



Highway Department

Jason Benson, P.E.
County Engineer

Thomas B. Soucy, P.E.
Deputy County Engineer

Blaine Laaveg
Superintendent

MEMORANDUM

TO: Cass County Road Advisory Committee

FROM: Jason Benson, Cass County Engineer *JPB*

DATE: March 3rd, 2023

SUBJECT: Road Advisory Committee Meeting
March 20th, 2023, at 2:00 pm.

A Road Advisory Committee meeting has been scheduled for Monday, March 20th, 2023, at 2:00 pm in the Cass County Commission Room. The agenda is as follows:

Call to Order / Note Participants

Approval of Agenda

Minutes – November 21st 2022

2:00 – 2:15	2023 Projects	Info.
2:15 – 2:30	Grant Application	Info
2:30 – 2:45	Casselton Soybean Crushing Facility	Info
2:45 – 3:00	Other Business	
3:00	Adjourn	

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**ROAD ADVISORY COMMITTEE
NOVEMBER 21, 2022 – 2:00 PM**

1. MEETING TO ORDER

Commissioner Mary Scherling called the meeting of the Road Advisory Committee to order at 2:05 PM on Monday, November 21, 2022, in the Commission Conference Room, Cass County Courthouse. Members present were as follows: Mary Scherling, Duane Breitling, and Jim Kapitan. Chad Peterson and Rick Steen were absent. Jason Benson, Scott Saewert, Bill Hejl, Keith Monson and via Microsoft Teams Blaine Laaveg. Also present was Tom Soucy, Robert Wilson, Tracy Peters, and Kyle Litchy.

2. AGENDA, Order approved

MOTION, passed

Mr. Breitling moved and Mr. Hejl seconded the order of the agenda be approved as presented. Motion carried.

3. MINUTES APPROVED

MOTION, passed

Mr. Breitling moved and Mr. Hejl seconded the minutes of the previous meeting held on July 18, 2022, be approved as written. Motion carried.

4. UPDATE OF 2022 AND 2023 CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS

Mr. Benson spoke about being invited by Kevin Cramer to provide testimony from the county's perspective to the United States Senate Transportation and Infrastructures Subcommittee regarding the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA). The hearing was Tuesday, November 15th in Washington, DC. Mr. Benson's testimony focused on North Dakota County Highway and Bridge needs and the impacts of the IIJA as well as IIJA funding of \$437 million in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers 2022 FM Diversion workplan. Mr. Benson said the IIJA was signed into law by President Biden on November 15, 2021. He said the law authorizes \$1.2 trillion for transportation and infrastructure spending with \$550 billion of that figure going toward "new" investments and programs. He said funding from the IIJA is expansive in its reach, addressing energy and power infrastructure, access to broadband internet, and water infrastructure.

Mr. Benson gave an update on the remaining construction projects needing completion for 2022. He said the Cass Highway 15 Bridge concrete south of I-94 will be completed in the fall of 2023; the Cass Highway 9 Bridge Project cement deck is half complete. Mr. Benson said cement is coming to Cass County from as far away as Duluth, MN, and the project will be ready for paving next year. Mr. Benson said there is a nationwide and regional shortage of cement which is causing delays on projects.

Mr. Soucy gave an update on the scheduled 2023 Construction Projects. He said the Box Culverts were ordered this summer for the next construction year to ensure the culverts are complete and ready for installation. Mr. Soucy said the 88th Avenue and Cass County 81 Buyout and Bridge Project will be completed in the next couple of weeks. Mrs. Scherling asked if the buyout and bridge project land is farmable. Mr. Benson said the buyout and bridge project land is used as a pasture and farmland.

Mr. Soucy said the County Road 9 Casselton Project has not been completed. Mr. Benson said due to the concrete shortage, the County Road 9 Casselton Project will carry over into 2023. He said the timeline has shifted and will not add additional cost to the project. Mr. Soucy said the County Road 16 Project is awaiting design development and information from the Water Resource Group. He said the Erie Dam and Brewer Lake subgrade projects will begin in the spring. Mrs. Schering asked if this is a repair improvement. Mr. Benson said it is a repair improvement and is as strong as a paved road.

Mr. Soucy said the Highway Department will be working on a round-about project on 52nd Avenue north of Horace. Mr. Benson said Mr. Litchy will be working on plans for this project to get bid out in December and be brought to the Commission meeting in January 2023. Mr. Soucy said the Bridge Expansion Project to Deer Creek will be a cost share agreement between Fargo and West Fargo. Mrs. Schering asked if MetroCOG would be adding a bike lane to the Bridge Expansion Project to Deer Creek. Mr. Benson said yes, a bike path will be added on County Road 17. Mr. Benson said the Box Culvert Companies are behind in product fulfillment and is best to get bids in the winter for July or August delivery. Mr. Wilson asked what the curing time is for a box culvert. Mr. Litchy said cure time is twenty-eight days.

5. 2023-2027 HIGHWAY AND BRIDGE PLAN

Mr. Benson said the Construction Cost Index increased 9% annually since 2001. He said Highway Distribution Funds are growing in mills with a tax increase of 3% annually since 2001. Mr. Benson said Prairie Dogs Funds will be available in February or March and expanding into 2024. Mrs. Scherling asked if any Highway Department work will be done with any of the Prairie Dog Funds. Mr. Benson said yes, the Highway Department remodel will use COVID funding, thanks to the County Commission.

Rick Steen entered the meeting.

Mr. Benson said the Gardner to Page Federal Aid Project will start in 2025. He said last years bridge changes will affect the bridges and restrictions in the next five years. Mrs. Scherling asked, do you feel confident in the County bridges. Mr. Benson said yes, just with the changes add more bridge restriction listings. Mr. Benson said the Highway Department is looking to get Federal Funding in the coming years to help with the Bridge Load Restriction changes. He said the North Dakota Department of Transportation (NDDOT) is contracting for private bridge inspections. This is an additional cost to counties. It might also impact the increase in load limit restrictions and other Counties are suffering more than Cass County. Mrs. Scherling asked if the Highway Department is proactively maintaining the bridges. Mr. Benson said the balance of bridges in decent condition are hard to move up or rebuild with the new inspections. Mr. Benson said everything will be elevated. Mr. Monson asked where this came from. Mr. Benson said changes came from the old standards before the new standards were put in place. Mr. Hejl asked about the new ways of regulation from Minneapolis. Mr. Litchy said it's due to the axle loading of the vehicle type crossing the bridge. Mr. Benson said North Dakota doesn't do this and it's not an option for North Dakota. Mrs. Scherling said this is something that needs to be worked out. Mr. Hejl said Senator Weber is interested and should be included in a conversation. Mr. Litchy said if the Highway Department could just change signage, that would be great. Mr. Benson said the pavement maps don't include new testing results and only include results from the last 21 years completed.

Mr. Benson said John Rutten, Chairman for the Mapleton Township said the speed limit on County Road 15 is set at 65 miles per hour and is too fast. Mr. Rutten said County Road 15 should be driven at a speed that is comfortable to each individual driver. Mr. Benson said County Road 11 in Mapleton and County Road 4 speed limit should be moved to 65 miles per hour as well. Mrs. Scherling said this is something that could be considered. Mr. Benson said items to be added in 2027, should include Crash Data over the last 20 years, rumble strips, signage, safety projects that show improvement of 20%. Mr. Hejl said the Highway Department should get the Sheriff's Office data on crashes as well. Mrs. Scherling said that's a great idea.

MOTION, passed

Mr. Hejl moved and Mr. Kapitan seconded to recommend the County Commission approval of Cass County Comprehensive Highway and Bridge Plan for 2023-2027. Motion carried.

6. UPDATE OF CASSELTON SOYBEAN CRUSHING FACILITY

Mr. Benson said the Casselton Soybean Crushing Facility Project items that were completed in 2022 are as follows: Graded Township Road, new culverts, gravel surface from County Road 23 for 1 mile East. 154th Avenue Southeast improved for Everest Township, 36th Street Southeast County Road 30 is paved. Including stabilized subgrade with cement, four inches of more gravel and dust control.

Mr. Benson said the Casselton Soybean Crushing Facility Project items to be completed in 2023 are as follows: Complete Entrance to Plant site on 36th Street County Road 30, realign Legal Drain 62 to the North for widening East of 154th Avenue Southeast for approximately 1,000 feet.

Mr. Benson said the Casselton Soybean Crushing Facility Project items to be completed in 2024 are as follows: Add Turn Lanes, Extend Box Culverts & Concrete Surface to County Road 23. Concrete Surface 36th Street Southeast and New County Road 30 to plant site entrance. Mr. Benson said the Casselton Soybean Crushing Facility will need a detail design fix. This is a NDDOT Project to be completed in 2024 and would take comments from Cass County, Everest Township and other businesses in the area during the design process.

Mr. Benson said the North Dakota Department of Transportation has many narrow bridges for travel. Mr. Hejl said the bridge over I-94 at Exit 328 has more than 400 semis crossing daily, it is too narrow for safe travel and something needs to be done to fix this problem.

7. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION, passed

On motion by Mrs. Scherling, seconded by Mr. Kapitan and all-in favor, the meeting was adjourned at 3:10 PM.