

January 10, 2013

## TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE REPORT

A Transportation Committee meeting was held on Thursday, January 10, 2013 at 6:00 p.m. in the County Administration Building, Quorum Court Meeting Room, 215 East Central, Bentonville, Arkansas

Committee Members Present: Curry, McKenzie, Harrison, Adams, Anglin, Moore

Others Present: JPs Jones, Moehring and Sandlin, County Judge Bob Clinard, Road Department Coordinator Cindy Jones

Media: Tom Sissom

JP Curry called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

None

#### **Presentation: CNG Fuel by Craig Hull**

Craig Hull of Fuels and Supplies, Springdale, Arkansas stated that a privately owned company would like to build a compressed natural gas (CNG) fueling station on county property. He stated that the Road Department on Southwest 14<sup>th</sup> Street in Bentonville could serve county vehicles and the public. He said the company would be willing to give the county a reduced rate in lieu of all but a nominal lease payment for land. He stated that the company wants some commitment from the county to at least convert some vehicles from gasoline to compressed natural gas fuel. He added this is fraught with peril from an economic standpoint for us, and that they are not asking the county for money, they are asking to convert the county fleet.

Craig Hull stated that the station would need to sell about 5,000 gallon-equivalents of fuel daily to be in the black, but he does not expect to reach that for some years. He stated that the business plan includes attracting other business and industries with sizable vehicle fleets as customers, in addition to working with the county and serving the public.

Hull said that Northwest Arkansas can take advantage of a mature industry in Oklahoma and connect this area to existing or planned stations. He added this is logical territory for expansion.

County Judge Bob Clinard stated that the lease question is one that he will have to ask County Attorney George Spence to explore, and that the county has no commitment to the project.

Lengthy discussion was held on the county leasing land to a private business and the cost effectiveness of converting enough county vehicles to compressed natural gas fuel to make the cost of conversion worthwhile.

JP K. Harrison made motion to forward the CNG Fuel presentation to the February 12, 2013 Committee of the Whole for further discussion, seconded by JP Anglin.

Motion passed by show of hands vote.

5 in favor: Curry, K. Harrison, Adams, Anglin, Moore

1 abstain: McKenzie

JP Moore stated that he wants the lease question answered, more information on the feasibility of converting vehicles, and the cost to convert vehicles.

**Presentation: 2013 Benton County Road Plan by Road Coordinator Cindy Jones**

Road Coordinator Cindy Jones presented a power point presentation comparing how the county could use reserve funds to do additional work in the first six years of the sales tax refund or use the revenue as it comes in. She reported that the estimated chip and seal and asphalt paving projects for 2013 would cover a total of 60 miles and cost roughly \$1.7 million. She stated that in a year with optimum weather and additional money the Road Department could do as much as 90 miles of roads.

Cindy Jones stated that the county could add 15 miles of asphalt paving to its annual schedule by using the \$1.2 million the county expects to receive in funding from the 1/2¢ state sales tax that is to be distributed over 10 years. She added that the county would have an additional \$400,000 from the tax revenue for additional bridge work. She stated if funding was distributed over a 6-year period, the Road Department could do an additional 25 miles of asphalt paving at a cost of approximately \$1,490,000 and \$655,000 could go toward bridge repair work.

Lengthy discussion was held on road work that could be done with the extra revenue from the 1/2¢ sales tax.

County Judge Bob Clinard stated that he has been unable to determine if the state will approve any plan other than using sales tax money as it is received annually. He stated that the county needs to have that question answered before proceeding with any plan. He added that it is too much money to gamble with, so we need to get a definitive answer from somebody, but we do not know who that somebody is.

Cindy Jones reported on the 2013 Bridge Plan, and stated that there are 22 non-state inspected bridges, 89 state inspected bridges, 61 box culvert bridges, and 77 low water slabs. She stated that there is a lot of work that needs to be done.

Fleet Manager Drew McCracken presented a slideshow showing the extensive damage to county bridges. He stated that Robinson Road Bridge, along with six others in the county, is monitored by the Arkansas Highway Transportation Department (AHTD) for scour. He stated they are required to have a plan of action for these bridges during and after a high water event. He stated that without replacement or repair the only plan is to close the bridges to traffic until inspection, replacement, and/or repairs are made. He stated that these bridges have been neglected and some are not designed correctly.

JP Moore stated that we need to do as much bridge work as we can with the state money we are going to collect.

JP Jones suggested that the county could avoid the question by adjusting its annual subsidy to the Road Department from the county's general fund. He stated the county could add to the Road Department subsidy for five or six years, and then reduce the subsidy until the general fund has recovered the money spent.

JP Sandlin stated that Benton County has chosen to supplement the Road Department's budget from its general fund and can increase or decrease that if it chooses. She added there is no state requirement that says we have to do that. She added it will work if we stipulate it in that manner.

JP Anglin made motion to come back with a plan to accelerate the road plan on spending the money after we get a determination from the state and forward to the Committee of the Whole, seconded by JP Moore.

Motion passed by show of hands vote.

5 in favor: Curry, K. Harrison, Adams, Anglin Moore  
1 abstain: McKenzie

JP Anglin asked for an update on the Colonel Meyers Road Bridge and the Fisher Ford.

Cindy Jones stated that the county's share of Federal funding for the Fisher Ford Bridge will be 20% of the project, which will be \$280,000.

Cindy Jones stated that the state is paying 80% of the cost for the Colonel Meyers Road Bridge, and that the plans are 90% complete.

### **Other Business**

None

### **Adjournment**

After motion and second the meeting adjourned at 8:12 p.m.