

Public Works Committee Minutes

August 10, 2009 – 4:30 p.m.

Present: Chairman Grattidge; Supervisors Connelly, M. Johnson, Peck, Richardson, Sausville, and Raymond; Spencer Hellwig, Mgmt. Analyst; Joe Ritchey, DPW; Paul Lent, Emergency Services; Press.

Chairman Grattidge called the meeting to order and welcomed all in attendance.

On a motion made by Mrs. Johnson, seconded by Mr. Richardson the minutes of the May 11, 2009 meeting were approved unanimously.

Mr. Lent discussed the Public Works Mutual Aid Agreement that was approved by the Public Safety Committee as follows:

This was an off shoot of the ice storm that occurred late 2008. One of the things that came to the surface after getting documentation together to obtain FEMA reimbursement, was that if the county had executed a countywide mutual aid agreement it would have negated the need for specific towns to have specific agreements for work. The agreement would be a non-binding. This does not compel anyone to do anything, other than if you do go, there is a framework by which there can be requests and documentation for reimbursement should you require it.

Mr. Grattidge said the County Attorney and the Administrator's office have reviewed the Mutual Aid Agreement.

A motion was made by Mrs. Johnson, seconded by Mr. Connors to approve the Public Works Mutual Aid Agreement and move it forward to the Law and Finance Committee. Unanimous.

Mr. Ritchey gave a brief update on the recent Batchellerville Bridge inspection results as follows: There were eleven red flags, thirty-six yellow flags and eight safety flags. The red flag is the most critical flag you can get. There are two different levels of a red flag; one prompts an urgent response within 24 hours and the other is a six-week response. The county has a six-week response. The yellow flag means that something may go wrong within the next year or prior to the next inspection and should be responded to. The safety flag doesn't impact the structural integrity of the bridge, but could simply be a broken railing or sidewalk.

Mr. Ritchey said there has been question as to who owns the bridge. There was an agreement that was established between the State and the County where the State agreed that they would facilitate the replacement of the bridge with federal money and then after

that the County would own the bridge. The State is now saying that they do not put any money into a bridge that is not on their State Highway system.

As a result, Mr. Ritchey said he just received permission to bring the bridge down to a single lane of traffic to keep the 15 ton posting that is already in place. The other option is to make it two lanes with a posting of 9 tons. After conversations with Supervisor Raymond, it was determined that it would be better to have one lane of traffic allowing school buses and emergency vehicles to pass.

Two traffic lights will be installed, one at each end of the bridge at a cost of approximately \$8,000/mo. Mr. Ritchey said bids will be sent out, but it might be more cost effective to purchase the light system rather than renting.

Mr. Peck asked what the cost of a traffic light would be? Mr. Ritchey said between \$70,000 - \$80,000.

Ms. Raymond said there are two issues with the bridge: one, is the issue of the eighty year old bridge which is wearing out; the second issue, concurrently, is to build a new bridge, which will take two construction seasons to build.

The original difference between the money available and the low bid was \$25 million. In February the Sate rejected the bids as there was no source for the additional \$25 million needed to award the project.

Ms. Raymond said on July 29th she and Mr. Grattidge had opportunity through arrangements from Senator Guillibrand's office and Congressman Murphy's office to meet with the Director of DOT. The meeting was very productive with a number of engineers and people from DOT in attendance. At the meeting there was an agreement that the bridge should be redesigned and that options needed to be explored to obtain the additional money needed.

Ms. Raymond said there are no bridges in Saratoga County that will be receiving stimulus money. When the stimulus money came out the Batchellerville Bridge was not only shovel ready, but had gone out to bid and the bids were available to be awarded if they had wished to do that.

Mr. Grattidge said the process has to keep moving forward to get the bridge designed. The difference between what was available and the bid price is too great of an amount to come up with. It is critical that DOT works on a new design to come up with features that will make it less costly to build. Additional funding will need to come from a number of sources.

Ms. Raymond said there was a positive attitude from DOT that they wanted to get the job done. It is anticipated that there may be more bidders on the new design, which will be less complex.

Mrs. Johnson said not having the bridge would have a great impact on the Town of Day as Edinburg provides their fire and Emergency Services.

Mr. Sausville asked when the last time the bridge was repaired and brought up to standard? Mr. Ritchey said it was repaired in 1982.

Ms. Raymond said she would not recommend doing much with repairs unless there is a plan in place to build a new bridge.

Mrs. Johnson said it is a shame the way that the stimulus money is being used. She has read many articles about money that is being given to bridges that don't even need repairs or if they do they are not significant. She encouraged all supervisors to speak to their Congressman or Senator about the urgent need to replace the Batchellerville Bridge and the need for additional funds to do so.

Ms. Raymond said that the County Emergency Services Team did a wonderful job mitigating the July 30th storm that damaged the South Shore Road in the Town of Edinburg.

Mr. Ritchey said repairs are still ongoing. Costs in repairing the roadway will be approximately \$15,000, and should be completed in the next couple of weeks.

Mr. Ritchey said the county has installed traffic lights where there are capacity issues, at turning lanes or multiple lanes on county highway intersections. Many of the towns have addressed issues in their towns. Mr. Ritchey said at some point the county should do an analysis and consider roundabouts.

Mr. Grattidge said he would like to begin a dialog with the committee on whether there are some county policies that should be changed to be more black and white.

Mr. Sausville said he is satisfied with the system the way it is now. You have situations where sometimes it is not black and white. If you leave the policy the way it is now you open the opportunity to brokerage a partnership arrangement for grant money or stimulus money where the county and the towns can work together.

Mr. Peck said the committee needs to continue to discuss and address as we continue to see AMD or Global Foundries come to fruition. The county is going to change dramatically over the next ten to fifteen years. We need to think about the best way to plan and handle traffic issues as they increase.

Mr. Grattidge said the committee would keep working on issues as they come up, and if there are policies that need to be forwarded to the Board that will be done.

Mr. Ritchey said DPW has received requests for maintenance on the Zim Smith Trail and Wilton Trail. Work will be done when crews are available.

Mr. Grattidge said there would be budget impact if there is going to be work shifted to the Public Works Department.

Mr. Richardson said there would have to be a dollar amount that will be dedicated to the maintenance of the trail system.

Mr. Grattidge said there would be discussions with the towns that are on the trails and what the appropriate commitment would be.

Mr. Peck said he commends Mr. Ritchey and the Department of Public Works staff for their commitment and always finding the resources.

Mr. Peck gave a brief update with regard to the Dix Bridge as follows: Everyone received a letter from Mr. Ritchey with regard to the Dix's Bridge at lock 5 island that crosses the river between Saratoga and Washington County. There was an 80/20 grant that was awarded with a 20% match. It was known that there would be some money necessary to attribute to the county or the partnerships that are involved. When the grant was awarded the engineering work that had been done was a couple of years old. Mr. Peck said he wanted to make sure before the county gets into a position in making the bridge accessible for snowmobiles, bicycles, and walkers that the budget is accurate. The outstanding 20% balance wasn't ever intended to come out of Public Works, so it was discussed in advance that it would be a partnership between the Saratoga, Washington County and the Hudson Partnership, which is made up from many of the municipalities along the river.

Mr. Peck said after the money is secured the issue would be brought forward to the committee.

A motion was made by Mr. Sausville, seconded by Mr. Richardson the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Chris Sansom