-up to that, who
handles your grant writing? Do you do --

A Yeah. So I -- I do most of that.

If -- if it's a -- if it's my department, I
will write the grant. I will put most of it together. We did -- however, we hired a consultant to -- to do a major bridge for a million-dollar-plus structure on the county system that we then were able to secure the money. It's scheduled to be built in 2022. So I -- we did hire that help to, you know, put that document together, and then with my oversight. It helped where it needed to be helped.

But -- but a lot of the stuff I try to write it myself. But then if I need to, we can get outside assistance through a consultant. And what I'm starting to realize now, it's just a lot cheaper to maybe hire a consultant once in a while and not have that head count and have the liability and the overhead, you know, and just use them when they're needed. And it's starting to work out pretty well.

Q Okay. Mr. Crane, should you be appointed to either of these positions that you've applied for here at Mobile County, what
would you, in either, intend to accomplish in your first year or your first few months? When you come, what do you see as your first steps and overall accomplishments your first year?

A There would definitely -- if I understand, I -- I am -- I have -- I can't say for sure. But I've now -- I -- I was just looking at your website and your -- your department website and your engineering department. And I know, you know, Mr. Kegley is your acting engineer. You know, there's a lot of experience there, so I know that I have a -- a tall hill to climb to make that point to be able to -- even to be considered to be appointed.

But if that will be the case, you know, with the knowledge that you currently have, my first priority would just be able to get to know the staff and -- and -- and, you know, try to figure -- you know, get those relationships, you know, established to find out exactly what strengths and weaknesses are
and, you know -- you know, how we can improve
the situation, if there are any need to
improve and improve services if they need to
be improved to -- for the citizens of Mobile
County and -- and -- and all of those
thousands of people who drive through.

But, yeah, the first order of business
would be really to -- to develop and foster a
working relationship with everybody that is
currently there and -- and under you guy's
guidance, too, you know, do what you would see
as a vision for the organization, either one.

Q Thank you.

BY MR. CARL:

Q All right. Let's see here. How do
you enlist support of your staff to establish
a common approach to solving a problem?

A So when -- I think, you know, when it
comes -- you know, being a government agency,
we -- we have to live and abide by statutes,
policy, and ordinances and those, you know,
guidelines that have been passed by, you know,
previous commissions or boards or
organizations.

So I -- I think the primary goal is
to -- you know, sometimes I try to be black
and white and -- and make sure that
everything -- you know, it's written a certain
way and that's what we have to follow. All of
the policy guidelines need to be followed.

And -- and to ensure that, you know,
everybody is -- is on the same sheet of music
following the same policies. That's -- that's
the first, you know.

But then also just have a good work
relationship with them and understanding
what -- you know, maybe what their decision
process is as far as what they're doing, how
they're working, and -- and how you can foster
that.

Q Okay. Thank you.

BY MS. LUDGOOD:

Q So how large is your commission, your
county commission?

A We -- yeah. We have seven county
board members.
Q Okay. And are they elected from districts?

A Yes, they -- they are elected from districts throughout the county.

Q Do you report directly to them?

A So I report to -- we are as -- as a -- as a setting of committees, so I report directly to a road -- road and bridge committee, which is three members of the county board. So we meet every month, 9:00 a.m. on the second Wednesday of the month. So that's when I report all of my -- to get county board approval. I report it at that meeting for inclusion on -- at the full county board meeting the follow week. And, so, like plat planning and --

Q Okay. And, so, who does your evaluation? Is it a member of the road and bridge committee of the commission or is it the full commission?

A So, it should be the full county board with guys from the -- the highway committee.

But I can you tell that it's only happened one
time in 15 years.

Q  Okay.

A  So I -- you know, I mean, we -- I guess we're kind of evaluated every time I meet with -- the work relationship I have with them, if my -- if there's something they don't like, they let me know. But as a formal written, you know, policy or procedure, it just does not happen for Douglas.

Q  Well, I was asking because in this position you will report to directly to the commission. And that's why I was just wondering whether you were in a similar kind of reporting situation now or if this would be different.

A  So it -- it would be -- you know, if -- if -- if you guys had separate meetings outside of your monthly or bimonthly commission meeting, then this would be exactly kind of how it would feel.

But as far as I guess the county board, the seven members together, it's -- they do their business upon the recommendation.
of the committee.

    Now, if they have a question or a clarification or what have you, I'm in the peanut gallery and they call me up and -- and I'll explain something.

    You know, for -- for example, if a resolution is on the table on the -- on the Wednesday board meeting, you know, the day after the primary election, which our county clerk -- you know, I did all the hard lifting for her, so we got through that without much problem.

Q So do you like having that level of committee between you and the commission or would you feel just as comfortable reporting directly to us?

A You know, I don't know for sure. I -- I -- I...

Q You answered --

A It's being a part of it. I mean, I -- when -- when we -- when I report to the committee, it's more of an informal -- it's informal with all the parts and everything.
But it -- it's more personal, you know. When we go to the full county board members, it's more of a business meeting. You know, the press is always there. You know, the -- there's all -- any kind of visitors or whoever wants to speak to the board, they're there. So, I mean, it's really a lot of stuff.

So it -- you know, having that -- and I know your situation is different because you three are the three. So it would be study session, you know, department heads separately, then your business meeting, I -- I think there could be some merit to that.

But I'm -- I've not worked in that situation. I don't know. I don't know for sure, to be honest with you. I know it's -- it's easier to discuss specific issues and problems like project related in a more intimate setting than on the grand stage.

You know, there's a place and a place for the grand stage. You know, like public hearings on certain projects and things like
that are required. But to develop some things before that to say: Well, here's what I'm trying to do. What do you think?

You know, sometimes it's hard to go to my boss on a grand setting and say: Hey, I have this idea. What do you think? And if they say: No, we're not interested, then that kind of doesn't look for good both for the county and myself and if I'm shut down in front of everybody. So having that -- that subcommittee role is -- is -- is -- is helpful in a lot of ways.

Q Well, in our setting, in an instance like that, you would just come to each of us to talk about it --

A Okay.

Q -- as opposed to having to just put any good ideas you had out in front of us, you know, at that time. You could test the waters with us ahead of time.

A Right.

Q And typically the only things that we hear is a project comes in a meeting because
it's gone way south and we're having to --

A Right.

Q -- ask the bonding company to finish

it or, you know, something like that.

A Yeah. And -- and I know when I have

an issue with something that -- that my

committee or the -- the county board needs to

know about, I call my committee chairman, who

happens to be the county board chairman and

say: Hey, Mr. Marson, I've just got to let

you this is what happened. This is what I

did. And you're probably going to hear about

it. So, communication is key both ways.

 MR. CARL: I compare it to

having three wives, by the way.

 MR. CRANE (VIA SKYPE): Yeah.

 MS. LUDGOOD: Or three

husbands.

 MR. CARL: Or three husbands,

whichever way you look at it.

A No, I -- I think I -- I've reached out

to individual members. I've had individual

members come to me on issues on -- on issues
within their -- their districts, you know. And sometimes I have to say no. We've got roads in worse shape. And let's go look at it, you know, and, so, it just -- it just has to be -- it has to be worked out together.

You know, budgets are small and slim. I don't care what side of the government it is, if it's Mobile, New York, Chicago, Cook County, you know, you have to operate within your means. And sometimes you have to say no.

MS. HUDSON: Very true.

Commissioners, do you have any more questions? Commissioner?

MR. CARL: I'm wrapped up.

MS. HUDSON: And I am as well.

Do you have any questions that you'd like to ask us?

MR. CRANE (VIA SKYPE): Yeah, I have a few here. Just -- I don't currently have my license in Alabama, so I'm not real familiar with Alabama laws and regulations.

But is the county engineer
contract, is it five or six years.
Or is it just --

MS. HUDSON: I'm sorry. What was your question? You kind of froze up there on us.

MR. CRANE (VIA SKYPE): Well, is the --

MS. HUDSON: We need to reestablish our connection. You have all of a sudden started freezing up on us.

MR. CARL: Ask him if he can call back.

MS. HUDSON: Can you hang up and call back, please.

MR. CRANE (VIA SKYPE): Okay.

(Recess taken.)

MS. HUDSON: Mr. Crane, can you hear us?

MR. CRANE (VIA SKYPE): Yes.

MS. HUDSON: Well, we're not hearing you very well still.

MR. CRANE (VIA SKYPE): Is
1. that better?
   MS. LUDGOOD: That's better.
   Yeah.
2. MR. CARL: Oh, yeah. That's fine.
3. MS. HUDSON: Okay. Let's try that again. What was your question again.
4. MR. CRANE (VIA SKYPE): So is the -- is the position a five-year contract? Is there a contract length assigned with the county engineer job.
5. MS. HUDSON: No, there's no contract length. No. It's --
6. MR. CRANE (VIA SKYPE): Okay.
7. MS. HUDSON: It's an appointment by the commission. And you become part of the merit system.
8. MR. CRANE (VIA SKYPE): Okay.
9. MS. HUDSON: Okay.
10. MS. LUDGOOD: Another
MR. CRANE (VIA SKYPE): And I started to freeze on my end too, now. It may be my end. So I -- I know you guys did the study on the -- the review of your -- your -- your systems and your -- your public works and your engineer groups. And that report date is June 14th, 2017. My question is: I'm assuming that you guys have -- have implemented that -- that structure in place now.

MS. HUDSON: We have.

MR. CRANE (VIA SKYPE): And then I guess have you seen any improvement, your goal that you're trying to -- like some of the things that were addressed in the report, have you seen improvement with that -- with that reassignment?
MS. HUDSON: Well, at this point in time, the last 18 months, of course, we've had an interim county engineer and a public works director.

So I think we have seen some improvement as far as the administration and public works and engineering beginning to really work together as a team. Whereas, before it was sort of just a separate environment. And there wasn't nearly as much as cooperation and collaboration. In that we've seen great improvement with.

But as far as implementing any big changes in both of those department, I think because we've been in an interim situation, I think things have been improved, but to some limited degree.

MS. LUDGOOD: And that was --
MR. CRANE (VIA SKYPE): Okay.

MS. LUDGOOD: -- some things that we were holding back on because we wanted the new leader in place to be a part of that moving forward. We didn't want to completely move forward and then step in. We were this close (demonstrating) where we could just hold that in abeyance. And, so, on the other aspects of it, our leader, the new leaders would be the people who would guide us through the rest of it.

MR. CRANE (VIA SKYPE): Okay.

MR. CARL: And I would say yes -- there's been a lot of positive changes in the last 18 months, especially with people's attitudes.

MR. CRANE (VIA SKYPE): That's good. Yeah. I read that report. And, yeah, I did -- I could see
there were some -- definitely some
issues. (Freezing frame)
commission (freezing frame) -- so
are there any other big issues,
like I'm -- you know, if I'm
appointed that I should be aware
of that you -- like, you know, if
I walked in to tomorrow, the first
day at work, you know, I want you
to solve this.

MS. HUDSON: I'm sure that'll
happen.

MR. CARL: But --

MR. CRANE (VIA SKYPE): Okay.

MR. CARL: -- just remember:
I'm always right.

MS. HUDSON: No, I am. No. I
think that you would find that you
have a lot of talent, a lot of
experience and expertise and
probably be blown away by the
staff that we have here and the
great job that they do. We can't
say enough good things about our
people.

MS. LUDGOOD: We have lots and
lots of rain. And we have lots of
dirt roads.

MS. HUDSON: Yeah.

MS. LUDGOOD: And, so, if you
come in on a rainy day, your phone
is going to be ringing off the
hook.

MS. HUDSON: Yeah. We have
our own unique issues.

MR. CRANE (VIA SKYPE): Yeah.
Unfortunately we're starting to go
to a lot of dirt roads, too. It's
kind of a shame. We had really
nice roads for a while and we're
going backwards unfortunately. I
guess my last question would be:
You know, obviously, I applied for
both positions. I just have a
question about the
confidentiality, you know, how we
move forward, if there a -- you know, I don't know if you're going to go to a final list or another interview. What is the process you see going forward?

MS. HUDSON: Mr. Crane, we have not planned for more interviews. After we conclude today, I anticipate that the commission will make a decision and it should be very soon.

MS. LUDGOOD: And typically the only way -- if you're concerned about references and reference checks, I think that would only be done in the event of an offer. If we anticipate an offer, that's the only way that the reference check will be done. And you will been aware so that you could talk to your people and so nobody would be hit by surprise.
MR. CRANE (VIA SKYPE): Right.
And -- and I talked -- I have
this -- like a regional engineer
for the IDOT. I talked to him
about this and a few other key
people. But obviously, you know,
I'm in a good situation in trying
to maybe better myself. I'd hate
to burn that bridge, you know, if
they --

MS. HUDSON: Right.

MR. CRANE (VIA SKYPE): --
thought I was, you know, baling
ship, you know. And --

MS. HUDSON: Well, Mr. Crane,
this is a public meeting, you
understand.

MR. CRANE (VIA SKYPE): Yes.

MS. HUDSON: There are no
members of media here. But it is
being transcribed. It's a public
meeting. So --

MR. CRANE (VIA SKYPE): That's
fine.

MS. HUDSON: Okay.

MR. CRANE (VIA SKYPE): That's fine. Yeah. So I just -- there's a lot of things to work out. And I know there's issues. So -- and I'm sure that there's a lot of high quality people applying for this position and I'm sure you'll get a great candidate, whether it's me or somebody else. So -- but I -- I -- I don't have any further questions. And I really thank you for the time and today and -- and out of your busy day. If you have any questions, feel free to contact me. If you need references, I can provide those if needed.

MS. HUDSON: Thank you. We are most grateful for your time and for your interest. And we appreciate your candor and your
responses. And, Commissioners, anything else?

MS. LUDGOOD: No.

MS. HUDSON: Okay. Well, thank you very much. And we should be back in touch very soon.

Okay.

MR. CRANE (VIA SKYPE): Okay. Thank you very much.

MR. CARL: Thank you, James.

MS. HUDSON: Have a great afternoon.

MR. CRANE (VIA SKYPE): Have a great day.

2:17 p.m.

(Recess taken.)
INTERVIEW OF KENNETH BRADLEY

MS. HUDSON: Our next applicant is Mr. Kenneth P. Bradley, and he is applying for the position of County Engineer and Public Works Director.

And we welcome you. Thank you for --

MR. BRADLEY: Thank you.

MS. HUDSON: -- joining us and thank you for your interest in these two positions.

MR. BRADLEY: Thank you.

MS. HUDSON: The way we have conducted the interviews so far, what we'll do is give you an opportunity to introduce yourself and tell us anything about you that you would like us to know.

And then after that, we will begin a round of questions. We'll
take turns.

And at the end we'll give you an opportunity if you have any questions of us.

MR. BRADLEY: Okay.

MS. HUDSON: So without further ado, we'll just turn it over to you.


MR. CARL: All right. Go Hornets.

MR. BRADLEY: And -- yeah. Exactly. And -- and I was appointed to the Military Academy from there and attended there and I graduated with a civil engineering degree there in 1998. And, like all other cadets, I was commissioned as a Second
Lieutenant in the army in -- in the engineer branch. And I was stationed at various assignments in Fort Benning, Georgia, at Fort Hood, Texas. And I deployed to Kuwait, Iraq, and Bosnia between 1998 and 2005 when I was -- when I was on active duty.

I'm still on active duty right now but I'm active Guard and Reserve in the Mississippi National Guard for another two weeks.

MR. CARL: Thank you for your service.

MR. BRADLEY: Thank you.

MS. HUDSON: Where do you do your drills?

MR. BRADLEY: Right now, I'm -- I'm -- I'm at the Vicksburg armory for the -- I'm the administrative officer for the 168th Engineer Brigade. So I'm
the full-time representative --

MS. HUDSON: Okay.

MR. BRADLEY: -- during the

week.

MS. HUDSON: Okay.

MR. BRADLEY: So I supervise

67 personnel during the week. And

we have two battalions underneath

us. And that's a total of 1600

people overall with our part-time

personnel and our full-time

personnel combined. And those are

our two engineer battalions.

We have, you know, various

specialties beneath us. We have

the HR folks. We have logistics

personnel. We -- we have some --
some specialty ordinance folks and

then a lot of engineers that do a

full spectrum of engineering,

everything from vertical, you

know, building structures to road

building to survey design and then
combat engineering were you -- I'm placing my fields, reducing structures, those type of things and doing it within the combat environment, support tanks and -- and environment. So --

MS. HUDSON: Okay, all right. Anything else?

MR. BRADLEY: Well, I would -- I would want to add that I have a master's degree from the University of Missouri, Missouri Science and Technology. And also I'm a licensed professional engineer in Missouri, Mississippi and Alabama.

MS. HUDSON: Okay. Very good.

BY MR. CARL:

Q All right. I'm Commissioner Jerry Carl. And we've got a list of stock questions here we're asking everyone. So if we hear something we want to vary off of, you'll see us jump in there.
A Sure.

Q How would you describe your leadership style? And explain how that would adapt, how this applies to your style.

A Well, with --

Q Did I say that right? How would you describe your leadership style? I'm sorry. Give an example of how this applies to this style.

A Okay. Well, there's a lot of different labels that -- that people have, the various leadership styles.

And what -- what I attempt to do is apply the appropriate leadership technique for the -- for the instance. You know, sometimes you need to be more in the autocratic mode. If you have a new employee maybe that doesn't understand exactly what -- what their role is and what they can do. You may have to get a little more -- pay more -- a little attention, give them a little bit -- you know, a little bit more direction.

You may have a more senior personnel.
You may have a more complex project where you have to, you know, give them -- give them a lot more leeway to be able to conduct their -- their job and to where they -- they can perform in that, in -- in the thing you've assigned them to do.

And the biggest thing for my leadership philosophy is to -- to make sure that I'm putting subordinates in a position to be successful. Because ultimately we've employed everyone to do a particular job. And we're looking for them to do that job. And you have to do what's necessary to put them in that position to be successful.

But sometimes folks come in and maybe not necessarily have the -- the certifications that they need and you may have to help them get -- get into that position where they can actually perform the way -- the way that you want them to perform. And then some folks are ready to do the job, you know. So --

MS. HUDSON: Okay.

MR. CARL: Thank you.
MS. HUDSON: I don't know if I've introduced you yet. This is Commissioner Merceria Ludgood.

MR. BRADLEY: Ms. Ludgood,
nice to meet you.

MS. LUDGOOD: Nice to meet you, too.

BY MS. LUDGOOD:

Q Oh, my question. I'm sorry. I was like, oh my God, a home boy. That was what I was just thinking. Welcome home.

A Yeah. I'm -- I'm hoping to be -- you know, my family and I were trying to relocate. That's a large part of why I'm interviewing for this job. I've finished my service. I'm trying to -- I'm trying to get back in the Mobile area.

I've got a two year old. And, you know, trying to give him at least the same opportunities I had when I -- when I came up. Because, I mean, I'm a product of the Mobile County public schools. And I was able to go to West Point and have a pretty successful
military career. So I want to make sure he gets the same opportunities, you know.

MS. HUDSON: Right.

BY MS. LUDGOOD:

Q Have you given some thought to the transfer from kind of your public sector in the military role to this kind of public sector role? And what do you view as challenges or opportunities? What do you see about it?

A I think it -- to me, it's kind of -- I -- I enjoy public service, obviously, if you serve in the military. I think it's just a good opportunity to be able to serve closer --

closer to home.

And I've -- you know, I've served the nation. And -- and even in the National Guard, you're still serving the nation. I served the state of Mississippi. I was there during Katrina in Bay St. Louis in -- in -- in working with various agencies. And that was a good opportunity.

That's the -- that was really the
first opportunity in my career I had to -- to be able to work with people at least, you know, fairly close to -- to -- to home. And -- and that -- that kind of opened my eyes to some things. I -- it's been -- it would be great to still continue public service and be able to do it here, you know, where I'm from.

MR. CARL: Baker has changed a little bit since you've been there, by the way.

MR. BRADLEY: Yeah, it -- it -- it has. They -- it's a lot different. I have a sister that's 13 years younger than me. And it was different then when I went to graduation with her. And it's a lot different now. So --

MR. CARL: Busting at the seams.

BY MS. HUDSON:

Q Well, Mr. Bradley, like any other positions, either of these positions that you would appointed to, it would be very important
to be able to establish a rapport not only
with employees but also with other department
heads, with outside agencies --

A Absolutely.

Q -- and particularly with commissioners
because both of these positions report
directly to the three commissioners.

So give us an idea of what your style
is in trying to establish a rapport with your
employees and your subordinates as well as
other people that you deal with --

A Sure.

Q -- and report to.

A Well, the -- the position I'm in right
now is a much -- it's -- it's a tradition
military position. I have an established
chain of command. I have subordinates. And
I'm that link between my subordinates and my
superiors.

The previous job I had, I was the
director of environment programs for
Mississippi National Guard and I had to work
with every state agency that -- the remotely
touched on -- on environmental issues on our
installations and included all the cultural --
cultural resources, national resources,
forestry.

So we had to work with a lot of
different agencies. And -- and some of them
may have only had a tangential relationship
with what we were doing. But it was important
to make sure that they were -- they were
included and -- and we could -- we could
leverage those relationships, you know.

So it was important that -- that we --
that we had a -- a good rapport with all of --
all of the various agencies. And I think that
that -- that -- that experience would be well
for this job to be able to interact with --
with -- with other agencies, the public, and
still be able to, you know, manage the -- your
subordinates to move them towards the goals
that are set by -- by -- by, in -- in this
case, the commissioners.

Q Okay.

//
BY MR. CARL:

Q  Thank you. Where do you think your
past colleagues would say about your ability
to communicate?

A  I think they would -- would say that
I -- that I have no difficulty communicating
with -- with -- with anyone, being forthright
with individuals and able to articulate fairly
complex issues and put them into a bite-size
format so that folks can understand so that --
so that the right decision can be arrived at.

And, like I was saying on that
environmental job, I was kind of a -- you
know, the general officers and the acting
general folks in the National Guard, they --
you know, they -- they don't deal with
environmental stuff on a daily basis. And it
was my job to make sure I had the expertise to
provide them with articulate informative
researched opinions to where they could make
informed decisions. So -- so I -- I -- I
think that they would -- they would say I was
able to do that on a regular basis.
BY MS. LUDGOOD:

Q So what strategies do you use for feedback, for motivating employees, particularly in a setting where there may be morale issues?

A Well, that's the best thing you can do is make yourself available and be, you know, approachable.

And sometimes you have to break down the -- those approachable barriers because folks feel that they -- you know, based on their position or past experience, that they may not be able to have a discussion with certain people in certain position.

And I'm -- I'm a Lieutenant Colonel right now. But it's very important to me that if we're on project sites and everything that I at least walk the ground and make sure I'm -- I have, you know, discussions with individual operators of equipment and -- and make sure they understand they're part of a team, and that it's absolutely critical what
they're -- what they're doing. And it may -- it may only be just a -- a minor interaction. But -- but I've seen a lot through my career that people don't take the time to actually know the people that they work with. And it doesn't -- it really doesn't take a lot of time to -- to -- to -- to get to know somebody.

And, at the same time, you don't have to be everybody's buddy. But --

Mr. Carl: Yeah.

A -- you know, to know that, you know, hey, you're important to this organization. Mr. Carl: It's easy to fall into that trap in management.

Mr. Bradley: Yeah. It's -- it's -- it's very easy to lock yourself up in the office and -- Mr. Carl: Yeah.

Mr. Bradley: -- worry about your problems.

By Ms. Hudson:

Q And I realize that the private sector
is different from the government sector as far as how you deal with employees. But coming to the private sector, it's a little different when we talk about building morale and rapport because it's not such -- it's still a chain of command. But still motivating employees is --

A Sure.

Q -- is more -- I don't know -- sometimes more involved. But what strategies --

MS. HUDSON: And I think this goes to the question you asked.

BY MS. HUDSON:

Q What do you foresee as a way -- I mean, we have a public works department, 250 or so people, engineering about 50. What things would do? Any ideas to be able to help build morale and get people working as a team?

A Well, when you have morale issue, there's -- there's a -- there's a number of things that can drive that. And -- and sometimes it's -- it's multiple problems and -- and you have to figure out what -- what
those issues are to begin with.

And I guess what I was telling Commissioner Ludgood on that first step, you have to be able to understand the -- the -- the personnel you're working for, you know, what -- what the obstacles may be for them being successful in those positions and why that -- that morale has -- has decreased.

As far as strategies, there's -- there's not a silver bullet to -- to inspire folks to perform better in their jobs or perform in their jobs in the first place.

So I -- I -- I don't know that I have a -- have a -- the -- the -- the right answer that'll -- that'll magically lift spirits across the board. But -- but I -- I just think it's -- it's extremely important to make people understand that they're valued in an organization. And there's a lot of different ways.

In the military, we do all kinds of stuff where we'll go out and -- and we'll have, you know, quarterly get-togethers, you
know --

Q Okay.

A -- where people --

Q That's kind of where I'm going with that.

A Yeah. So where people can get to know each other in a -- in a -- in a -- in a more calm environment, in a -- in an unthreatening environment.

And I know my dad worked for the Corps down here. Every year they had a picnic out at the Coast Guard base. I know me, as a child, I knew everybody that he worked with because they had a little basketball tournament and they had little games and competition stuff and everybody got to know each other in an unthreatening environment.

And it seemed -- it seemed to work for them.

For us it -- it -- it definitely works. But it's a hassle sometimes to put those things together. But they end up paying off because people -- you know, you know somebody's wife or.
MS. HUDSON: Right.

A All right. You know somebody's wife
or somebody's family.

MS. LUDGOOD: No worries.

MR. CARL: Yeah.

MS. LUDGOOD: I'm usually the
one who does that.

MR. BRADLEY: Yeah.

MS. HUDSON: I may have to
just throw it at you.

(Recess taken.)

MS. HUDSON: I talk with my
hands. I'm always knocking things
over.

MR. BRADLEY: Yeah. That's
kind of why I didn't want the
water. But --

MS. HUDSON: That's quite all
right.

MR. BRADLEY: But it got a
little bit warmer today than I
thought it was going to be.

MR. CARL: You're further
south, you know.

MR. BRADLEY: Yeah. Yeah. It does make a little bit of a difference. There is a little bit of a difference between that I-20 corridor and the I-10.

MR. CARL: Yeah. There is.

BY MR. CARL:

Q Tell me about the big changes in a work situation that you've had to manage. And how did you cope with it?

A I tell you, I -- I'm -- I'm going to give you two answers here. One -- one real quick was just a change in -- in the environment. I went to that environmental position. I actually had no active duty soldiers beneath me. They were all state employees. So that was -- that was a change in environment for me personally.

Then as far as work environment, every -- it's roughly every two years we have a different Adjunct General come in, in the Mississippi National Guard. And every single
one we've had has had completely different priorities as to what they wanted to see and how they wanted to see it and the direction that they thought the organization needed to go in.

So, it was on a pretty regular basis you had to kind of get a good feel for what -- what the new Adjunct General wanted and how -- and how he wanted to see it.

And sometimes it's took a little while to -- to try to -- try to figure out what it was. Of course, he was -- he was new to the job as well. So sometimes, you know, what he wanted initially, you know, six months later it changed again, you know. But, fortunately, the ones that we had while I was there, they were -- they were all pretty good. And they -- and they all eventually figured the job out and they figured out how to articulate to folks and -- and, you know, we were able to be a pretty successful organization.

Q So is your dad still with the Corps?
A He retired a couple of years ago. He
Q  Okay.
A  And -- and he's -- I keep telling him, you know, you -- you retired. He kind of -- for a period of about five years and said he was going to retire from the Corps. And now he -- the two years, he said, well, I'm just going to retire, retire. But he keeps on showing up for work. So at -- at -- at some point, you know, it's -- it's -- I said it's okay to just retire at some point, you know.
Q  Make a slot for --
A  But he keeps on working.
Q  Make a slot for somebody else to move in.
A  Yeah.

MS. HUDSON: He doesn't know how not to work.

MR. BRADLEY: Yeah. He really doesn't. He keeps punching a clock. And he -- I don't think he knows how to operate otherwise.

MR. CARL: Yeah.
MS. HUDSON: Commissioner

Ludgood?

BY MS. LUDGOOD:

Q I think I had one other question and that is: How do you currently develop your key employees? And I would imagine you have some who come in highly motivated and ready to go. And you know that they're going to be a star. And how do you take that person and help them develop to realize their potential? And then the flip side of that is the person who comes in who's less fully formed and who may be struggling, maybe have a little challenge, how do you work with those two to try to get the most you can out of them?

A Yeah. Of course, you have to just kind of work in an initial assessment. The first thing you look at on paper, if they actually have -- you know, sometimes you're forced in a situation where you may have to hire someone and -- and bring them along, like you were saying, like if somebody has limited experience.
And you would want to work towards getting any kind of schooling certificates that they -- or certifications that they need to perform that job to get them to a baseline. And then at -- at that point, hopefully they're not in a position in isolation. Hopefully there are other people in the organization that perform similar functions and create an environment for them to mentor or shadow personnel in the early going to where they -- they -- they could at least see what right looks like and -- and -- and help them to come along.

That's -- that's -- that's very common in the military that we -- that we have that, that we're -- we're -- folks have what we call battle buddies where you work together with a guy. And he may not be much more experienced than you. But he may have enough to bring you along a little bit further. And then someone who you know is going to be, you know, a stellar performer, you want to make sure that -- that you give them
opportunities to maybe see some things outside
the realm of what they're working in just then
because they may be somebody who needs to have
an opportunity for -- for progression in the
future.

So you may do some -- do some cross
training in cross functional areas and you may
allow them to do some things a little bit
outside of their -- outside of their comfort
zone to where they can get that experience and
prepare them in the future. Because you may
be in a situation down the road where you need
somebody to fill that -- fill that position.
And if you have someone with at least a little
bit of experience in that area, it'd be
helpful, you know.

Q Thank you.

BY MS. HUDSON:

Q What key performance measures do you
use to monitor the performance of the people
who report to you to make sure that they are
being productive and staying on track?

A Well, you -- you always have your
baseline of what -- what the expectation of
that position is and what those requirements
are.

If they're -- you know, the easiest
thing is going to be weekly, monthly, and, you
know, quarterly and annually requirements.
You're going to -- you're going to follow up
with them and sure meeting they're those.

And every engineer has done critical
path methods. And it's just -- it's just
beaten into our skulls as engineers to where
there are certain dates and certain times that
you want someone to meet if you have the
suspense out there. And it's -- sometimes
it's hard and fast. You write those down that
you want to see certain things prior to that
final product. And then other times you have
it mentally mapped out to where you want to
see.

If I'm hearing certain feedback from
him at certain points I know that they're --
that they're -- you know, on smaller tasks, I
know that they're -- they're tracking on to
Q Right. Public works, that's a little bit different animal than engineering and how would you track productivity and performance also. Any different thoughts there?

A I was just saying that -- that, you know, in the -- in the engineering world, you just have that running through your mind all the time. Where are we at exactly in -- in -- in making this happen. So you're kind of always checking to see kind of where -- where things are in -- in -- in the process. And I guess you're saying with public works you have to -- you know, it's kind of a -- a little bit longer process. Is that -- is that what you're getting at?

Q It's just different responsibilities and, you know, just different jobs, scope of work. You have a lot of people who are out working in the field that are out, the road crews. And they're cleaning ditches, you know. There's a lot of -- like in
engineering, I mean, you may have inspections
and so forth. But it's just different
responsibilities.

Since you've applied for both jobs, I
was just wondering, you know, if you would
handle them differently as far as trying to
track performance and productivity.

A I don't -- I don't have a -- a
particular method to -- to track it other than
to -- than -- than to follow up with people,
where they're at, at different points --

Q Okay.

A -- with -- with what they're tasked to
do. I have some basic -- some basic things
that I do as -- as far as -- as using the --
using the -- using the tasks on Outlook,
coming back to where I can follow up later on
or if I have a -- if I have a particular
question or I want to ping someone on a
particular detail to make sure that everything
is coming along and --

Q Do you have regular follow-up
meetings?
A: Oh -- oh, yeah. Yeah. That’s --
that’s kind of what I’m -- what I’m getting at
is you kind of plug those in where it’s
attached to -- to your task and your calendar.
And then you -- then you can ping those
individuals for those -- those particular
times.

Now -- now, folks working in the
field, you know, you can -- if you’re work on
a longer-term task, you know, you could -- you
could schedule it out. If you need go and
work on this particular stretch of road for
two weeks, you know, you -- you can schedule a
followup. Okay. Tuesday and Thursday I’m
going to ask about these particular things or
I’m going to look at these folks or one of the
subordinate supervisors to -- to follow up
on -- on a particular detail of that project.

Q: Okay.

A: You know, I -- I consider it all kind
of a -- a project, whether it is anybody is
working on it. I'm using that term kind of
generic.
BY MS. LUDGOOD:

Q So critical path is a term of art?

A Uh-huh.

Q Okay. Where, like to the lay person, it would be just be taking the project, breaking it down with timelines and that kind of thing for --

A The critical path, it -- it looks at -- there may be all of these other activities that need to take place. But there's a certain line of activities that have to happen in a certain sequence to actually produce that product at that end point.

Q Okay.

MS. HUDSON: Any other questions, Commissioners?

MR. CARL: I'm good.

MS. LUDGOOD: No. I'm good.

MS. HUDSON: Do you have any questions of us?

MR. BRADLEY: No. No, I don't think so. I appreciate y'all's time.
MS. HUDSON: Absolutely.

MR. CARL: I hope you brought your family, man. You're going to spend the weekend, right?

MR. BRADLEY: We're going to hang out for a couple of days. My wife is an attorney and she's going to have to get back to Jackson on Saturday for --

MR. CARL: Uh-oh.

MR. BRADLEY: -- some stuff that's going on. So we're going to turn back around tomorrow. But it's just the way it is sometimes.

MS. HUDSON: My daughter, until about eight months ago, was in the -- she was a JAG officer. And she drilled in Jackson. She's with the Alabama Guard now at Fort Whiting.

MR. BRADLEY: Okay. Well, that's -- I know you're proud of her.
MS. HUDSON: Oh, yeah.

MR. BRADLEY: The JAG, they got -- they got it pretty good, though.

MS. HUDSON: Yeah. I think she might even admit that.

MR. BRADLEY: Yeah. Not too bad.

MS. HUDSON: Yeah. But, anyway, we will conclude the interviews today. And I anticipate that we'll make a decision very shortly, very soon. And as soon as that happens, you'll be notified, okay?

MR. BRADLEY: Okay, all right. Well, thank y'all very much.

MS. HUDSON: Thank you. Have a great afternoon.

MR. CARL: Thank you.

2:52 p.m.

(Recess taken.)
3:08 p.m.

INTERVIEW OF JERRY STOKES

BY MS. HUDSON:

Q Good afternoon.
A Hello.

Q Mr. Stokes, can you hear us okay?
A Yeah. Can you hear me okay?

Q We can. We can.
A Good.

Q Well, thank you for joining us for --

in this expedited scheduled. It worked out

that we were able to talk you with a little

bit earlier. So we appreciate your ability to

be able to meet us earlier than scheduled.

I'm Commissioner Hudson. To my right is

Commissioner Carl. To my left is Commissioner

Merceria Ludgood.

A Hello.

Q Good afternoon. We appreciate you joining

us. And we -- we thank you for your interest

in applying for the position of county

engineer. And for the record -- And we to
Mobile County Commission Meeting Minutes 3/22/2018

have a court reporter transcribing the meeting today. It is a public meeting. Our applicant is Mr. Jerry Dudley Stokes. We he is applying for the position of Mobile County engineer.

Mr. Stokes, what we have -- what we have done with the other applicants, we're giving everyone a chance to introduce themselves and tell us about yourself and anything that you would like to for us to know. And then we will go through a series of questions. And we will take turns asking those. And then at the end of that, we'll give you an opportunity to ask us any questions that you might have about the Mobile County; okay?

A Okay.

Q So we'll just go ahead and let you get started.

A Okay. Well, I appreciate the opportunity. So I'm Jerry Stokes. And I worked for the McClain County for 14 years. And I've been the county engineer for two years, the assistant county engineer for six
years prior to that. And I started at the County in 2003 as just a regular civil engineer on staff. And I ran design projects and -- and -- and ran projects as a resident engineer and designed projects and then progressed from there.

And then I went to Bradley University, which is in Peoria, Illinois. And then after I graduated, I worked for a consulting firm called Cobb Work and Tilly (phonetic). I was the aviation division of Cobb Work and Tilly. And so we did work all around Illinois and some -- some other airports around -- around the US doing design work and consulting work for them.

I'm a real laid-back guy, energetic. I like to -- a real sports nut and outdoor, hunter, golf all of that type stuff.

BY MR. CARL:

Q Roll Tide, by the way.

A What is that?

Q Roll Tide. Alabama football. I -- I guess I will take the first question here?
MS. HUDSON: Okay.

BY MR. CARL:

Q How would you describe your leadership style, and give us an example of how -- how to apply it?

A Okay. I'm probably more of -- I would say like a participative leadership style. I like to get other -- get people's input on -- on a -- on a decision and try to -- try to take -- look at all aspects of the decision before -- before it gets made, look -- try to talk to people that have experience in, you know -- a certain issues arises.

You know, we lost a -- one of our bridge guys that -- thirty years of experience. He just retired here about a year ago. So that was kind of, you know -- I would always go to him to, you know, find an answer, you know, if we had a problem on another truck or another issue, he'd, you know -- he had done that, so I would reach out to him.

And so then I would then go to the other resident engineer and talk to -- talk to
them and see how to -- kind of coach them along. So kind of -- kind of a combination of, you know, participative but then also coaching some of -- some of the younger guys that might have just came on the staff.

BY MS. LUDGOOD:

Q So I'd like to know a little bit about your current department, your current county where -- where you're the county engineer now, your budgets, whether you are involved in the preparation of the budget, whether you are the person who monitors those budget.

A Sure. So McClain County is -- is biggest county Illinois as far as lane area goes. And we take care of around 366 miles of road and 87 bridges. And so -- And it's also broken up -- and the county is broken up into -- we're a township government, so we have thirty townships. And amongst those 30 townships, there is another 1400 miles of road.

So our annual budget for -- for McClain County is around 12 million dollars.
And that's broken out into -- into four -- four different funds. We have kind of a -- what we call a highway fund, that is a general fund that most of our operating systems come out that. Then we have a bridge fund, and then a matching fund, and a fuel tax fund.

So in the fuel tax, we get about two hundred thousand dollar. And that comes from the state. And so -- so that's basically used -- used to do all of the capital projects, capital improvement projects.

And then the bridge fund is based on a certain tax -- the tax levee at the county. And we just use that all of structural -- structural projects throughout the county.

And, so -- so I have been -- So when I was assistant, you know, I did a lot of the cost estimating and -- and kind of prepared the budget that way. And then when I became the county engineer, you know, I was in charge of the overall budget.

And so we would -- we'd go out and we would drive the roads. And we'd rate all the
roads and then determine what capital project
need to be and then start there and then --
and then go and look what or operational fees
are going to need to be and what additional
equipment that was going to be need to
purchase and that type of thing.

BY MS. HUDSON:

Q As a follow-up, just so I understand,
make sure I've got this straight, does McClain
County -- is McClain County responsible for
maintaining the roads in three of the
townships?

A Not -- not -- no, not quite. We -- we
it's more of an advisory role with the
townships. We -- so they're -- they're --
they get a township motor fuel tax. And so
that -- all that has to come through the
county engineer. So we -- we monitor their
expenditures on that.

And so let's say if like one township
may get, you know, $100,000 a year in motor
fuel tax funds, and they spent that on roads.
But we monitor how that is spent and what is
spent on. And then they -- but they're their own taxing body.

So but we also do an -- we're also an advisory role. So if they -- if they have a problem on a road, they will contact us. And we will go out and look at it and, you know, kind of give an engineering analysis on it.

We do a lot of drainage work, culvert work for them. And -- and so we do that type of stuff. We do all of the bridge inspection for -- for the townships in that regard.

So -- so we have 87 bridges on the County side, and they have like 290 the township side. So, you know, we're inspecting those every two to four years, depending on the interval. But then, you know, we also looking -- looking out for their best interest economically and making sure they're spending their motor -- motor fuel tax.

Q So you monitor, but they -- they basically generate their own funds for the road projects?

Q Because I thought 12 million dollars would not go that far for 30 townships.

A No. No. And they get kind of mad because we don't -- I -- I -- you know, I tell them that we can't spend County money on -- on the township projects unless it, you know, qualifies for certain -- certain issues.

But, yeah, they -- But we try to help them out whenever we can. Because we have -- you know, we have a lot of equipment and manpower to do it whereas some of the -- some of the Townships they just don't have -- you know, they don't have a small Cat or anything in their -- in their townships. So their's is real low. And so they just don't have a good tax base. And I think, you know, each township probably has anywhere from 30 to 50 miles of the roads. And so the amount of the money they get isn't -- doesn't go very far.

Q All right. In -- in your role, I'm sure you know how important establishing rapport is with your employees as well other department directors with -- who you were
report directly to. And I'm assuming that's your -- your County Board. Do you report directly to the County Board?

A (Nods head.)

Q Okay. Tell us a little bit about your -- your style in -- in dealing with people, in establishing rapport, in -- in building relationships with employees and so forth. What's your style?

A Some -- I'm a laid back guy. And I'm, you know able to get along with everybody at -- at all different levels. Kind of -- I kind of have a knack for reading people and, you know, their personalities and, you know, what -- what they have and how they're going to respond to certain things, not only on the employee side, but, you know, the county board members and -- and that. So we have 20 county board members --

Q 20?

A -- throughout McClain County, 20.

Q You see we have three.

A Yeah. So -- so --
Q Wow.

A -- it's like I said, we're a rural county, a lot -- a lot of agricultural, but we're Bloomington normal is a population of right at 150,000 probably, maybe, maybe a little bit less.

And so, you know, kind of an urban, rural area. And so, yeah, 20 county board members, so some of them are from the -- from the area, and some of them from the rural area.

And then they're made up of -- So our transportation committee is made up of seven members of -- of the 20. So that's who I report to.

Q Okay.

A And so that's how all the -- all the funding, the budget and everything gets presented -- presented to the seven members.

Q Okay.

A And then -- then that -- then that committee reports to the county board. And then if there's a critical issue or something
needs to be addressed, then I would have to
maybe present it to the board in that case.

BY MS. LUDGOOD:

Q So you really only have to deal with
seven, not 20, for the most part?

A For the most part, yeah. Yeah.

They're all -- they're kind of all together.
And they -- you know, some of them are on the
committee, on -- on -- on transportation
committee for a couple of years. And they
might get moved to another committee.

So they know the operation. So, you
know, if there's a constituent that, you know,
reach out and have an issue, they'll contact
certain county board member who will then
contact me at highway department. And then,

you know, I'll look -- look into their

concerns.

But as far as establishing a rapport,
you know, I think it's -- there's just a lot,

you know, different personalities and being
able to -- to -- to mix that, you know, I

think I do a real good job of. Our -- at the
highway department, we have an engineering
staff of about 10 people and then we have a
maintenance crew of around 18 to 20.

And so when I first start at the
County, I was -- we were doing projects with
our own maintenance crew staff. And so I was
kind of -- kind of basically leading the
charge and -- and directing them on what to do
on a daily basis.

And so then I started moving up to
assistant county engineer. So I still had
that same -- same rapport with -- with the --
the individuals that work here. And I think
that helped kind the smooth the transition in
with the county engineer.

And -- and, you know, I do have a
maintenance foreman that, you know, I talk to
every day, you know on a daily. We talk
things through, what -- what he's got planned
and what -- what I think needs to be done as
far as whatever, you know, the kind of project
that we're going to be starting.

Q Okay. Very good. Thank you.
BY MR. CARL:

Q How do you -- how do you enlist the support from your staff to establish a common approach to solving a problem?

A We -- we kind look at all aspects and, you know, look at what the problem is and how much -- you know, we ran into a problem like out in the field, what -- what -- you know, what -- what it's going to cost to correct it or what, you know -- what's the best measures for, you know -- for the taxpayer to spend that money, but also for the -- you know, for the -- for the overall job itself.

For example, if -- if we're on a job, we run into a soft spot in -- in there, you know, how -- what's the best route to fix it, the best course of action. We can -- we can wait a few days and take care, you know, try to fix it up, or dig it all out and replace it.

So we kind of look at -- you know, look at the impact of -- of the overall job.

And we may look and see if we're going to save
1. money somewhere else, or if we don't do
2. anything, how that is going to affect -- how
3. that's going to be affected down the line.
4. Q Thank you.
5. BY MS. LUDGOOD:
6. Q So I -- I have a -- I guess kind of a
7. two-part question, maybe three parts. I'm not
8. sure. But in -- is -- It's really about
9. growing employees. And I'm curious to know
10. what strategies you use in trying to develop
11. employees, particularly an employee who is
12. maybe -- maybe marginal or maybe not come in
13. fully formed for a position, how to you grow
14. that employee.
15. You see the potential, but they aren't
16. quite there. What strategies do you use to
17. try to grow that employee. And then the
18. second part of the question is how do you --
19. what strategies do you use to build morale
20. among your -- among your employees?
21. We have -- we're coming off of what
22. we've been told are some morale issue
23. within -- you know, within this particular
function of this county. And in this role, you would be the leader, kind of setting the vision for how to improve that. So I'm just curious how -- I'd like to know what strategy would you use for that?

A So I think at first I would probably take a laid back approach with them, just kind of -- I would, know you -- I don't know. Do you guys kind of like -- does -- does -- would the county engineer be doing like formal reviews of all of the employees, as -- you know, like yearly reviews?

Because that's what -- like typically right now I do -- do reviews of -- of engineering staff. And so, you know, I -- I give them -- you know, I kind of give them like three or four things they're doing good, but I also kind of give them three or four things to work on and improve on. That way, you know, they kind of know where I'm coming from and -- and what -- what I'd like to see them -- them improve on. And hopefully they can grow into -- grow into becoming a better
engineer project manager, but also, you know, improving -- improving their skills to -- to -- to -- to make them a better -- a better employee.

As far as building morale, you know, that's -- that could, you know, be tough. It's more of a -- I think it's just earning their respect and knowing that, you know, they can make a mistake, that -- that, you know, you -- you kind of have their back. But, you know, tell them that they need to improve on -- improve on, you know, whatever they did. But then you can also kind of -- you know, being able to joke with them, you know, talk about sports, talk -- you know, just kind of talk about things other than work. And that kind of helps to deliver -- you know, develop a rapport and, you know, help build the morale so they can trust you. And if you can build that trust, then they're liable to try to be more productive in their -- in their work.

Q  Thank you.

//
BY MS. HUDSON:

Q   What -- what type of performance measures do you have in place to make sure that you are you're monitoring and -- and measuring performance and productivity of your employees? Does this involve meetings? Does this involve -- I mean, how often do you get involved in -- in the monitoring of the productivity?

A   So it kind of -- you know, in the winter -- so up here Illinois, we're probably -- we're kind of limited to about eight months of construction. So we don't necessarily do construction all year round.

         So a lot of times in -- in the winter, we working on doing the design work for -- for the next year to start construction. And so -- so we could have -- we probably do, you know, biweekly staff meetings every -- every -- with staff to kind of see where they're at on projects, you know, what they have coming up.

         It's a little harder to do during the
summer, because everybody's out usually
building something, a bridge project, a road
project. So it's kind of hard to get all
the -- get the whole staff together.

But in the wintertime, we'll have a
couple guys working on bridges, a couple guys
working on roads. And so I wouldn't say
necessarily -- you know, we don't really have
performance measures. We kind of have
deadlines of when the projects are going out
to bid.

And so we just make sure that on those
weekly meetings, where things are at. And a
lot of it depends on the type of funding.
Because sometime they're federal funds. We
might be waiting on a consultant to -- to
finish their bridge plans, where we might be
waiting on a right-of-way issue, or it just
kind of depends on -- on a certain project.

But, you know, a lot of the time,
what -- what really gets us is if -- So the --
the 30 Townships -- you know, Bloomington is
like centrally located in McClain County. But
the surrounding Townships around the -- around the area, and so they have a little more tax base, and so they have a lot more money to do things with.

And so they'll want to resurface a road. So then they'll come in and want -- want us to that for them, you know, do the engineering for them. Well, those -- those projects seem to kind of, you know, fall by the wayside, because we're concentrating on the County projects. So you've got to -- got to try to keep those -- you know, those going and -- and guys working on those. We're moving those in the right direction.

So I wouldn't say it's necessarily performance measures, but it -- it -- it's kind of -- you know, we kind of have a list of things. And when we -- since we only have, you know, nine people on the staff, we kind of know -- we try and space out the projects so they can get all done in -- in one year.

Q That makes sense. And as a follow-up, who -- who handling your grant writing? Do
you -- do you handle grants?

A Usually me or the assistant county engineer. We don't -- We apply for some types of grants through -- through the highway department. Like we have what they call a tarpen (phonetic) grant from semi-truck traffic, or there might be like a high-tech grant, which is an enhancement grant for bike trails. So we do -- we do all that at the staff level and then -- and then submit those types of applications through the -- through IDOT.

Q Okay.

BY MR. CARL:

Q Tell us about -- One of the biggest changes in a work situation that you have had and how you've coped with it.

A Um --

BY MS. HUDSON:

Q Good change or bad.

A Meaning -- What's that?

Q I said good change or bad change.

A Person -- Like personnel level or just
actual like constriction project level or --

BY MR. CARL:

Q Any -- anything that justifies as big change.

A Okay.

BY MS. HUDSON:

Q Responsibilities, whatever.

A Just --

BY MS. LUDGOOD:

Q Like going from resident engineer to being the boss.

BY MS. HUDSON:

Q Yeah.

A Sure. Yeah. Okay. That's where I was going to go. So the -- the previous county engineer was -- before I became county engineer was there for about six years. And we were close to the same age. And then he took -- he ended up taking a job with -- still with McClain County, but he went to the county administration.

So -- so he left. And then so basically I was named interim county engineer
and then became the county engineer. So it was -- as county -- as assistant county engineer, I was involved -- you know, he kept me involved in a lot -- a lot of the information.

But when it was -- it was quite a change with all of the decisionmaking was -- was becoming on your shoulders and that. And I have handled it -- handled it well. You know, kind of sometimes I'd have a take a step back and just kind of look at the whole situation. But, you know, I think it's really -- really -- really helped me along to -- you know, to help me become a better engineer and a better administrator.

BY MR. CARL:

Q Thank you.

BY MS. LUDGOOD:

Q My -- my final question: How do you provide feedback to your employees, and how to you currently recognize their achievements?

A So -- we do -- when we do the yearly reviews, and I -- you know, so if, you know,
they've done a good job throughout the year
and they've improved on -- on the -- on the
things that I wanted them to work on the year
before, you know, I -- I make sure I tell them
that.

You know, it's hard for it being a
government agency to really do a lot more. I
mean, I try to take them out to lunch and --
and -- and make them -- encourage them that
they did a good job and -- and -- and, you
know, try to at least, you know, recognize --
like we had a -- we just hired a -- a project
manager here last spring. And he just out of
the school. And I think he was having --
having some issues with his confidence. He
just want sure of himself out on the job with
contractor and that. And he actually posted
some stuff on Facebook. And it -- it got back
to me. And so, you know, I sat him down and
just kind of reassured him that I had the
confidence in him to do the job that I knew --
that I knew that he could do it. And he
needed to develop his confidence, that we were
here to support him however we could. But, you know, putting it on Facebook doesn't help overall view of county or, you know, things like that.

So I addressed one thing, but just to reassure him that, you know, we're -- we're here to help him however we can and, you know, try to grow his confidence.

And I think -- it seems like this winter he -- he's seems to be more comfortable and getting -- getting in the swing of things with -- with being here at the highway department.

BY MS. HUDSON:

Q I think you kind of answered the question I was going to ask about how you would handle conflicts with employees. So I think you covered that. So I think that -- I think I've -- I'm satisfied.

MS. HUDSON: Do you have any questions of us?

MR. STOKES: I just have a couple. So how -- how long was
the previous county engineer there?

MS. HUDSON: 47 years.

MR. STOKES: Wow.

MS. HUDSON: And it was the --

the positions were combined,

public works director and county engineer. And he oversaw all of that operation.

You have to -- I mean, he --

he grew into it over those 47 years. He just didn't assume that. It just sort grew and evolved.

MR. STOKES: Okay.

MS. HUDSON: But, you know, this size county and the responsibility -- the reorganization that we did actually separated those positions. They work very closely together, but they actually are separate and apart. And both will
MR. STOKES: Okay. And then so I was kind of curious about --
I notice in the application and online about the -- the
Pay-As-You-Go program. So that --
so is that like a referendum that was done through -- through county?

MS. LUDGOOD: It was authorized by state legislature.
And it allow us every two or four years to pick a set of roads. And they go on ballot. And the public votes to tax themselves a certain millage to fund those roads that are in that program.

And we used to do if -- let's see. For a long time, it was just every four years. Now we've started pretty much doing it every two years. Those are typically resurfacing projects.
You're doing what we call a grade, drain, base, pave, you know, bringing one from a dirt road to a paved, it typically takes a lot longer it get that done, longer than two years.

But, yeah, but it is a program where the citizens vote to tax themselves -- assess themselves, not tax, assess themselves that millage to pay for our programs.

MS. HUDSON: It's six and a half mills. And -- and it be in existence, the particular program for Mobile County -- the actual -- the revenue has been -- was first passed, I think, in 1924 or something. But it was folded into the Pay-As-You-Go program in around 1977; is that correct?

So it's been in existence that long. And the citizens continue to vote for it, because they have
so much confidence in it. It is the envy of all the other counties in the State of Alabama. We are the only County. With that program. It has allowed us to be very proactive with road building and resurfacing. And, so, we're real proud of that program.

MR. STOKES: Sure. I read that and I was like that is -- that's excellent.

MS. LUDGOOD: A good part of the money is spent inside our municipalities. So we work with them. They identify their priority streets.

And it -- it's not a set amount. It just kind of a floating amount, depending on the size -- the size of program.

But all of them have streets, are able to participate. So that -- that helps us supplement
<table>
<thead>
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<th></th>
<th>their budget. Because they are like your townships. They don't have enough money to do what they need to do. So the Pay-As-You-Go is as critical for them as it is for us.</th>
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<td>7</td>
<td>MS. HUDSON: But they contribute to it with that six and a half mills. Everybody throughout the county with an ad valorem tax contributes to that. So that's why --</td>
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<td>MR. STOKES: Okay. Sure.</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>MS. HUDSON: You know, that's -- that's why we try to -- to distribute out, you know.</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>MR. STOKES: Sure.</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>MS. HUDSON: As well as the unincorporated areas. So, anyway, any other questions?</td>
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<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>MR. STOKES: No, I don't believe so. I appreciate the opportunity.</td>
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</table>
MR. HUDSON: Well, certainly.

We -- This concludes -- today concludes our interviews. And so we will establish a plan on how we will go forward with a selection. And then we anticipate having that done very, very quickly.

MR. STOKES: Okay.

MS. HUDSON: And we will back in touch with you to let you know.

MR. STOKES: Okay.

MS. HUDSON: Okay? Thank you.

MR. STOKES: Thank you. And I appreciate it.

MR. CARL: Thank you, Jerry.

MS. HUDSON: Have a good afternoon.

MR. STOKES: All right.

MS. HUDSON: Bye-bye. All right.

(Skype interview with James Crane concluded.)

3:37 p.m.
MS. HUDSON: I did want to --

Before we adjourn, and -- and I have a suggestion going forward how we would handle this. And you let me know, you know, if you -- if you agree or disagree or what -- if you think -- have another idea.

But in our -- on our -- during our meeting Monday, if -- if you know at that particular time who -- And these are positions that you would have as your number 1 choice, we can each state our number 1 choice. And, I mean, if. If one of us -- if two of us have as the same choice, one has as a second choice, I mean, if we want to discuss, you know, and -- and see if we can reach a consensus. But I think, you know, it -- like everything else we do, it comes down to a majority.
MR. CARL: Oh, yeah. That --
that goes without saying.

MS. HUDSON: But, the first
thing -- I mean, if -- if there's
discussion -- because I tell you
what, we -- we have some great
talent here. And -- and there are
several people that interviewed
for -- for both of these positions
that I think would you do a great
job in working for us. But, you
know, unfortunately, we can only
select one.

MR. CARL: Does our -- does
our vote necessarily have to be
public?

MS. HUDSON: Well, I've
asked -- I've asked about that.
And I talked to Don about it. Do
you want --

MS. JONES: I mean, I think a
vote does, or does it --

MS. LUDGOOD: I -- I think the
vote does -- we have question
about -- because the character and
good name?

MS. HUDSON: I mean, do you
think it -- it rises to the level?
Because when I asked Jay, he
didn't seem -- I mean, we can
broach that again with him.

MS. LUDGOOD: I'd just like to
know that. Because if we are
going -- saying one person is --

MR. CARL: Can we not on paper
maybe narrow it down to two each?

MS. HUDSON: Well, I had asked
about that. And I don't know if
that constitutes --

MR. CARL: I mean, I want to
go back --

MS. HUDSON: -- meeting, you
know.

MR. CARL: For my own benefit,
I'm going to go back. And I know
the ones that I'm going to discard
for whatever reason. And then
it's going to be matter of one or
two in each category. Some -- one
is actually going to be three.
But if I've got to narrow that
down to two, you know, I think
maybe putting in writing and
comparing it would -- would help
all of us.

MS. HUDSON: Well, I'm
agreeable to whatever is legally
allowable, you know, as far as
that goes. I -- I think, you
know, our attorney needs to --

MR. CARL: He can --

MS. HUDSON: We need some
legal -- we need an umbrella, some
legal guidance here. And I think
hopefully maybe tomorrow we can
obtain that.

MR. CARL: He's got a wedding.

MS. HUDSON: Well, not all
day. He's going to be free
sometime or other. We get in touch with him. But we -- we need to know if it's -- so -- so if it's allowable to narrow that selection down with like a top two in each -- for each position and -- and -- and --

MR. CARL: We can peek that back through Donna and see how close we are.

MS. LUDGOOD: Could -- could we set our selection date at April 9? And than that would give us enough time to figure out what our options are in terms of --

MS. HUDSON: Is that the next --


MS. HUDSON: That's our next Monday meeting after --

MS. LUDGOOD: No.

MS. HUDSON: -- after Monday?
MS. LUDGOOD: Uh-huh.

MS. JONES: If you wanted to do it in the -- If you wanted to do it sooner, you could do it in conference before. So whenever the next meeting is after that, y'all could make your decision if you're ready.

MS. HUDSON: I was -- you know, I was thinking if -- if -- if we had to state publicly who we were supporting, that, you know the sooner as opposed to later --

MR. CARL: I don't see how that -- that would be an issue.

MS. JONES: I mean, I think that you -- the candidate --

MR. CARL: I mean, if we -- if we if two of us agree in whatever form, obviously through -- through our staff, we know it's going to be that person -- or three agree, I mean, it's that person. We just
make that announcement. I think if we get up and we start debating who and what publicly, we're going to hurt some feelings.

MS. HUDSON: I -- I --

that's --

MR. CARL: And that's what I'm more worried about.

MS. HUDSON: And I don't know that we have. We could --

MR. CARL: It's at least --

MS. HUDSON: We don't have to state our --

MR. CARL: -- four of these people --

MS. HUDSON: -- top two for the position. We just state our top one. And -- and if we come up with three different people, obviously, we're going to have to -- we may even have to wait until April, if that is the case.

MS. JONES: Well, I mean, you
could, if you --

MR. CARL: We could poll that before.

MS. JONES: -- wanted to.
Submit it to HR. Each of your submit your top candidates. And then if there are two that are the same, I could tell you all.

MS. HUDSON: You could come and -- and -- and sit with us and let us know if we -- we have a majority or a consensus, either one. But -- but it's -- I mean, I just didn't want that take away the option of any kind of a discussion if -- if there was one that was different than the other two, if -- if -- if you wanted an opportunity to discuss. That's why I'm bringing it up.

MR. CARL: I really don't want to debate people in -- in.

MS. HUDSON: Okay.
MR. CARL: We've got to work with four of them.

MS. HUDSON: I don't disagree with you.

MR. CARL: You know, at least two of them are going to get their feelings hurt.

MS. HUDSON: Right. I don't disagree with you.

MR. CARL: I mean --

MS. HUDSON: I just want to make sure that we're kind of all on the same page. You know, I think can --

MS. LUDGOOD: Because we have five internal candidate.

MS. HUDSON: But, then again, you know, we need to make sure we don't step over the line as far as open meeting goes.

MR. CARL: Oh, yeah. I mean, we're not got to --

MS. JONES: We just have to
get legal to give us some
guidance.

MR. CARL: Three of us get
together and do it.

MS. HUDSON: So if that's --
if that's acceptable, if -- and
how much -- I don't know how much
time you need. If you want submit
it, your top -- submit your top
candidates for each of the -- for
each of the city position to
Donna.

MR. CARL: I'm leaving town.
You'll have mine before five.

MS. HUDSON: Today?

MR. CARL: Yes.

MS. HUDSON: Okay. All right.
You'll have mine, too.

MR. CARL: It'll take it. It
takes a week --

MS. HUDSON: And it's fine if
you need more time. Don't --
don't make us feel --
MS. LUDGOOD: Are you saying top one or two?

MS. HUDSON: Top one?

MS. LUDGOOD: All right. Okay.

MS. JONES: Then we I get those, then I can let y'all know who the top who the top --

MS. HUDSON: I mean --

MS. JONES: If there were two -- I can just -- yeah, I could also you know who the -- if there was one that got two votes.

MS. HUDSON: Sure.

MS. JONES: Or all three votes or how --

MS. HUDSON: Yeah.

MR. CARL: Or three -- you got three votes for three different people.

MS. JONES: Three different ones.

MS. HUDSON: If we got three
different ones, then we've got to
go back to drawing board.

MS. JONES: Yeah. I may mean
we have to have another meeting to
discuss it.

MS. LUDGOOD: For me if there
were two and it was -- my one was
the outlier, I will make it
unanimous.

MR. CARL: I think that's an
excellent idea, the same way y'all
did on the RESTORE Council. Even
though I know it probably didn't
feel that way, it still wound up a
that way.

MS. HUDSON: I think that's
good. So we'll give that to you.
You check back with us. Do you --
do you have any idea how long you
would need?

MS. LUDGOOD: I can know -- I
mean, what's today?

MS. HUDSON: Today is --
MR. CARL: Friday -- Thursday, Thursday.

MS. LUDGOOD: Tomorrow. I will give it to you tomorrow.

MS. HUDSON: So potentially we could vote on it on Monday, if we -- I mean, there's no point in holding it over if we can reach a decision. And they are ready.

They want --

MR. CARL: I'm ready to get this -- put this to bed.

MS. HUDSON: So get back with us tomorrow when you get --

MS. JONES: I'll -- I'll be in a little bit late in the morning, but I should hopefully be in by 10:30.

MS. HUDSON: Okay. And so Monday we can -- we can have it on the agenda. And in the meantime, what is process for letting the other -- letting the -- Before it
goes on the agenda -- I'm just --
what would be the appropriate
thing to do in terms of notifying
people before it goes public like
that?

MS. JONES: Well, the way I do
other candidates -- Of course,
they're not usually public that
everybody knows, but we would
notify the one that we selected
that they are the -- but you are
going to do in it in a meeting --
and then we would send letters out
to those who didn't. And they
wouldn't know until after the
fact.

MS. HUDSON: Well, then if you
could be ready with notifications
to go out immediately, whether it
was e-mail or whatever, so that
they are not hearing it
secondhand, because we do have
four people -- five people --
MS. JONES: Well, if they come to the meeting, they are going to -- to know.

MS. HUDSON: Well, in case they aren't, I mean, just for protocol's sake.

MS. JONES: I will be ready. We will send it out right after the meeting.

MS. HUDSON: Okay.

MS. JONES: Make sure that we're ready to do that.

MS. HUDSON: And like I said, I -- I -- I think that the -- the qualifications of really everybody, you know, it was impressive. And -- and I think we had some really good candidates. We did. We had good candidates.

MR. CARL: I'm thinking the snail stalker.

MS. HUDSON: With that said, do we have -- is there anything
else before we adjourn? Any
motion to adjourn?

MS. LUDGOOD: So moved.
MR. CARL: Second.
MS. HUDSON: We stand
adjourned. Thank you all.

3:47 p.m.

PROCEEDINGS CONCLUDED
CERTIFICATE

STATE OF ALABAMA
COUNTY OF CONECUH

I hereby certify that the above and
foregoing transcript of proceedings was
taken down by me in machine shorthand, and
the questions and answers thereto were
transcribed by means of computer-aided
transcription, and that the foregoing
represents a true and correct transcript
of the proceedings given by said witness
upon said hearing.

I further certify that I am neither
of counsel nor of kin to the parties to
the action, nor am I in anywise interested
in the result of said cause.

I further certify that I am duly
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MS. HUDSON: This meeting is now called to order. And the purpose of today's meeting is to continue with the interviews that we've been conducting for the County Engineer and Public Works Director and Chief Engineer of the Division of Public Roads.

And today we have three candidates.

(Skype call ringing.)

MS. HUDSON: Hello.

MR. CRANE (VIA SKYPE): Hello. How are you doing?

MS. HUDSON: Doing very well. Thank you. For the record, our first interview today is Mr. James Crane. And he is interviewing for the position of County Engineer and Public Works Director.

Mr. Crane, good afternoon.

MR. CRANE (VIA SKYPE): How are you doing today?

MS. HUDSON: We're doing great. Thank you. I am Commissioner Hudson. To my right is Commissioner Jerry Carl. To my left is Commissioner Merceria Ludgood.

We appreciate you joining us via Skype this afternoon. We thank you for your interest in these positions.

And the way we will conduct this interview is to begin with, we will ask you to introduce yourself and give us any information that you would like for us to know about you and then we will go through a series.

We'll take turns asking you some questions and give you an
opportunity to respond. At the end of the interview, if you have any questions of us, we will save time for that as well.

MR. CRANE (VIA SKYPE): Okay.

MS. HUDSON: Okay. So we will go ahead and move forward and just allow you a chance to introduce yourself.

MR. CRANE (VIA SKYPE): Well, I appreciate the opportunity to interview with you folks. I'm excited about the opportunity.

The -- my -- my personal life, 1 -- 1 was born and raised in the area. I went off to a small high school not too far from a little town. I went to a university and studied civil engineering. I went to the University of Illinois and graduated with a Bachelor of Science in civil engineering in 1996.

From there, I -- to kind of round out my professional career to go Illinois Department of -- or Indiana Department of Transportation.

My full first-time job prior to that, I was a -- spent three months at the -- at a work study co-op program with the Illinois Department of Transportation, Illinois.

So from Indiana Department of Transportation, I worked up in the Chicago Lake area in Gary and Hammond up in the northwest region of Indiana, which is heavy industrial, lots of traffic. At the time, Indiana was doing a lot of rebuild projects. I spent three years there. Decided that -- I was in the Illinois Army National Guard and I was gaining rank and I was getting promoted to Master Sergeant. So I thought it would be good to get back towards central Illinois because I was coming down every weekend for drill and I had a specialty at work, so I decided to come back in the -- and worked at a couple of different firms in central Illinois. The first one being Sader for about ten months. And then I went and worked for a firm for three years, Champagne Daily Associates, which has been bought out a couple of times since then.

And from there the -- the old home town county engineering job came open. So I put my hat in the ring a little over 15 years ago and was selected as the county engineer for Douglas County and

I've been here ever since. Privately, personally: I'm married for 18 years. I have two sons. One is a senior getting ready to graduate. I've got another son who's a sophomore. My -- my son is a senior right now. He's, you know, doing the old college selection process, trying to figure out where he wants to go. He has an appointment to West Point if he chooses to take it.

MR. CARL: Nice.

MR. CRANE (VIA SKYPE): And probably for a couple of weeks if he decides to go off to New York for four years. So it's a pretty exciting time in the Crane household.

MS. HUDSON: Well, excellent. Very good. Okay. I think Commissioner Carl will start us

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BY MR. CARL:

Q Thank you for your service and congratulations on your son talking about West Point. That's big.

A Yeah. It's -- it's -- it's pretty humbling. It's -- he's worked his rear end off for it, so it's -- it's all his decision to go where he wants to go. Thank you very much.

Q All right. Fantastic. We've got a list of just stock questions that we were provided. If you see us looking and reading straight off of it. We try to ask everyone these same questions although we can vary off if we hear something that we want to explore a little deeper. We can ask questions off it. But let me start on some leadership questions. How would you describe your leadership style? And give us an example of how that style applies?

A So my leadership style is kind of a hybrid of, you know, all the successes and failures over my career; multiple facets. With my military experience in -- in leadership in those roles is different from civilian roles obviously. But there's a lot of things that are pretty intertwinable. But I don't really demand respect; I kind of try to earn it. I will never ask any employees or subordinates to do something that I wasn't willing to do. I -- I, you know, really try to make a collaborative effort and -- and build teams. Anything I'm in, whether it's coaching basketball, football or being a county engineer or a consulting engineer or, you know -- you know, a military member in the for that matter. So a leader is only as strong as its supporting staff. And the better trained and equipped they are, the better off you are and as a team in general. I try to be a subject matter expert in everything I do. And if I don't know an answer, I will try to find an answer that I can convey that to who I'm working with.

BY MS. HUDSON:

Q Mr. Crane, as a follow-up question to that: How many employees do you currently supervise in your department?

A So -- so right now I supervise -- I have basically three branches, you know, in Illinois. I don't know if you watch the news but it's not real good at the moment. So we actually contract a little bit. But currently I have one technician as my senior tech. I've got two IT folks and an administrative assistant. I do have a couple of contractual employees that we utilize for some of our federal bookkeeping to help us with the burden and as well as some, you know, construction inspection, some survey work use, primary consultants on our various, various contracts to help with some of those functions.

We're in the process in the next year or two, and hopefully sooner, we've got some pretty large projects coming up to where we're going to have to expand again and get some head count put in place. And then -- so we -- we -- we kind of...
self -- in the meantime in Illinois and in the country in general, but more so in Illinois, just try to get through the hump and still to great things. But then, you know, we're coming to a time where we have to -- we're going to have to staff up -- staff up and make sure we can meet our needs.

Q Okay.

BY MR. CARL:

Q And what's the population of that county?

A We're just shy of 20,000.

Q Okay.

A And -- and one of the unique things we do have -- I'm kind of back to the staffing. We do -- we're one of four counties in the state of Illinois -- pretty much every county is under county and township jurisdiction, so everything is pretty well centralized. We're -- our state and federal funding is funded through IDOT and -- and the Illinois Department of Transportation, from that direction. But a lot of our roads, township roads, are maintained by Township Highway elected highway commissioners.

So we have the agreement in place where we actually contract our maintenance. Our county highway system is actually, you know, field work that we -- you know, patching potholes, mowing, culvert replacement, things like that with them.

So, you know, I have direct, you know, four or five employees from time to time. I've got nine highway commissioners that are under contract with my maintenance department.

The county decided about the first year I was here -- they were in the process of doing it -- to eliminate the maintenance department at the highway level. It was very ineffective unfortunately. It could have been fixed but was literally too far down the path. So we went ahead and made the transition and we moved all of maintenance to -- to the townships.

Q Okay. Thank you.

MS. HUDSON: Commissioner for the federal standard.

So, you know, we -- we always, you know, try to make sure everybody is current in their training.

I -- I employ -- I was afforded the opportunity of being -- afforded the opportunity to be an intern and really get the jump on my career working at the co-op for the state of Illinois.

I always try to employ one or two college engineering students every year to get them some field experience in practical mileage and application, get them some design project under my guidance.

And then I -- and those ones that are successful and capable that look like they'll become great engineers at some point, we bring them back year after year until they graduate.

And the ones that don't, you know, maybe it's not going to work out. We always -- it probably means working with them.
As far as handling an employee who's maybe not performing, not -- not a rising star, or maybe abusing the system, I had one instance when I had an employee that I actually went to high school with that was kind of abusing the system and -- and -- and built the case against him. A great guy and still -- somehow still friends through it all. But we ended up having to release him because it just -- you know, gave him the opportunity to grow, taught him how to survey, became one of my main survey techs. But then he just kind of got lazy and started, you know -- so, you know, a tough decision, but it had to get -- had to make it happen. So, you know, you try to remediate as much as you can. But -- but sometimes, you know, it's hard in government situations. But sometimes you've got to cut the cord and let people go. And sometimes that process -- in this case, we were able to bend the -- the unemployment case and -- and all the money that the county had to pay on that behalf was reimbursed back. So -- Q All right. Thank you. A But always try to develop. Always try to develop first and give every opportunity, make a decision, you know, that they -- it's not going to work. Q Okay. BY MS. HUDSON: Q Mr. Crane, I'm sure you will agree that building a rapport with others is an important component, and especially in a job as either a county engineer or a public works director. What we have here in Mobile County, a much larger department. Engineering is approximately 50 people; public works, about 250. And for someone to come in, it would be important to establish rapport, not only with employees but with other department heads, with commissioners. What is your style? How would you go about doing that for each of these entities?

A I think it's pretty simple. It's just being -- being a human being to begin with. You know, unfortunately some people, when they get into positions of power, as you -- as you -- I'm sure you've all seen in different aspects of life, you know, sometimes power goes in the wrong way and people take it the wrong way. It -- what it really comes down to, you know, if -- if I was selected for this position and was -- and was hired, I mean, I will answer to you folks. So my job, you know, just like in Douglas County, I have seven county board members. My job is to make them look good. And for -- for me to make them look good is that I have to make sure my people around me and the surrounding people look good. And, you know, it -- if a citizen has an issue with something and I don't address it, there are people they're going to call on here. And then that doesn't make them look good.

So it's -- it's very important to build up relationships within the department, and especially the community because that's who we're serving is the public and it's their tax dollars. We've got to be good stewards of their money and we have to do what's right for them to get them, you know, to work, school, to the beach, to wherever in a safe manner.

But then, you know, you also have to -- here in Douglas County, unfortunately, we -- we're right at the tail end of the -- the election season for the primary elections. And we had some -- some ugly races against people from state departments trying to get that sheriff's job and such. But we -- we would -- we would always meet, you know, every month or so, sometimes more as department -- as department heads to discuss -- or each department to -- what our needs are, how we can share.

For example, the county IT stuff is under my umbrella. And -- and is it the best...
fit? Probably not. But I'm -- I'm the only department that has the budget that can support them. So, you know, they -- they work in the majority of other offices. You know, they spend more time in other offices doing it work than they do working for me.

But it's -- it's a good relationship to be able to know what each department's needs are, you know, what the common equipment, common software, common platforms. And then -- and then outside stakeholders is -- is definitely, you know, a key. We're -- we're unique in Douglas County. The county has 20,000 people. In -- in the south part of -- the southwest part of the county, we have a very large Amish community. And when you're talking Amish community and transportation networks where a large part of the population, large amount of, you know, buggy traffic, horses, horse and buggy, slow-moving vehicles and the fast-moving traffic stream with, you know, the modern farming, huge equipment like you see down there, too.

But it's -- it's a hazard at times. So, you know, I have a pretty good working relationship with the Amish community. But it took me sitting down in the front yard for a major road improvement project in their community, drinking iced tea and lemonade with the Amish bishops and make sure that they're okay with what we were going to do.

So it really boiled down to being a good decent human being and honest and -- and, you know, the goal is, you know, treat others as you want to be treated. So --

Q Okay. A But, yeah, that -- I'm sure I can speak for -- I just try to do what you would want done to you. Make sure that everybody has a say. Sometimes the answer is no. And a lot of times the answer is no. And the unfortunate job is for the county engineer and I'm sure the public works director, you know. Like my umbrella is permitting, oversight, flood plane, you know, stuff and things like that. Well, I have to say no a lot. I had to say no to a guy again today. And, you know, it's just the way it is. And, so -- but you explain why it's no and what you can do to rectify it after the variance or what have you, what the law is and what the ordinances say and let them make that decision on how they want to proceed. So --

Q Okay. Thank you.

BY MR. CARL:

Q Have you ever been in a situation where you were less successful as a leader than you wanted to be of course? And what did you learn from that experience?

A Oh, I mean, absolutely. Many times. I -- you know, I think -- I think one of the strong traits of a -- of a leader is to understand that you're not perfect and that you're going to make mistakes and that you understand that, you know, you have to learn from those mistakes.

You know, there's a saying, you know, the definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and hoping for a different result. So, you know, if you keep doing the same thing, making the same mistake, you're not going to, you know, correct yourself. You can't expect somebody else to, you know, correct the problem for you.

So, I -- I make mistakes every day, and I learn something every day. So, you know, sometimes you make the wrong decision. I -- I'm a school board member. And sometimes we have to make tough decisions that you second guess yourself. But you have to stand by them. You know, you may get calls or you get political heat and public heat because you fired that favorite coach, you know. But I know why he was fired. Nobody else will ever know, but you know. You just have to stand by that and -- and then be -- with some of those things, though, you have to be completely transparent, especially in the government setting, to make sure that, you know, there's no hidden agenda. Everything is done in the
open. But your decisions are public and you have a good standing of why you made the decision.

Now, if it wasn't the right decision, then you -- you know, you fix it and go to the next one. And hopefully you won't repeat it.

Q: Thank you.

BY MS. LUDGOOD:

Q: Either in your current role as a county engineer or even in your role as part of the Guard, what strategies do you use to try to build morale among those you supervise?

A: I think in Illinois, you haven't had enough budgeting in, what, a year?

Q: Well, we won't even go there.

A: I know. We -- I -- I mean, and that's a big deal. And I think we're -- I think it's going to happen to us again. So morale in Illinois is low. Morale at the Illinois Department of -- Department of Transportation is low. They -- they reorganized again to try to save some money and -- and save money that

The state does have.

At one point in time, I think it was behind like six or eight million dollars, our pension payments at the Illinois level.

And -- and -- and that -- we went through eight months two years ago of not receiving any of our state -- state money. And they were shutting down state contracts and federal contracts because they couldn't pay the contractors.

So the best I can do is -- is control my little 40 acres, you know. There's bad stuff that happens that's above you. And I just -- I -- it's my job as -- as the department head to make sure that my people are taken care of. And that if they're having a bad day, that, you know, they're allowed to have a bad day. But I can't let my actions all the time, you know, make -- make the climate bad for -- for the -- of the department.

Am I perfect? No. Because sometimes you get bad and sometimes you can't shield your emotions all the time. But, you know, it's my job to make sure that, you know, we work through any issue and try to deflect any outside problems that could affect us locally.

And when you're talking money and the state of Illinois not giving us money we're supposed to get by statute, sometimes that's pretty difficult. But, you know, it -- it -- morale is -- is -- you know, it's a serious thing, no matter if you're in the military or in a government agency or wherever you're at, if it's, you know, a school setting, whatever, if morale is bad, you can't get anything accomplished.

So, you know, sometimes, you know -- and every employee is different. Sometimes it takes a pat on the back. Sometimes it takes a little 'in of pressure as to, you know, hey, you need to get back on track and do what you need to do. Sometimes we'll step back away, take a breath, and we'll work through this together. And sometimes it's just, you know, I have to step in and -- and show them: This

is what we need done.

And, so, sometimes it's just the understanding of what needs to be done in that circumstance. So, you receive some training so they have the knowledge and the ability to go on from there.

Q: Okay. Thank you.

BY MS. HUDSON:

Q: Mr. Crane, with your employees, what type of key performance measures do you use to monitor their performance and to make sure that whatever direction you give them or whatever responsibilities they have, they're actually following through? How do you monitor that?

A: So it's a small shop. You know, it's -- it's -- I don't really -- I don't have a formal process of like, you know, documentation of -- of what -- you know, how to track that as -- as performance goes.

But, you know, I -- for example, during the winter we do most of our bridge inspections. So my -- my chief technician, we
The need of the job of -- of managing those folks and giving them clear guidance of what needs to be done and what the priority of work is and timelines and deadlines are and then follow them up with that. And then giving them the tools to be successful if they're not.

So, you know, as far as going down to the -- the guy putting patch material on a -- on a state route somewhere or on a county route somewhere, you know -- you know, that's -- that's hard to judge, you know, it's -- at -- as upper level. But his superior, his -- that's his person who he reports to, their job to make sure. And it -- and it builds up the tree, you know. That's how it would work.

I mean, it would -- it would take clear guidance from a guy like me or whoever you would hire to make sure that happened. And -- and -- and performance levels will change over time just based on your technology, based on, you know, your

And sometimes she goes down the rat hole and -- and doesn't get what needs to be done in a timely manner. And I can, you know, reel her back in and say: You need -- you're over-thinking it. It's easy. It's just -- just do this and we're good. You don't have to worry about all of this other.

So it's -- it's easier in my -- my position now to manage productivity because I see it every day.

Q In an operation that's not so small, such as ours, how do you --
A Right.
Q -- envision going about monitoring and ensuring productivity?
A So I have an organizational chart, a revised charge. So I am assuming that's what's operating under now. You know, every -- every level of leadership, one leader can only control so many people. So -- or the public works probably has four people to report to him, a county engineer that had six people to report to him.

And it builds up the tree, you know. That's how it would work.

I mean, it would take clear guidance from a guy like me or whoever you would hire to make sure that happened. And -- and -- and performance levels will change over time just based on your technology, based on, you know, your

Q Thank you.
BY MR. CARL:
Q Tell me about the biggest change in a work situation that you had to manage. And how did you cope with it?
A I was the change from the -- our -- our having a three-person maintenance staff to transitioning that to the township control for maintaining our highways. And it -- it was such a big deal at the time, I've actually been across the state giving presentation to different units and different townships and -- and different organizations on how we make the

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Because the transition wasn’t difficult in its own right, you know, getting rid of the surplus equipment, you know, make notes. Those relationships work where if we had problems that we were, you know, able to address them. Is it a perfect system? No. But it — it gives better service to our citizens.

But it’s a process that it was two years in the making before I took the job. And it took two years of me being here before we finally got it done. And it was a -- it was a big change.

I -- I know one big change in the department when I came is -- and I will take on lots of -- lots of roles. And I -- I do all the highway designs, flood plane analysis, the hydraulic stuff that I can do in-house to save taxpayer money. And I’ve been able to do that in a smaller department. But then still have that knowledge. We can do it. And that’s been a change that some of my -- my technicians -- because, you know, they don’t like doing it. But they were able to do more work.

So the -- the biggest change is probably the transition of the -- of the township maintenance back -- the county to the township. And we would go back the other way, I don’t know why, but...

Q Thank you.

MS. HUDSON: If we can just take a few moments, Mr. Crane, we need to break for just a minute.


MR. CRANE (VIA SKYPE): I'll hang on.

(Recess taken.)

MS. HUDSON: I think we are ready to resume the questions --

MR. CRANE (VIA SKYPE): Okay.

MS. HUDSON: -- for the position. Commissioner Ludgood,
dollars' worth of resurfacing work and
$600,000 patching jobs.
So for our standards, you know, four
to five million dollars in a year is a big
construction season with the manpower we have.
So last year, you know, probably total
budget of about six.
Q Okay.
A And -- and I've been here going on 15
to 16 years. And I've -- I've been in the black
every year. And we actually - - I've -- I've
grown my fund balance from about 600,000 to
about 900,000 over the last 15 years. Which,
you know, again, I -- I'm short staffed some
too, but what have you, doing a lot on my
own. And it helps offset those costs. But
for a small counties, we're in pretty good
shape.
Q And what's the size of the county's
budget, the entire?
A So the -- the entire county budget --
so the general fund has got some problems. So
they -- they pretty well -- we're on a hiring
freeze. We have not -- we have not -- no
increases except for their -- the sheriff's
union got a pay increase. A couple of other
agencies got pay increases that probably
shouldn't have. It's causing strife within
the county government system here.
But I think they -- overall, I think
the sheriff's department is about 1.5 million.
The health department is about a million. And
then you have the treasurer's office at
courts, about 600,000. So, I think the grand
total on the operational side, probably seven,
eight -- eight million dollars for them.
Actually cash on hand, most of the
cash on hand is what my funds are for that as
far as our motor fuel tax, my tax county
highway funds and all of my reserves.
Q Okay. Thank you.
BY MS. HUDSON:
Q Well, as a follow-up to that, who
handles your grant writing? Do you do --
A Yeah. So I -- I do most of that.
If -- if it's a -- if it's my department, I
will write the grant. I will put most of it
together. We did -- however, we hired a
consultant to -- to do a major bridge for a
million-dollar-plus structure on the county
system that we then were able to secure the
money. It's scheduled to be built in 2022.
So I -- we did hire that help to, you know,
pay that document together, and then with my
oversight. It helped where it needed to be
helped.
But -- but a lot of the stuff I try to
write it myself. But then if I need to, we
can get outside assistance through a
consultant. And what I'm starting to realize
now, it's just a lot cheaper to maybe hire a
consultant once in a while and not have that
head count and have the liability and the
overhead, you know, and just use them when
they're needed. And it's starting to work out
pretty well.
Q Okay. Mr. Crane, should you be
appointed to either of these positions that
you've applied for here at Mobile County, what
would you, in either, intend to accomplish in
your first year or your first few months?
When you come, what do you see as your first
steps and overall accomplishments your first
year?
A There would definitely -- if I
understand, I -- I am -- I have -- I can't say
for sure. But I've now -- I -- I was just
looking at your website and your -- your
department website and your engineering
department. And I know, you know, Mr. Kegley
is your acting engineer. You know, there's a
lot of experience there, so I know that I have
a -- a tall hill to climb to make that point
to be able to -- even to be considered to be
appointed.
But if that will be the case, you
know, with the knowledge that you currently
have, my first priority would just be able to
get to know the staff and -- and -- and, you
know, try to figure -- you know, get those
relationships, you know, established to find
out exactly what strengths and weaknesses are
Freedom Court Reporting, A Veritext Company
877-373-3660
and, you know -- you know, how we can improve the situation, if there are any need to improve and improve services if they need to be improved to -- for the citizens of Mobile County and -- and -- all of those thousands of people who drive through.

But, yeah, the first order of business would be really to -- to develop and foster a working relationship with everybody that is currently there and -- and under you guy’s guidance, too, you know, do what you would see as a vision for the organization, either one.

Q Thank you.

BY MR. CARL:

Q All right. Let’s see here. How do you enlist support of your staff to establish a common approach to solving a problem?

A So when -- I think, you know, when it comes -- you know, being a government agency, we -- we have to live and abide by statutes, policy, and ordinances and those, you know, guidelines that have been passed by, you know, previous commissions or boards or organizations.

So I -- I think the primary goal is to -- you know, sometimes I try to be black and white and -- and make sure that everything -- you know, it’s written a certain way and that’s what we have to follow. All of the policy guidelines need to be followed. And -- and to ensure that, you know, everybody is -- is on the same sheet of music following the same policies. That’s -- that’s the first, you know.

But then also just have a good work relationship with them and understanding what -- you know, maybe what their decision process is as far as what they’re doing, how they’re working, and -- and how you can foster that.

Q Okay. Thank you.

BY MS. LUDGOOD:

Q So how large is your commission, your county commission?

A We -- yeah. We have seven county board members.

Q Okay. And are they elected from districts?

A Yes, they -- they are elected from districts throughout the county.

Q Do you report directly to them?

A So I report to -- we are as -- as a -- as a setting of committees, so I report directly to a road -- road and bridge committee, which is three members of the county board. So we meet every month, 9:00 a.m. on the second Wednesday of the month. So that’s what I report all of my -- to get county board approval. I report it at that meeting for inclusion on -- at the full county board meeting the follow week. And, so, like plat planning and --

Q Okay. And, so, who does your evaluation? Is it a member of the road and bridge committee of the commission or is it the full commission?

A So, it should be the full county board with guys from the -- the highway committee. But I can you tell that it’s only happened one time in 15 years.

Q Okay.

A So I -- you know, I mean, we -- I guess we’re kind of evaluated every time I meet with -- the work relationship I have with them, if my -- if there’s something they don’t like, they let me know. But as a formal written, you know, policy or procedure, it just does not happen for Douglas.

Q Well, I was asking because in this position you will report to directly to the commission. And that’s why I was just wondering whether you were in a similar kind of reporting situation now or if this would be different.

A So it -- it would be -- you know, if -- if you guys had separate meetings outside of your monthly or bimonthly commission meeting, then this would be exactly kind of how it would feel.

But as far as I guess the county board, the seven members together, it’s -- they do their business upon the recommendation
of the committee.
Now, if they have a question or a
clarification or what have you, I'm in the
peanut gallery and they call me up and -- and
I'll explain something.
You know, for -- for example, if a
resolution is on the table on the -- on the
Wednesday board meeting, you know, the day
after the primary election, which our county
clerk -- you know, I did all the hard lifting
for her, so we got through that without much
problem.
Q So do you like having that level of
committee between you and the commission or
would you feel just as comfortable reporting
directly to us?
A You know, I don't know for sure. I --
I... Q You answered --
A It's being a part of it. I mean, I --
when -- when we -- when I report to the
committee, it's more of an informal -- it's
informal with all the parts and everything.
But it -- it's more personal, you know.
When we go to the full county board
members, it's more of a business meeting. You
know, the press is always there. You know,
the -- there's all -- any kind of visitors or
whoever wants to speak to the board, they're
there. So, I mean, it's really a lot of
stuff.
So it -- you know, having that -- and
I know your situation is different because you
three are the three. So it would be study
session, you know, department heads
separately, then your business meeting, I -- I
think there could be some merit to that.
But I'm -- I've not worked in that
situation. I don't know. I don't know for
sure, to be honest with you. I know it's --
it's easier to discuss specific issues and
problems like project related in a more
intimate setting than on the grand stage.
You know, there's a place and a place
for the grand stage. You know, like public
hearings on certain projects and things like
that are required. But to develop some things
before that to say: Well, here's what I'm
trying to do. What do you think?
You know, sometimes it's hard to go to
my boss on a grand setting and say: Hey, I
have this idea. What do you think? And if
they say: No, we're not interested, then that
kind of doesn't look for good both for the
county and myself and if I'm shut down in
front of everybody. So having that -- that
subcommittee role is -- is -- is -- is helpful
in a lot of ways.
Q Well, in our setting, in an instance
like that, you would just come to each of us
to talk about it --
A Okay. Q -- as opposed to having to just put
any good ideas you had out in front of us, you
know, at that time. You could test the waters
with us ahead of time.
A Right.
Q And typically the only things that we
hear is a project comes in a meeting because
it's gone way south and we're having to --
A Right.
Q -- ask the bonding company to finish
it, or, you know, something like that.
A Yeah. And -- and I know when I have
an issue with something that -- that my
committee or the -- the county board needs to
know about, I call my committee chairman, who
happens to be the county board chairman and
say: Hey, Mr. Marson, I've just got to let
you this is what happened. This is what I
did. And you're probably going to hear about
it. So, communication is key both ways.
MR. CARL: I compare it to
having three wives, by the way.
MR. CRANE (VIA SKYPE): Yeah.
MS. LUDGOOD: Or three
husbands.
MR. CARL: Or three husbands,
whichever way you look at it.
A No, I -- I think I -- I've reached out
to individual members. I've had individual
members come to me on issues on -- on issues.
within their -- their districts, you know.  
And sometimes I have to say no. We've got  
roads in worse shape. And let's go look at  
it, you know, and, so, it just -- it just has  
to be -- it has to be worked out together.  
You know, budgets are small and slim. I don't  
care what side of the government it is, if  
it's Mobile, New York, Chicago, Cook County,  
you know, you have to operate within your  
means. And sometimes you have to say no.  

MS. HUDSON: Very true.  

Commissioners, do you have any  
more questions? Commissioner?  

MR. CARL: I'm wrapped up.  

MS. HUDSON: And I am as well.  

Do you have any questions that  
you'd like to ask us?  

MR. CRANE (VIA SKYPE): Yeah,  
I have a few here. Just -- I  
don't currently have my license in  
Alabama, so I'm not real familiar  
with Alabama laws and regulations.  
But is the county engineer  

contract, is it five or six years.  
Or is it just --  
MS. HUDSON: I'm sorry. What  
was your question? You kind of  
froze up there on us.  

MR. CRANE (VIA SKYPE): Well,  
is the --  

MS. HUDSON: We need to  
establish our connection. You  
have all of a sudden started  
frozing up on us.  

MR. CARL: Ask him if he can  
call back.  

MS. HUDSON: Can you hang up  
and call back, please.  

MR. CRANE (VIA SKYPE): Okay,  
(Recess taken.)  

MS. HUDSON: Mr. Crane, can  
you hear us?  

MR. CRANE (VIA SKYPE): Yes.  

MS. HUDSON: Well, we're not  
hearing you very well still.  

MR. CRANE (VIA SKYPE): Is  
that better?

MS. LUDGOOD: That's better.  
Yeah.  

MR. CARL: Oh, yeah. That's  
fine.  

MS. HUDSON: Okay. Let's try  
that again. What was your  
question again.  

MR. CRANE (VIA SKYPE): So is  
it the -- is the position a five-year  
contract? Is there a contract  
length assigned with the county  
engineer job.  

MS. HUDSON: No, there's no  
contract length. No. It's --  

MR. CRANE (VIA SKYPE): Okay.  

MS. HUDSON: It's an  
appointment by the commission.  
And you become part of the merit  
system.  

MR. CRANE (VIA SKYPE): Okay.  

MS. HUDSON: Okay.  

MS. LUDGOOD: Another  

question?  

MR. CRANE (VIA SKYPE): And I  
started to freeze on my end too,  
now. It may be my end. So I -- I  
know you guys did the study on  
the -- the review of your --  
your -- your systems and your --  
your public works and your  
engineer groups. And that report  
date is June 14th, 2017. My  
question is: I'm assuming that  
you guys have -- have implemented  
that -- that structure in place  
now.  

MS. HUDSON: We have.  

MR. CRANE (VIA SKYPE): And  
then I guess have you seen any  
改善, your goal that you're  
trying to -- like some of the  
things that were addressed in the  
report, have you seen improvement  
with that -- with that  
reassignment?
MS. HUDSON: Well, at this point in time, the last 18 months, of course, we've had an interim county engineer and a public works director. So I think we have seen some improvement as far as the administration and public works and engineering beginning to really work together as a team. Whereas, before it was sort of just a separate environment. And there wasn't nearly as much cooperation and collaboration. In that we've seen great improvement with.

But as far as implementing any big changes in both of those department, I think because we've been in an interim situation, I think things have been improved, but to some limited degree.

MS. LUDGOOD: And that was --

MR. CRANE (VIA SKYPE): Okay.

MS. LUDGOOD: -- some things that we were holding back on because we wanted the new leader in place to be a part of that moving forward. We didn't want to completely move forward and then step in. We were this close (demonstrating) where we could just hold that in abeyance. And, so, on the other aspects of it, our leader, the new leaders would be the people who would guide us through the rest of it.

MR. CRANE (VIA SKYPE): Okay.

MR. CARL: And I would say yes -- there's been a lot of positive changes in the last 18 months, especially with people's attitudes.

MR. CRANE (VIA SKYPE): That's good. Yeah. I read that report. And, yeah, I did -- I could see there were some -- definitely some issues. (Freezing frame) commission (freezing frame) -- so are there any other big issues, like I'm -- you know, if I'm appointed that I should be aware of that you -- like, you know, if I walked in to tomorrow, the first day at work, you know, I want you to solve this.

MS. HUDSON: I'm sure that'll happen.

MR. CARL: But --

MR. CRANE (VIA SKYPE): Okay.

MR. CARL: -- just remember:

I'm always right.

MS. HUDSON: No, I am. No. I think that you would find that you have a lot of talent, a lot of experience and expertise and probably be blown away by the staff that we have here and the great job that they do. We can't say enough good things about our people.

MS. LUDGOOD: We have lots and lots of rain. And we have lots of dirt roads.

MS. HUDSON: Yeah.

MS. LUDGOOD: And, so, if you come in on a rainy day, your phone is going to be ringing off the hook.

MS. HUDSON: Yeah. We have our own unique issues.

MR. CRANE (VIA SKYPE): Yeah.

Unfortunately we're starting to go to a lot of dirt roads, too. It's kind of a shame. We had really nice roads for a while and we're going backwards unfortunately. I guess my last question would be: You know, obviously, I applied for both positions. I just have a question about the confidentiality, you know, how we...
move forward, if there a -- you know, I don't know if you're going to go to a final list or another interview. What is the process you see going forward?

MS. HUDSON: Mr. Crane, we have not planned for more interviews. After we conclude today, I anticipate that the commission will make a decision and it should be very soon.

MS. LUDGOOD: And typically concerned about references and reference checks, I think that would only be done in the event of an offer. If we anticipate an offer, that's the only way that the reference check will be done. And you will have been aware so that you could talk to your people and so nobody would be hit by surprise.

MR. CRANE (VIA SKYPE): Right.
And -- and I talked -- I have this -- like a regional engineer for the IDOT. I talked to him about this and a few other key people. But obviously, you know, I'm in a good situation in trying to maybe better myself. I'd hate to burn that bridge, you know, if they --

MS. HUDSON: Right.

MR. CRANE (VIA SKYPE): -- thought I was, you know, baling ship, you know. And --

MS. HUDSON: Well, Mr. Crane, this is a public meeting, you understand.

MR. CRANE (VIA SKYPE): Yes.

MS. HUDSON: There are no members of media here. But it is being transcribed. It's a public meeting. So --

MR. CRANE (VIA SKYPE): That's fine.

MS. HUDSON: Okay.

MR. CRANE (VIA SKYPE): That's fine. Yeah. So I just -- there's lot of things to work out. And I know there's issues. So -- and I'm sure that there's a lot of high quality people applying for this position and I'm sure you'll get a great candidate, whether it's me or somebody else. So --

MR. CRANE (VIA SKYPE): But I -- I don't have any further questions. And I really thank you for the time and today and -- and out of your busy day. If you have any questions, feel free to contact me. If you need references, I can provide those if needed.

MS. HUDSON: Thank you. We are most grateful for your time and for your interest. And we appreciate your candor and your responses. And, Commissioners, anything else?

MS. LUDGOOD: No.

MS. HUDSON: Okay. Well, thank you very much. And we should be back in touch very soon. Okay.

MR. CRANE (VIA SKYPE): Okay. Thank you very much.

MR. CARL: Thank you, James.

MS. HUDSON: Have a great afternoon.

MR. CRANE (VIA SKYPE): Have a great day.

2:17 p.m. (Recess taken.)
Lieutenant in the army in -- in the engineer branch. And I was stationed at various assignments in Fort Benning, Georgia, at Fort Hood, Texas. And I deployed to Kuwait, Iraq, and Bosnia between 1998 and 2005 when I was -- when I was on active duty.

I'm still on active duty right now but I'm active Guard and Reserve in the Mississippi National Guard for another two weeks.

MR. CARL: Thank you for your service.

MR. BRADLEY: Thank you.

MS. HUDSON: Where do you do your drills?

MR. BRADLEY: Right now, I'm -- I'm -- I'm at the Vicksburg armory for the -- I'm the administrative officer for the 168th Engineer Brigade. So I'm the full-time representative --

MS. HUDSON: Okay.

MR. BRADLEY: -- during the week.

MS. HUDSON: Okay.

MR. BRADLEY: So I supervise 67 personnel during the week. And we have two battalions underneath us. And that's a total of 1600 people overall with our part-time personnel and our full-time personnel combined. And those are our two engineer battalions.

We have, you know, various specialties beneath us. We have the HR folks. We have logistics personnel. We -- we have some -- some specialty ordinance folks and then a lot of engineers that do a full spectrum of engineering, everything from vertical, you know, building structures to road building to survey design and then...
combat engineering were you -- I'm placing my fields, reducing structures, those type of things and doing it within the combat environment, support tanks and -- and environment. So --

MS. HUDSON: Okay, all right. Anything else?

MR. BRADLEY: Well, I would -- I would want to add that I have a master's degree from the University of Missouri, Missouri Science and Technology. And also I'm a licensed professional engineer in Missouri, Mississippi and Alabama.

MS. HUDSON: Okay. Very good.

BY MR. CARL:

Q All right. I'm Commissioner Jerry Carl. And we've got a list of stock questions here we're asking everyone. So if we hear something we want to vary off of, you'll see us jump in there.

A Sure.

Q How would you describe your leadership style? And explain how that would adapt, how this applies to your style.

A Well, with --

Q Did I say that right? How would you describe your leadership style? I'm sorry.

Give an example of how this applies to this style.

A Okay. Well, there's a lot of different labels that -- that people have, the various leadership styles.

And what -- what I attempt to do is apply the appropriate leadership technique for the -- for the instance. You know, sometimes you need to be more in the autocratic mode.

If you have a new employee maybe that doesn't understand exactly what -- what their role is and what they can do. You may have to get a little more -- pay more -- a little attention, give them a little bit -- you know, a little bit more direction.

You may have a more senior personnel.

You may have a more complex project where you have to, you know, give them -- give them a lot more leeway to be able to conduct their -- their job and to where they -- they can perform in that, in -- in the thing you've assigned them to do.

And the biggest thing for my leadership philosophy is to -- to make sure that I'm putting subordinates in a position to be successful. Because ultimately we've employed everyone to do a particular job. And we're looking for them to do that job. And you have to do what's necessary to put them in that position to be successful.

But sometimes folks come in and maybe not necessarily have the -- the certifications that they need and you may have to help them get -- get into that position where they can actually perform the way -- the way that you want them to perform. And then some folks are ready to do the job, you know. So --

MS. HUDSON: Okay.

MR. CARL: Thank you.

MS. HUDSON: I don't know if I've introduced you yet. This is Commissioner Merceria Ludgood.

MR. BRADLEY: Ms. Ludgood, nice to meet you.

MS. LUDGOOD: Nice to meet you, too.

BY MS. LUDGOOD:

Q Oh, my question. I'm sorry. I was like, oh my God, a home boy. That was what I was just thinking. Welcome home.

A Yeah. I'm -- I'm hoping to be -- you know, my family and I were trying to relocate. That's a large part of why I'm interviewing for this job. I've finished my service. I'm trying to -- I'm trying to get back in the Mobile area.

I've got a two year old. And, you know, trying to give him at least the same opportunities I had when I -- when I came up. Because, I mean, I'm a product of the Mobile County public schools. And I was able to go to West Point and have a pretty successful
military career. So I want to make sure he gets the same opportunities, you know.

MS. HUDSON: Right.

BY MS. LUDGOOD:
Q Have you given some thought to the transfer from kind of your public sector in the military role to this kind of public sector role? And what do you view as challenges or opportunities? What do you see about it?
A I think it -- to me, it's kind of -- I -- I enjoy public service, obviously, if you serve in the military. I think it's just a good opportunity to be able to serve closer -- closer to home.
And I've -- you know, I've served the nation. And -- and even in the National Guard, you're still serving the nation. I served the state of Mississippi. I was there during Katrina in Bay St. Louis in -- in -- in working with various agencies. And that was a good opportunity.
That's the -- that was really the first opportunity in my career I had to -- to be able to work with people at least, you know, fairly close to -- to -- to home. And -- and that -- that kind of opened my eyes to some things. I -- it's been -- it would be great to still continue public service and be able to do it here, you know, where I'm from.

MR. CARL: Baker has changed a little bit since you've been there, by the way.

MR. BRADLEY: Yeah, it -- it -- it has. They -- it's a lot different. I have a sister that's 13 years younger than me. And it was different then when I went to graduation with her. And it's a lot different now. So --

MR. CARL: Bustling at the seams.

BY MS. HUDSON:
Q Well, Mr. Bradley, like any other positions, either of these positions that you would appointed to, it would be very important to be able to establish a rapport not only with employees but also with other department heads, with outside agencies --
A Absolutely.
Q -- and particularly with commissioners because both of these positions report directly to the three commissioners.
So give us an idea of what your style is in trying to establish a rapport with your employees and your subordinates as well as other people that you deal with --
A Sure.
Q -- and report to.
A Well, the -- the position I'm in right now is a much -- it's -- it's a tradition military position. I have an established chain of command. I have subordinates. And I'm that link between my subordinates and my superiors.

The previous job I had, I was the director of environment programs for Mississippi National Guard and I had to work with every state agency that -- the remotely touched on -- on environmental issues on our installations and included all the cultural -- cultural resources, national resources, forestry.
So we had to work with a lot of different agencies. And -- and some of them may have only had a tangential relationship with what we were doing. But it was important to make sure that they were -- they were included and -- and we could -- we could leverage those relationships, you know.
So it was important that -- that we -- that we had a -- a good rapport with all of -- all of the various agencies. And I think that that -- that that experience would be well for this job to be able to interact with with -- with other agencies, the public, and still be able to, you know, manage the -- your subordinates to move them towards the goals that are set by -- by -- in -- in this case, the commissioners.
Q Okay.
BY MR. CARL:

Q Thank you. Where do you think your past colleagues would say about your ability to communicate?

A I think they would -- would say that I -- that I have no difficulty communicating with -- with -- with anyone, being forthright with individuals and able to articulate fairly complex issues and put them into a bite-size format so that folks can understand so that -- so that the right decision can be arrived at.

And, like I was saying on that environmental job, I was kind of a -- you know, the general officers and the acting general folks in the National Guard, they -- you know, they -- they don't deal with environmental stuff on a daily basis. And it was my job to make sure I had the expertise to provide them with articulate informative researched opinions to where they could make informed decisions. So -- so I -- I think that they would -- they would say I was able to do that on a regular basis.

BY MS. HUDSON:

Q So what strategies do you use for feedback, for motivating employees, particularly in a setting where there may be morale issues?

A Well, that's the best thing you can do is make yourself available and be, you know, approachable.

And sometimes you have to break down the -- the -- those approachable barriers because folks feel that they -- you know, based on their position or past experience, that they -- they may not be able to have a discussion with certain people in certain position.

And I'm -- I'm a Lieutenant Colonel right now. But it's very important to me that if we're on project sites and everything that I at least walk the ground and make sure I'm -- I -- I have, you know, discussions with individual operators of equipment and -- and make sure they understand they're part of a team, and that it's absolutely critical what they're -- what they're doing.

And it may -- it may only be just a -- a minor interaction. But -- but I've seen a lot through my career that people don't take the time to actually know the people that they work with. And it doesn't -- it really doesn't take a lot of time to -- to -- to --

And, at the same time, you don't have to be everybody's buddy. But --

MR. CARL: Yeah.

A -- you know, to know that, you know, hey, you're important to this organization.

MR. CARL: It's easy to fall into that trap in management.

MR. BRADLEY: Yeah. It's -- it's -- it's very easy to lock yourself up in the office and --

MR. CARL: Yeah.

MR. BRADLEY: -- worry about your problems.

BY MS. LUDGOOD:

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MR. CARL: Yeah.

MR. BRADLEY: -- worry about your problems.

BY MS. HUDSON:

Q And I realize that the private sector is different from the government sector as far as how you deal with employees. But coming to the private sector, it's a little different when we talk about building morale and rapport because it's not such -- it's still a chain of command. But still motivating employees is --

A Sure.

Q -- is more -- I don't know -- sometimes more involved. But what strategies --

MS. HUDSON: And I think this goes to the question you asked.

BY MS. HUDSON:

Q What do you foresee as a way -- I mean, we have a public works department, 250 or so people, engineering about 50. What things would do? Any ideas to be able to help build morale and get people working as a team?

A Well, when you have morale issues, there's -- there's a -- there's a number of things that can drive that. And -- and sometimes it's -- it's multiple problems and -- and you have to figure out what -- what
1 those issues are to begin with.
2 And I guess what I was telling
3 Commissioner Ludgood on that first step, you
4 have to be able to understand the -- the --
5 the personnel you're working for, you know,
6 what -- what the obstacles may be for them
7 being successful in those positions and why
8 that -- that morale has -- has decreased.
9 As far as strategies, there's --
10 there's not a silver bullet to -- to inspire
11 folks to perform better in their jobs or
12 perform in their jobs in the first place.
13 So I -- I -- I don't know that I have
14 a -- have a -- the -- the -- the right answer
15 that'll -- that'll magically lift spirits
16 across the board. But -- but I -- I just
17 think it's -- it's extremely important to make
18 people understand that they're valued in an
19 organization. And there's a lot of different
20 ways.
21 In the military, we do all kinds of
22 stuff where we'll go out and -- and we'll
23 have, you know, quarterly get-togethers, you

Q Okay.
A -- where people
Q That's kind of where I'm going with
A Yeah. So where people can get to know
each other in a -- in a -- in a more
calm environment, in a -- in an unthreatening
environment.

And I know my dad worked for the Corps
down here. Every year they had a picnic out
at the Coast Guard base. I know me, as a
child, I know everybody that he worked with
because they had a little basketball
tournament and they had little games and
competition stuff and everybody got to know
each other in an unthreatening environment.
And it seemed -- it seemed to work for them.
For us it -- it -- it
definitely works. But it's a hassle sometimes
to put those things together. But they end up
paying off because people -- you know, you
know somebody's wife or.

Q Tell me about the big changes in a
work situation that you've had to manage. And
how did you cope with it?
A I tell you, I -- I'm -- I'm going to
give you two answers here. One -- one real
quick was just a change in -- in the
environment. I went to that environmental
position. I actually had no active duty
soldiers beneath me. They were all state
employees. So that was -- that was a change
in environment for me personally.

Then as far as work environment, every
-- it's roughly every two years we have a
different Adjunct General come in, in the
Mississippi National Guard. And every single
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1. one we've had has had completely different
2. priorities as to what they wanted to see and
3. how they wanted to see it and the direction
4. that they thought the organization needed to
5. go in.
6. So, it was on a pretty regular basis
7. you had to kind of get a good feel for what --
8. what the new Adjunct General wanted and how --
9. and how he wanted to see it.
10. And sometimes it's took a little while
11. to -- to try to -- try to figure out what it
12. was. Of course, he was -- he was new to the
13. job as well. So sometimes, you know, what he
14. wanted initially, you know, six months later
15. it changed again, you know. But, fortunately,
16. the ones that we had while I was there, they
17. were -- they were all pretty good. And
18. they -- and they all eventually figured the
19. job out and they figured out how to articulate
20. to folks and -- and, you know, we were able to
21. be a pretty successful organization.

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22. Q So is your dad still with the Corps?
23. A He retired a couple of years ago. He

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24. Q Okay.
25. A And -- and he's -- I keep telling him,
26. you know, you -- you retired. He kind of --
27. for a period of about five years and said he
28. was going to retire from the Corps. And now
29. he -- the two years, he said, well, I'm just
30. going to retire, retire. But he keeps on
31. showing up for work. So at -- at some
32. point, you know, it's -- it's -- I said it's
33. okay to just retire at some point, you know.
34. Q Make a slot for --
35. A But he keeps on working.
36. Q Make a slot for somebody else to move
37. in.
38. A Yeah.
39. MS. HUDSON: He doesn't know
40. how not to work.
41. MR. BRADLEY: Yeah. He really
42. doesn't. He keeps punching a
43. clock. And he -- I don't think he
44. knows how to operate otherwise.
45. MR. CARL: Yeah.

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46. And you would want to work towards
47. getting any kind of schooling certificates
48. that they -- or certifications that they need
49. to perform that job to get them to a baseline.
50. And then at -- at that point,
51. hopefully they're not in a position in
52. isolation. Hopefully there are other people
53. in the organization that perform similar
54. functions and create an environment for them
55. to mentor or shadow personnel in the early
56. going to where they -- they -- they could at
57. least see what right looks like and -- and --
58. and help them to come along.
59. That's -- that's -- that's very common
60. in the military that we -- that we have that,
61. that we're -- we're -- folks have what we call
62. battle buddies where you work together with a
63. guy. And he may not be much more experienced
64. than you. But he may have enough to bring you
65. along a little bit further.
66. And then someone who you know is going
67. to be, you know, a stellar performer, you want
68. to make sure that -- that you give them

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opportunities to maybe see some things outside
the realm of what they're working in just then
because they may be somebody who needs to have
an opportunity for -- for progression in the
future.
So you may do some -- do some cross
training in cross functional areas and you may
allow them to do some things a little bit
outside of their -- outside of their comfort
zone to where they can get that experience and
prepare them in the future. Because you may
be in a situation down the road where you need
somebody to fill that -- fill that position.
And if you have someone with at least a little
bit of experience in that area, it'd be
helpful, you know.
Q Thank you.
BY MS. HUDSON:
Q What key performance measures do you
use to monitor the performance of the people
who report to you to make sure that they are
being productive and staying on track?
A Well, you -- you always have your
baseline of what -- what the expectation of
that position is and what those requirements
are.
If they're -- you know, the easiest
ting is going to be weekly, monthly, and, you
know, quarterly and annually requirements.
You're going to -- you're going to follow up
with them and sure meeting they're those.
And every engineer has done critical
path methods. And it's just -- it's just
beaten in to our skulls as engineers to where
there are certain dates and certain times that
you want someone to meet if you have the
suspense out there. And it's -- sometimes
it's hard and fast. You write those down that
you want to see certain things prior to that
final product. And then other times you have
it mentally mapped out to where you want to
see.
If I'm hearing certain feedback from
him at certain points I know that they're --
that they're -- you know, on smaller tasks, I
know that they're -- they're tracking on to
meet that ultimate goal.
Q Right. Public works, that's a little
bit different animal than engineering and how
would you track productivity and
performance also. Any different thoughts
there?
A I was just saying that -- that, you
know, in the -- in the engineering world, you
just have that running through your mind all
the time. Where are we at exactly in -- in
making this happen. So you're kind of
always checking to see kind of where -- where
things are in -- in the process.
And I guess you're saying with public
works you have to -- you know, it's kind of
a -- a little bit longer process. Is that --
is that what you're getting at?
Q It's just different responsibilities
and, you know, just different jobs, scope of
work. You have a lot of people who are out
working in the field that are out, the road
crews. And they're cleaning ditches, you
know. There's a lot of -- like in

baseline of what -- what the expectation of
that position is and what those requirements
are.

If they're -- you know, the easiest
ting is going to be weekly, monthly, and, you
know, quarterly and annually requirements.
You're going to -- you're going to follow up
with them and sure meeting they're those.
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final product. And then other times you have
it mentally mapped out to where you want to
see.
If I'm hearing certain feedback from
him at certain points I know that they're --
that they're -- you know, on smaller tasks, I
know that they're -- they're tracking on to

engineering, I mean, you may have inspections
and so forth. But it's just different
responsibilities.
Since you've applied for both jobs, I
was just wondering, you know, if you would
handle them differently as far as trying to
track performance and productivity.
A I don't -- I don't have a -- a
particular method to -- to track it other than
to -- than to follow up with people,
where they're at, at different points --
Q Okay.
A -- with -- with what they're tasked to
do. I have some basic -- some basic things
that I do as -- as far as -- as using the --
using the -- using the tasks on Outlook,
coming back to where I can follow up later on
or if I have a -- if I have a particular
question or I want to pin someone on a
particular detail to make sure that everything
is coming along and --
Q Do you have regular follow-up
meetings?
A: Oh -- oh, yeah. Yeah. That's -- that's kind of what I'm -- what I'm getting at is you kind of plug those in where it's attached to -- to your task and your calendar. And then you -- then you can ping those individuals for those -- those particular times.

Now -- now, folks working in the field, you know, you can -- if you're working on a longer-term task, you know, you could -- you could schedule it out. If you need go and work on this particular stretch of road for two weeks, you know, you -- you can schedule a followup. Okay. Tuesday and Thursday I'm going to ask about these particular things or I'm going to look at these folks or one of the subordinate supervisors to -- to follow up on -- on a particular detail of that project.

Q: Okay.

A: You know, I -- I consider it all kind of a -- a project, whether it is anybody is working on it. I'm using that term kind of generic.

BY MS. LUDGOOD:

Q: So critical path is a term of art?

A: Uh-huh.

Q: Okay. Where, like to the lay person, it would be just be taking the project, breaking it down with timelines and that kind of thing for --

A: The critical path, it -- it looks at -- there may be all of these other activities that need to take place. But there's a certain line of activities that have to happen in a certain sequence to actually produce that product at that end point.

Q: Okay.

MS. HUDSON: Any other questions, Commissioners?

MR. CARL: I'm good.

MS. LUDGOOD: No. I'm good.

MS. HUDSON: Do you have any questions of us?

MR. BRADLEY: No. No, I don't think so. I appreciate y'all's time.

MS. HUDSON: Absolutely.

MR. CARL: I hope you brought your family, man. You're going to spend the weekend, right?

MR. BRADLEY: We're going to hang out for a couple of days. My wife is an attorney and she's going to have to get back to Jackson on Saturday for --

MR. CARL: Uh-oh.

MR. BRADLEY: -- some stuff that's going on. So we're going to turn back around tomorrow. But it's just the way it is sometimes.

MS. HUDSON: My daughter, until about eight months ago, was in the -- she was a JAG officer. And she drilled in Jackson. She's with the Alabama Guard now at Fort Whiting.

MR. BRADLEY: Okay. Well, that's -- I know you're proud of her.
3:08 p.m.

INTERVIEW OF JERRY STOKES

BY MS. HUDSON:
Q Good afternoon.
A Hello.
Q Mr. Stokes, can you hear us okay?
A Yeah. Can you hear me okay?
Q We can. We can.
A Good.
Q Well, thank you for joining us for --
in this expedited scheduled. It worked out
that we were able to talk you with a little
bit earlier. So we appreciate your ability to
be able to meet us earlier than scheduled.
I'm Commissioner Hudson. To my right is
Commissioner Carl. To my left is Commissioner
Merceria Ludgood.
A Hello.
Q Good after. We appreciate you joining
us. And we -- we thank you for your interest
in applying for the position of county
engineer. And for the record -- And we to
have a court reporter transcribing the meeting
today. It is a public meeting. Our applicant
is Mr. Jerry Dudley Stokes. We he is applying
for the position of Mobile County engineer.
Mr. Stokes, what we have -- what we
have done with the other applicants, we're
giving everyone a chance to introduce
themselves and tell us about yourself and
anything that you would like to for us to
know. And then we will go through a series of
questions. And we will take turns asking	hose. And then at the end of that, we'll
give you an opportunity to ask us any
questions that you might have about the Mobile
County; okay?
A Okay.
Q So we'll just go ahead and let you get
started.
A Okay. Well, I appreciate the

years prior to that. And I started at the
County in 2003 as just a regular civil
engineer on staff. And I ran design projects
and -- and -- and ran projects as a resident
engineer and designed projects and then
progressed from there.
And then I went to Bradley University,
which is in Peoria, Illinois. And then after
I graduated, I worked for a consulting firm
called Cobb Work and Tilly (phonetic). I was
the aviation division of Cobb Work and Tilly.
And so we did work all around Illinois and
some -- some other airports around -- around
the US doing design work and consulting work
for them.
I'm a real laid-back guy, energetic.
I like to -- a real sports nut and outdoor,
hunter, golf all of that type stuff.
BY MR. CARL:
Q Roll Tide, by the way.
A What is that?
Q Roll Tide. Alabama football. I -- I
guess I will take the first question here?

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them and see how to -- kind of coach them along. So kind of -- kind of a combination of, you know, participative but then also coaching some of -- some of the younger guys that might have just came on the staff.

BY MS. LUDGOOD:

Q So I'd like to know a little bit about your current department, your current county where -- where you're the county engineer now, your budgets, whether you are involved in the preparation of the budget, whether you are the person who monitors those budget.

A Sure. So McClain County is -- is the biggest county Illinois as far as lane area goes. And we take care of around 366 miles of road and 87 bridges. And so -- And it's also broken up -- and the county is broken up into -- we're a township government, so we have thirty townships. And amongst those 30 townships, there is another 1400 miles of road.

So our annual budget for -- for McClain County is around 12 million dollars.

And that's broken out into -- into four -- four different funds. We have kind of a -- what we call a highway fund, that is a general fund that most of our operating systems come out that. Then we have a bridge fund, and then a matching fund, and a fuel tax fund.

So in the fuel tax, we get about two hundred thousand dollar. And that comes from the state. And so -- so that's basically used -- used to do all of the capital projects, capital improvement projects.

And then the bridge fund is based on a certain tax -- the tax levee at the county. And we just use that all of structural -- structural projects throughout the county. And so -- so I have been -- So when I was assistant, you know, I did a lot of the cost estimating and -- and kind of prepared the budget that way. And then when I became the county engineer, you know, I was in charge of the overall budget.

And so we would -- we'd go out and we would drive the roads. And we'd rate all the roads and then determine what capital project need to be and then start there and then -- and then go and look what or operational fees are going to need to be and what additional equipment that was going to be need to purchase and that type of thing.

BY MS. HUDSON:

Q As a follow-up, just so I understand, make sure I've got this straight, does McClain County -- is McClain County responsible for maintaining the roads in three of the townships?

A Not -- not -- no, not quite. We -- we it's more of an advisory role with the townships. We -- so they're -- they're -- they get a township motor fuel tax. And so that -- all that has to come through the county engineer. So we -- we monitor their expenditures on that.

And so let's say if like one township may get, you know, $100,000 a year in motor fuel tax funds, and they spent that on roads.

But we monitor how that is spent and what is spent on. And then they -- but they're their own taxing body.

So but we also do an -- we're also an advisory role. So if they -- if they have a problem on a road, they will contact us. And we will go out and look at it and, you know, kind of give an engineering analysis on it.

We do a lot of drainage work, culvert work for them. And and so we do that type of stuff. We do all of the bridge inspection for -- for the townships in that regard.

So -- so we have 87 bridges on the County side, and they have like 290 the township side. So, you know, we're inspecting those every two to four years, depending on the interval. But then, you know, we also looking -- looking out for their best interest economically and making sure they're spending their motor -- motor fuel tax.

Q So you monitor, but they -- they basically generate their own funds for the road projects?

Q Because I thought 12 million dollars would not go that far for 30 townships.

A No. No. And they get kind of mad because we don't -- I -- I -- you know, I tell them that we can't spend County money on -- on the township projects unless it, you know, qualifies for certain -- certain issues.

But, yeah, they -- But we try to help them out whenever we can. Because we have -- you know, we have a lot of equipment and manpower to do it whereas some of the -- some of the Townships they just don't have -- you know, they don't have a small Cat or anything in their -- in their townships. So their's is real low. And so they just don't have a good tax base. And I think, you know, each township probably has anywhere from 30 to 50 miles of the roads. And so the amount of the money they get isn't -- doesn't go very far.

Q All right. In -- in your role, I'm sure you know how important establishing rapport is with your employees as well other department directors with -- who you were report directly to. And I'm assuming that's your -- your County Board. Do you report directly to the County Board?

A (Nods head.)

Q Okay. Tell us a little bit about your -- your style in -- in dealing with people, in establishing rapport, in -- in building relationships with employees and so forth. What's your style?

A Some -- I'm a laid back guy. And I'm, you know able to get along with everybody at - at all different levels. Kind of -- I kind of have a knack for reading people and, you know, their personalities and, you know, what -- what they have and how they're going to respond to certain things, not only on the employee side, but, you know, the county board members and -- and that. So we have 20 county board members --

Q 20?

A -- throughout McClain County, 20.

Q You see we have three.

A Yeah. So -- so --
highway department, we have an engineering staff of about 10 people and then we have a maintenance crew of around 18 to 20.

And so when I first start at the County, I was -- we were doing projects with our own maintenance crew staff. And so I was kind of -- kind of basically leading the charge and -- and directing them on what to do on a daily basis. And so then I started moving up to assistant county engineer. So I still had that same -- same rapport with -- with the -- the individuals that work here. And I think that helped kind the smooth the transition in with the county engineer.

And -- and, you know, I do have a maintenance foreman that, you know, I talk to every day, you know on a daily. We talk things through, what -- what he's got planned and what -- what I think needs to be done as far as whatever, you know, the kind of project that we're going to be starting.

Q Okay. Very good. Thank you.

BY MR. CARL:

Q How do you -- how do you enlist the support from your staff to establish a common approach to solving a problem?

A We -- we kind look at all aspects and, you know, look at what the problem is and how much -- you know, we ran into a problem like out in the field, what -- what -- you know, what -- what it's going to cost to correct it or what, you know -- what's the best measures for, you know -- for the taxpayer to spend that money, but also for the -- you know, for the -- for the overall job itself.

For example, if -- if we're on a job, we run into a soft spot in -- in there, you know, how -- what's the best route to fix it, the best course of action. We can -- we can wait a few days and take care, you know, try to fix it up, or dig it all out and replace it.

So we kind of look at -- you know, look at the impact of -- of the overall job. And we may look and see if we're going to save money somewhere else, or if we don't do anything, how that is going to affect -- how that's going to be affected down the line.

Q Thank you.

BY MS. LUDGOOD:

Q So I -- I have a -- I guess kind of a two-part question, maybe three parts. I'm not sure. But in -- is -- It's really about growing employees. And I'm curious to know what strategies you use in trying to develop employees, particularly an employee who is maybe -- maybe marginal or maybe not come in fully formed for a position, how to you grow that employee.

You see the potential, but they aren't quite there. What strategies do you use to try to grow that employee. And then the second part of the question is how do you -- what strategies do you use to build morale among your -- among your employees?

We have -- we're coming off of what we've been told are some morale issue within -- you know, within this particular function of this county. And in this role, you would be the leader, kind of setting the vision for how to improve that. So I'm just curious how -- I'd like to know what strategy would you use for that?

A So I think at first I would probably take a laid back approach with them, just kind of -- I would, know you -- I don't know. Do you guys kind of like -- does -- does -- would the county engineer be doing like formal reviews of all of the employees, as -- you know, like yearly reviews?

Because that's what -- like typically right now I do -- do reviews of -- of engineering staff. And so, you know, I -- I give them -- you know, I kind of give them like three or four things they're doing good, but I also kind of give them three or four things to work on and improve on. That way, you know, they kind of know where I'm coming from and -- and what -- what I'd like to see them -- them improve on. And hopefully they can grow into -- grow into becoming a better
1. engineer project manager, but also, you know, improving -- improving their skills to -- to -- to make them a better -- a better employee.

As far as building morale, you know, that's -- that could, you know, be tough. It's more of a -- I think it's just earning their respect and knowing that, you know, you can make a mistake, that -- that, you know, you -- you kind of have their back. But, you know, tell them that they need to improve on -- improve on, you know, whatever they did. But then you can also kind of -- you know, being able to joke with them, you know, talk about sports, talk -- you know, just kind of talk about things other than work. And that kind of helps to deliver -- you know, develop a rapport and, you know, help build the morale so they can trust you. And if you can build that trust, then they're liable to try to be more productive in their -- in their work.

Q. Thank you.

BY MS. HUDSON:

Q. What -- what type of performance measures do you have in place to make sure that you are you're monitoring and -- and measuring performance and productivity of your employees? Does this involve meetings? Does this involve -- I mean, how often do you get involved in -- in the monitoring of the productivity?

A. So it kind of -- you know, in the winter -- so up here Illinois, we're probably -- we're kind of limited to about eight months of construction. So we don't necessarily do construction all year round. So a lot of times in -- in the winter, we working on doing the design work for -- for the next year to start construction. And so -- so we could have -- we probably do, you know, biweekly staff meetings every -- every -- with staff to kind of see where they're at on projects, you know, what they have coming up.

It's a little harder to do during the summer, because everybody's out usually building something, a bridge project, a road project. So it's kind of hard to get all the -- get the whole staff together.

But in the wintertime, we'll have a couple guys working on bridges, a couple guys working on roads. And so I wouldn't say necessarily -- you know, we don't really have performance measures. We kind of have deadlines of when the projects are going out to bid.

And so we just make sure that on those weekly meetings, where things are at. And a lot of it depends on the type of funding. Because sometime they're federal funds. We might be waiting on a consultant to -- to finish their bridge plans, where we might be waiting on a right-of-way issue, or it just kind of depends on -- on a certain project.

But, you know, a lot of the time, what -- what really gets us is if -- So the -- the 30 Townships -- you know, Bloomington is like centrally located in McClain County. But the surrounding Townships around the -- around the area, and so they have a little more tax base, and so they have a lot more money to do things with.

And so they'll want to resurface a road. So then they'll come in and want -- want us to that for them, you know, do the engineering for them. Well, those -- those projects seem to kind of, you know, fall by the wayside, because we're concentrating on the County projects. So you've got to -- got to try to keep those -- you know, those going and -- and guys working on those. We're moving those in the right direction.

So I wouldn't say it's necessarily performance measures, but it -- it -- it's kind of -- you know, we kind of have a list of things. And when we -- since we only have, you know, nine people on the staff, we kind of know -- we try and space out the projects so they can get all done in -- in one year.

Q. That makes sense. And as a follow-up, who -- who handling your grant writing? Do
1 you -- do you handle grants?
2 A Usually me or the assistant county engineer. We don't -- We apply for some types
3 of grants through -- through the highway department. I like we have what they call a
4 tarpen (phonetic) grant from semi-truck traffic, or there might be like a high-tech grant, which is an enhancement grant for bike trails. So we do -- we do all that at the staff level and then -- and then submit those types of applications through the -- through IDOT.
5 Q Okay.
6 BY MR. CARL:
7 Q Tell us about -- One of the biggest changes in a work situation that you have had and how you've coped with it.
8 A Um --
9 BY MS. HUDSON:
10 Q Good change or bad.
11 A Meaning -- What's that?
12 Q I said good change or bad change.
13 A I said good change or bad change. Person -- like personnel level or actual like construction project level or --
14 BY MR. CARL:
15 Q Any -- anything that justifies as big change.
16 A Okay.
17 BY MS. HUDSON:
18 Q Responsibilities, whatever.
19 A Just --
20 BY MS. LUDGOOD:
21 Q Like going from resident engineer to being the boss.
22 A Just --
23 BY MS. HUDSON:
24 Q Yeah.
25 A Sure. Yeah. Okay. That's where I was going to go. So the -- the previous county engineer was -- before I became county engineer was there for about six years. And we were close to the same age. And then he took -- he ended up taking a job with -- still with McClain County, but he went to the county administration.
26 Q So -- so he left. And then so basically I was named interim county engineer and then became the county engineer. So it was -- as county -- as assistant county engineer, I was involved -- you know, he kept me involved in a lot -- a lot of the information.
27 A Okay.
28 BY MS. LUDGOOD:
29 Q My -- my final question: How do you provide feedback to your employees, and how do you currently recognize their achievements?
30 A So -- we do -- when we do the yearly reviews, and I -- you know, so if, you know, they've done a good job throughout the year and they've improved on -- on the things that I wanted them to work on the year before, you know, I -- I make sure I tell them that.
31 A You know, it's hard for it being a government agency to really do a lot more. I mean, I try to take them out to lunch and -- and -- and make them -- encourage them that they did a good job and -- and -- and, you know, try to at least, you know, recognize -- like we had a -- we just hired a -- a project manager here last spring. And he just out of the school. And I think he was having -- having some issues with his confidence. He just want sure of himself out on the job with contractor and that. And he actually posted some stuff on Facebook. And it -- it got back to me. And so, you know, I sat him down and just kind of reassured him that I had the confidence in him to do the job that I knew -- that I knew that he could do it. And he needed to develop his confidence, that we were
here to support him however we could. But, you know, putting it on Facebook doesn't help overall view of county or, you know, things like that.

So I addressed one thing, but just to reassure him that, you know, we're -- we're here to help him however we can and, you know, try to grow his confidence. And I think -- it seems like this winter he -- he's seems to be more comfortable and getting -- getting in the swing of things with -- with being here at the highway department.

BY MS. HUDSON:
Q I think you kind of answered the question I was going to ask about how you would handle conflicts with employees. So I think you covered that. So I think that -- I think I've -- I'm satisfied.

MS. HUDSON: Do you have any questions of us?

MR. STOKES: I just have a couple. So how -- how long was the previous county engineer there?

MS. HUDSON: 47 years.

MR. STOKES: Wow.

MS. HUDSON: And it was the -- the positions were combined, public works director and county engineer. And he oversaw all of that operation.

You have to -- I mean, he -- he grew into it over those 47 years. He just didn't assume that. It just sort grew and evolved.

MR. STOKES: Okay.

MS. HUDSON: But, you know, this size county and the responsibility -- the reorganization that we did actually separated those positions. They work very closely together, but they actually are separate and apart. And both will report directly to the commission.

MR. STOKES: Okay. And then so I was kind of curious about -- I notice in the application and online about the -- the Pay-As-You-Go program. So that -- so is that like a referendum that was done through -- through county?

MS. LUDGOOD: It was authorized by state legislature. And it allow us every two or four years to pick a set of roads. And the public votes to tax themselves a certain millage to fund those roads that are in that program. And we used to do that -- let's see. For a long time, it was just every four years. Now we've started pretty much doing it every two years. Those are typically resurfacing projects.

You're doing what we call a grade, drain, base, pave, you know, bringing one from a dirt road to a paved, it typically takes a lot longer it get that done, longer than two years.

But, yeah, but it is a program where the citizens vote to tax themselves -- assess themselves, not tax, assess themselves that millage to pay for our programs.

MS. HUDSON: It's six and a half mills. And -- and it be in existence, the particular program for Mobile County -- the actual -- the revenue has been -- was first passed, I think, in 1924 or something. But it was folded into the Pay-As-You-Go program in around 1977; is that correct?

So it's been in existence that long. And the citizens continue to vote for it, because they have
so much confidence in it. It is the envy of all the other counties in the State of Alabama. We are the only County. With that program. It has allowed us to be very proactive with road building and resurfacing. And, so, we're real proud of that program.

MR. STOKES: Sure. I read that and I was like that is -- that's excellent.

MS. LUDGOOD: A good part of the money is spent inside our municipalities. So we work with them. They identify their priority streets.

And it -- it's not a set amount. It just kind of a floating amount, depending on the size -- the size of program. But all of them have streets, are able to participate. So that -- that helps us supplement their budget. Because they are like your townships. They don't have enough money to do what they need to do. So the Pay-As-You-Go is as critical for them as it is for us.

MS. HUDSON: But they contribute to it with that six and a half mills. Everybody throughout the county with an ad valorem tax contributes to that.

So that's why --

MR. STOKES: Okay. Sure.

MS. HUDSON: You know, that's -- that's why we try to -- to distribute out, you know.

MR. STOKES: Sure.

MS. HUDSON: As well as the unincorporated areas. So, anyway, any other questions?

MR. STOKES: No, I don't believe so. I appreciate the opportunity.

MR. HUDSON: Well, certainly. We -- This concludes -- today concludes our interviews. And so we will establish a plan on how we will go forward with a selection. And then we anticipate having that done very, very quickly.

MR. STOKES: Okay.

MS. HUDSON: And we will back in touch with you to let you know.

MR. STOKES: Okay.

MS. HUDSON: Okay? Thank you.

MR. STOKES: Thank you. And I appreciate it.

MR. CARL: Thank you, Jerry.

MS. HUDSON: Have a good afternoon.

MR. STOKES: All right.

MS. HUDSON: Bye-bye. All right.

(Skype interview with James Crane concluded.)

3:37 p.m.

MS. HUDSON: I did want to -- Before we adjourn, and -- and I have a suggestion going forward on how we would handle this. And you let me know, you know, if you -- if you agree or disagree or what -- if you think -- have another idea.

But in our -- on our -- during our meeting Monday, if -- if you know at that particular time who -- And these are positions that you would have as your number 1 choice, we can each state our number 1 choice. And, I mean, if. If one of us -- if two of us have as the same choice, one has as a second choice, I mean, if we want to discuss, you know, and -- and see if we can reach a consensus.

But I think, you know, it -- like everything else we do, it comes down to a majority.
MR. CARL: Oh, yeah. That --
that goes without saying.

MS. HUDSON: But, the first
thing -- I mean, if -- if there's
discussion -- because I tell you
what, we -- we have some great
talent here. And -- and there are
several people that interviewed
for -- for both of these positions
that I think would you do a great
job in working for us. But, you
know, unfortunately, we can only
select one.

MR. CARL: Does our -- does our
vote necessarily have to be
public?

MS. HUDSON: Well, I've
asked -- I've asked about that.
And I talked to Don about it. Do
you want --

MS. JONES: I mean, I think a
vote does, or does it --

MS. LUDGOOD: I -- I think the
vote does -- we have question
about -- because the character and
good name?

MS. HUDSON: I mean, do you
think it -- it rises to the level?
Because when I asked Jay, he
didn't seem -- I mean, we can
broach that again with him.

MS. LUDGOOD: I'd just like to
know that. Because if we are
going -- saying one person is --

MR. CARL: Can we not on paper
maybe narrow it down to two each?

MS. HUDSON: Well, I had asked
about that. And I don't know if
that constitutes --

MR. CARL: I mean, I want to
go back --

MS. HUDSON: -- meeting, you
know.

MR. CARL: For my own benefit,
I'm going to go back. And I know
the ones that I'm going to discard

for whatever reason. And then
it's going to be matter of one or
two in each category. Some -- one
is actually going to be three.
But if I've got to narrow that
down to two, you know, I think
maybe putting in writing and
comparing it would -- would help
all of us.

MS. HUDSON: Well, I'm
agreeable to whatever is legally
allowable, you know, as far as
that goes. I -- I think, you
know, our attorney needs to --

MR. CARL: He can --

MS. HUDSON: We need some
legal -- we need an umbrella, some
legal guidance here. And I think
hopefully maybe tomorrow we can
obtain that.

MR. CARL: He's got a wedding.

MS. HUDSON: Well, not all
day. He's going to be free

sometimes or other. We get in
touch with him. But we -- we need
to know if it's -- so -- so if
it's allowable to narrow that
selection down with like a top two
in each -- for each
position and -- and -- and --

MR. CARL: We can peek that
back through Donna and see how
close we are.

MS. LUDGOOD: Could -- could
we set our selection date at April
9? And than that would give us
eough time to figure out what our
options are in terms of--

MS. HUDSON: Is that the
next--

MS. LUDGOOD: Yeah. It's
April 9.

MS. HUDSON: That's our next
Monday meeting after --

MS. LUDGOOD: No.

MS. HUDSON: -- after Monday?
MS. LUDGOOD: Uh-huh.

MS. JONES: If you wanted to
do it in the -- if you wanted to
do it sooner, you could do it in
conference before. So whenever
the next meeting is after that,
y'all could make your decision if
you're ready.

MS. HUDSON: I was -- you
know, I was thinking if -- if --
if we had to state publicly who we
were supporting, that, you know
the sooner as opposed to later --

MR. CARL: I don't see how
that -- that would be an issue.

MS. JONES: I mean, I think
that you -- the candidate --

MR. CARL: I mean, if we -- if
we if two of us agree in whatever
form, obviously through -- through
our staff, we know it's going to
be that person -- or three agree,
I mean, it's that person. We just

make that announcement. I think
if we get up and we start debating
who and what publicly, we're
going to hurt some feelings.

MS. HUDSON: I -- I --
that's --

MR. CARL: And that's what I'm
more worried about.

MS. HUDSON: And I don't know
that we have. We could --

MR. CARL: It's at least --

MS. HUDSON: We don't have to
state our --

MR. CARL: -- four of these
people --

MS. HUDSON: -- top two for
the position. We just state our
top one. And -- and if we come up
with three different people,
obviously, we're going to have
to -- we may even have to wait
until April, if that is the case.

MS. JONES: Well, I mean, you
could, if you --

MR. CARL: We could poll that
before.

MS. JONES: -- wanted to.
Submit it to HR. Each of your
submit your top candidates. And
then if there are two that are the
same, I could tell you all.

MS. HUDSON: You could come
and -- and sit with us and
let us know if we -- we have a
majority or a consensus, either
one. But -- but it's -- I mean, I
just didn't want that take away
the option of any kind of a
discussion if -- if there was one
that was different than the other
two, if -- if -- if you wanted an
opportunity to discuss. That's
why I'm bringing it up.

MR. CARL: I really don't want
to debate people in -- in.

MS. HUDSON: Okay.

MR. CARL: We've got to work
with four of them.

MS. HUDSON: I don't disagree
with you.

MR. CARL: You know, at least
two them are going to get their
feelings hurt.

MS. HUDSON: Right. I don't
disagree with you.

MR. CARL: I mean --

MS. HUDSON: I just want to
make sure that we're kind of all
on the same page. You know, I
think can --

MS. LUDGOOD: Because we have
five internal candidate.

MS. HUDSON: But, then again,
you know, we need to make sure we
don't step over the line as far as
open meeting goes.

MR. CARL: Oh, yeah. I mean,
we're not got to --

MS. JONES: We just have to
1 get legal to give us some
2 guidance.
3 MR. CARL: Three of us get
4 together and do it.
5 MS. HUDSON: So if that's --
6 if that's acceptable, if -- and
7 how much -- I don't know how much
8 time you need. If you want submit
9 it, your top -- submit your top
10 candidates for each of the -- for
11 each of the city position to
12 Donna.
13 MR. CARL: I'm leaving town.
14 You'll have mine before five.
15 MS. HUDSON: Today?
16 MR. CARL: Yes.
17 MS. HUDSON: Okay. All right.
18 You'll have mine, too.
19 MR. CARL: It'll take it. It
20 takes a week --
21 MS. HUDSON: And it's fine if
22 you need more time. Don't --
23 don't make us feel --
24 MS. LUDGOOD: Are you saying
25 top one or two?
26 MS. HUDSON: Top one?
27 MS. LUDGOOD: All right.
28 Okay.
29 MS. JONES: Then we I get
30 those, then I can let y'all know
31 who the top who the top --
32 MS. HUDSON: I mean --
33 MS. JONES: If there were
34 two -- I can just -- yeah, I could
35 also you know who the -- if there
36 was one that got two votes.
37 MS. HUDSON: Sure.
38 MS. JONES: Or all three votes
39 or how --
40 MS. HUDSON: Yeah.
41 MR. CARL: Or three -- you got
42 three votes for three different
43 people.
44 MS. JONES: Three different
45 ones.
46 MS. HUDSON: If we got three
47 different ones, then we've got to
48 go back to drawing board.
49 MS. JONES: Yeah. I may mean
50 we have to have another meeting to
51 discuss it.
52 MS. LUDGOOD: For me if there
53 were two and it was -- my one was
54 the outlier, I will make it
55 unanimous.
56 MR. CARL: I think that's an
57 excellent idea, the same way y'all
58 did on the RESTORE Council. Even
59 though I know it probably didn't
60 feel that way, it still wound up a
61 that way.
62 MS. HUDSON: I think that's
63 good. So we'll give that to you.
64 You check back with us. Do you --
65 do you have any idea how long you
66 would need?
67 MS. LUDGOOD: I can know -- I
68 mean, what's today?
69 MS. HUDSON: Today is --
70 MR. CARL: Friday -- Thursday,
71 Thursday.
72 MS. LUDGOOD: Tomorrow. I
73 will give it to you tomorrow.
74 MS. HUDSON: So potentially we
75 could vote on it on Monday, if
76 we -- I mean, there's no point in
77 holding it over if we can reach a
78 decision. And they are ready.
79 They want --
80 MR. CARL: I'm ready to get
81 this -- put this to bed.
82 MS. HUDSON: So get back with
83 us tomorrow when you get --
84 MS. JONES: I'll -- I'll be in
85 a little bit late in the morning,
86 but I should hopefully be in by
87 10:30.
88 MS. HUDSON: Okay. And so
89 Monday we can -- we can have it on
90 the agenda. And in the meantime,
91 what is process for letting the
92 other -- letting the -- Before it
goes on the agenda -- I'm just --
what would be the appropriate
thing to do in terms of notifying
people before it goes public like
that?

MS. JONES: Well, the way I do
other candidates -- Of course,
they're not usually public that
everybody knows, but we would
notify the one that we selected
that they are the -- but you are
going to do it in a meeting --
and then we would send letters out
to those who didn't. And they
wouldn't know until after the
fact.

MS. HUDSON: Well, then if you
could be ready with notifications
to go out immediately, whether it
was e-mail or wherever, so that
they are not hearing it
secondhand, because we do have
four people -- five people --

MS. JONES: Well, if they come
to the meeting, they are going
to -- to know.

MS. HUDSON: Well, in case
they aren't, I mean, just for
protocol's sake.

MS. JONES: I will be ready.
We will send it out right after
the meeting.

MS. HUDSON: Okay.
MS. JONES: Make sure that
we're ready to do that.

MS. HUDSON: And like I said,
1 -- I -- I think that the -- the
qualifications of really
everybody, you know, it was
impressive. And -- and I think we
had some really good candidates.
We did. We had good candidates.

MR. CARL: I'm thinking the
snail stalker.

MS. HUDSON: With that said,
do we have -- is there anything

else before we adjourn? Any
motion to adjourn?

MS. LUDGOOD: So moved.
MR. CARL: Second.
MS. HUDSON: We stand
adjourned. Thank you all.

3:47 p.m.

PROCEEDINGS CONCLUDED

CERTIFICATE

STATE OF ALABAMA
COUNTY OF CONECUH

I hereby certify that the above and
foregoing transcript of proceedings was
taken down by me in machine shorthand, and
the questions and answers thereto were
transcribed by means of computer-aided
transcription, and that the foregoing
represents a true and correct transcript
of the proceedings given by said witness
upon said hearing.

I further certify that I am neither
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the action, nor am I in anywise interested
in the result of said cause.

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