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DeKalb County Government
Sycamore, Illinois

**Highway Committee Minutes
September 3, 2020**

A hybrid public meeting of the Highway Committee of the DeKalb County Board was held on Thursday, September 3, 2020, at 6:00pm.

Chairman Plote called the meeting to order at 6:03pm and called for the roll. Committee members present were Ms. Emmer, Mr. Luebke (by Zoom), Mr. Osland (by Zoom), Mr. West, and Vice Chair Willis (by Zoom). Mr. Pietrowski (by Zoom) joined the meeting at 6:11. The County Engineer, Mr. Nathan Schwartz and Mr. Wayne Davey, Support Services Manager, were present and Mr. Pete Stefan, Finance Director, and two guests were also present by video.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Motion made by Ms. Emmer and seconded by Mr. West to approve the agenda as presented. Roll call vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Mr. Luebke moved and Vice Chair Willis seconded a motion to approve the minutes of the August 6, 2020 regular meeting. Roll call vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: None

RESOLUTION: #R2020-45: APPROVAL OF PLANK ROAD IMPROVEMENT STUDY

The County Engineer has heard the Committee's concerns regarding the total potential cost of the agreement presented in June and August, which was a not-to-exceed amount of \$470,927.69. Instead of recommending the study and phase I engineering proceed at the same time under one agreement, the recommendation is to proceed with only a study of the corridor to determine what improvements, if any, should be done. The cost of just the study has been determined to be not-to-exceed \$141,755.17. This cost will be spread out over the rest of 2020 and 2021. The study will be completed by the Engineering Firm of Crawford, Murphy & Tilly, Inc. (CMT) from Aurora, Illinois. Discussion followed. The Committee stated the current anticipated amount would be around \$10,000 per month. Mr. Schwartz indicated the amount could vary month to month depending on items completed during any one month but overall would average

around \$10,000 a month. If CMT determines that certain items quoted in the agreement do not need to be accomplished, the County will not be charged for those items. If additional work is determined to be needed that would put the cost of the completed project over the \$141,755.17 amount, the County would not pay for those completed items due to the agreed NTE amount. The Committee pointed out the Highway Department only budgeted \$75,000 for this project during 2020 and inquired where that figure came from. Mr. Schwartz indicated that during the 2020 budget process in July of 2019 it was determined to begin the preliminary engineering process for the future improvements to Plank Road. A figure of \$75,000 was considered appropriate at that time. As the Committee is aware, several safety concerns were received during late 2019 and early 2020 from Plank Road residents. The County Engineer determined a study should be performed to determine the best option to handle future traffic increases safely for Plank Road. After performing the Qualifications Based Selection process, CMT was selected to move forward with a study as well as phase I preliminary engineering pending County Board approval. Plank Road went from a plan and looking at preliminary engineering to constructing a center lane turn between Gerry Lane and Lukens Road and now just an in-depth study to determine what, if any, improvements would best serve the community now and in the years to come. These additional funds will be paid from the Department's Highway Budget and be paid by property taxes. Although the estimated cost of this study is over the Department's budgeted amount, these additional funds will be made up throughout the Highway budget will little to no effect on our day-to-day operations or future construction projects. The Committee inquired if the cost of the study and the phase I preliminary engineering will increase now that these two have been split out. Mr. Schwartz indicated that is hard to say. Will some items need to be done twice due to time sensitive items that would have an expiration date? That is hard to say until the study is done and we see what items need to be completed and what they are. The price could increase over time. To clarify for the Committee, Mr. Schwartz re-emphasized that the \$141,755.15 is part of the original \$470,927.69 amount and not in addition to that amount. So if the study found a favorable solution to the current and future safety needs for Plank Road, the phase I engineering services for that solution could be estimated at \$329,172.50 (using the current cost estimates). A concern was voiced as to why the study is needed right now and could not be planned for future years when the economy improves or when the County has a better picture of future revenues. Also, why not allow time for the safety improvements already completed on Plank Road to work and seek input from residents as to just how well those improvements have been? Mr. Schwartz indicated that an increasing number of complaints were being received from the residents residing in the subdivision off of Gerry Lane since the repaving had been completed and the safety shoulders installed. The proposed study is not funded from sales tax revenue nor from Motor Fuel Tax funds and will have very little impact on the Highway Department's ability to fund future construction projects as these projects are already planned and budgeted for. With the completion of the proposed study the County will be in a very good position to determine what path forward would be appropriate. When and if that path is chosen, then that would be the appropriate time to review funding participation possibilities for other governments that might benefit from such a path. This study

under no circumstance obligates the County to any further action except for actions approved by the County Board. If the study were to determine nothing needs to be done, or if the study indicates a realignment is necessary, no movement on that option will be done without future County Board approval. **Mr. Luebke moved and Ms. Emmer seconded a motion to forward the resolution to the full County Board for approval. Roll call vote was taken with seven yes votes and zero no votes. Motion passed unanimously.**

CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS: Chairman Plote stated he had received concerns that the County mowers had mowed over a political sign while mowing the ditches. Mr. Schwartz indicated crews are trying to be careful as they mow but sometimes things happen. Mr. Schwartz reminded the Committee that no signs are allowed within the right-of-way without the permission of the agency having jurisdiction over that portion of roadway. Chairman Plote further commented on the intersection of Illinois Route 23 and Chicago Road. Despite the flashing lights, drivers are still stopping and pulling out in front of oncoming traffic. It happened to him recently and he wished there was something further that could be done to improve this intersection.

COUNTY ENGINEER'S COMMENTS: Monthly updates on projects were shared with the Committee. The McGirr Road Bridge, scheduled to be built during 2021, stands at 75% of the preliminary and 35% of the design engineering complete. Construction of McNeal Road Bridge is underway and it is 20% complete and has a completion date of October 31st. Motel Road Bridge is still waiting on the contract to be awarded/signed. Because it has been 45 days since bid opening with no awarded contract, the contractor is no longer bound by the prices submitted in their bid. To put this project off to next year, the contractor has indicated that prices would change. The Highway Commissioner has made the decision to go forward with the project yet this year. That will mean the contractor will work on the Motel Road Bridge and the road will remain closed through the winter months into late spring or early summer. The contractor indicated he would honor his bid prices if they could work on this project over the winter. A preconstruction meeting with the contractor is scheduled for October 1, 2020. The contract for the South First Street box culvert replacement is awaiting signatures. The contractor is ready to begin as soon as the contract is signed. The Suydam Road Bridge stands at 75% complete for the preliminary engineering and 30% complete for design engineering. The consultants have been at the bridge this week doing borings and surveying. Waterman Road project, 3B – ditches south of Somonauk Creek, currently stands at 70% preliminary and 60% of the design engineering complete. The timber pile repairs to Anderland and Haumesser Bridges have begun. As of today Anderland Bridge is just about completed and Haumesser Road will be closed starting tomorrow.

There is very little to report on any legislative updates from Springfield. On the Federal side the Federal Transportation Bill is set to expire this month. It will more than likely be extended a couple of times before there is a new, long-term bill.

DSATS interviewed a promising candidate for the Planner position but unfortunately the candidate accepted another position. There is a candidate that just sent in an application and arrangements will be made to offer an interview in the coming weeks.

This Department has a position classified as an Administrative Clerk C. Since May of 2019 the Department has been trying to fill and keep that position filled. During this time three employees have filled that position, one for 72 days, one for 169 days and one for 52 days that just left today. The common thread to everyone leaving this position is the \$12.88 starting salary. They find it difficult to support themselves and any family member(s) they might have. In order for the Department to hire above the starting salary set by the County, approval is needed from the appropriate County Board Committee. Due to our past difficulties in keeping this position filled we look for your consensus in allowing hiring up to 10% over the set starting salary for this position. This position will be looked at during the 2022 budget process to see if the position is classified appropriately or if it would be appropriate to classify this position as an Administrative Clerk B position. The Committee consensus was every member was in favor of allowing to hire at up to 10% over the set starting salary for this position.

The 2020 annual highway tour of projects will be conducted virtually this year. The County Engineer will put together a video and share it with the Committee. If it rises to the level of stardom it could be placed on the County's website for all to see!

ADJOURNMENT: Chairman Plote stated there was nothing further on the agenda and asked for a motion to adjourn. **A motion was made by Mr. Luebke seconded by Mr. Pietrowski. Roll call vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously with six yes votes.** The meeting was adjourned at 7:17pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Roy Plote
Chairman