

Minutes of the Transportation Committee

The Transportation Committee of the County Board on May 6, 2003 at 7:30 a.m. at the Law and Justice Center, Room 700, 104 West Front Street, Bloomington, Illinois.

Members Present: Chairman Bass, Members Cavallini, Dean Rodgers, Hoselton and Owens

Members Absent: None

Staff Members Present: Mr. John Zeunik, County Administrator;
Ms. Lucretia Wherry, Administrator's Office;
Ms. Jennifer Sicks, Transportation Planner, Regional Planning Commission; Mr. Jack Mitchell, Highway Engineer;
Mr. Eric Schmitt, Assistant County Engineer

Others Present: Ms. Christine Brauer, Regional Planning Commission

Chairman Bass called the meeting to order at 7:36 a.m.

Chairman Bass presented the Minutes of the April 4, 2003 meeting for approval.

Motion by Hoselton/Owens to approve the minutes of the April 4, 2003 meeting of the Transportation Committee. Motion carried.

Mr. Jack Mitchell, McLean County Highway Engineer, introduced Mr. Eric Schmitt to the Committee Members. Mr. Schmitt is the new Assistant County Engineer.

Chairman Bass presented the bills for approval.

Mr. Hoselton noted an increase under the uniform line item. Mr. Mitchell stated that the new summer shirts were ordered and any replacement of the steel toe shoes worn by the Highway Maintenance staff.

Motion by Hoselton/Rodgers to approve the bills for April 2003 as submitted. Motion carried.

Mr. Mitchell presented the results from the April 24, 2003 bid letting for County and Township projects. Mr. Mitchell stated that this letting was for stockpiling rock for the County and other necessary materials for the Gridley project. The recommendation is to award the bid to Don Hansen Trucking, Melvin, Illinois for the rocks for the County in the amount of \$64,320.00. Towanda Company, Towanda, Illinois, is the recommended bid for the Gridley project in the amount of \$37,857.00.

Motion by Owens/Cavallini to recommend approval of the recommended bid awards from the April 24, 2003 County and Township letting. Motion carried.

Mr. Mitchell presented an 80,000 pound Weight Limit Agreement Resolution. Mr. Mitchell stated that it would be of mutual benefit for both McLean County and Evergreen FS, Inc., to enter into an agreement to increase the weight limit of the Arrowsmith Road, County Highway 15, from Route 9 to the southern corporate limits of Arrowsmith to 80,000 pounds. This new designation is to be effective upon the completion of the resurfacing of said highway and the erection of the signs designating this portion of the road as a Class III Highway. Mr. Mitchell explained that Evergreen FS, Inc., will pay for one-fourth (1/4) of the cost of increasing the weight limit on the Arrowsmith Road, County Highway 15, from Illinois Route 9 south approximately 13,305 feet to Fry Street in Arrowsmith, from 73,280 pounds to 80,000 pounds for semi-trailer loads. The total estimated cost of this work is based on 2022 tons of bituminous hot mix at \$50.00 per ton for a total of \$101,100.00. Evergreen FS, Inc.'s estimated share of the cost of this is \$25,275.00. The actual amount owed by Evergreen FS, Inc. to the County Highway Department shall be for 505 tons of bituminous hot mix binder course at the bid price. McLean County shall pay for the balance of the cost of this project. It has been mutually agreed that this agreement will be null and void should the resurfacing of the Arrowsmith Road not be completed within three years after the date of this agreement.

Mr. Hoselton asked Mr. Mitchell to further explain this project in relation to the Randolph Road project. Mr. Mitchell explained that the Randolph Road Project is a totally separate project from this Arrowsmith Road project. Mr. Mitchell has been notified that the funds for the Randolph Road Project should be forthcoming shortly. Mr. Mitchell is awaiting the official paperwork regarding this issue.

Mr. Hoselton noted that there is a facility in Holder. Mr. Hoselton noted that there is a County highway that runs parallel to Route 9, south of Arrowsmith Road. Mr. Hoselton asked if as this road has been classified as an 80,000 pound road. Mr. Mitchell answered that has not been classified as an 80,000 pound road. The main access to the Holder Plant is off Route 9 to Holder Road. The road south of Holder and Ellsworth Road is classified at 46,000 pounds. Mr. Mitchell noted that when he was discussing the Arrowsmith Project with Evergreen FS, Inc., the five-year plan included the Holder Road Project.

Chairman Bass commented that when the weight limits come to fruition, there must be a way where all of the interested trucking firms are notified. Chairman Bass asked how are the trucking firms notified. Mr. Mitchell answered that this is done by signage. A Class III truck route is posted on site. This signage informs the truckers of the classification of the road and prevents violations from occurring.

Mr. Dean asked what is the length of the Randolph Road from Route 51 to the Sanitary Plant. Mr. Mitchell estimated about 2 miles. Mr. Hoselton stated that the configuration of Route 51 was changed by McLean County. Mr. Mitchell explained that currently Randolph Road from Downs runs south to the interstate interchange and then goes west to 1550 east, then it jogs down $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile towards Randolph. The proposed change would come straight across the section line, eliminating the extra jog in the road. This was part of the Intergovernmental Agreement with the Bloomington-Normal Water Reclamation District.

Mr. Owens asked if the Arrowsmith Project will be completed by this summer. Mr. Mitchell answered that the project is scheduled for bidding on the June 13th.

Mr. Owens asked if any part of this project has anything to do with the proposed Eastside Corridor Project. Mr. Mitchell answered that this project does not have anything to do with the Eastside Corridor Project.

Mr. Cavallini asked what will happen with the extra jog area once the road is straightened out. Mr. Mitchell answered that the road will physically stay where it is, but jurisdiction will transfer to Randolph Township. The agreement between the County Highway and the Bloomington-Normal Water Reclamation District calls for the District to pay for any major damage to this road. Due to Right-of-Way negotiations, this project has been on hold from last year.

Motion by Owens/Cavallini to recommend approval
of a request for a 80,000 pound Weight Limit
Agreement Resolution for Arrowsmith Road from Route 9 to the Southern
corporate limits of Arrowsmith and an 80,000 pound Weight Limit
Agreement with Evergreen FS, Inc. Motion carried.

Mr. Mitchell presented a request to approve a Speed Limit Resolution. Mr. Mitchell stated that the Highway Commissioner requested that a speed study be performed on Old Town Township Road – Township Road 429, County Highway 43 and County Highway 29. Mr. Mitchell stated that Township Road 429 will have the 55 miles per hour speed limit lowered to 40 miles per hour, from County Highway 29 to U.S. Route 150. County Highway 43 will have a speed limit of 45 miles per hour, down from 55 miles per hour, from the Illinois Route 9 to 100 ft. south of Deer Ridge Drive. County Highway 29 will have a speed limit of 45 miles per hour, down from 55 miles per hour, from U.S. Route 150 to 2,700 North.

Ms. Christine Brauer, Regional Planning Commission, asked if the County Highway Department has communicated with the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) about the actual speed limit of 45 miles per hour on either side of Route 9. Mr. Mitchell answered that he has not had any communications with IDOT regarding this issue. Ms. Brauer asked Mr. Mitchell if he can recommend that IDOT lower the speed limit on Route 9 to 45 miles per hour. Mr. Hoselton asked that Mr. Mitchell write a letter to IDOT, thus making a permanent record of the request. Mr. Mitchell will write a letter to IDOT regarding the speed limit on Route 9 as directed by the Transportation Committee.

Motion by Rodgers/Cavallini to recommend approval
of the request for approval of a Speed Limit Resolution for certain County
and Township Roads. Motion carried.

Per the directive of the Transportation Committee, Mr. Mitchell presented a budget report for the Committee's information through end of April 2003.

Mr. Dean referred to Line Item 0790-0004 Equipment Rental budgeted at \$6,200.00. Mr. Mitchell explained that this line item expense is used to cover the cost of renting equipment throughout the year, such as loaders, a trencher, etc.

Mr. Owens referred to Line Item 0795-0003 Telephone budgeted at \$15,500.00. Mr. Owens asked if this line item also pays for the cell phones used by the department. Mr. Mitchell answered that this covers the cell phones bills. Mr. Owens noted that Line Item 0795-0002 Gas Services budget of \$6,700.00 has already been half spent. Mr. Owens asked if there will be a need to increase this line item. Mr. Mitchell responded that there may be a need in the future to ask for further funds for this line item. This will depend on the weather and the usage. Mr. Mitchell informed the Committee that when there is a need for more fuel, a bid will be taken.

Chairman Bass commented that Mr. Mitchell does have some flexibility within the line items to move funds around. Mr. Mitchell explained that funds between line items within the same account category can be transferred as long as the total budgeted amount balances out.

Ms. Rodgers asked for clarification of Line Item 0527-0001 Incentive Pay.

Mr. Mitchell explained that this account is used for Merit Raises. Ms. Rodgers noted that this line item account has had no action as of yet. Mr. Mitchell explained that the Full-Time Line Item Account 0503-0001 is used to cover this expense before the Incentive Pay line item is used.

Mr. Mitchell presented a Road Work Status for the Committee's information.

Mr. Mitchell stated that he has had two meetings with IDOT, Farnsworth Group, TSC, Rowe Construction, Co., and Dunn Construction Co., concerning the cause and cure for the frost heave on Sections 113 and 165 of Towanda Barnes Road. It is believed that the free lime from the lime modification is drawing moisture that resulted in both sections having frost heave. Mr. Mitchell referred to Section 113, Route 9 to Fort Jesse Road. The solution for this area is to mill off the bumps, change one pass of 2 inches of surface to two passes of ½ inch level binder and 1 ½ inches surface. To move this project to completion, Rowe Construction Co., has agreed to do the work at no cost to McLean County. Regarding Section 165, Ireland Grove Road to Route 150, Mr. Mitchell stated that the solution will be to mill three lanes wide by ½ inch deep in two locations for a total of approximately 8,300 feet in length, then replace with 1½ inches of new surface. Rowe Construction Co., Dunn Construction Co., (the Lime Subcontractor) and Farnsworth Group think that more testing should be performed before this expense is incurred. They will be contacting Mr. Marshall Thompson, University of Illinois, who is an expert on lime to see what recommendations he may have.

Mr. Hoselton wondered if it would be beneficial for the County to research and invest in the Hydrostatic Pressure Lines used by the State to help relieve the pressure that occurs underneath the highway. Mr. Mitchell responded that it probably would have been very beneficial in the Towanda-Barnes Road project because it would have drained some of the moisture from underneath the road. Mr. Mitchell is not sure if the hydrostatic lines would have prevented the present problems.

Chairman Bass asked who has the monetary responsibility to fix the bumps on these roads. Mr. Mitchell answered that in Section 113, the contractor has assumed responsibility for the bump repair. In Section 165, no monetary responsibility has been assigned to any one party as of yet.

Mr. Owens asked for a rough estimate of the costs to repair Section 165. Mr. Mitchell answered that he estimates a figure around \$160,000.00.

Mr. Hoselton asked for an update on the issue regarding the parcel of road between Lexington and LeRoy, south of Route 9. Mr. Mitchell answered that the road does not look any better. Future plans are to add a second pass of surface to help smooth out the road.

Mr. Owens asked if any other County was experiencing problems with their roads due to lime usage. Mr. Mitchell answered that he is not aware of any problems in other counties. Mr. Mitchell informed the Committee that the District Soil expert visited McLean County. He informed Mr. Mitchell that McLean County is unique, because the glacier moraines run through it. As a result, soils vary a lot in McLean County.

Mr. Mitchell noted that a Stand-up Meeting will be needed at the May 20, 2003 Board Meeting for the award of the May 13, 2003 Bid Letting. Mr. Mitchell stated that the oil and chip mixes are being rebid. Mr. Hoselton informed the Committee that he received a couple of calls from Townships regarding this re-bidding. Apparently, only two bids were awarded, the rest of the bids came in very high. Mr. Mitchell explained that most of the bids ran 15% to 18% higher than estimated. Mr. Mitchell thinks that since the estimates listed on this bid were made last November, the war in Iraq has driven the asphalt prices up.

Mr. Hoselton asked if the numbers from the first bidding were made public. Mr. Mitchell answered that he did not release any of the numbers presented in the first bid. Mr. Schmitt noted that the individual bids are on the bid tabs. Mr. Mitchell stated that if a contractor calls and asks for the summary of the bids received, the bid tabulation is given out. Mr. Hoselton recommends that the numbers from the first bidding not be released.

Mr. Owens noted that the Highway Department's estimate of the costs is included with the bid packet. Mr. Owens suggested that the Department's estimate should not be given to the bidder. Mr. Mitchell stated that the Transportation Committee has to review all of the bids received from all of the bidders for the projects on that letting. Mr. Mitchell noted that the Highway Department has to follow Motor Tax Fuel regulations. If the 18% figure presented on the bids is over the allowance from IDOT, then penalties could be levied if the bid is awarded.

Ms. Rodgers agrees that the Department's estimate of the project cost should not be made public. Mr. Mitchell explained that the bid tabulations presented in the Transportation Committee agenda after the letting are public information. If the Transportation Committee makes a recommends that the Department discontinue the practice of providing an estimate of the project cost to the bidders, then the Highway Department will discontinue this practice.

Mr. Dean stated that the release of estimate costs can help contractors at times, but it can also hinder the system. Ms. Rodgers suggested just providing a range for the estimates.

Chairman Bass suggested that a specific time period be set to test this practice. Mr. Cavallini asked how long of a period of time would be appropriate to see a formal trend. Mr. Mitchell suggested trying this new procedure for a year's time.

Chairman Bass explained that since this item was not in the Transportation Agenda, a formal motion cannot be considered by the Committee. The Transportation Committee agreed to try this new procedure for one year.

Mr. Mitchell formally introduced Mr. Eric Schmitt to the Committee. Mr. Schmitt has been promoted to Assistant County Engineer. Mr. Schmitt is a Bradley University graduate. He passed the Professional Engineering Exam last year and has been with McLean County now for three years. He was previously with Woodford County.

Mr. Mitchell stated that he met with the new IDOT Engineer from District 3, Ms. Diane O'Keefe. The Interstate Interchange 55 project was discussed. An application through Congressman Johnson for high priority funds under the T-3 process has been made. Ms. O'Keefe explained that the District has been directed to back two IDOT statewide high priority projects only. Those two projects are the Wacker Drive project in Chicago and the St. Louis Mississippi River Bridge crossing project. Any request made to Congressman Johnson may trickle down through IDOT central to the District Office, and then local projects may be approved, However, IDOT won't actively support any projects, but the two high priority projects listed.

Mr. Mitchell referred to the Eastside Corridor Facility Study. Mr. Mitchell informed the Committee that IDOT will back this project if the communities agree on a corridor.

Mr. Owens asked if Mr. Mitchell has approached Congressman Weller's Office regarding the Eastside Corridor Project. Mr. Mitchell answered that the Shirley Interchange is in Congressman Weller's District and he has contacted his office about this project, but has not received any response as of yet.

Ms. Jennifer Sicks, Transportation Planner, Regional Planning Commission, stated that she has heard back from Congressman Johnson's Office with a firm support, but has not heard from Congressman Weller. Mr. Owens has spoken with Congressman Johnson and he has shown support towards this project, especially with the Lexington portion of the project. Congressman Weller stated that if Congressman Johnson goes forth and supports the other two issues and funding was obtained, he would back Congressman Johnson.

Mr. Hoselton stated that Interstate 55 runs from Chicago to St. Louis, and there are a lot of bridges along this interstate. Mr. Hoselton questioned how did McLean County get picked to upgrade the interchanges at Shirley, Towanda and Lexington for \$3 Million. Mr. Hoselton wanted to know if other Counties have been contacted to see if they are on the list for upgrades. Mr. Mitchell answered that he has talked to other Counties. Several of the other interchanges going south towards Springfield have been overlaid. The Odell interchange, which was upgraded a few years back, was a mistake, due to poor wording in the agreement. The State will fund the upgrades of bridges, but the surrounding government is responsible for the ramps, connections, etc.

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Mr. Mitchell informed the Committee that the Governor of Illinois has directed that 5% of all special revenue funds be assessed as an administrative surcharge to help balance the State budget. The Motor Fuel Tax Fund is projected to lose \$65.2 Million, which reflects a loss of \$37 Million for local entities. Ms. Rodgers thanked Mr. Mitchell for this explanation of the state funds and how it reflects Mclean County. Mr. Mitchell stated that he is aware that there will be a 5% cut in the Motor Fuel Tax.

Chairman Bass asked if anyone had any further comments.

A member of the public asked why the Eastside Highway Corridor was designed to come off so far back instead of coming off Highway 74, before it makes a bend south to Downs. Chairman Bass answered that the Transportation Committee cannot discuss anything regarding the Eastside Highway Corridor. The Committee has to wait until Bloomington and Normal make a decision, so this issue has been "tabled" until all the parties involved have made a decision.

Mr. Zeunik clarified that the Transportation Committee has "tabled" the Eastside Highway Corridor issue pending final action by from the other governmental entities. Chairman Bass asked that anyone interested on this topic contact the County Highway Department for placement on the Transportation Committee agenda.

Mr. Owens suggested that the Transportation Committee take a trip around the County so that the members can see the projects in progress and some of the projects already completed. Mr. Mitchell suggested that June would be a good time to schedule this trip. Members will check their schedules and let Mr. Mitchell know. This field trip can be finalized at the scheduled Stand-Up meeting on May 20th.

There being nothing further to come before the Committee at this time, the meeting was adjourned by Chairman Bass at 8:50 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Carmen Zielinski
Recording Secretary