

Minutes of the Transportation Committee

The meeting of the Transportation Committee was held on February 7, 2001 at 7:30 a.m. at the Law and Justice Center, 104 West Front Street, Room 701 Bloomington, Illinois.

Members Present: Chairman Bass, Members Emmett, Johnson, Selzer, Owens

Members Absent: Member Hoselton

Staff Members Present: Mr. Terry Lindberg, Assistant County Administrator; Ms. Martha B. Ross, County Administrator's Assistant, County Administrator's Office

Others Present: Ms. Chris Bauer, citizen spokesperson for Route 9 citizens' group

Chairman Bass called the meeting to order at 7:34 a.m. Chairman Bass presented the Minutes of the January 2, 2001 meeting for approval.

Motion By Emmett/Johnson to approve the minutes of the January 2, 2001 meeting of the Transportation Committee. Motion carried.

Chairman Bass presented the bills for approval. Mr. Mitchell stated that the month of December 2000 was an expensive month for the Highway Department. The cost of road salt was especially high and barge travel north on the Mississippi River was difficult. Therefore, the Midwest suffered shortages of road salt supplies.

Mr. Mitchell explained that there are two (2) sets of bills for the Committee's consideration this month. The first set addresses the bills for December 2000, as the Auditor's Office is now able to prepare to close out the Fiscal Year 2000. The second set of bills is the monthly totals for January 2001.

Mr. Mitchell noted that billing amounts for vehicle parts are somewhat higher than at other times of the year. He explained that plowing large amounts of snow is very hard on the Highway Department's vehicles and replacement of parts is frequently necessary.

Mr. Emmett asked for more information on the charges for rentals. Mr. Mitchell responded that front end loaders were rented for a one week term to push snow back from various County roads that couldn't be otherwise removed more effectively. The wings on the trucks and plows remove the snow, but subsequently create walls of snow that then need to be pushed back out of the roadsides.

Motion by Selzer/Owens to approve the bills for December 2000 and January 2001 as submitted. Motion carried.

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Mr. Mitchell presented the Motor Fuel Tax (MFT) Resolution for Improvement for Weston Road. He stated that this document is actually submitted in two (2) parts. The first part is the Resolution. The portion of the road in question is located in the northeast corner of McLean County. Weston Road continues northeast into Livingston County. There are three (3) rock quarries that transport rock and agricultural lime using the Weston Road, causing significant wear to the road.

Mr. Mitchell stated that this road is to be upgraded to an 80,000 pound road. McLean County applied for State funds to complete the project last year. However, that application was rejected. It was resubmitted this year. McLean County has a one mile

jurisdiction; Livingston County has a seven mile jurisdiction. Livingston County is using Federal monies on their portion of the project. McLean County is utilizing local money for its portion of the project.

Mr. Mitchell presented the second part of the Weston Road improvement document, which is the Local Agency Agreement for Federal Participation, Jurisdictional Addendum #2. He noted that McLean County will retain jurisdiction over the improvement from US Route 24 to the Livingston County line.

Mr. Owens asked whether this project is currently budgeted. Mr. Mitchell responded that it is.

Motion by Selzer/Emmett to Approve the MFT Resolution for Improvement for Weston Road and the Jurisdictional Addendum #2. Motion carried.

Mr. Mitchell presented the results of a letting from February 1, 2001. He explained that the bulk of this letting is for road work, gravel and cold mix. He noted that the location of selected quarries and a price of 15 cents per ton per mile is used to determine which quarry is patronized. During the heat of the summer, some locations run out of material. Then the bid is subject to the availability of the material.

Mr. Mitchell stated that if material is not available, then the Department will progress to the next low bidder, and so on.

Mr. Owens asked when actual costs of a project exceed the stated estimate, what is the procedure. Mr. Mitchell stated that up to 5% over an estimate is still acceptable. If the overage is between 5% and 10 %, the additional cost must then be justified. He noted that the unit price of items bid is utilized to determine estimates. Therefore, the prices stated are merely rough estimates of the total project cost.

Chairman Bass asked Mr. Mitchell to briefly explain the bid process. Mr. Mitchell responded that there are lettings conducted nearly every month. Various items are dealt with each time because projects are staggered throughout the year. He noted that spring is an especially active season for projects to be let.

Chairman Bass asked whether Mr. Mitchell and his staff are present at bid openings. Mr. Mitchell stated that the State of Illinois prints a listing each week of bid openings that will occur. Lettings are open to the public and were conducted at Transportation Committee meetings in the past. However, that format proved to be too time consuming for the Committee.

Bids arrive in sealed envelopes and are held until the specified time for opening. Once opened, the bids are sorted by project. The bids are then read aloud. Bidders must present a bid check. The entire procedure must follow the specifications found in the State manual.

Mr. Owens asked when is the March letting. Mr. Mitchell responded that the next letting is scheduled for March 1, 2001. Committee members are welcome to attend. In the past, notices of lettings were provided to the Committee members and can that process can be revived if there is interest on the part of the Committee.

Mr. Mitchell explained that in Group 9 of the letting results, steel prices had dropped, and therefore, materials were more affordable for this project.

Mr. Mitchell stated that he recommended accepting the results of all bids listed from the February 1, 2001 letting.

Motion by Selzer/Johnson to approve all bids from the February 1, 2001 letting. Motion carried.

Mr. Mitchell presented the Joint Agreement Between the State of Illinois and McLean County regarding Illinois Route 9 at Jolly Lake Road and Covell Road. He explained that the two (2) roads currently do not align correctly. As a result of traffic accidents at this intersection, the State of Illinois would like to align the intersection more appropriately. Jolly Lake Road will need to be moved to align with Covell Road. There will also be left turn lanes placed on Route 9 and signals added to make the intersection safer.

Mr. Mitchell stated that McLean County's cost for the project will be \$7,000.00. The total cost of the project is \$1.6 million. Federal safety funds and funds from the State of Illinois will pay for the remainder of the costs.

Chairman Bass asked what is the time approximation for the project. Mr. Mitchell responded that the time frame is undetermined at this time. Right-of-way has been acquired.

Ms. Chris Bauer, McLean County citizen, asked why a right turn lane was not included in the plans. Mr. Mitchell stated that such an option was not discussed, but that he would be happy to suggest it.

Mr. Owens asked whether the inquiry should be made, but not to postpone action on the Agreement as it is currently proposed. Mr. Mitchell responded that any further changes may detain the project for another season.

Ms. Bauer remarked that there is currently enough right-of-way obtained in order to begin the project. There may not be delays associated with the addition of a right turn lane to the project. Chairman Bass stated that Mr. Mitchell should make the State aware of the request for a right turn lane at the intersection, and gauge their response.

Mr. Mitchell presented the Resolution for the Appropriation of Funds for Construction of Traffic Signals at the Intersection of Illinois Route 9 and County Highway 43/Covell Road.

Motion by Owens/Selzer to Approve the Joint Agreement Between the State of Illinois and McLean County regarding Illinois Route 9 at Jolly Lake Road and Covell Road; the Resolution for the Appropriation of Funds for Construction of Traffic Signals at Intersection of Illinois Route 9 and County Highway 43/Covell Road; request a right turn lane be included at the intersection of Route 9 and Covell Road.
Motion carried.

Mr. Mitchell presented a comparison between vehicle leasing and vehicle purchase for the Highway Department. It had been proposed during budget meetings in preparing the budget for Fiscal Year 2001, that leasing might be more cost effective than purchasing vehicles for the Department. He stated that one major flaw in the leasing option is the fact that damage to vehicles will be heavily penalized at the time the vehicles are turn in. He noted that the type of use that most of the vehicles will experience will make condition a less cost effective method.

Mr. Mitchell explained that purchasing vehicles under the State bid is generally more cost effective. He noted that County-owned vehicles can be sold and some costs recouped. Vehicle leasing does not afford the County the option to recoup any of its costs.

Mr. Mitchell noted that summer projects require additional vehicles which can then be sold at the conclusion of the season. As a result of the type of use those vehicles will incur, the cost to purchase under the State bid and then resell is projected to be more advantageous to the County than leasing, when having to pay for potential damages to the vehicles.

Chairman Bass noted that often the Highway Department vehicles are driven by many different drivers, and driven under extreme weather conditions. That situation makes it

much more difficult to control the condition of the vehicles. Mr. Mitchell stated that the Highway Department's mechanic now provides labor for vehicle maintenance, so labor costs are not included in the purchase cost comparisons. Labor would be added to leasing options.

Chairman Bass asked whether renting equipment is a viable alternative to leasing. Mr. Mitchell stated that vehicles and equipment are available to rent, but it is still a more expensive option than purchasing.

Motion by Selzer/Emmett to retain the procedure to purchase vehicles for use by the County Highway Department rather utilize a leasing plan. Motion carried.

Mr. Mitchell presented an equipment bid tabulation for a jib crane to be utilized in the shop at the County Highway facility. He explained that a jib crane is utilized to lift and move large items to other locations for maintenance and repair. The unit that is presently in operation was fabricated by Highway Department employees and is no longer effective.

Chairman Bass asked whether such an item is within the budget. Mr. Mitchell responded that the cost of the jib crane is approximately \$1,300.00 over budget.

Motion by Emmett/Johnson to approve the Highway Department's Request for the purchase of a jib crane for use in the shop at the Highway Department. Motion carried.

Mr. Mitchell presented a letter from the Illinois Department of Agriculture to Mr. and Mrs. George Kasbergen. The letter requests more information from them regarding their proposed Stone Ridge Dairy Facility, prior to the Department's approval of the facility. The Kasbergens have not submitted a plan for compliance with road weight restrictions and other regulations associated with the public roads proposed to be utilized by the facility.

Mr. Mitchell stated that right-of-way still has not been fully acquired for the project.

Mr. Selzer stated that it is important that the Stone Ridge Dairy project be treated as would any other project involving McLean County roads. Chairman Bass asked Mr. Mitchell to make a list of other projects that could be compared to the Stone Ridge Dairy project and bring the list and funding details to the next meeting of the Transportation Committee.

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Mr. Owens requested that a field trip be taken to the proposed site of the Stone Ridge Dairy so that the Committee may more fully understand the impact on the roads surrounding the site.

Motion by Selzer/Owens to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried.

There being nothing further to come before the Committee at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 9:00 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Martha B. Ross
Recording Secretary