

Tuscaloosa County Road Improvement Commission (TCRIC)
Meeting Minutes—November 27, 2017
Northport City Hall-Council Conference Room

Judge McCollum called the meeting to order at 7:30 a.m.

Commission Member Attendees: Hardy McCollum-Chair; Walt Maddox-Vice Chair; Donna Aaron; Jim Page; Senator Gerald Allen; Claude Edwards; Representative Chris England; James Brown

Other Attendees: Alyce Spruell, Nicole Hampton, David Kemp, Tera Tubbs, Glenda Webb, Scott Anders, Mark Nelson, Bruce Higginbotham, Ron Davis, Eddie Pugh, Mike Wright, Cynthia Almond, Jason Morton, Rick Harbin, Katy Metcalfe, Bill Poole, Rich Wingo, Rob Robertson, John McWilliams, Stan Acker, Brad Darden, Deidre Stalnaker, Alicia Rudolph, Michael McGuire

Meeting minutes from the October 30 meeting were approved unanimously after a motion by Gerald Allen seconded by Donna Aaron.

TCRIC accountant Rick Harbin provided a financial update to the Commission. The Commission currently has approximately \$5M on hand after a November deposit of \$812,600.00 with no outstanding November bills left to be paid. Harbin and TCRIC counsel, Alyce Spruell, stated that the audit process has begun with JamisonMoneyFarmer and documents requested have been provided to JMF. JMF has had minimal questions to this point, so Harbin does not anticipate much complication in the audit process and hopes to see something finalized in the next 7-10 days. Mayor Maddox inquired as to how much of the \$5M in the bank currently is encumbered. Harbin stated that he is working on an updated budget/cash flow analysis and hoped to provide that at the next Commission meeting. Harbin and Spruell discussed the need for the completed audit to move forward with borrowing possibilities.

The Commission considered Res. 17-004, which amended the Hargrove Road agreement to account for a \$727, 579.00 addition to the project budget. The resolution was based on the discussion of the amended budget at the October meeting.

VOTE: Res. 17-004 was adopted unanimously after a motion by Chris England seconded by Donna Aaron.

The Commission discussed updates on current TCRIC projects, along with other ALDOT projects in Tuscaloosa County.

- The project at Bear Creek Road intersection currently under construction has kept a projected completion date of 12/15/17. The expenditures to date are at approximately 59% to the contractor. Spruell reminded the Commission of the one change order on the project for approximately \$50,000.00, although its impact on the final cost is still to be determined.
- The construction bid and water line bid on the project at SR-69N/Martin Road both came in under budget and were awarded to the same contractor, Price Construction. Meeting attendees inquired about the number of days in the contract, and Scott Anders stated that he believed the contract was for 120 work days.

- Right of way is still in process for the project at SR-69N/Union Chapel Road, with 2 tracts having accepted the offers and approved by Northport City Council, and 4 other tracts remaining.
- The final plan submittal for ALDOT's project on Lurleen Wallace Blvd has occurred, and the project should be advertised for letting in the next four weeks.
- Representative Bill Poole inquired about the status of US-82/McFarland expansion and other priority projects identified in the Commission's enacting legislation. James Brown stated that the section of US-82/McFarland that includes Woolsey Finnell Bridge may be ready to let as early as summer 2019, as the environmental document is expected to be returned soon. Representative Poole urged the Commission to keep the other priority projects in mind when dealing with the larger projects currently before them.

Significant discussion surrounded the project at Hwy 69S/Skyland Blvd. intersection and possible projects to alleviate traffic congestion that would be caused by the larger 69S project. Brad Darden updated the Commission that the larger 69S project would be having a supplemental PS&E meeting in December, and the goal remains to have a late spring/early summer 2018 letting. Utility agreements are in place, and ALDOT has been told verbally that the environmental document is approved but is waiting on the signed document.

- Based on the discussion at the October meeting related to possible projects to alleviate traffic congestion prior to the larger 69S project, Tera Tubbs and Scott Anders presented the Commission with three alternatives discussed to address that issue. The first option would include Duncanville Road work, which would be a short project at approximately 6 months, but would include a \$17M budget. The second and third options are based on improvements to Bear Creek Cutoff Road. Both options included the same improvements to the railroad crossing and change of free flow traffic, as well as a realignment with a different US-82 tie-in. The second option included a 4-lane section on Bear Creek Cutoff Road, with an estimated cost of \$11M and 1 year of work, because utilities and ROW would be involved. The third option kept the road as a 2-lane, which reduced the price tag to \$2.8M, for a 5-month project that could begin as early as May 2018.
- Discussion primarily centered around the third option as the most viable for Commission approval. Discussion included whether the access road envisioned would be a public road, the public benefit to the proposed work, and the role of the railroad company involved. There was also discussion surrounding whether the work could be done by Tuscaloosa County's workforce and whether that would impact the time and cost. James Brown mentioned that the original concept for this road was an \$11.5M grade separation and stated that he believed the best approach would be to publicize the alternative routes in existence.
- Mayor Maddox discussed how this project could fit within the FY 2018 working budget as it exists and given the movement possible in the existing working budget, discussed how the Bear Creek project would be viable.

VOTE: Mayor Maddox moved to authorize the relevant entity representatives to continue to finalize the third proposal for final consideration at the December meeting; the motion passed unanimously after a second by Senator Allen.

- Additional discussion was had about the \$1.5M 6-lane project on Hwy 69S that was previously raised by James Brown/ALDOT. Mr. Brown stated that the project would turn the existing shoulders into additional lanes on 69S and close a median to help with 69S

traffic flow. Discussion was had around whether the project would qualify as an ‘improvement’ to meet the Commission’s legislation, and Spruell stated that it would. Discussion was had around whether ALDOT could still contribute part of the funds as previously discussed. Judge McCollum stated that the project would be on the Tuscaloosa County Commission agenda so that if needed, the County could potentially front the money to be reimbursed by the RIC or actually take the project on itself. Mayor Maddox raised whether this project, along with a potential Bear Creek project, could be an appropriate place for the Commission to seek a line of credit. Brown discussed the timeliness of the 6-lane project to be completed outside cold weather and that a special letting in December may be possible. Discussion was also had about who would be responsible for overruns. Judge McCollum entertained a motion to move forward with discussions on the 6-lane project.

VOTE: Mayor Maddox moved to authorize Alyce Spruell to continue negotiations on the 6-lane project based on the contingencies discussed for final consideration at the December meeting; the motion passed unanimously after a second by Senator Allen.

In light of the discussion surrounding additional projects, Judge McCollum suggested a finance meeting in December. Mayor Maddox stated he would like to present an amended 6-year plan at the next Commission meeting. The Commission agreed that a working finance meeting needed to be set.

Jim Page updated the Commission that TCRIC signs have been produced for Bear Creek project (2 signs) and Mitt Lary, and one is currently in production for Martin Road. Those are in the process of being installed at the relevant locations.

The next meeting of the Commission is tentatively scheduled for Monday, December 18 at 7:30 a.m. at the Courthouse Annex, with a possible finance working meeting between now and the next meeting.

Judge McCollum adjourned the meeting at 9:00 a.m.