

March 3, 2011

TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE REPORT

A Transportation Committee meeting was held on Thursday, March 3, 2011 at 5:30 p.m. in the County Administration Building, Quorum Court Meeting Room, 215 East Central, Bentonville, Arkansas

Committee Members Present: Douglas, King, Harrison, Blaty, Curry

Others Present: JPs Jones and Winscott, County Judge Bob Clinard, Administrator of Public Service Gary Black, Administrator of General Services Elizabeth Bowen, Environmental Services Coordinator Theresa Sidwell

Media: Tom Sissom – Daily Record

JP Douglas called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

Public Comments:

None

JP Douglas stated that Ozark Regional Transit will be meeting with the Washington County Finance Committee on March 8, 2011 and would to wait until after that meeting to address this committee, so that item will be deleted from tonight's agenda.

1. Kiss Every Road/Bridge in Benton County

Administrator of Public Service Gary Black recognized Environmental Services Coordinator Teresa Sidwell. Teresa Sidwell stated that they would like to invite the court to help keep our county beautiful by supporting the "Kiss Every County Road and Bridge in Benton County" program. She stated that the program is headed jointly by the Benton County Road Department and the Environmental Department and is sponsored by the national "Keep America Beautiful" organization. She stated that during the week of March 21 through March 25 the Road Department, in coordination with our "Adopt a County Road" program, groups will be cleaning up litter along more than 1,400 miles of county roads. She stated that they will also be cleaning graffiti and debris off of bridges, cutting back brush along intersections, and recycling everything possible. She added that County Judge Bob Clinard, along with the other administrators, are going to help pick up litter and clean graffiti off of road signs. She stated that they are asking for help and support to find volunteers to join them in making Benton County beautiful again.

Gary Black stated that employees from the Road Department, except for the mechanics, would be taking the week off from their normal workload to help with cleaning up the litter along the 1,400 miles of county roads, and that they have also contacted the Sheriff's Office for inmate help. He stated that they have contacted different groups in the county to help, such as the Boy Scouts and churches, and that several groups have volunteered to help. He stated that this is a huge project and encouraged everyone to volunteer. He stated that the program will be divided along the same lines the county uses to define its road districts, so that progress can be monitored, and work crews can be sent where they are most needed. Gary Black stated that he does not know of any county in Arkansas, or in the country, that has attempted a cleanup program on this scale; it is huge, but he thinks that they can do it.

2. Car Pool

Gary Black reported that the county has started a car pool program with three vehicles, which will be monitored by County Properties Coordinator Marsha Graham.

JP Douglas stated that the court has talked about establishing a travel policy. He said in all fairness to the taxpayers, and probably from a liability standpoint, if county employees are going to be on county business, they need to be driving county vehicles as long as one is available.

Gary Black stated that in the past, county employees did not have access to vehicles. He added that the Road Department will service these vehicles and keep them cleaned up and in good shape mechanically.

3. West Side Road Facility

County Judge Bob Clinard reported on the progress of the Westside County Road Department in Decatur. He stated that they are waiting on the architect to notify them if the site will work for the project. He stated that a preliminary survey has been made and they will meet with the architect and engineer to lay out the building structures on the site. He stated that the plans should be completed and ready for bid in two months.

JP Douglas asked if there was a rough cost estimate for the project. County Judge Bob Clinard stated that \$500,000 had been allowed for the project when it was going to be located on Bethlehem Road, but that there is an unknown cost to reconfigure the new structure to the new site. He stated that the structure that was designed for the Bethlehem Road site will not work at the Decatur site because it was not planned for expansion. He stated that the Decatur site structure will be very similar but instead of having the lean-to canopies, the building will have an extended roof so that they can park vehicles under it and then close it in at some point in the future. He stated that the architect and engineer are working on a bid proposal that should be ready next week.

JP Douglas stated that it is good to know that the building could be expanded.

County Judge Bob Clinard stated in addition to the new building, there will be a fueling station, truck wash area, three sheds to park trucks in so that they can plug in to block heaters, areas for the culvert and salvage metal storage, an area for the recycled concrete, and in the future a building for a welding and tire shop.

County Judge Bob Clinard stated that the old Health Department Building will now be called the Benton County Public Services Building, and gave a presentation showing the layout of the old Health Department Building. He stated that the county owns the 20,000 square foot building and it is structurally sound. He then showed where the Public Defender and Election Commission Departments would be located, and stated that the county at this time is paying \$10,000 a month for lease property. He stated that the county will have to spend some money to renovate the building, and the architects have been working on the layout. He said they discovered that the building needs a new roof, with a cost estimate of \$150,000 or more, and that a new roof would have nothing to do with using this space. He stated in trying to keep the costs as low as possible, they will opt to bid out all of the major portions of the work, including plumbing, electrical, heating and air conditioning, new metal studs, walls, framing, painting, and flooring, and that there is a lot of demolition work to be done. He stated that the Sheriff will provide inmate labor and that the Maintenance Department will supervise the work. He stated that he is asking the committee to allocate \$10,000 to do the demolition, and that the main expense for the demolition will be the costs for trash dumpsters to haul off the debris.

JP Curry asked how much the county will save by moving the departments.

County Judge Bob Clinard stated that the lease for the Election Commission is \$58,000 a year, and the Public Defender is in a county-owned building, but when it is vacated, someone else will be moved in. He stated that the Prosecuting Attorney needs to be moved into the courthouse where Juvenile Probation

is now, and that will be a savings of \$40,000 to \$50,000 a year, because the Assessor will move to the building where the Public Defender is now. He stated that in a three-year program, the county will be paying \$160,000 less per year. He stated that we need to own the buildings, not lease buildings. County Judge Bob Clinard stated they are requesting \$10,000 for this demolition, and would like for the request to go directly to the Committee of Thirteen. JP Allen stated that he felt that the entire Finance Committee should hear the request.

JP Hawkins made motion to forward the request for up to \$10,000 for demolition of the former Health Department Building to the Finance Committee agenda, seconded by JP Curry.

Motion passed by unanimous show of hands vote.

4. Countywide Clean-up

Gary Black stated that the Countywide Clean-up will be held on April 9, 2011 and encouraged the JPs to participate. He stated that he would announce the time at a later date.

5. Colonel Meyers Road Bridge

Gary Black gave an update on the Colonel Meyers Bridge. He stated that the county is planning to replace the bridge with a \$500,000 pre-fabricated structure, and to begin work next summer, but because of a law that protects the fish in the streams they cannot start on it until after July 15.

6. Road Graders

Gary Black stated that they are evaluating all of the road graders, and that County Judge Bob Clinard has challenged them to grade them from one to ten and come up with a plan on how many they will need next year and the following year.

JP Douglas asked if it was better to buy road graders or to lease road graders, and what the county would need to look at to get the most efficient use of our tax dollars.

County Judge Bob Clinard stated that he felt that it was better to buy than to lease. He stated that he would be bringing a Fleet Road Grader Purchasing program to the Transportation Committee with the option of buying or leasing road graders, along with a 3-year buy back option.

Gary Black presented an update of the improvements and remodeling work at the Road Department Buildings.

JP Winscott asked if the county is exposed to any liability by rebuilding the Colonel Meyers Bridge, and if the plans that were presented have to be submitted to the Arkansas State Highway Department for approval.

Gary Black stated that the Arkansas State Highway Department is always included in the planning part of the project, because the bridge has to be built with an R-22 rating. He said it will be inspected by ASHD as it is being built, and after it is completed it will be the Highway Department's responsibility to monitor the bridge.

JP Douglas stated that there will be a Transportation Committee meeting held in April, with the date and time to be announced later, and at some time in the future they will be involved with working on a 5-year road plan.

After motion and second the meeting adjourned at 6:46 p.m.