

Board of Commissioners Meeting

11-24-2021

Present: Dennis Henderson, Tracey Powell, Nancy Cline

Other Present: Jim Leffler, Rick Chandler, Tom Dolezal, Jay Holbrook, David Lacy, Ken Summers, Mark Baird, Lou Ann Millett, Carl Watson

The meeting was opened by Commissioner Henderson

Re-Drawing of Voting Precincts – County Attorney Mark Regnier

County Attorney Regnier stated that the only changes to the precinct maps were in Cicero 4 and Cicero 7. The State had put part of Southwood Subdivision from Cicero 4 into Cicero 7, in error. This would have prevented those residents from voting in City elections. The State will correct the error to put those properties back into the City, in Cicero 4.

Ambulance Service Contract - Tabled

Maintenance of the Previous Jail – Bruce Thompson

Commissioner Powell suggested putting electric heaters in the jail to keep the pipes from freezing, as opposed to spending additional money on the heating system that will probably be replaced.

Motion by Commissioner Powell to approve Bruce Thompson to take steps to keep the previous jail from freezing. Second by Commissioner Cline. Motion carries.

Proposed Relinquishment of SR28 and SR 19

Engineer Beer explained that the proposed relinquishment of SR 28 runs from CR560W to SR19. SR 19 along Jefferson Street to Main Street and south to Park Road would be relinquished, with SR 19 continuing south from Jefferson Street along Ash Street to Park Road to SR19 South. Truck traffic will be diverted to Division Road. The State would take over Ash Street and Park Road as new SR19. They would also take over the Bridge on Ash Street. The City would take over the bridge over Cicero Creek and the County would take over the bridge over Buck Creek, just west of the City along Jefferson Street. Highway Superintendent Morris expressed concerns that the funds from the State be protected in their use for roads and bridges, and that the agreement with INDOT for winter maintenance be preserved in writing to protect the County and City in the case of administration and managerial changes over the ensuing years.

Mayor Tom Dolezal stated that the City would not be reconstructing Jefferson Street (old SR28) through the city to INDOT standards since truck traffic would be diverted. He stated that he would be open to splitting the money from INDOT in a way that would be comfortable to both City and County. He stated that this would be an opportunity for downtown revitalization and would get the trucks out of the town. Commissioner Powell stated, that with the maintenance and upgrade to Division Road, he could not see a split less than 50/50. He stated that the money could be used as a match for grants to extend the use of the money to get the maximum amount of work done to the roads and bridges. President Henderson made it clear that local truck traffic would still be allowed to use the current route to town for local business.

Commissioner Cline stated that she was concerned that the public had not had opportunity to weigh in on something as big as this and that there is pressure to decide immediately. President Henderson

commented that the diversion of truck traffic to Division Road may assist in convincing INDOT to install an intersection there, though there is no guarantee. Commissioner Cline stated that some had commented to her that they did not want to see increased traffic on Park Road. Allowing local truck traffic will relieve concerns of local businesses like Pioneer and Park 110, and will also provide farmers continued access across town to the grain companies.

Public Comment

Jim Leffler stated that it is an excellent opportunity with a 50/50 split.

Jay Holbrook, who has lived on Park Road since 1977, stated that Park Road is not designed for trucks and that it will cause a problem for school buses. He stated that Park Road is already congested. He also expressed concern for child traffic near the school. He stated that Park Road has enough traffic as it is. David Lacy expressed concern about turning a town street into state highway. He also expressed concern about the expense of maintaining the bridges into the future. It adds 3 miles to trucks diverted to Division Road and he stated that the corner of SR19 and SR28 East is a difficult corner.

Ken Summers, who has resided on Park Road for 34 years, asked if this had been presented to the City Council. It had not. He stated that this was being decided without a public hearing and without the City Council. He also expressed concern about trucks navigating Park Road and for the ingress/egress at the high school. He stated that kids don't use sidewalks; they cross the street and walk in the street. He expressed concern about out-of-area semi's speeding on Park Road and there being no state police presence. He stated that it is difficult, now, to get into and out of driveways, potentially resulting in more collisions. He also stated that the money will run out and the county will have to find money for maintenance.

Mark Baird stated that the countywide vision plan indicated that access to US31 was important. This would increase the likelihood of an exchange at US31 and Division Road. It also relates to downtown revitalization.

City Council President Chandler asked if the city could establish a truck route by ordinance. Phil Beer responded that INDOT establishes truck routes by moving the state road.

Carl Watson stated that the county would be trading one short-term project for a lifetime commitment and long-term expenses. He likened it to "buying a pig in a poke with the fond expectation of receiving federal funds."

Commissioner Cline stated that we never have enough money to maintain our roads. She asked if the incentive from INDOT is enough.

Ken Summers stated that the City does a good job of clearing Park Road and that they don't throw snow. He expressed concern that trucks would throw snow and ice and that it could come close to the 50 foot set back.

Motion by Commissioner Powell to close public comment. Second by Commissioner Cline. Motion carries.

County Attorney Mark Regnier asked if we had a commitment from the City for a 50-50 split.

Commissioner Cline asked if there had been talks behind the scene. Commissioner Powell stated that he had had conversations with the mayor. He stated that he told the mayor that he would have a number for him and if he accepts it, great, and if he doesn't, we move on. Commissioner Cline asked what was the motivation behind this and when would the public have a voice in something of this magnitude. She stated that INDOT's deadline is 5pm on Friday. The citizens of the City and the County have not had an opportunity to voice their opinions.

Attorney Regnier stated that INDOT will not split the money. Commissioner Powell stated that it would require a written agreement to split the money.

Mayor Tom Dolezal stated that the money would be used for grant matches and also would be put back for maintenance and upkeep and downtown revitalization. He stated that they expect to have the money multiplied by using Community Crossings and OCRA grants. He stated that it is his understanding the this a decision of the executive for both the county and the city and it doesn't need County Council approval as it doesn't need City Council approval. He said, " I can pledge to you that I can commit to a split of 50-50 for you and not accept anything other".

Motion by Commissioner Powell that we accept the INDOT proposal for the relinquishment, with the City and County splitting the funds evenly.

Engineer Beer stated that both the County Board of Commissioners and the Mayor will have to agree to the relinquishment. There would be a memorandum of understanding prepared for signature along with the agreement between the County and City.

Motion was seconded by Commissioner Henderson. Commissioner Cline called for a roll call vote.

Commissioner Powell: Aye; Commissioner Henderson: Aye; Commissioner Cline: No Motion carries.

Motion by Commissioner Cline to adjourn the meeting. Second by Commissioner Powell. Motion carries.

Approved this 20th day of December, 2021

Dennis Henderson, President

Tracey Powell, Vice President

Nancy Cline, Commissioner

Attest:

Gregg A. Townsend, Tipton County Auditor
Respectfully submitted by Gregg A. Townsend