

Flathead County Road and Bridge Advisory Committee
Advisory Committee Meeting
March 20, 2008 – 7:00 pm
Solid Waste District Board Room – County Landfill

1. Roll Call

Committee Members Present: Charles Lapp – Chairman, Mike Schlegel – Vice Chairman, Karl Schrade, Dan Siderius, David Hilde

Staff Present: Public Works Director Dave Prunty, Operations Manager Guy Foy, Recording Secretaries Patti Vernarsky and Juanita Nelson, Administrative Assistant Mike Pence.

Public Attendees: Miral Gamradt of MDG Consulting, Mark Gluth, Glen Hook, Jean Hook, Tom Gorton, Paul Abel, Myrt Webb

2. Introductory Remarks

No introductory remarks at this time.

3. Comments from the Public (15 Minutes Maximum)

Mark Gluth, McMannamy Draw – He distributed handouts showing pictures from the lower valley area. He described each picture stating the top is how the air quality should be, the second is currently how the dust situation is, and the third is how the dust affects the entire valley. He stated that dust is the main issue, and the reason that the road committee was formed. He reiterated what Dan Siderius had mentioned at the last meeting about the flat grading being inadequate, but there is no material to work with. He felt the commissioners responded back to the Department of Environmental Quality, but did not respond back to their own constituents. He feels the money that is being spent on overlay and chip sealing should be budgeted out to bring the rest of the county roads up to standards. He is not sure what the plan for overlays and chip sealing, but he feels the small amount going towards dust abatement needs to be increased.

Tom Gorton, Mennonite Church Road – He commented on the study on the Four Corners gravel report from TD&H. He presented bags of gravel from his driveway provided by Schellinger's Pit, and then presented bags of material from Mennonite Church Road which came from Four Corners pit. He wanted the committee to see the difference between the two materials.

Paul Abel, Farm Road – He wanted to reiterate the dust issues and disagrees with the Transportation Plan done by Jeff Key that dust is not a factor. He would like to see the committee enforce to the commissioners that dust is a major issue and needs to be included.

Glen Hook, Prairie View Road – He stated the south end of Prairie View Road was so full of potholes that a private citizen took the initiative and graded that end of the road. He

continued with the dust issue, and both his wife and him have asthma, even though their house is back at least 100 yards from the county road with trees as a blocker from the road, they still receive dust. He stated that the committee's work here is not in vain because he was assured by Dale Lauman that all of the committee's recommendations would be approved.

Jean Hook, Prairie View road – She stated the work that was done on the South end of Prairie View Road was greatly appreciated, but continued to state that the rest of the road is “Prairie View Creek” and river bottom. She stated there is no material left on top of Prairie View Road to work with. She continued with the dust issue for everybody, stating that people living on paved roads are affected depending on the direction of the wind. She wants the committee to consider what is happening to the health of the citizens as a result of dust. She would appreciate any consideration the committee can give to reducing the dust problem on the roads that are getting the greatest amount of impact, and not by road count, but from the impact from changes in the valley, such as approval of subdivisions, and the locations of building resources such as sand, gravel, concrete, asphalt, etc.

4. Approval of the Board Meeting Minutes – **Action Required**

Mike Schlegel moved to approve the minutes from February 28, 2008 meeting. Karl Schrade seconded the motion. All in favor; motion passed, minutes approved.

5. Action Agenda – **No Items Requiring Action**

6. Director's Report

a. Miral Gamradt - Exposure Draft Review of Cost Accounting System

Dave Prunty introduced Miral Gamradt and explained how Miral has been working with Flathead County for several years on different projects. He continued to explain the Exposure Draft report Miral put together for the committee to review and discuss.

Miral Gamradt explained that the report is a review of the PubWorks accounting system. He explained that the PubWorks accounting system is not the same as the County's Fund system. He continued to explain that the information in these reports do not just come from PubWorks but from Dossier and the County's Fund system. He further commented that government entities operate under a Fund Accounting System, and that this type of system is not designed to provide the financial information the committee is requesting. He stated that Dossier is the Road Departments program that is used to track equipment repairs and the mechanics time.

Miral wanted to point out that the levels of effort go into producing the cost information that the Road Department has provided. It is very seldom seen in a local government services.

Miral went on to explain the asphalt and crushing operations, and the main focus of the reports was to calculate a cost per ton for production. He continued that a few issues were found in each of the spreadsheets and the process has been started to correct the issues.

He explained some of the issues that were discussed previously and wanted to explain the important distinction between Debt Financing and Cash Financing. Debt Financing is when money is borrowed to pay for the equipment and payments are made to reimburse the loan. Cash Financing is when there is cash to purchase the equipment outright, equipment is then depreciated. He stated the two systems can be confusing if they are mixed.

Mike Schlegel asked what happens when 20% is required as a down payment, and then the rest is financed. Miral replied that is where the two systems get confusing, but rarely any one has the funds to pay for a \$1 million piece of equipment outright.

Mike Schlegel commented that the best way for equipment costs would be to use the cat manual. David Hilde stated FEMA costs come out close to cat costs and that FEMA costs are competitive. Guy Foy replied that all of the equipment rates used in the accounting comes from FEMA costs.

Charles Lapp brought the question of the private sector crushing the material compared to the county crushing and the prices being the same per ton. Dave Prunty explained that Schellinger crushed spec material for the asphalt plant mix, and what the county produced was ¾ inch crush and sanding material together. He stated there is a difference in the type of material that was produced.

Dan Siderius stated the basic fact is the gravel needs to be spec material and to find a way to bring these roads up to a standard. He continued that the committee needs to work with what money the road department has currently, and then maybe find a way to receive more funding.

Dave Prunty wanted to comment to the committee that the software to get the information asked for is the equivalent to an FTE, which is approximately \$50,000 to produce the data. He continued that to get them to agree totally would take four staff accountants and several hundreds of thousands of dollars more. He asked the committee how far they wanted to go to have exact numbers matching.

There was discussion of the comparisons of the figures that are coming from PubWorks and why those figures don't balance with other spreadsheets supplied to the committee. Guy Foy explained that the man hours are separated by the type of task being done in PubWorks, while the previous spreadsheets give costs for each individual road completed. He continued to explain that in PubWorks chip sealing might be included in hauling, sweeping, watering, flagging, etc, so all costs are not all inclusive under one category, but the other spreadsheets all the different tasks are all included into each individual road.

Mike Schlegel questioned the equipment costs on PubWorks in the hauling categories and that the costs come up differently. Guy Foy explained this depends on where the haul is, and also whether pups are being used or even belly dumps.

Dave Prunty stated the staff will look at breaking the PubWorks categories into smaller groups, so all tasks are included together, such as snow plowing, chip sealing, asphalt maintenance, etc.

Mike Schlegel distributed the contracts he files with the Forest Service for the grading services. He explained how the process works, starting with dividing the areas into districts and how the break downs of the contract works, by equipment and lane type. He stated that there needs to be some sort of quality control with crowning and gravel maintenance that needs to be worked on. Dave Prunty commented that the gravel roads have not had gravel hauled on them for many years, so all of the material is now gone. He reiterated about McMannamy Draw and Prairie View with stumps showing through. Mike Schlegel commented that McMannamy Draw is in rough shape and the ditches need to be pulled to get a crown back. Dan Siderius stated the old operator in his area had really good crowns on the road, but the new operator has pretty much removed the crown, so there isn't much drainage left. Dave Prunty agreed that a gravel road maintenance program needs to be started and roads recrowned, but how much money should be put towards this program. He stated this would get the roads in a better structure for residents that want to start an RSID to get them paved. The consensus was to get the gravel roads back in shape and to start a gravel road maintenance program.

b. Committee Report – Discussion and Input

Charles Lapp stated that item b will be discussed at the next meeting and for the committee members to bring ideas needed to be discussed with the commissioners. He stated the next meeting will be April 10th.

7. Comments from Committee Members

No comments at this time.

8. Adjournment

Mike Schlegel made the motion to adjourn, Karl Schrade seconded, all in favor, motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 9:22 p.m.