

**TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE MEETING**

**October 25, 2017**

**5:30 P.M.**

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Kevin Meachum  
Tim Dudley  
Kevin Bird  
Kevin Greenfield  
Jerry Potts  
Phil Hogan

**COUNTY PERSONNEL PRESENT**

Bruce Bird, County Engineer  
Stuart Jacobs, Highway Department  
Jeannie Durham, County Board Office

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

Jay Dunn

The meeting was called to order by Chair Meachum at the Macon County Office Building.

**MINUTES**

Mr. Dudley made a motion to approve the September 27, 2017 meeting minutes, seconded by Mr. Hogan, motion carried 6-0.

**CLAIMS**

Mr. Potts made a motion to accept the report of the claims as presented, seconded by Mr. Hogan, and the motion carried 6-0.

**Public Comments –**

Lawrence & Kathryn Bennett, 9122 Argenta Road, Argenta, IL 62501

Ms. Bennett advised the committee that their concern is the closure of the two bridges on Lake Fork Road which is on the border of Macon & DeWitt Counties. She distributed packets with information and explained that they have a Sesquicentennial Farm that is almost 165 years old. Right now there are 120 acres that they have no access to because the 2<sup>nd</sup> bridge on the east side was recently closed and barricaded. The information in the packet includes the ownership of the land, the parcel where they pay taxes, the bridges that are affected, pictures of the land. There are almost \$94,000 worth of crops sitting out there that they cannot go get because both bridges are closed. She said they are going to need to do something so they can get the crop off the ground. There is information on the equipment, sizes of the equipment, and the weights of the equipment. She said she did not know what the bridges are rated, but right now since the spring when the west bridge was closed, they have gone around the section to get to their piece of ground to plant in the spring. Now the east bridge has barricades and the equipment cannot fit between those barricades. There is only a total of 6 inches on the east bridge to get the combine through to go harvest. With the barricades up, they are unable to get the equipment through. There is also a four wheel drive tractor that pulls the chisel plow in the fall. She said they need to get that in there as well. This is going to lead into spring for planting and getting to that 120 acres that is now landlocked because of no access to it. Ms. Bennett said she was hoping to get an answer as to how they would be able to get the crop out of the field. It has to be harvested. They have to get their equipment across. Access is needed in the future until the bridge is fixed. She said she had the understanding that the west bridge is not even on the docket to be fixed until 2019 and the one that was just closed is not even on a docket yet. She said she wanted to make the committee aware of what is happening and where they are right now. She said they grow seed beans and there are 40 acres of seed beans sitting out there and they are under contract with Monsanto to deliver them. She said she needs to get there.

Chair Meachum asked Ms. Bennett to identify the entrances to the farm on the map in the information in respect to the two bridges that are marked on the map. Ms. Bennett explained that on the west bridge, there is an entrance right across the bridge in between the two. She took time to go over the map with each committee member showing where the entrances are located and what the problems are. She then asked what the next step would be.

Mr. Bruce Bird said that when he had spoken with Mr. Bennett when he had called him earlier about this, he had told him that he needed to know the weights of the equipment, etc. because what happens with these bridges is that we (County Highway) do the inspections on them, but any kind of restrictions such as weight, width, etc. come out of the IDOT Bridge Office in Springfield. It is nice to have this information because it is what Mr. Bird said he was waiting on. He said he would be taking that back to the folks at the Bridge Office. They are fully aware that the one bridge is closed and this one is being restricted. He said he is very confident that they will work with us on something. He repeated that since he now has the information, he would get with them and see what they want us to do. That is the first step. There may be some things they will allow us to do to that existing structure to allow . . . Honestly, the Bennetts will be the only ones who will be using it. There won't be anybody else using it. Ms. Bennett agreed saying that they are the only ones mandated to use it, that have to use it. Mr. Bird said that anyone else going there shouldn't be there anyway. Ms. Bennett agreed except if they are fertilizer companies or something that are applying . . . Mr. Bird agreed, saying that they would be down there for the Bennett's reason and for that reason only. He said he had to run it past the Bridge Office first, based on their being responsible. He said that he could come up with some options. It is a County Line Township Road, so it is a township road, so the Township gets involved, but also, since it is a county line road, the County also gets involved too. He said they would see what the Bridge Office says first. They are usually pretty prompt and as soon as Mr. Bird finds out something, he said he would let the Bennetts know along with everyone on the committee. Ms. Bennett said her main concern right now is the contract with Monsanto for the seed beans that are sitting up there and up until the day before yesterday when it started raining, they were working 14 hours to get the seed beans out. It was just impossible to get everything they had out. There are 40 acres of seed beans she said she has got to get out. Everyday that moisture is lost, germ is lost. She said she needs to get them out. They're popping out of pods. Time is of the essence. Corn is not as critical, but there is a contract with Monsanto. Mr. Bird said he would contact the Bridge Office tomorrow morning.

Mr. Greenfield asked if they had made anyone aware of the problem before now. Ms. Bennett said her husband had spoken with Mr. Bird a couple of weeks ago. Mr. Bennett said that the Township Supervisor had gotten a letter from Allison at the Highway Department and the Township Supervisor had notified the Bennetts that the bridge has to be barricaded, but not 100%. Barricaded on the north side. It still can access pickups and cars. At that point, a few days later, Mr. Bennett said he had talked with Mr. Bird and since they (the Bennetts) were in process of harvesting, he had not gotten the numbers together. It then rained and they got all the numbers together. Ms. Bennett called to find out when this (Transportation Committee) meeting was. So they got it all together and came to this meeting. Ms. Bennett said the only thing not in the packet of information she had handed out was the weight of the semi that is used to load with. It is 80,000 pounds. It is probably the heaviest, but is a spread out load. Mr. Bird said that the letter Mr. Bennett is referring to comes from the Bridge Office. The County Highway Department gets a copy off to the Road Commissioner because it is his structure and if there is any kind of . . . in this case, they had to barricade the north side of the bridge because the edges of the abutments are failing and they don't want anything to drive on them. The other problem with this bridge is that several years ago, someone had hit the railing on the south side. Mr. Bennett said that was approximately 15 years ago. Mr. Bird agreed that it was a long time ago because his department had gone out and put those up when it occurred. There are jersey barriers on the south side. That might be one of the solutions in talking with the Bridge Office. Since it is just you guys going across, they may let

us take that jersey barrier off to get more space. That is one of the questions that will be asked. Mr. Bennett said he had requested the south side be fixed 15 years ago and the jersey barriers are still up and have been up. Mr. Bird repeated that he would call the Bridge Office the next day. Usually in a situation like this, they are pretty prompt. They've got a lot of stuff they have to keep track of, but if there is something where time is of the essence, they will get an answer back in a timely fashion. Ms. Bennett said she was hoping for an answer by Friday. She said she was hoping the beans would dry up by then and Mr. Bennett added that as soon as they dry up, they have to go. Mr. Bird said it would be easy to take the jersey barriers off. That's just a matter of getting a backhoe and a truck and pulling them off of there. It's just a question of what they would want to do with the other side and how they would want to protect it. Ms. Bennett asked if the west bridge is in better shape than the east bridge. At the east bridge, part of it doesn't even have dirt under it. The west bridge at least has dirt under the whole bridge. Mr. Bird explained that it is the abutments that are holding the west bridge up. The deck pieces are not in that bad shape. What holds it up is the timber underneath. The timber that both the piles that are driven into the ground and the cap across the top, all that stuff is split and crushing. It just can't hold up what is sitting on top of it. Ms. Bennett (moved away from microphone – hard to hear) asked about the other bridge. Mr. Bird explained that it is the same type of structure beneath it, but the north portion that they want barricaded has deteriorated like the west bridge, but the rest of it has not. That is the basic issue they are dealing with. They'll look at a lot of different things. They have a lot of situations like this that pop up statewide. It's not something out of the ordinary that they have to deal with. They're not trying to make it so you can't get to your land. They understand that, but they do have an obligation to make sure that when someone drives across, they are safe. Ms. Bennett said she did not want to take that big machinery across that bridge and endanger her life or the machinery. Mr. Bird said they take that into consideration, so he would give them a call to see what they do. He said he would let them know that we need to know ASAP and that there are beans sitting out there. Mr. Bennett explained that they have been driving around the section to get to 17 acres. Ms. Bennett agreed saying that they had access and drove all the way around to get to that 17 acres, but now they have nothing. She thanked the committee for listening. Mr. Bird thanked them for the information saying that that is what he needed.

Chair Meachum asked if the committee wanted to leave this in Mr. Bird's hands to get this corrected, to work with them, and get them access to get their crops out. Mr. Bird said the first step is talking with the Bridge Office. Chair Meachum asked Mr. Bird if once he finds out what direction he has to go, after that he would come up with the option to help them out. Mr. Bird said that what they have to say would be the key to what the next step is.

Ms. Bennett said that the only other way they could possibly get in would be to have an easement through someone else's ground north . . . Mr. Bird said that would be in DeWitt County. Ms. Bennett asked if he was suggesting that this be presented to De Witt County's Transportation Committee as well. Mr. Greenfield said he did not think they had that kind of time. He suggested they work with Mr. Bird to see what he could do for them. Mr. Bennett reminded them that this will also become a 2018 problem. They need to harvest now, but in 2018, if both bridges are down they will still need to access for planting. Chair Meachum said he had confidence in Mr. Bird. He said they would get this immediate threat corrected and then through the winter, they'll have to get something figured out so it is all doable for both parties. He asked they give Mr. Bird a chance to get it done. Communication is key.

The Bennets left the meeting. Chair Meachum addressed Mr. Bird saying he felt this is something Mr. Bird should deal with and get us back on track. Mr. Bird said he was very certain that the Bridge Office would get back to him with something tomorrow.

Mr. Greenfield asked if the barricades were taken off the one side, if they could pretty much get across. Mr. Bird said he thought he'd probably have to narrow up what they want closed on the north side, but

given the situation, if we explain things to them, they'll probably be fine with it, but they have the final say. Mr. Dudley said it should shift the weight to the north side of the bridge anyway. That's the good side. There won't be much weight on the part they've got barricaded off. Mr. Bird agreed saying the barriers on the south side are where there isn't really anything wrong so whatever is going to be traveling on it is going to be more . . . The only issue is that the railing was damaged and it is not totally secured, but who's going to be driving down there at 55 mph and hitting it? It's not going to be anybody. He said as soon as he knows anything, he would let the committee know.

**Old Business** - None

**New Business:**

***Macon County Board Resolution Appropriating Funds for Engineering on Section 15-00233-01-BT, the Baltimore Avenue Bike Path***

Mr. Bruce Bird explained that back in the August letting for IDOT, this came in at 23% over the engineer's estimate. As mentioned at that time, IDOT's designers originally approved the design, but then said there were flaws and that it had to be changed because of the slope of the path. They were not going to let us put it back on the letting until we fixed the flaws. This is intended to fix those flaws so it can be put on a letting.

Mr. Potts made a motion to approve forwarding the resolution on to the Finance Committee with recommendation to approve, seconded by Mr. Hogan, and the motion carried 6-0.

***Macon County Board Resolution Appropriating Funds for the Salary of the County Engineer***

Mr. Bruce Bird explained that the recommended salary list came out from IDOT and they recommended, because of the state's budget issues, a 0% raise.

Mr. Potts (not speaking into microphone) asked about comparability of counties. Mr. Bird said that Macon County is 18<sup>th</sup> on the list out of 102. Mr. Potts asked what other counties are comparable to Macon County. Mr. Dudley said Sangamon, Champaign, Tazewell, Peoria . . . Mr. Bird said it is based on county highway mileage, population, . . . There are 4 factors used to calculate it. Whatever the calculation is, it comes up with the ranking and then they apply the percentage for the salaries afterwards.

Mr. Dudley made a motion to amend the resolution to include a 1 ½% increase which would bring the salary to \$120,886.50 for the County Engineer, seconded by Mr. Potts. Mr. Greenfield asked how much they were proposing to raise the salary. Mr. Dudley said 1 1/2 % which is \$1,786.50 for a total salary of \$120, 886.50. Mr. Greenfield asked Mr. Bird if IDOT pays ½ of that. Mr. Bird said ½ comes out of federal funds and ½ comes out of MFT. Chair Meachum said there is no county money involved. Mr. Greenfield asked if the state pays 100% of the salary. Mr. Bird explained that it does end up being 100% MFT because ½ comes out of MFT and one half comes out of federal funds, but they give us a check and it basically becomes a swap on their end. It is the only way to use federal funds to pay for operational expense. All the other funds have to go towards projects. Mr. Potts said that they recommend a 0% raise, but they're still going to pay for it. Mr. Bird confirmed saying they don't have a cap, it is a recommendation. Mr. Greenfield asked what raises were given to Mr. Jacobs and Mr. Moretti. Mr. Bird explained that it was not a percent, but was a flat amount that was the same as what the girls in the office got. So, the percentage was different for both of them. By roll call vote, the motion carried 5-1 with Mr. Greenfield voting no.

Mr. Potts made a motion to approve forwarding the amended resolution on to the Finance Committee with recommendation to approve, seconded by Mr. Dudley, and the motion carried 5-1 with Mr. Greenfield voting no.

***Macon County Board Resolution Approving the Macon County Quality Based Selection Process***

Mr. Bruce Bird explained that this is a requirement from the federal highway and IDOT. It is a process we have to adopt if we are going to use state or federal funds when we are procuring engineering services. This is the process that we are to go through. There was a go-by that the state put out. This document was put together by Ann Schneider. We worked with her in tweaking it so it would work well with what we do. She & Chairman Dunn have looked at it and approved it, so going forward it will be done on large projects such as the Beltway as well as the smaller township projects. It would not necessarily be for every project. It depends. If local funds are used, the process would not necessarily have to be used. Mr. Greenfield asked if it didn't call for a committee. Mr. Bird confirmed saying there is a committee setup in it. You have to have an interview committee of the County Engineer and at least two other people. The reason they went with that is because with the township bridges, you're probably not going to need more than 3 people interviewing for a little township bridge. For a larger project, more people will be needed. The flexibility is in there and how to size it appropriately for the size of the project. Chair Meachum explained that Mr. Bird has had several meetings with the Consultant, the Finance Chairman, County Board Chairman, himself and other people that have implemented this in the past so he feels confident that this is a good resolution.

Mr. Greenfield made a motion to approve forwarding the resolution on to the Finance Committee with recommendation to approve, seconded by Mr. Hogan, and the motion carried 6-0.

**County Engineer's Report:**

Mr. Bruce Bird reported that the guys are finishing up a lot of things such as the last round of mowing, some ditch work when the weather allows, some entrances here and there. He said they are trying to get everything knocked out before winter shows up.

The new sign truck is in and it is a really nice piece of equipment. The guys like it a lot. Disposal of the old one is in progress. It is kind of a unique thing. Auction places are being explored and in the interim, it is parked in front of the Highway Department with a for sale sign on it.

Chair Meachum suggested they talk about the next purchases and asked what Mr. Bird expected to need next. Mr. Bird said the plow trucks out of the current year budget. They will probably be in around mid-December. The bid on those trucks is still good through the end of the model year or the end of this year. Next year's budget has another 2 trucks in it. He said he would like to go ahead and order those trucks based on this year's bid. If we wait til next year, it will go up. It will save us money if we do that. The Local supplier, who was the low bidder, has said they can hold it over, but they need to know soon. Chair Meachum asked if the approval would be needed at the November meeting. Mr. Bird said that if it goes to the November committee meeting, the full board would vote on it in December and that is the new fiscal year anyway. He said that is why he was wanting to know. If there is interest in that among the committee, he would bring a resolution next month. Chair Meachum asked the committee for some direction. Mr. Potts said he did not mind saving money. Mr. Dudley said he didn't mind looking at it. Mr. Greenfield said we are going to buy them anyway, so we just as well do it on this year's bid.

Mr. Bird updated the committee about the Wind Farm. Washington Street has been asphalt paved by Dunn Company and it is a great looking road. Kenney Blacktop has the seal done and it is a great looking road too. They've topped everything and are moving a lot of equipment out. They will

maintain the roads over the winter and as soon as the spring weather allows, they will be out there chipsealing the roads that need it. The turbines should be in operation by then.

The asphalt paving has been started on the approaches to the bridge on Sefton Road. They will be done by Friday. If it is dry enough, the shoulders and stone work should get done and the guardrail will be put up. There is a pretty good chance that by the end of next week, that will be done and open.

Chair Meachum asked for an update on the bridge by Mr. Hogan's house. Mr. Bird said that the right of way has been identified and will start talking with people.

Mr. Bird updated members on the IDOT Reductions in FY2018 Statewide Program. Mr. Bird said that we lost \$133,631 which is a little less than he thought. So, the state basically took \$133,631 and sent \$52 million to Debt Service for Series D Bonds, \$130 million to Debt Service on Bonds for RTA Capital Projects which is the Regional Transit Authority in Chicago, \$100 million to the State's Operating match to the RTA, and \$21 million for Free Senior Rides and para-transit in the Chicago Area. So, unless you go ride the CTA or Chicago Metro, you will not get much benefit out of our \$133,000. He said he just wanted to make the committee aware of where the money went.

**Miscellaneous Business:** None

**Closed Session:** None

**Adjourn:**

Mr. Potts made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Dudley, the motion carried 6-0 & meeting was adjourned @ 6:15 p.m.

Minutes submitted by: Jeannie Durham, Macon County Board Office