

**Champaign County Board
Committee Minutes**

**Highway & Transportation Committee
Friday, February 6, 2009
Highway Department Building Meeting Room**

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: Knott

OTHERS PRESENT: Jeff Blue, John Cooper, Tracy Wingler, Debby Wagner, Pius Weibel

Agenda Item

Call to Order

Chair Cowart called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. A roll call confirmed a quorum present.

Approval of Agenda/Addendum

MOTION by Carter to approve the agenda; seconded by Kurtz. There was no addendum for the meeting.

Mr. Blue added a Rural Transportation Study information only item under other business.

Motion carried.

Approval of Minutes

MOTION by Jay to approve the minutes of November 7, 2008 as presented; seconded by Bensyl. **Motion carried.**

Public Participation

There was no public participation.

Monthly Reports

County & Township Motor Fuel Tax Claims - November 2008, December 2008, January 2009

MOTION by Jay to receive and place on file the County & Township Motor Fuel Tax Claims for November 2008, December 2008 and January 2009; seconded by Carter. **Motion carried.**

County Engineer

Resolution awarding of contract for the replacement of a bridge located on County Highway 9 - Section #07-00936-00-BR

Mr. Blue stated this bridge is five miles west of Ludlow and is a County highway project from the bridge funds. The engineers estimate was \$484,000 and Stark was the low bidder at \$427,229.

MOTION by Jay to recommend County Board approval of Resolution awarding of contract for the replacement of a bridge located on County Highway 9 - Section #07-00936-00-BR; seconded by Bensyl.

Mr. Weibel asked if there has been any drop in cost of bridge construction because of the economy. Mr. Blue explained that last year bridge costs were higher so the engineers cost estimates are based on the costs received last year. Costs are no where near where they were prior to 2006 but are coming back in line with what they expect.

Motion carried.

Resolution awarding of contract for the replacement of a bridge located in Ludlow Road District - Section #07-14940-00-BR

Mr. Blue explained this is south of Ludlow, bordering I-57. The County picks up 50%, the bridge program picks up 40% and the township picks up 10%. The engineers estimate was \$157,510 and Stark was the low bidder at \$153,654.40.

MOTION by Bensyl to recommend County Board approval of Resolution awarding of contract for the replacement of a bridge located in Ludlow Road District - Section #07-14940-00-BR; seconded by Jay. **Motion carried.**

Dump Truck Replacement

Mr. Blue explained that in the 2009 budget, there were funds for heavy equipment replacement for one of the county's dump trucks. They have 12 that they run and will be replacing a 1994 model with a fully loaded 2009 International with a stainless steel bed. This is off of the state bid so there is no competitive bidding process. The estimate was \$130,000 and the cost through the state is \$106,833, he explained this doesn't have to go to the full board, according to the purchasing policy, but he wanted to make sure there weren't any issues with moving forward.

Mr. Kurtz asked if it is necessary to have 12 trucks right now. Mr. Wingler stated when they run snow routes they have to have back up trucks in case something goes down. Mr. Blue explained the truck is necessary, they have nine snow routes and 12 trucks and all the trucks have snow plows. They will sell the old truck but it is not worth trading it in, the money is coming from the County Highway Fund. There is \$200,000 for equipment replacement so this truck is roughly half of that. He explained they haven't replaced a truck since 2005 because of building the new building and the normal replacement schedule is 15 years.

MOTION by Beckett to approve the replacement of the dump truck; seconded by Langenheim.

Mr. Kurtz asked if the erosion of the bed is the problem if they could just replace that part of the truck. Mr. Wingler stated the entire truck is the problem here but there are a couple of trucks they are looking at to just replace the bed, which costs around \$55,000.

Motion carried.

Economic Stimulus

Mr. Blue explained he along with Mr. Inman, Mr. Weibel and Mr. Moore attended a meeting to talk about the stimulus plan. He distributed a letter received earlier in the week talking about what they are expecting in Illinois and the infusion of funding for projects. At that meeting there were a number of communities there who presented lists of projects that would be ready and available for that money. The way the package is looking right now we could see up to one billion dollars, half of that money will have to be spent within 120 days of being sent to the states, the other half will have to be spent by June 2010. If locals are ready to accept some of the money there is a possibility we could see some money in the first round although it sounds like they are thinking about giving local money in the second round which will be June 2010. Our projects could be ready to receive that money, we will have to wait and see what happens. When asked about Curtis Road Mr. Blue explained they believe because it has already been let it does not qualify.

Curtis Road

Mr. Blue explained it was bid in January and Stark was the low bidder. The programmed amount for the project was 12.1 million and the bid came in at 10 million. There is 5.6 million dollars in high priority project money we received three years ago so 5.6 of the total will be federal aid. The rest will be split between locals and our share will be half a million less because bid prices came in lower. The project is due to start in March, this is a joint project and we will have an engineer and technician on the job site but the City of Champaign will be the lead agency.

Mr. Bensyl asked how our portion of Curtis falls into our cap. Mr. Blue explained we are going to be a year behind in paying this and will stretch it out until a year past the project. Now that the money is a little less it may not lag as far as originally thought.

Mr. Beckett explained that the Facilities Committee, when talking about the stimulus package, questioned what impact it would have on planning that has been done into the future, taking into account our fringe road agreement, and if the influx of capital would cause any readjustment of that document, if any projects are awarded with stimulus money. Mr. Blue stated that document was based on 3 million a year and if we get 5 million it moves everything back in time.

Mr. Blue stated the best approach here is to wait and see what happens, they have talked about doing a long term contract with Applied Research and that would be his approach. Once they get the money and put it in the system they will have to see what happens but what scares him about the stimulus package is the fact that there are only so many contractors and so much equipment and prices are going to go up.

Construction Costs - Legislative Meeting

Mr. Blue explained he had a meeting, six to eight months ago, with local politicians and local contractors and highway officials talking about the need for infrastructure funding in the state. He distributed a flyer talking about the capital bill the state is contemplating and what has happened to MFT buying power over the last 8 years. He also distributed a spreadsheet that was sent out to all counties to get a comparison of 2000, 2007 and 2008 unit prices. The average increase from 2000-2008 is 191% on the county side and 189% on the township side. Our costs are going up greatly and our income is not meeting those needs. He would like to have another legislative meeting here to talk about what is going on long term in the state, the townships feel like they are being left out because there is nothing in the stimulus package for them. He will send out an email if another meeting occurs.

Rural Traffic Sign Upgrade Program

Mr. Blue stated this is something that was started back in November; there is a highway safety project the state has awarded to Champaign County because of the number of fatalities on our roadways. They rank the counties in the state each year and we came to the top of the list for replacement of our deficient signs, not only on county roads but also township roads and all municipalities under 5000. He stated they have been out counting all signs in the county, putting together an estimate to send to the state. He has purchased a sign inventory management program, as of April 1 they are to have the entire sign inventory done; the County will have to front all the money for the signs initially then will be reimbursed.

Other Business

Contractor OSHA Violations

Mr. Kurtz explained the News-Gazette ran an article regarding Stark Excavation and an OSHA fine and at the end of the article it stated the company had different violations dating back years. He talked to Jeff about it and then called the safety officer at Stark construction. He has distributed an email he received from the safety officer explaining that most of the violations occurred 5 years ago and they have received awards within the last years for their great safety and he feels comfortable with Stark at this point.

Mr. Beckett stated it is always difficult with construction companies because stuff happens on jobs. He was contacted by the News-Gazette this week, because a company we are in arbitration with was awarded a big contract with the City of Champaign, and asked what he thought of that company and his reaction was stuff happens and they are a reputable company. All these firms are reputable, they have to be bonded with insurance and if there was a serious problem they wouldn't be able to bid. He applauded Mr. Kurtz for bringing this forward but stated we need to be cautious about what we read in the paper, he agrees we should be looking at the people we are doing business but asked the committee to remember regulatory agencies; if OSHA comes on the job site it is their responsibility to find things.

Illinois House of Representatives/House Joint Resolution 130

Mr. Blue stated this is an information only item and declares a section of Route 150 be designated as a Veterans Parkway.

MOTION by Beckett to receive and place on file; seconded by Bensyl. **Motion carried.**

Rural Transportation Study information

Nicole George, from the Regional Planning Commission, provided the committee with a memo and survey. She explained she is working with the Institute for Rural Affairs at Western Illinois and the ICCT clearing house. Champaign County, under the SAFETEA-LU bill for transportation coordination and enhancement of public transportation in rural areas was allocated \$450,000 for three years to initiate this service. They have to go through a 5 phase process and right now we are in phase 2, which is collecting 1500 surveys from residents or employees in rural areas. They have been working on this since the end of August and only have 428 so far so there is still a long way to go. She is asking the committee to help in getting to the people in rural areas to complete these surveys. She explained there is a way to fill it out online but she also provided hard copies to the committee.

When asked about the deadline for these surveys she explained the money is supposed to be allocated in 2010 and the service is supposed to be initiated by 2010. IDOT was slow in getting this information to them so the process is something 23 counties in Illinois are going through. The sooner they can get it completed, the better.

Determination of Consent Agenda Items

Committee items 6 A and B will be on the County Board consent agenda.

Adjournment

Chair Cowart declared the meeting adjourned at 9:51 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Tiffany Talbott
Administrative Secretary