

CHAMPAIGN COUNTY BOARD  
COMMITTEE MINUTES

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HIGHWAY & TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

Friday, August 10, 2007 – 9:00 a.m.

Lyle Shields Meeting Room, Brookens Administrative Center  
1776 E. Washington St., Urbana

MEMBERS PRESENT: Cowart, Beckett, Bensyl, Carter, Jay, Langenheim  
O'Connor

MEMBERS ABSENT: Knott, Melin

OTHERS PRESENT: Jeff Blue, John Cooper, Pius Weibel,  
Deb Busey, Susan McGrath, Debby Wagner,  
Tony Fabri, Bill Gray, Jason Barickman

Call to Order

Chair Cowart called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m. A roll call confirmed a quorum present.

Approval of Agenda/Addendum

MOTION by Langenheim to approve the agenda; seconded by Jay. There was no addendum for the meeting. **Motion carried.**

Approval of Minutes – June 15, 2007

MOTION by Carter to approve the minutes of June 15, 2007 as presented; seconded by Bensyl. **Motion carried.**

Public Participation

There was no public participation.

Monthly Reports

County & Township Motor Fuel Tax Claims – June & July 2007

MOTION by Beckett to receive and place on file the County & Township Motor Fuel Tax Claims for June & July 2007; seconded by Jay. **Motion carried.**

County Engineer  
**Curtis Road Right of Way**

Mr. Blue reminded the committee that at the last meeting they talked about the different options available for the Finney Branch channel design through the Lo and Henderson properties. Clark Dietz is the primary engineers on the job and they hired an engineer out of Jacksonville to be a peer review engineer to look at the designs Clark Dietz had proposed. They have gone through some more options of design on that channel, talked about possibly bringing the outfall channel as an open ditch from Curtis up to the north property line and piping the channel underground through a large double box culvert or putting the water into a ditch, which Mrs. Henderson and Mrs. Luther are opposed to. The cost for the double box culvert was about \$600,000 more than the cost for just building an open ditch through their property. They have looked at what else they could do to put that water underground and the engineers have gone back and looked at just what the sisters had asked them to do which is to bring that channel to the north property line of the Lo property and put the water into a 24 inch storm sewer across their property with a swale above it which mirror images the flooding condition that is on the property now. They have had meetings with the Lo's and explained to them the Henderson's want to see their property as it is now, the Lo's were understanding of that. They have given the Lo's two options as well; building the channel up to their property and piping it underground or putting a tile on their property with a grass swale above it. They haven't given us a 100% answer but he believes they will desire to have a ditch across their property because they are going to develop it. He called Mrs. Henderson on the phone and told her what was being contemplated and she seemed to be very happy, now it's a matter of hammering out what the easement will look like across their property. He believes we are moving in a positive direction, this brings the cost down and with this option IDOT didn't see a need to revise plans, they said put it through as if it was always going to be designed this way.

Mr. Weibel asked if with further development south of the property there is the anticipation that retainage ponds will have to be put in. Mr. Blue stated when they develop that property they understand they will have to build retainage ponds, regardless of what we do and at this point they don't know their timeline for development.

Regarding the quick take process, Ms. McGrath stated the Governor's office has been tied up with the budget so the path to the signing of the eminent domain bill seems to be slow. The 60<sup>th</sup> day falls next week and we need to know for our timeline for what is happening with the rest of our property owners.

The only land owners we have not achieved successful negotiations with yet are the three indicated as prospect point, the Main Street Bank Trustee and John Thompson who sold off part of his property during negotiations. By the time they receive the eminent domain power those are the properties we may need to file against.

Mr. Blue stated since he and Ms. McGrath have taken a personal interest in this land acquisition they have been able to progress a lot better.

### **Washington Street Extension**

Mr. Blue stated this was brought to the County about 3 months ago as a request from the City of Urbana that we be a participant in a half mile extension of Washington Street.

Mr. Gray updated the committee stating that the approvals that Menards and their engineers needed from IDOT have been received along Illinois 130 so they are poised to start with the design for the roadway work. It is about 8 million dollars worth of work including the piece of Washington Street. The city and Menards are in active negotiations for an agreement regarding some sales tax rebates but Menards is fronting this 8 million dollars.

Mr. Blue stated the request was 1/3 of that \$750,000 to upgrade Washington Street. He put the \$250,000 Washington Street number into our financials and it shows that over the timeline of the spreadsheet Curtis Road is the project that does a big hit putting us into the negative whereas Urbana's projects don't have a negative impact on the fringe road balance. Using 35% of the money for Urbana we stay above water so this \$250,000 seems to be something that could work. The problem it creates is that we get into a 2.5 million dollar hole in 2010 due to the Curtis Road project and he needs to talk to Champaign about some financing possibilities for that project. After the building is completed and all of our commitments have been completed in 2007 he estimates that the MFT fund will have a balance of 3-4 million dollars, the negative impact that it does have on the fund we could ride out as long as we weren't trying to commit more money.

Mr. Beckett stated it seems like Mr. Blue is not opposed to approving the money for this project. Mr. Blue stated it is fair to say, our cash balance could handle it in the short run. Mr. Beckett stated this is a good neighbor thing more than a fringe road thing. Mr. Blue stated that is correct.

Mr. Beckett stated he was very disappointed with the Mayor of the City of Urbana and the way she approached the whole fringe road mess and he is concerned that our good neighbor approach to this will get politicized.

He wasn't on highway when the decision was made to use the MFT reserve to build the building and a stated some County Board members are asking why spend all the MFT funds up front, bond more and keep a bigger reserve.

Mr. Blue stated the bond issue is being used to offset the highway fund cost of the building. If it were increased we could use it to offset some of the MFT funds.

Mr. Jay stated his belief was that they were not going to enter into any new agreements until we got through this period and are out of the crunch, now Mr. Blue is saying we can do this.

Mr. Gray stated if the County's answer is no, then its no and based on current conditions he can deliver that message and he understands sometimes you have to make business decisions. Mr. Blue stated if this were the City of Champaign asking us to spend this money in 2008 we would look at it differently.

Mr. Beckett stated they should put this discussion in writing in the form of a resolution. Chair Cowart stated Ms. McGrath will draft something and bring it to the committee meeting next month.

### **HSIP – Monticello Road**

Mr. Blue stated this was an action item at the County Board meeting in July to appropriate money for an engineering contract to start the work on this HSIP project. He explained this is for the Monticello corridor, which goes from route 45 to the Piatt County line and is 11 miles long. We are working with State Farm Insurance and with a grant through them hired a safety specialist to look at our corridors in Champaign County and identify safety issues. When we entered into this agreement with State Farm he felt we could get some grant money through the Federal Highway Administration by using that specialist to come up with a program for some safety improvements in Champaign County. They applied in March of this year for a safety improvement grant for Monticello Road for 1.5 million dollars asking for funding for the first 5 miles of the road from Route 45 to County Road 19. That piece of roadway, looking at Sheriff's reports over last 5 years, has had 56 accidents, 2 of those were fatal with three total fatalities. The upgrade will be to widen the shoulders to 6 feet and it is estimated we will need about 10 feet of right of way on each side of the road. 4 feet of the 6 foot shoulder will be paved, along the edge line there would be a rumble strip as well as one on the center line, they will also have the raised reflective pavement markers down the center line. That piece of the project is estimated to be 1.5 million which 90% of that will come back through the Highway Safety Improvement program funds.

His thought is that if you are going to do 5 miles of an 11 mile stretch we should just make the whole thing safe, the remaining 6 miles didn't have enough traffic or crashes to get the improvement funds but he would like to improve the entire corridor, Our pavement study shows the piece from Staley road to two miles east of Piatt County is in need of an overlay, they are looking at a 2009 project where it would be 3 million to do the entire corridor. During the 2007 construction season we have had a lot of help from the federal government so our MFT expenditures are not real great, next year the plan is to save some money back for this Monticello road project. He would like to do more projects like this, making roadways safer.

### **St. Joseph-Royal Road Intersection Improvement**

Mr. Blue explained they have an agreement with IDOT and they are going to replace all signs at that intersection and the County will provide solar powered flashing lights so we should see some safety improvements there.

### **County Highway 32 Bridge Repair**

Mr. Blue explained there is a bridge 2 miles south of Gifford where an accident a few weeks ago did substantial structural damage. The cost for repair will be about \$45,000 and the driver's insurance company will pay the entire bill so there will be an emergency repair done in the next two to three weeks.

### **Building update**

Mr. Blue reported that the issues with the walls have been resolved. They have roughly 50-60% of the concrete on the inside poured and in place and the geothermal will be done today. English Brothers continues to tell us they are on schedule for a winter completion date, as a county we have been doing all sub-grade work inside and are now waiting for the schedule to remove the CAC.

He pointed out that Tony Fabri, County Auditor brought a memo before the committee regarding the funding of the walkway bridge. The bridge fund is restricted to bridges on public roadways so he will run it through the general fund.

### **Road Construction Update**

Mr. Blue explained that we are done with County Road 9. For County Road 22 for the ethanol project we are waiting on the fully executed contracts from IDOT right now, should be done by late October.

Mr. Bensyl asked about the road between St. Joe and where the bridges are being done and if it will be open soon. Mr. Blue stated it should be open in September or October.

**Other Business**

There was no other business.

**Determination of Consent Agenda Items**

No items will be going to the Board.

**Adjournment**

Ms. Cowart declared the meeting adjourned at 10:03 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Tiffany Talbott  
Administrative Secretary