

## **Minutes of the Transportation Committee**

The Transportation Committee of the McLean County Board met on Tuesday, April 6, 2004 at 8:00 a.m., in Room 700 of the Law and Justice Center, 104 West Front Street, Bloomington, Illinois.

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

Members Absent: Member Hoselton and Cavallini

Staff Members Present: Mr. John Zeunik, County Administrator; Mr. Terry Lindberg, Assistant County Administrator; Ms. Christine Northcutt, Recording Secretary, County Administrator's Office

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

Others Present: Ms. Christine Brauer, Regional Planning Commission; Ms. Jennifer Sicks, Regional Planning Commission; Mr. Barry Reeves

Chairman Bass called the meeting to order at 8:06 a.m. Chairman Bass presented the Minutes of the March 2, 2004 meeting for approval.

Motion by Owens/O'Connor to approve the Minutes of the March 2, 2004 meeting of the Transportation Committee. Motion carried.

Chairman Bass presented the bills for approval.

Mr. Eric Schmitt, Assistant County Engineer handed the bills to the Committee. Chairman Bass informed the Committee that there is a letter from Ms. Jackie Dozier, County Auditor, recommending payment of the bills.

Mr. Owens asked if the County Highway Department has an account with Lowes. Mr. Schmitt replied that the County Highway Department does have a credit account at Lowes.

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

Chairman Bass informed the Committee that the next item on the agenda is appearance by members of the public. Chairman Bass introduced Mr. Barry Reeves. Mr. Reeves is appearing before the Committee today to request approval for an 80,000-pound weight limit on Towanda-Gridley Road. Chairman Bass informed the Committee that the corresponding item on the agenda is Item 5G. Mr. Schmitt informed the Committee that as the memo states, the Highway Department plans to widen and resurface the Towanda-Gridley Road from the I-55 Interchange north to County Highway 12. Mr. Schmitt informed the Committee that Mr. Reeve's mother's farm is ½ mile north of the interchange. Mr. Reeve's request is for an 80,000-pound access to the north drive on this property. Mr. Schmitt noted that, typically, the Highway Department recommends that the person making this type of request pay 25% of the cost. In this case, the recommendation is that Mr. Reeves pays 50% of the cost. Mr. Schmitt explained that the reason that 50% is being recommended, rather than 25%, is because this particular request benefits only one party. Requests made in the past have benefited several parties, such as the grain elevators or other residents.

Mr. Schmitt informed the Committee that in 2000, there was a fire which damaged a bridge in the Martin Road District. After a police investigation, it was determined that the fire originated from farmers who were burning ditches. This fire took place on Mr. Reeves' farm. Mr. Schmitt informed the Committee that, as per the memo in the Committee's agenda packet, it was determined that Mr. Reeves portion of the damages to the bridge totals \$12,506.55. Mr. Schmitt advised the Committee that the Highway Department suggests that before the

County enters into an agreement with Mr. Reeves, the losses from the fire should be collected. Mr. Schmitt noted that Mr. Brian Hug, Civil Assistant State's Attorney, is working on filing suit against Mr. Reeves' insurance carrier.

Mr. Owens asked if the road improvements could be made without upgrading the weight limit. Mr. Schmitt replied that the road improvements can be made, but the weight limits would remain at the standard (73,280-pound) weight limit. Mr. Owens asked why it has taken four years to bring a suit against Mr. Reeves' insurance company. Secondly, Mr. Owens stated that he would like to see a judgement or partial payment on the fire damage in place before the County enters into a new agreement with Mr. Reeves. Ms. O'Connor asked if Mr. Reeves could be asked to pay his portion of the proposed work up front. Mr. Schmitt responded that the Highway Department could put together an estimate for Mr. Reeves to pay, but the final tally will not be known until the work is done.

Chairman Bass informed the Committee that he feels that this item should be tabled so that the Committee can seek advice from Mr. Hug. Ms. O'Connor asked Mr. Reeves if he would like to respond to this matter. Mr. Reeves stated that he has spoken with Mr. Jack Mitchell, County Engineer, several times about this issue. Mr. Reeves informed the Committee that he has a copy of the police report, which states that the evidence is inconclusive as to the origin of the fire. Mr. Reeves states that the report states that there were no witnesses and that there were several fires that spring due to very dry weather. Mr. Reeves informed the Committee that he did have some employees burn some ditches in that area, but the employees were advised to stay with the fire until it was out. Mr. Reeves informed the Committee that he has been advised by his insurance agent that denial letters were sent to the County stating that the police report was inconclusive. The fire could have been caused by a number of other things. Mr. Reeves stated that if he and his insurance company knew for certain that he was directly responsible for the damages, his insurance company would submit payment immediately, but that is not the case.

Mr. Dean asked Mr. Schmitt how he arrived at the figure of \$12,506.55. Mr. Schmitt replied that the Highway Department had to replace a portion of an abutment with steel sheet piling that was damaged by the fire. Mr. Schmitt stated that the contract price was divided by lineal feet. Mr. Dean asked if there was a whole new structure put in to place. Mr. Schmitt replied that the original structure was repaired.

Chairman Bass stated that, with the Committee's concurrence, this issue will be tabled to the next meeting of the Transportation Committee or until Mr. Hug can investigate this matter more thoroughly. Mr. Owens requested that the Committee be provided a copy of the aforementioned police report. Mr. Schmitt responded that he will provide that report to the Committee.

Mr. Dean stated that he feels that these two issues are separate and should not be linked. Mr. Dean suggested that the Committee move forward with the 80,000-pound weight limit request. Mr. Dean stated that if Mr. Reeves would agree to pay for his portion of the proposed work up front, the County will not be at risk. Ms. O'Connor asked Mr. Reeves if he would agree to pay his 50% share of the work in advance. Mr. Reeves stated that he has been given a copy of the proposal and that he would have no problem paying his 50% share of the estimated cost up front.

Chairman Bass stated that he would prefer to hold off on any action until the Committee has more information. Chairman Bass thanked Mr. Reeves for his time.

Chairman Bass stated that the next item on the agenda is a request for approval of letting results for County and Township projects. Mr. Schmitt informed the Committee that the letting took place on March 31, 2004 in Downs. Mr. Schmitt stated the purpose of the letting is to set prices on gravel for when the Townships go to the gravel pit to pick up gravel. Mr. Schmitt advised the Committee that the Highway Department recommends acceptance of the bids received. Chairman Bass asked if the Highway Department is recommending acceptance of all three of the bids for the Township work so that one of the three could be called on as needed. Mr. Schmitt replied that is correct. Mr. Owens asked what is the low bid on the letting for the bridge work. Mr. Schmitt replied that Stark was the low bidder at \$5972178.65. Mr. Schmidt noted that the bids are actually higher this time around because the steel market is currently very tough.

Motion by O'Connor/Dean to recommend approval of all bids as presented, from the March 31, 2004 bid letting for County and Township Projects as presented. Motion carried.

Chairman Bass stated that the next item on the agenda is a request for approval of a Bridge Petition for Danvers Township. Mr. Schmitt informed the Committee that this is a standard Bridge Petition in which the Township petitions the County for 50% of the cost of a bridge reconstruction.

Motion by Dean/Owens to recommend approval of a Bridge Petition for Danvers Township Non-MFT Culvert. Motion carried.

Chairman Bass stated that the next item is a Bridge Petition for Gridley Road District, bridge deck repair. Mr. Schmitt informed the Committee that this is bridge that has a timber deck in Gridley Township. It was found to be severely

rotten. The most inexpensive alternative available is to replace the deck with timber. Mr. Owens asked why the County would be replacing the timber with timber. Mr. Owens stated that he was under the impression that timber structures were to be replaced with steel. Mr. Schmitt stated that the County policy is the replace timber bridge pilings with steel. Mr. Schmitt commented that this is a timber deck, and is a very low volume road. Chairman Bass informed the Committee that the County is replacing all of the timber piling in the County as needed.

Motion by Owens/O'Connor to recommend approval  
of a Bridge Petition for the Gridley Road District  
for a Bridge Deck Repair. Motion carried.

Chairman Bass stated that the next item is a State of Illinois, Illinois Commerce Commission Stipulated Agreement for the Danvers-Yuton Road. Mr. Schmitt advised the Committee that the Illinois Commerce Commission would like to install gates and flashing lights as a warning on County Highway 18 and Danvers-Yuton Road. Chairman Bass asked if this was by the railroad tracks. Mr. Schmitt replied that is correct. The lights will be for the railroad crossing. Mr. Schmitt stated that the County would pay 10% of the total cost, which is \$16,660.00. Mr. Owens asked if there were two sets of tracks which will have the flashing lights added. Mr. Schmitt replied that there are two crossings and that the County will only be paying for 10% of the cost for the lights on County Highway 18. The other road is a Township Road. Mr. Dean asked who will perform this work. Mr. Schmitt responded that the Illinois Commerce Commission and Norfolk and Southern Railroad will be responsible for contracting to have this work completed.

Motion by O'Connor/Dean to recommend approval  
of an Illinois Commerce Commission Stipulated  
Agreement No. 1088 for Danvers-Yuton Road.  
Motion carried.

Chairman Bass informed the Committee that the next item is a request for approval of a Resolution for Motor Fuel Tax Improvement on McLean Road, County Highway 44. Mr. Schmitt stated that this is a request for improvements for McLean Road which begins at Route 136 and goes ½ mile north through McLean and then over to County Highway 59 (Stanford-McLean Road). This plan is to resurface the road via standard overlay and area reflective crack control. Mr. Schmitt informed the Committee that the estimated cost is \$325,000.00. Mr. Owens asked if there would be any Township contribution to this project. Mr. Schmitt replied that this project is all County Highway and will be funded 100% by Motor Fuel Tax Funds. Mr. Schmitt stated that the cost

projections are high because it includes a lot of in-town work which includes manholes and water valves being adjusted. There will also be paving of driveways to that access the County Highway.

Motion by Owens/O'Connor to recommend  
Approval of a Resolution for McLean Road,  
County Highway 44, MFT Improvement,  
Sec. 03-00149-02-RS. Motion carried.

Chairman Bass stated that the next item on the agenda is a request for approval of a Resolution for Motor Fuel Tax Improvements to Colfax-Weston Road, County Highway 13. Mr. Schmitt advised the Committee that the proposed improvements will begin at Colfax and go to County Highway 8, Lexington-Straun Road. Mr. Schmitt stated that this work was originally slated for Fiscal Year 2005, but due to changes in the availability of funds, the Highway Department would recommend proceeding with this particular project now. Mr. Schmitt stated that the Stanford Road and Stringtown Road resurfacing were slated for this year and have been pushed back to next year instead. Mr. Dean asked what will be done on the Colfax-Weston Road. Mr. Schmitt replied that it is a resurface much like what is proposed for McLean Road. Mr. Schmitt advised that the intersection on 165 by Colfax will also be reconstructed. Mr. Owens asked how many miles of resurfacing are involved in the Colfax-Weston Road as compared to the Stanford Road and Stringtown Road projects. Mr. Schmitt replied that the Colfax-Weston project is 4.5 miles and the Stanford Road and Stringtown Road together would be 4.5 miles. Mr. Schmitt stated that the Colfax-Weston project does not have the in-town work that the Stanford Road project will include. Mr. Schmitt noted that the cost of the Colfax-Weston road is estimated at \$950,000.00.

Motion by Owens/O'Connor to recommend approval  
of a Resolution for Colfax-Weston Road for Motor Fuel  
Tax Improvements, Sec 04-00130-09-RS. Motion carried.

Chairman Bass stated that concludes the Committee's items for action. The rest of the items are for the Committee's information. Chairman Bass stated that there is no change in the road work status. Chairman Bass directed the Committee's attention to a letter that was received from the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) regarding Interchanges on 1-55 with Shirley, Towanda, and Lexington. Chairman Bass informed the Committee that IDOT has informed the County that they have maintained these intersections in error. IDOT has informed the County that they will no longer be maintaining these intersections. Chairman Bass stated that the County has contacted local State representatives to see if there is anything that can be done about this, but most likely there is not.

Ms. O'Connor asked what will be done with the intersections in the mean time. Mr. Schmitt replied that these intersections are slated for reconstruction next year, but that is based on getting State funds. In the mean time the approaches to the bridges will be patched.

Chairman Bass stated that the next item is the Budget Report for the Committee's perusal. Chairman Bass stated that the next item on the agenda is regarding Towanda-Barnes Road Payment Agreement. Chairman Bass advised the Committee that this item should have been removed from the agenda. There are negotiations in progress and there will be more information available at a later time.

Chairman Bass informed the Committee that the last item on the agenda is the Yulton Culvert-Haas Agreement. Chairman Bass informed the Committee that some time ago, there was a considerable wash out at this culvert. There has been an agreement reached with Stark, who was contracted to perform the work on this project, McLean County and Mr. Dick Haas, who is the owner of the property. Mr. Dean stated that he wanted to commend Mr. Hug, who worked diligently to bring this situation to a resolution.

Chairman Bass asked if there was any other information for the Committee. Mr. Owens stated that he would like to give the Committee a quick update on his trip to the NACo Conference. Mr. Owens informed the Committee that the biggest issue currently being discussed at the Transportation Steering Committee is the reauthorization of the federal Transportation funding reauthorization bill, referred to as the T-21 legislation. The Senate has passed a \$310 billion spending bill. The House is considering a \$388 billion bill. Mr. Owens stated that there was one very interesting statistic brought forward during this meeting, for every \$1 billion in roadwork, 47,000 jobs are created.

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 8:50 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine Northcutt  
Recording Secretary