

Note: These minutes are not official until approved by the Highway Committee at a subsequent meeting. Please refer to the meeting minutes when these minutes are approved to obtain any changes to these minutes.

DeKalb County Government
Sycamore, Illinois

**Highway Committee Minutes
October 3, 2013**

A meeting of the Highway Committee of the DeKalb County Board was held on Thursday, October 3, 2013 at 6:00pm in the Conference Room of the DeKalb County Highway Department, DeKalb, Illinois.

Chairman Gudmunson called the meeting to order at 6:00pm. Committee members present were Mr. Deverell, Mr. Frieders, Mr. Johnson, Mr. Jones, Mr. O'Barski and Vice Chair Pietrowski. Others present were Mr. Nathan Schwartz, County Engineer, Wayne Davey, Support Services Manager, Mr. Gary Hanson, County Administrator, Mr. Pete Stefan, Finance Director, Mr. Greg Millburg, Farm Bureau and Mr. Raymond Hambaugh, DeKalb County Citizen.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Motion made by Mr. Johnson and seconded by Vice Chair Pietrowski to approve the minutes of the regular September 5, 2013 meeting. The motion to approve the minutes carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Motion made by Mr. O'Barski and seconded by Mr. Frieders to approve the agenda as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Mr. Raymond Hambaugh addressed the Committee requesting consideration be given to lowering the speed limit on that section of Rich Road, beginning approximately 1400 feet west of North First Street and extending west for one mile. Mr. Hambaugh stated a petition containing 121 signatures was presented to the

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County Engineer requesting the lowering of the 55mph speed limit to 45mph and to restrict truck traffic from using this portion of the road. The rationale for this request is there are 14 access points on the north side of Rich Road along this section of roadway and the south side containing access roads for several large housing developments and the Brooks School. Rich Road was not built to handle all the truck traffic that they are experiencing lately due to NIU removing some fill dirt on University property and trucking it to a northern location in the County. Chairman Gudmunson thanked Mr. Hambaugh for addressing the Committee and informed him no action would be taken on his request at this time due to this item not being on the agenda. Mr. Hambaugh thanked the Committee for any consideration they might provide. (This item is discussed during the County Engineer's comments.)

BUDGET APPEALS: Two budget appeals were submitted through the appeals process that requires action by this Committee tonight. The first appeal presented was submitted by Board Members Frieders and Jones and deals with the upgrade of the current Engineering Manager's position in the Engineering Division to that of Assistant County Engineer. Mr. Frieders explained that limited resources cannot continue to go to salaries and benefits while the capital assets and infrastructure are in need of replacement and repairs. Mr. Jones appealed this item to ensure the Committee could discuss the need for this reclassification. Mr. Schwartz explained to the Committee that this position was an Assistant County Engineer's position until approximately 11 years ago when it was reclassified to the current classification. The direction in which the County Engineer is taking this Department will be better served to have two professional engineers on staff to handle the expected increase in design work and for one person to be in charge of the Department in the County Engineer's absence. This position is paid for through the charging of fees for services performed by the engineering staff and does not come out of tax levies. Mr. Schwartz stated he was not requesting an increase in the number of staff but the reclassification to better manage and move the Department forward in a productive and responsible way. Mr. Hanson presented the Committee with a revised paragraph 26 of the budget narrative showing the salary range of \$70,000 - \$105,000 for this position with the hiring range being \$70,000 - \$77,000. Discussion followed on the pros and cons of the requested upgrade and what it would take to provide more funding for the repair/upkeep of the County's infrastructure. **Mr. Frieders moved and Chairman Gudmunson seconded to sustain this appeal and to deny the requested upgrade. A roll call vote was taken with two yes votes and five no votes – no votes voiced by Mr. Deverell, Mr. Johnson, Mr. Jones, Mr. O'Barski, and Vice Chair Pietrowski. Motion failed and this item has no need to be forwarded out of Committee for further action.**

The second budget appeal was submitted by Board Member Jones concerning the purchase of one new six-wheel drive tandem plow truck. His concern was that the funds budgeted did not appear to be sufficient to purchase such a truck. Mr. Schwartz stated that with the amount of trade in or the funds received for an outright sale of the vehicle being replaced that sufficient funds should be available for the purchase. These

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six-wheel vehicles are just utilized for snow removal operations during a serious snow event and also provide back-up if a regular tandem experiences mechanical problems. This vehicle would be on a 20 year replacement cycle. Mr. Jones stated that leasing options should be explored as well. The Highway Department is waiting for information concerning leasing and will evaluate all options in regards to the purchase/lease of this vehicle. Mr. Jones was satisfied with the information provided by Mr. Schwartz that this equipment is needed and funds would be available for its purchase/lease. **At this time Mr. Jones pulled his appeal from consideration and this item has no need to be forwarded out of Committee for further action.**

CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS: Chairman Gudmunson stated there had been another recent accident at the intersection of Somonauk Road and Suydam Road. Mr. Schwartz explained he is still in the process of reviewing all accident data for this intersection. A review of the numbers show over the last six years, from 2008, this intersection averages one to two accidents per year. The current year has seen four accidents to date with two of the four involving deer. After his review, any additional measures Mr. Schwartz feels are warranted, if any, such as rumble strips, flashing lights, or doubling up on signs, will be put in place.

Chairman Gudmunson state Mr. Jones was concerned of the lack of controlled intersections in the townships. In the fall when the corn is high these intersections are virtually blind intersections and he feels there in no need for these when a stop sign or yield sign could be placed to stop at least the east/west or north/south traffic. Mr. Schwartz explained that the County has no jurisdiction over township roads but he will address this issue with Road Commissioners. All signs placed on the township system would need to be approved by the County Engineer. In the past Road Commissioners have been told less is better when it comes to signs for liability purposes. Should a sign be installed and is knocked down and an accident were to happen, there is a good chance the township would be found somewhat at fault. Mr. Jones was wondering if the County could pass some sort of non-binding resolution informing the townships of this concern and recommend appropriate action be taken. Mr. Schwartz feels at this time the best course of action would be for him to address this concern with the Road Commissioners.

COUNTY ENGINEER'S COMMENTS:

Mr. Schwartz briefed the Committee on Mr. Hambaugh's request presented earlier under Public Comments. A speed/traffic study was performed on this segment of roadway after the petition was received. Three different locations were studied. The State of Illinois has a set procedure to be followed when there is any attempt to lower a statutory speed limit. Mr. Schwartz explained to the Committee this procedure and what information is to be considered. This information would be accident history, pedestrian traffic, large or small business drives and any permitted parking along this section of roadway, along with the number of conflicts (driveways, etc.) within a given distance.

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When all of this information was reviewed it would appear the posted speed limit is justified at the current 55mph. The Committee requested the County Engineer review Mr. Hambaugh's request and see if there was anything the County could do to address the concerns of the residents along Rich Road.

Mr. Schwartz stated it was time to begin to plan for the annual tour of completed 2013 construction projects and those anticipated for 2014. The Committee stated November would be better and Mr. Schwartz would plan a date and get the proper notices posted for this special meeting.

Mr. Schwartz also indicated that 2013 was the 100th year anniversary of the establishment of the County Highway System. The Highway Department is planning to hold an open house in honor of this occasion and to allow the public to stop by and tour the facilities and learn more about what the Department does. This will happen during October/November time frame.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS: None presented

ADJOURNMENT:

A motion was made by Mr. O'Barski and seconded by Mr. Frieders to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously and the October 3, 2013 meeting was adjourned at 8:35pm. Monthly update on projects was not discussed and will be incorporated during November's meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,

John Gudmunson
Chairman

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