



RAILROAD TRANSPORTATION SAFETY DISTRICT

Board Meeting

June 11, 2007

Meeting Began At: 8:30 A.M.

Meeting Ended At: 9:30 A.M.

Members Present: Deb Schorr, Ken Svoboda, Bob Workman, Ray Stevens, Dan Marvin

Members Absent: Robin Eschlimann (arrived during Order No. 07-14)

Others Present: Roger Figard, Alicea McCluskey, Randy Hoskins, Susie Filipi, Scott Cockrill, Tracy Schuppan, Bruce Sweney, Tina Queen, Dick Nuernberger, Bill Kuester, Kurt Micek, Rick Haden, Harlan Layton.

Order No. 07-08 Call to Order. Approval of Previous Minutes.

Stevens motioned to approve the minutes. Svoboda seconded the motion. Motion approved 5-0.

Order No. 07-09 Report of Treasurer.

Nuernberger presented the treasurer's report. As of May 29, 2007 the District had investments in various banks totaling \$4,402,213.75. As of May 29, 2007, a balance of \$6,081,375.46 was carried in the District's checking account. As of May 29, 2007, the County Treasurer's balance for the District was \$549,759.44.

Marvin asked what Nuernberger estimated for interest income for budgeting purposes.

Nuernberger replied that it currently earns 4.75%. Most vary in the 4-5% range.

Svoboda motioned to approve the treasurer's report. Stevens seconded the motion. Motion approved 5-0.

Order No. 07-10 Election of Officers.

Marvin nominated **Schorr** for **President**. Stevens seconded the motion. Motion approved 5-0.

Workman nominated **Svoboda** for **Vice-President**. Stevens seconded the motion. Motion approved 5-0.

Svoboda nominated **Workman** for **Secretary**. Stevens seconded the motion. Motion approved 5-0.

Order No. 07-11 2007-2008 Budget & CIP.

Figard went over the budget and CIP and highlighted the following areas:

- Operating budget of \$63,950 would remain the same.
- The construction railroad crossing improvements of \$300,000 would remain the same.
- Southwest 40th Street was \$5 million. The current status of design in working with the Railroad results in not being able to enter into a construction contract prior to July 1, 2008. \$600,000 has been budgeted to get through the upcoming fiscal year. The goal would be to get to a construction contract late in 2008. The budget went down \$4.4 million on this line item.
- Total proposed construction budget is \$6,660,000.
- Total RTSD budget is \$6,723,950.
- Antelope Valley Phase I - The City is moving ahead with the East Leg and would propose to bid that project in July. All the money from 2010 and 2011 was put into 2010 and \$1 million was added in 2011.
- South 68th Street at Hickman New Schedule - \$35,000 in the current year, no expenditures in 2009 and start back up in 2010 with construction to occur in 2010/2011. A reimbursement of \$2.5 million from NDOR is expected and would be requested in 2010/2011. Moving this ahead was at the request of the County Engineer.

Marvin asked if the total expense was shown without the \$2.5 million reimbursement.

Figard replied that the total expense is shown and when the \$2.5 million comes in, that number would be reduced. The whole amount was budgeted in case the reimbursement was delayed. This way a construction contract could still move ahead.

- OL&B Railroad in Holdrege and 33rd and BNSF Crossing - Those are planning estimates. The City and RTSD will be working in the upcoming year to prepare actual cost estimates for these projects.
- Recommendation is to request a levy 0.026 from the County Board.

Workman asked if Antelope Valley ended in 2010/2011.

Figard replied that would be the end of Antelope Valley Phase I. Phase II is not in the City's 6 year CIP. It is in the Long Range Transportation Plan. One of the crossings in the City that has a high exposure rate is 33rd Street. The 33rd Street undercrossing could be constructed without moving ahead with the other parts of Antelope Valley Phase II.

Stevens asked about the status of the Harris Overpass and the time frame.

Figard replied that the City has advertised for bid. The goal would be to close down Harris shortly after the last football game of 2007. The work would start on the east end. The goal is to be done by the end of the construction season in 2008 around Thanksgiving.

Marvin motioned to approve the budget as proposed and to forward the budget to the County Board to set the levy rate. Stevens seconded the motion. Motion approved 5-0.

**Order No. 07-12 Review/Renew Legal Service Contract with Crosby Guenzel.
Review/Renew Accounting/Auditing Contract with Micek and Crouch.**

Figard stated that the District continues to use the services of Crosby Guenzel. Bill Kuester answers many legal questions in a timely and efficient manner. Figard recommended that the Board move ahead with approving the legal service contract. Kurt Micek of Micek and Crouch does the budget, looks at the audit and does reviews throughout the course of the year and gives input on money management. Figard recommended approval of the accounting/auditing contract. These are both one year contracts.

Stevens motioned to approve the renewal of the legal service contract with Crosby Guenzel and the accounting/auditing service contract with Micek and Crouch. Svoboda seconded the motion. Motion approved 5-0.

Order No. 07-13 Crossing Graphic Database Presentation.

Figard stated that the RTSD needed to have a better handle of the infrastructure and is responsible in helping to provide safety, maintenance, etc. In 2005, the intent was to gather as much information as possible about all the existing crossings throughout the County. A City intern drove to those crossings and took pictures. The data has slowly been entered into GIS and is being refined to produce a web page. The result of this review is not yet publicly available on the City's website. In the federal crossing information site, there are 542 crossings in Lancaster County. Some are private and some are public. In the public domain, some of those crossings belong to the NDOR, some to County and some to the City. The goal is have the County and City public crossings in the database. To date, there are 138 in the database with pictures. Overpasses and underpasses are not yet done. Figard presented what the database holds for information for each crossing.

- crossings - at grade, overpass, underpass, pedestrians or bicycles, RTSD project, grade separation, etc.
- can query by location, crossing, accident, crash prediction, etc.
- crossing location - RTSD cost, street crossing, directions, railroad name, # of tracks, flashers, gates, crossbucks, crossing material, railroad mile post, # of trains, exposure rate, maximum train speed, view pictures from different directions, etc.

Marvin asked if everything is manually entered.

Schuppan replied that as the information is updated, it can be done on web. Someone in the field with a wireless connection can update it real time and would post on the website immediately.

Figard added that if someone updates the federal program, it can populate over to the database without manually entering in the information.

Schorr agreed that this will require a substantial amount of time to get all the information.

Figard replied that less than half of those 542 will be in the database. This will give the public an opportunity to get information.

Schorr added that pictures will be helpful and asked if the public will be able to send in comments via the web.

Figard replied that perhaps that could be added to ACTION. There is some new legislation moving forward and may become a requirement to place Yield signs at all crossings that don't have gates and lights. The State and/or the Railroad would be responsible for the cost of the Yield signs.

Svoboda asked how much the software and implementation cost.

Figard replied there was no cost for the software. This is being done on GIS like the City and County use. The operating budget would be used for staff time. It could also come out of the contractual contingency services.

Stevens asked how many of the 542 crossings are City and how many are County.

Figard replied that the approximate City crossings are 110 but unsure on the County crossings.

Schorr asked when this information will be available on the website.

Figard replied that the information should be available on the web by the next board meeting.

Order No. 07-14 Non -Agenda Items.

Schorr asked for a brief update on quiet zone projects.

Figard handed out a progress report.

Haden stated that the final plans for the Cornhusker Highway corridor has not begun yet. Information is still needed from Railroad Controls Ltd. If the information is not received this week, the contract will be submitted to the City with a best estimate from past work with them on wayside horns. Haden presented the progress report (see attachment). A public information meeting will tentatively be held on June 28, 2007 for South Salt Creek, but still needs to be coordinated with the neighborhood group.

Marvin asked if a public meeting will be held for the Saltillo Road area.

Haden replied that an overview of the whole corridor will be presented at the public meeting for South Salt Creek.

Stevens asked if there is a possibility for an overpass at 14th and Yankee Hill.

Figard replied that with the train volume and the proximity of cutting over to 27th Street, it would not be high on the priority list. Figard handed out a draft priority list for railway crossings with an exposure rating of 50,000 or more (see attachment). The City and County, in their long range transportation plan, had discussed whether or not there would be an overpass that would go west.

Svoboda asked if there is a developed specific criteria for when quiet zones are needed and money is spent. The fear is that a Pandora's box will be opened and once quiet zones are developed, every neighborhood is going to want one. Svoboda waived on the 14th and Yankee Hill quiet zone because most of those homes are 5-7 years old, the train traffic hasn't increased considerably, and people moved into the area knowing that there were trains traveling throughout the day and night in their neighborhood.

Figard replied there is no specific criteria. The State has some criteria on exposure rates for underpasses and overpasses. A study is done on each quiet zone that comes forward and then the board can decide whether or not to move ahead. Figard would be happy to create a policy that includes trains, proximity to homes, increased train traffic, etc. for the Board to consider. Quiet zones seem to be an increasing demand across the country. The State still sees the quiet zone as a quality of life issue and are not proposing funding support.

Marvin added that cost should also be a factor.

Svoboda motioned to have Roger Figard investigate a base criteria for when quiet zones can be used. Stevens seconded the motion. Motion approved 6-0.

Stevens asked about Old Cheney Road and 6th Street listed on the draft priority list and why there is a NO next to it when the exposure rate is 300,000.

Figard replied that the State needs to finish and move ahead with the West Bypass and re-evaluate what happens with Old Cheney. A decision can be made at that time. Warlick Boulevard provides a reasonable alternative to that crossing.

Figard stated that a portion of the City Engineer's time is reimbursed to the City to provide management and oversight for the RTSD which includes RTSD meetings, putting together a budget, interacting for the overall operation of the district, etc. As the RTSD moves into quiet zones and more project involvement, more time is spent working on projects. Figard stated that a significant amount of time is spent on RTSD capital projects and asked if the actual work time should be charged against some of those projects over and above what the District reimburses the City for management time. Figard can track that and give the Board a report on a regular basis. Staff numbers continue to stay the same or go down on the City side and Figard is spending more time on the actual projects themselves.

Marvin asked if Figard would prefer keeping track of his time so time can be allocated accordingly instead of altering the percentage.

Figard replied that he would be open to any options offered.

Stevens asked if it would be easier to change the management portion of the budget to account for the split between the various responsibilities.

Figard replied that in some years, there may be very little project involvement and other years, there is a lot.

Eschlimann stated that as a City Council member, she was happy to get the funds from the RTSD for the quiet zones. As a member of the RTSD Board, the board has strayed away from what should be done. Quiet zones have a price tag associated with it. Eschlimann questioned whether the RTSD is a railroad district or a safety district and initiated that the State Legislature should be approached about making this a transportation district. The board could then make decisions under the umbrella of safety and what is important to the community. Eschlimann suggested that at the next board meeting, a discussion is held about this.

Svoboda asked if there is an allocated cost back to the RTSD from the County side.

Figard replied that the County Engineer's office is budgeted and accounted for differently than Engineering Revolving. The County is budgeted to pay for the staff from a general fund and do not charge to separate projects. Figard will contact the County Engineer and ask him if they would like the opportunity to bill the District for their efforts.

Schorr stated that at the next board meeting, an agenda item should be added to discuss allocation of management time. It might be helpful to have a copy of the billing sheets where time is allocated out to various projects. Another agenda item should be added in regards to approaching the State Legislature regarding a change in statute.

Figard referred to the report from his attendance at the Mid-States Highway Rail Safety Conference in Omaha, May 7th - 9th and thanked the board for giving him the opportunity to attend. The highlights were:

- Welcomed by the Governor, Mayor of Omaha and Director of NDOR
- Nebraska is the #2 producer of ethanol.
- Nebraska has more trains crossing it per day than any other state in the union.
- Rail and trucks are going to continue to be a huge part of the national economy. As the train traffic increases, the congestion and frustration at crossings will continue.
- There will be significant increased needs of freight by 2020.
- Most of the infrastructure is 1950's design and is aging.
- Projection that truck traffic will increase 60% by 2020.
- Train traffic is expected to increase 55% by 2020.

Figard was approached about serving on a National MUTCD Railroad Technical Subcommittee. This committee meets two times a year. They have an opening for a Municipal Representative. Figard would want Board support to attend those two meetings. The first one is usually around the 1st of the year and in conjunction with the TRB (Transportation Research Board) meeting in Washington. The other meeting is held during the summer. It would provide an opportunity for local input. It would give the City of Lincoln an opportunity to promote the community. This cost would be covered within the budget under the travel expense item which is proposed at \$1,550.

Stevens asked if there are sufficient funds to cover the anticipated two yearly meetings. He added that he appreciated the report on the conference and that it provided a lot of information.

Figard replied that there is ample funds to cover those meetings.

Workman motioned to allow Roger Figard to be a Representative on the national organization of the MUTCD and to have those two conferences paid for out of RTSD funds. Marvin seconded the motion. Motion approved 6-0.

Workman asked about the conference when Rick Haden will attend as well.

Figard replied that the next Highway Rail Safety Conference is in Texas next year. This would be an additional expense over and above the other travel expense and should be within the operating budget.

Workman asked if the presentation could be filmed.

Figard replied that he could have the presentation together and a draft can be distributed to the board members.

Schorr asked for any public comment.

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, September 11, 2007 @ 8:30 a.m.

Stevens motioned to adjourn the meeting. Marvin seconded the motion. Motion approved 6-0.

Prepared by: _____
Tina Queen, Engineering Services