

**MINUTES
JOINT MEETING
OF THE
TRANSYLVANIA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
&
NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
September 26, 2012 – SPECIAL MEETING**

The Board of Commissioners of Transylvania County met jointly with officials from the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) on Wednesday, September 26, 2012 at 3:30 p.m. in the downstairs conference room of the Community Services Building. The purpose of the meeting was to consider the NCDOT's recommended program for secondary road improvements in Transylvania County for FY 2012-2013.

Commissioners present were Jason Chappell and Chairman Mike Hawkins. Vice-Chairman Larry Chapman and Commissioners Daryle Hogsed and Kelvin Phillips were absent. There was no quorum present for this meeting. Also present were County Manager Artie Wilson and Clerk to the Board Trisha Hogan.

NCDOT officials present from Division 14 were Division Engineer Joel Setzer, Division Maintenance Engineer Mark Gibbs, District Engineer Steve Cannon, and County Maintenance Engineer Ben Williams.

There were three people in the audience. There was no media in attendance.

CALL TO ORDER/WELCOME

Chairman Mike Hawkins presiding called the meeting to order at 3:35 p.m. He introduced the members of the Board of Commissioners present and welcomed NCDOT officials and members of the audience. Division 14 Engineer Joel Setzer introduced the members of the NCDOT in attendance.

PRESENTATION – SECONDARY ROAD IMPROVEMENTS FY 2012-2013

Division 14 Engineer Joel Setzer announced that Conrad Burrell, the long time member of the Transportation Board representing Division 14, has retired. Division 14 is now represented by Larry Kernea who was unable to attend the meeting today.

The purpose of this meeting is to allow NCDOT officials to present the proposed Secondary Road Program for Transylvania County for FY 2013 and to discuss any other transportation-related issues. The proposed Secondary Road Program will be considered for approval by the Board of Commissioners at a regular meeting on October 8, 2012.

Mr. Setzer reported that Transylvania County's portion of the Secondary Road Program for FY 2013 is \$295,796. NC General Statutes determines how much money is allocated toward projects and how the monies are spent and it is based on a formula from gas tax revenues. This year the NC General Assembly used a statewide ranking system to prioritize projects. Monies were allocated for prioritized statewide projects and the remaining funds were distributed using a standard formula for secondary roads. The NC General Assembly could decide to change the funding formulas for next year depending on its success in FY 2013.

District Engineer Steve Cannon presented the Secondary Road Improvement Program in greater detail. There is \$2.872 million carried forward from prior year allocations. These funds are for projects that were

approved in previous years. The remaining projects will cost \$2.791 million, leaving a balance to be carried forward of \$80,475. Prior fiscal year programmed projects are broken down as follows:

1. Countywide - Spot stabilization, safety improvements, road additions (from Trust: \$151,029)
2. Countywide - Spot stabilization, safety improvements, road additions (from Highway: \$176,452)
3. Countywide - Countywide surveys (\$104,008)
4. Countywide - Safety signage (\$9,561)
5. SR 1151 Cash Road from SR 1152 to end of system - 0.66 miles; grade, drain, base and pave unpaved road (\$150,000)
6. SR 1156 Main Street in Rosman from US 178 to SR 1388 - 0.42 miles; curb and gutter, drain, and pave (\$410,000)
7. SR 1301 Cold Mountain Road from end of pavement to end of system - 3.2 miles; construct retaining wall (\$306,000)
8. SR 1307 Shelton Road from NC 281 to end of system - 0.81 miles; grade, drain, base and pave unpaved road (\$176,516)
9. SR 1348 Probart Street from SR 1344 to SR 1350 - 0.16 miles; paved road improvement (\$1,645)
10. SR 1398 Morton Gap Road from SR 1304 to end of system - 0.54 miles; grade, drain, base and pave unpaved road (\$4,592)
11. SR 1344 Cashiers Valley Road from US 64 to WCL Brevard - 1.91 miles; paved road improvement (\$1,250,000)
12. SR 1188 Whitewater Church Road from NC 281 to NC 281 - 0.54 miles; removed from program due to right of way unavailable (\$125,000)
13. SR 1542, SR 1609 - 2.90 miles; AST strengthening-triple seal (\$51,746)

These projects total \$2.791 million. The \$80,475 remaining from prior year projects will be carried forward to FY 2013. Adding the carry forward to FY 2013 allocations in the amount of \$295,796 allows \$376,271 for road programs in FY 2013.

FY 2012-2013 Program:

1. Countywide - Spot stabilization, safety improvements, road additions (from Trust)
2. Countywide - Spot stabilization, safety improvements, road additions (from Highway)
3. Countywide - Countywide surveys (\$10,000)
4. Countywide - Safety signage
5. SR 1212 Carrie Lane from SR 1124 to dead end - 0.09 miles; grade, drain, base and pave unpaved road (\$40,000)
6. SR 1559 Solomon Jones Road from US 276 to South Carolina line - 2.6 miles; AST strengthening-triple seal (\$101,000)
7. SR 1578 Seldon-Emerson Road from SR 1559 to dead end - 0.6 miles; AST strengthening-split seal (\$15,000)
8. SR 1324 Tannasee Gap Road from NC 215 to Jackson County line - 4 miles; AST strengthening-split seal (\$95,000)
9. SR 1326 Macedonia Church Road from NC 215 to SR 1309 - 3.9 miles; AST strengthening-split seal (\$90,000)
10. SR 1316 Reid Road from US 64 to SR 1304 - 0.85 miles; AST strengthening-split seal (\$25,000)

These projects total \$376,000 leaving \$271 to carry forward to FY 2014. Adding the carry forward to FY 2014 allocations in the amount of \$295,796 allows \$296,067 for road programs in FY 2014. FY 2014 allocations are on based on FY 2013 allocations. At this point, FY 2014 and FY 2015 consist of only countywide improvements, such as spot stabilization, safety improvements, road additions, surveys, safety signage, and AST strengthening.

Mr. Setzer noted that State or federal numbered routes are not funded by secondary road monies.

DISCUSSION OF SECONDARY ROAD IMPROVEMENTS FY 2012-2013

The Manager inquired about the funding for completing the second half of Wilson Road. This road has been deemed a priority by the County and it is frequently used as a bypass. Division Maintenance Engineer Mark Gibbs responded that the Wilson Road project is listed as a future project but at this time there is not enough money to complete the project. It would cost well over \$1 million to fund this project.

Commissioner Chappell asked if the NCDOT will continue trying to obtain right of way on Whitewater Church Road. Mr. Cannon said there was a refusal by the property owners to give right of way so a stop work order has been issued. He noted that Upper Whitewater Road is still being pursued.

The Manager expressed disappointment in the small amount of dollars allocated to Transylvania County for secondary roads. Mr. Setzer commented that transportation funding for North Carolina comes down to choices made by the NC General Assembly. Many times transportation funding is used to plug holes in the State's budget. The Secondary Road Program gets raided the most, along with road maintenance funds.

Commissioner Chappell asked if there will be funds available for snow removal during the winter months. Mr. Setzer said this is a safety issue and snow will be removed from the road despite the funds available in the budget.

Chairman Hawkins commented about how complex transportation projects are because there are numerous funding sources.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Tim Petit inquired about whether or not there are federal stimulus dollars available to pay for road projects. Mr. Setzer said any monies that were received through the federal stimulus have already been expended and he is unaware of any additional funding. He is unsure if any of those monies could have been spent on secondary roads.

Mr. Petit asked about the probability that a new NC 215 route will be constructed. Mr. Setzer responded that the project is still alive but it is one of the hardest projects to deliver because of concerns by agencies and advocacy groups about constructing a new road on forest lands. Officials are still working on the environmental studies. He also noted that Old Gloucester Road has been deemed as a historic road which adds another barrier. Studies have already been completed on the cost impact and traffic. Currently right of way is expected to begin on the project in 2018 with construction set for 2021 if all goes according to plan and no other obstacles are presented. Mr. Setzer further noted that this project must have unwavering public support or it will not get done. Besides the Davidson River Connector Road, NC 215 is the County's number one priority.

Mr. Petit commented that if NC 178 was widened and needed repairs were made it may motivate South Carolina DOT to upgrade their side. He believes NC 178 could become a major thoroughfare between the two states and have a positive effect on tourism and economic development. Mr. Setzer reported that NC 178 was submitted as a statewide project and it ranked very well. If the project gets funding, it will be subject to the same studies and public input process that NC 215 has undergone. Although he does not know how SCDOT ranks their road projects, NC 178 is considered a priority in this State. Chairman Hawkins brought up the idea of drafting a letter to Pickens County officials and sharing these thoughts about how road improvements on NC 178 would be beneficial to both states.

Mark Tooley noted that Transylvania County has several roads that flood rather quickly during heavy rain periods. He inquired about the NCDOT's plans to raise the level of these roads. Mr. Setzer said there are environmental issues associated with raising the level of roads out of the flood plain and it is extremely costly. It is a complex issue that requires advanced studies.

COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS

There were no further comments from Commissioners.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 4:15 p.m.

Mike Hawkins, Chair
Transylvania County Board of Commissioners

ATTEST:

Trisha M. Hogan, Clerk to the Board