

Minutes of the Transportation Committee

The Transportation Committee of the McLean County Board met on Tuesday, September 7, 2004 at 8:00 a.m., in Room 404 of the Government Center, 115 E. Washington Street, Bloomington, Illinois.

Members Present: Chairman Bass, Members Owens, Cavallini, Dean, and O'Connor

Members Absent: Member Hoselton

Other Members Present: None

Staff Members Present: Mr. John Zeunik, County Administrator;
Ms. Lucretia Wherry, Recording Secretary,
County Administrator's Office

Department Heads Present: Mr. Jack Mitchell, County Engineer;
Mr. Eric Schmitt, Assistant County Engineer

Others Present: Ms. Jennifer Sicks, Transportation Planner,
Regional Planning Commission; Ms. Christine
Brauer, Regional Planning Commission

Chairman Bass called the meeting to order at 8:10 a.m

Chairman Bass presented the Minutes of the August 3, 2004 meeting for approval.

Motion by Owens/O'Connor to approve the Minutes of the August 3, 2004 meeting of the Transportation Committee. Motion carried.

Chairman Bass requested that the Committee move ahead on the agenda to the letting results from September 1, 2004 for County and Township projects. Chairman Bass asked Mr. Jack Mitchell, County Engineer, to present this item.

Mr. Mitchell stated that on September 1, 2004 two lettings were held. The first letting for the Dry Grove Road project was successfully bid by McLean County Asphalt. The bid was 1 percent under the Highway Department's bid estimate.

Ladd Construction Company was the successful bidder for the Non-MFT Bridge Deck Repair project. The bid is 2.4 percent over the bid estimate. However, after reviewing the bid estimate, an error in the estimated number of laborers needed was discovered. Correcting this error brings the bids in line with the Department's bid estimate.

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Motion by Owens/Cavallini to recommend approval of the bids as presented, from the September 1, 2004 bid letting for County Projects.

Mr. Owens stated that he was glad to see several bidders submitted bids on these project.

Motion carried.

Chairman Bass asked Mr. Mitchell to present the next item on the agenda, which is being presented for the Committee's information. The County is currently working with the City of Bloomington on a Jurisdictional Transfer Agreement for Ireland Grove Road.

Mr. Mitchell informed the Committee that, for years, the Highway Department has wanted to transfer jurisdiction for roads on the west side of Bloomington to the City of Bloomington. The roads are Bloomington Heights Road from Route 9 to Washington Street, Six Points Road and Oakland Avenue from Six Points to Euclid. The County currently maintains all of the aforementioned roads. If the County agrees to pay the City the estimated cost of the improvements for Ireland Grove Road, the City will accept Jurisdictional Transfer of the three aforementioned roads in addition to Ireland Grove Road from the current City limits in its entirety. Euclid Street would also need to be included in the transfer. Mr. Mitchell informed the Committee these changes were proposed after the draft proposal was included in the agenda packet. The former agreement includes Ireland Grove Road to Steid Drive only and did not include Euclid Street.

Ms. O'Connor asked if the County is still paying the \$220,000.00 for the repairs for Ireland Grove Road. Mr. Mitchell replied the County will still be paying that amount, but the County will not be footing the bill for maintenance for Bloomington Heights Road, Six Points Road and Oakland Avenue This project will probably be done as other similar projects have been done in the past. The City will pay for the preliminary engineering and the right-of-way. The County will then match the Federal Aid Urban Funds. Mr. Dean asked why the County could receive Federal Aid Urban Funds for repairs to Six-Points Road but not to Ireland Grove Road. Mr. Mitchell explained that there is a limited amount of Federal Aid urban Funds that must be divided by the County and Bloomington/Normal for projects each year. The money allotted this year is being given to the County for repairs to Old 150.

Mr. Owens noted that the City of Bloomington does not bid for asphalt cost as frequently as the County does. Mr. Mitchell explained that our asphalt costs are lower because County projects generally encompass a larger area of work. The City has to work in smaller areas at a time to insure that traffic is not disrupted

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too much. This drives up the cost of the City projects since the City is not able to bid for large amounts of asphalt at once. The County also has more competitive bidders.

Ms. O'Connor asked if the Dover Ridge Subdivision, which was the topic of a letter to the editor in the weekend paper, is on township roads. Mr. Mitchell replied that the Dover Ridge Subdivision is on township roads. The County responsibility lies in the inspection process. The County does not have any budgetary responsibilities toward the roads in the Dover Ridge Subdivision.

Mr. Mitchell apologized to the Committee stating that he needed to leave the meeting early. Mr. Eric Scmitt, Assistant County Engineer, remained to answer questions.

Chairman Bass presented the bills for approval. Chairman Bass informed the Committee that there is a letter from Ms. Jackie Dozier, County Auditor, recommending payment of the bills.

Mr. Cavallini asked how the County is able to retrieve funds from bills paid if the bills are not approved at the Committee level. Mr. Zeunik explained that the Auditor reviews every invoice in order to be certain that the items purchased follow the County Boards policies regarding purchases. If there are any questions regarding invoices, the Auditor's Office returns the invoice to the Department Head. All matters are resolved prior to being presented to the Committee for its review and approval.

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Motion by O'Connor/Cavallini to recommend approval of the bills for August, 2004 as submitted by the County Auditor. Motion carried.

Chairman Bass stated that the next item on the agenda is the status of roadwork on County projects. Mr. Schmitt stated that the contract work is complete on Randolph Road. The County needs to complete seeding. The Randolph Road Bloomington-Normal Water Reclamation District Project is complete as well with seeding needing to be done.

On the Weston-Colfax Road, the contract work is complete. Culvert extension work needs to be completed.

The Section V Bridge project is being paved and should be open by the end of the week.

The contract work on the Towanda-Gridley Road is complete as are the guardrails.

Shoulder working is being completed on the P.J. Keller Highway. Once the shoulder work is complete, the guardrails will be installed.

Stringtown Road is under construction with dirt work to be completed next week. Curbing should be done this week and hot mix by then end of the month.

Mr. Cavallini asked Mr. Schmitt to explain the new guardrail standards. Mr. Schmitt replied that the guardrails used to extend out in a one foot flare. The new requirement is for the guardrails to flare out 4 feet on the approach side. This change increases safety. Mr. Cavallini asked if this is a State or a Federal Standard. Mr. Schmitt replied that it is a State Standard modeled after Federal Guidelines.

Chairman Bass informed the Committee that they could find the budget report in their packets. Mr. Owens asked, on page 19, what is the line item Property T. Mr. Zeunik explained that the Property T. is the property taxes on the Route 9 property purchased by the County. Since there is a tenant farmer, the County has to pay property taxes on the land. However, Mr. Zeunik stated that he is unsure as to why the line item is over budget. Mr. Cavallini suggested that maybe the increase in the property taxes is due to the quadrennial reassessment. The Committee discussed that the value of farmland is beginning to rise after decreasing the last few year. Mr. Owens asked to see the agreement the County has with the tenant farmer. Mr. Zeunik replied that he would pull the agreement for the Committee's review at the September Transportation Committee Meeting.

Ms. O'Connor stated that the Seasonal Employees line item is over budget. Mr. Zeunik responded that the Highway Department estimates as much as possible as to how many seasonal positions can be charge to the Motor Fuel Tax (MFT) Fund. However, until projects are started, it is not known what function the seasonal workers will do. The Highway Department is still well under budget on the seasonal help line items in other Highway Funds. The funds will be redistributed for the seasonal help line item.

The Committee reviewed the map of the Zilkha Wind Farm. Mr. Schmitt stated that at this point, nothing formal has been presented to Building and Zoning, although Zilkha has met with the Building and Zoning Department. The Highway Department is working with the Zilkha Wind Farm on a Road Use Agreement. Zilkha has reached agreements with the land owners, but does not have an agreement in place with any utilities or wholesale provider. Mr. Zeunik added that as part of the Federal Budget, tax incentives for wind farms proposed to be were eliminated. Utilities may not be as interested in investing in wind farms if the tax incentive is lost.

Mr. Owens asked if Zilkha would have to meet with the communities in which the wind towers would be placed. Mr. Zeunik explained that the Zilkha wind farms would have to apply for a special use permit in the agricultural district and seek approval before the Zoning Board of Appeals. Notice would be give to the adjacent property owners as well as in the communities in which the wind towers would be placed. Mr. Zeunik added that Illinois State University has received a grant to study the effects of wind towers.

Ms. Jennifer Sicks, Regional Planning Commission, stated that Zilkha has a website, www.zilkha.com. Zilkha refers to the wind farm as the Arrowsmith Wind Farm.

Chairman Bass asked when the installation of the wind towers would begin. Mr. Schmitt replied that he is not sure in what order the towers would be placed. The towers would be installed in 3 phases.

The Committee reviewed the Bloomington-Normal City Limit Map. Ms. O'Connor asked if any safety devices are going to be placed at the Linden Street/Norhtown Road intersection. The intersection has increasing volumes of traffic due to Nomal Community East opening and the population of Hudson growing. Mr. Schmitt replied that he would speak to Mr. Mitchell regarding the intersection. Ms. O'Connor stated that even flashing lights cautioning drivers to stop would help. Mr. Owens suggested that the County purchase a small portion of the land near the intersection so that the County could clear the ditches of weeds on the sides of the road and not have crops so near the intersection. Mr. Schmitt stated that the County will be ridding the ditches of the cattails by installing tiles.

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Ms. Sicks said that the Town of Normal is waiting for Federal Funds to improve the intersection. Chairman Bass suggested that the Committee write a letter to the Town of Normal voicing the County's concerns. Ms. Sicks suggested that she call the Town of Normal to discuss the situation. The Committee agreed to allow Ms. Sicks to speak to the Town of Normal on the County's behalf. Ms. Sicks stated that she would report back to the Committee at the September Transportation Committee Meeting.

There being nothing further to come before the Committee at this time, Chairman Bass stated that he would entertain a motion to adjourn.

Motion by Owens/Dean to adjourn
at 9:07 a.m. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Lucretia Wherry
Recording Secretary

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