

Regular Meeting of the Vernon County Highway Committee

April 10, 2014

The meeting was called to order at 9:45 A.M. by Chairperson Nickelatti. Members present were Nickelatti, Cade, Brose, Davig and Sullivan. Also present was Commissioner Hewitt.

Motion by Brose, seconded by Sullivan, to accept the minutes of the March 11, 2014 regular meeting as printed. Motion carried.

Representatives from Mathy and Scott were present with asphalt bids for the CTH P & D paving project that will be partially funded by LRIP (Local Road Improvement Program). See attached. Motion by Cade, seconded by Davig, to accept the bid from Mathy Construction for \$650,717. Motion carried.

Commissioner Hewitt advised the committee that in the past the county paid for right-of-way (R.O.W.) purchases for township bridge replacement projects. The past costs have been minimal because all negotiations and paperwork were done by county staff. There is a new certification required for negotiating R.O.W. purchases, so it is now being done by consultants, increasing the cost substantially. The committee discussed the additional burden this would place on both the county and townships. Motion by Cade, seconded by Davig, that the county will no longer pay for the purchase of right-of-way for township bridge construction. Motion carried.

Commissioner Hewitt informed the committee he would like to purchase a used auger truck to do sign work. He has found a 1998 Xcel Energy truck for \$19,000 that has been rebuilt. Motion by Cade, seconded by Brose, to purchase the truck. Motion carried.

Commissioner Hewitt informed the committee he is looking at options for purchasing a used loader.

Commissioner Hewitt presented information on blacktop heaters for patching. There were several options for different sizes and types. He felt the best choice would be an oil-jacketed/trailer type for \$25,768. Motion by Davig, seconded by Sullivan, to purchase the blacktop heater. Motion carried.

Commissioner Hewitt presented a memo from personnel coordinator, Linda Kica, regarding mechanic position stipends. See attached. After discussing both options, motion by Sullivan, seconded by Davig, to go with option two, developing a policy for stipends. Motion carried.

Commissioner Hewitt discussed the policy for calling in dispatchers during storms.

Commissioner Hewitt informed the committee that the state may draft overweight permits and fees that the county could adopt in the future.

Commissioner Hewitt updated the committee on the following: he would like to purchase an inexpensive, used pickup; he has purchased a used scissor lift from Nelson Agri-Center and a used milling machine from Toman Tools; he is getting proposals for insulating the back room; he would like to purchase a distributor truck for tack.

Commissioner Hewitt presented the bills. Motion by Brose, seconded by Cade, to approve the bills. Motion carried.

The next regular meeting is scheduled for May 9, 2014 at 9:30 a.m.

Motion by Cade, seconded by Brose, to adjourn. Motion carried.

Minutes submitted by Sue Conaway – Vernon County Highway Department

ASPHALT BIDS – 2014

Item # - Description	Mathy	Scott	Sheldon's	Tri-County
40204-Asphaltic Material (Tack)/gal.	\$2.35	\$2.25	No bid	No bid
40402-Tons Asphaltic Material for road mix surface	\$100.00	\$100.00		
41101-Asphaltic Surface/ton	\$47.72	\$59.00		
64301-Traffic Control (Lump Sum)	\$500.00	\$5970.00		
61910-Mobilization (Lump Sum)	\$3,200.00 *may be deleted if no performance bond required	\$5970.00		
Total cost	\$650,717.00	794,790.00		

**Vernon County
Human Resources**
Enhancing Employee Experience

Interoffice Memo

To: Highway Committee
 From: Linda Kica, Personnel Coordinator
 Date: April 10, 2014
 Re: Mechanic Position Stipends

The mechanic position in Vernon County is in pay grade 11, wage range 18.62 – 23.38. The 2013 wage rate for this position was 18.94, with no steps (as per union contract). Thus, moving this position into the new wage scale allows employees to increase their pay in significant proportion to their previous top pay.

That being said, our job description for mechanics only requires a high school degree and the equivalent of 2 years' experience repairing heavy equipment. With advances in technology related to repair of machinery and heavy equipment, our ability to recruit for this position would be limited based upon future skill requirements and competing with the private sector.

We have some options with regards to changing pay.

1. We can rewrite the job description and reclassify the position. This would mean going to Personnel Committee and to the County Board for approval (2/3 majority vote required). Moving this position to Grade 12 results in compression issues, in that the Highway Supervisor position is already in Grade 12. Thus, we would need to persuade the County Board to move the Highway Supervisor position to Grade 13.
2. We can develop a specific list of certifications and licenses that would enhance the employees' skills while saving the department money by doing repairs in-house, and we can implement a stipend payable upon completion of that certificate/license. An example might be a mechanic becoming certified in repairing IH electronics – a skill that is beneficial to the department but not a specific job requirement.

Please note that if we decided to go with a stipend a policy would be developed, that includes but is not limited to:

- The employee would attend the training at his/her own expense.
- The certification/license must result in a reasonable cost savings to the County.
- The certification/license must be related to skills/abilities that are not listed as a job requirement.
- A stipend is not a bonus; it is not pay for performance; once given it cannot be rescinded unless the employee loses certification/licensure. A stipend is not a job reclassification or a restructuring of a position. To be clear – if an employee picks up another job duty/task from someone else, this does not qualify him/her for a stipend.

I look forward to discussing this further at the Committee meeting.