

**Washtenaw County Board of Road Commissioners  
Virtual Working Session Minutes of  
May 5, 2020**

**Present:** Road Commissioners Douglas Fuller, Barbara Fuller, Rodrick Green

**Staff Present:** S. Siddall, J. Harmon, D. Ackerman, M. MacDonell, C. Ryan, E. Kizer,  
C. Quinter, C. Brochue

**Others Present:** County Commissioner Sue Shink

The Board entered the Working Session at approximately 9:00 a.m.

Roll Call Vote of Attendance:

Doug Fuller, Chair  
Barb Fuller, Vice-Chair  
Rod Green, Member  
Sheryl Siddall, Managing Director  
Matt MacDonell, Director of Engineering  
Jim Harmon, Director of Operations  
Dan Ackerman, Director of Finance & IT

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

No public comment.

**North Territorial Road /Pontiac Trail Intersection Design**

Matt MacDonell, Director of Engineering, provided a review of this intersection project. This project is programmed with Federal funds in the 2021 fiscal year. Matt stated that MDOT schedules projects by their fiscal year. This project is in the TIP (Transportation Improvement Project) list. The Board approved a preliminary engineering consulting purchase order for Fishbeck which has been working on designing a solution for this intersection. The existing intersection is a four way stop which is considered a fairly safe intersection. We have been working on solving congestion issues at four way stop intersections within the county. A roundabout solution has been presented to consider for this intersection. This intersection has a skew to it that will need to be addressed which means deviating from the existing Pontiac Trail roadway. Matt provided an arial graphic of the proposed roundabout solution. A skewed intersection can present some traffic issues. Matt stated that a four-way stop is a very safe intersection but also creates a congestion issue. The roundabout solution is a very good solution, it keeps the speed approaching the roundabout down compared to a four stop. Staff also took into consideration the businesses on the corners of this intersection.

Matt provided a review of a traffic signal proposal at this intersection. In a signal design, vehicles travel at the posted 50 mph which needs to be accommodated when designing curves to correct the skew which results in a bigger impact to right of way than the roundabout options. With higher traffic speeds, the traffic signal option presents a greater safety concern. Also, the larger footprint for construction of a traffic signal is at a higher cost. The roundabout costs of dealing with the skewed intersection are higher than staff was anticipating along with more significant right of way costs. The estimated construction costs for this project are all eligible for federal dollars. We are using rural funds for this project. This is matched at 80/20% with a 20% local match. The right of way acquisition costs are funded through MTF dollars which is all WCRC cost. It is staff's recommendation to move this project to fiscal year 2022. This allows time to continue refining the design and determining what are the impacts from a right of way standpoint. The money allocated for this project would be used for other road maintenance projects until 2022.

Commissioner Rod Green asked why right of way costs are higher for a traffic signal than the roundabout option? Matt MacDonell replied that with a traffic signal, there is a safety component of higher traffic speeds and there is a much bigger footprint with more parcels impacted with this option due to the skew of the intersection.

Commissioner Barb Fuller asked if federal dollars can be reallocated for other projects. Matt replied that would require reassigning fiscal year funds to other projects. With urban funds, we can save funds for larger scale projects. With this project, there is no entity to trade funds with. Borrowing funds from 2023 is an option that can be considered.

Sheryl Siddall, Managing Director, stated the intent is to continue to refine the design of this intersection project. Matt stated we can also perform appraisals on the right of way acquisition areas. Commissioner Doug Fuller was in favor of the roundabout solution for this intersection.

Matt stated property owners will be notified of pushing this project back to 2022 and keep them updated on the design for this intersection. Staff will also notify the township.

### **IT Needs for Road Commissioners**

Sheryl Siddall, Managing Director, stated that with the COVID 19 situation, the use for virtual meetings and working virtually increased suddenly. We need to make sure we have our Road Commissioners equally able to do business in a virtual manner for however long that is required. Over time, technology is critical on how we do business.

Dan Ackerman, Director of Finance & IT provided a review of technology options for Road Commissioners. Dan provided a PowerPoint presentation of equipment currently being used by the Road Commissioners. Dan stated older devices are becoming incompatible to utilize some of the technology tools needed. Personal devices being used would be subject to FOIA.

The timeline to provide a company laptop and cell phone to Commissioners would be just prior to the two new Road Commissioners coming on board that will be appointed by the Board of Commissioners on May 20<sup>th</sup>. Training on this equipment would be provided by Chris Quinter. Dan provided a review of costs to provide a cell phone and laptop to each Commissioner.

### **Miscellaneous Discussion Items**

Sheryl Siddall, Managing Director, stated that the County Board will be appointing two new Road Commissioners at their May 20<sup>th</sup> meeting. We will provide the new Road Commissioners a welcome packet. There will be five packets put together for all Road Commissioners.

In April of this year, the County Board approved the ballot language for renew and restoration for road and non-motorized millage. Sheryl and staff have had several conversations with County Parks and a representative from the Huron Waterloo Path Initiative on what the educational effort would look like on behalf of the Road Commission. In addition, how this would fold into the advocacy portion of this with the August 4<sup>th</sup> elections with absentee ballots going out around June 20<sup>th</sup>. There will be a virtual information meeting for local elected officials, next Thursday, May 14<sup>th</sup>.

Commissioner Sue Shink stated she appreciated the information on the North Territorial Road /Pontiac Trail roundabout proposal which is in her district. The County Board will be discussing the new Road Commissioner candidates shortly. County Commissioner Shink stated that she appreciates all the efforts to make virtual meetings available to the public.

### **CLOSED SESSION**

B. Fuller moved, R. Green seconded to enter closed session at approximate 10:29 a.m. to discuss Wagner Road/Waters Road Intersection, Parcel 9 – Right-of-Way Acquisition.

Roll Call Vote:

YEAS: D. Fuller, B. Fuller, R. Green

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

ABSTAIN: None

Motion Carried.

B. Fuller moved, R. Green seconded to exit closed session at approximately 10:47 a.m.

Roll Call Vote:

YEAS: R. Green, D. Fuller, B. Fuller

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

ABSTAIN: None

Motion Carried.

**ADJOURNMENT**

B. Fuller moved, R. Green adjourn the May 5, 2020 Virtual Working Session at 10:49 a.m.

Roll Call Vote:

YEAS: R. Green, D. Fuller, B. Fuller

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

ABSTAIN: None

Motion Carried.

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Douglas E. Fuller, Chair  
Washtenaw County Board of Road Commissioners

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Barb Fuller, Vice-Chair  
Washtenaw County Board of Road Commissioners