

Highway 25 Coalition

Agenda

Thursday, February 28, 2019

7:30 AM

North Mississippi Room, Monticello City Hall

1. Call to Order
2. Consideration of Adding Items to the Agenda
3. Consideration of Approval of October 25, 2018 Meeting Minutes
4. Treasurers Report
5. Highway 25 Area Study – Consideration of Preferred River Crossing Options
(tabled from 07/26/18, 08/30/18, and 10/25/18 meetings)
6. Consideration of Approval of the 2019 Highway 25 Coalition Work Plan and Budget
(tabled from 7/26/18, 08/30/18, and 10/25/18 meetings)
7. Consideration of Authorizing Expenditure for Development of Highway 25 Coalition
Website (tabled from 7/26/18, 08/30/18, and 10/25/18 meetings)
8. Transportation and Related Economic Development/Land Use Updates
 - A. Becker
 - B. Becker Township
 - C. Big Lake
 - D. Big Lake Township (Fiscal Agent)
 - E. Monticello
 - F. Sherburne County
 - G. Wright County
9. I94 Coalition Update
10. Other Updates
11. Adjourn

Highway 25 Coalition
Meeting Minutes – October 25, 2018
7:30 a.m.
North Mississippi Room, Monticello Community Center

3.

Members Present - **City of Becker** – Tracy Bertram, Rick Hendrickson and Greg Pruszinske; **Becker Township** – Brian Kolbinger; **City of Big Lake** – Raeanne Danielowski, Clay Wilfahrt, Layne Otteson, and Gina Wolbeck; **Big Lake Township** – Larry Alford; **City of Monticello** – Brian Stumpf, Jeff O’Neill, and Matt Leonard; **Sherburne County** – Tim Dolan, Steve Taylor, and Andrew Witter; and **Wright County** – Michael Potter, Darek Vetsch, and Virgil Hawkins.

Others Present: Claudia Dumont from MnDOT, and Stacy Morse from Congressman Emmer’s Office.

1. Call to order.

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 a.m.

2. Consideration of adding items to the agenda.

No items were added.

3. Consideration of approval of meeting minutes from meeting August 30, 2018.

Motion made by Tim Dolan to approve the August 30, 2018 Highway 25 Coalition Meeting Minutes as presented. Seconded by Larry Alford, unanimous ayes, motion carried.

4. Treasurer’s Report

Larry Alford presented the October Treasurer’s Report showing a cash balance of \$221,587.26.

Motion made by Tracy Bertram to accept the October 2018 Treasurer’s Report. Seconded by Tim Dolan, unanimous ayes, motion carried.

5. Highway 25 Area Study – Consideration of Preferred River Crossing Options (tabled from 07/26/18 & 08/30/18 meetings)

Chair Danielowski reintroduced Item No. 6 that was tabled at the July 26, 2018 meeting to allow the City of Monticello to provide data regarding Option E, and tabled again at the August 30, 2018 meeting to allow the City of Monticello time to review Option 2 of the SRF report dated August 23, 2018 until the next coalition meeting.

Motion by Brian Stumpf to continue the study process and complete the tasks identified in the original scope to include additional evaluation of three of the six alternatives specified as Option A, B, and, with the study tasks to include short term

improvements for safety and traffic flow, identification of funding opportunities, and an outline of key steps and timeframes from NEPA through construction of crossing. Seconded by Darek Vetsch. Discussion followed prior to the vote. Discussion was held on location of each option site. It was clarified that Stumpf's motion excluded Option E. **Motion failed 2-5 with Monticello and Wright County voting aye, and the City of Becker, Becker Township, the City of Big Lake, Big Lake Township, and Sherburne County voting nay.** The motion failed because any action must have at least one affirmative vote from both sides of the Mississippi River.

Tim Dolan clarified that Mike Potter's motion at the August 30 Coalition meeting was to provide time for the City of Monticello to analyze option 2. Dolan asked for clarification on what research was done by Monticello in their analysis of option 2. Stumpf stated that they reviewed the handout distributed by SRF from the last meeting. Darek Vetsch reviewed Ditch 33 that is located in the Option E site area and the costs they have incurred due to collapsed drainage tile in this ditch system.

Motion by Darek Vetsch to document what has been completed in the study to date, including the identification of the six river crossing options, with additional detail outlining the facts of Monticello's opposition to Option E, then terminate the study with no authorization to study or begin the NEPA process on any of the options at this time. Seconded by Brian Stumpf. Discussion followed prior to the vote. Discussion was held that a prior motion was to not push forward preferred options, but to let the NEPA process determine concerns. Vetsch stressed that we should not enter the NEPA process without a consensus. Andrew Witter questioned why the Coalition shouldn't vet all the options. Members commented that as long as Option E remains in the project, it appears we won't have a consensus and that we are at an impasse. Witter discussed the option to bring this back to the Study Group for further review. The Study group consists of a member from each entity along with planning and engineering staff. Dolan questioned what the shelf life of the NEPA study is? Witter stated that it would be up to the various agencies involved, and will depend on the data within the study. Claudia Dumont noted that traffic patterns and volumes change so they would most likely need to be redone, but that the study can sit in limbo, and if there is interest in the future to re-evaluate it, we would start with the alternatives that were included. Discussion was held that the Coalition should not enter the NEPA process until we have agreement to move forward. Members discussed their concern that the motion presented is a biased position. Jeff O'Neill reiterated that Option E will damage the Monticello Community. Raeanne Danielowski stressed that all Coalition members have things that they could identify that would potentially damage their specific communities, noting that the study would have allowed the opportunity for these concerns to be vetted out properly. Vetsch stated that he feels SRF put too much stock in the study group process. Dolan stated that it is obvious that we are not going to reach any kind of common ground. Dolan also stressed the need to close out the study without locking in future elected officials. Limiting language in the study will handcuff future officials. Rick Hendrickson reconfirmed that the Coalition has a consensus on everything except option E. Dolan stressed the need to maintain the integrity of the study. Vetsch stressed the need for Wright County to have more time to review Ditch 33 and the Nuclear Plant site. Vetsch reconfirmed that they want to close out the study with all original options, noting Monticello's opposition to Option E and not enter into NEPA. **Motion failed 2-5 with Monticello and Wright County voting**

aye, and the City of Becker, Becker Township, the City of Big Lake, Big Lake Township, and Sherburne County voting nay. The motion failed because any action must have at least one affirmative vote from both sides of the Mississippi River.

Clay Wilfahrt asked for discussion on how we can move all options forward. Matt Leonard discussed the need to know all the specifics to have a successful grant application. Discussion was held that if opposition is accepted by one entity, then all entities should be given the opportunity to declare opposition on the various options. Wilfahrt noted that declaring opposition at this point, would make the study biased, and would weaken the integrity of the study. Danielowski discussed that if opposition was going to be taken at this point, then each community should have probably just done their own study. Dolan clarified that no option is going to serve each community equally. The goal of the group was to relieve congestion and promote safety. The NEPA process was where each option would be thoroughly studied. O'Neill stated that for Monticello, it is very easy to measure the expense they have already incurred for infrastructure improvements in the Option E area. These are investments they have already made, and O'Neill further stated that they are biased as they have real dollars invested that would be wasted.

Hendrickson stated that the City of Becker's position is that we need to let the process play out, noting that we are done here today if we cannot come to a consensus. Hendrickson stated his concern that we could potentially walk out of the meeting without accomplishing anything. Larry Alford reviewed where we are in the process of the study, questioning how we take it to the next level. Vetsch stressed that going into the NEPA process will be very expensive, noting that Wright County doesn't want to invest any more dollars in the Option E area. O'Neill stated that the process requires that this Coalition vote on options. Dolan reiterated that substantial economic drivers could change the minds of future officials. Danielowski stated that she is concerned that Monticello isn't going to be interested in any option other than Option A. Discussion was held that every day that goes by is devaluing the study. Members again discussed how the Coalition can close out this study so that we leave with something of value. Danielowski stressed her frustration that she feels two entities have bullied their way into defining the process. Stumpf and Vetsch stated that they are trying to protect their investments. Dolan asked for clarification on where there would be harm to Monticello in closing out the study as it sits, stating that Option E has been sitting on the map since the inception, and that Monticello isn't even willing to close out the study unless it is on their terms. Alford clarified that issues would come out in the next level of the study, and is not certain that there is that much harm in that. Dolan reiterated that by removing any options at this point would pollute the study. Wilfahrt asked if the Coalition members would be willing to allow all entities to submit comments on any option. O'Neill stated that Monticello is open to Options A, B, and D only. Virgil Hawkins reviewed that Option 3 in the report provided by SRF at the August 30 meeting would provide a draft study, questioning if a draft study would maintain the integrity of the study. Witter noted that it would handcuff us as far as seeking grant opportunities. Members questioned if having input from Monticello and Wright County would distract from the value of the study moving forward. Witter stated that he is not sure how the NEPA process would see it, eliminating options would most likely cause some issues. Dolan stressed that Sherburne County does not want to invest in the NEPA process with elimination of any options. O'Neill stated

that we can't just turn away from inaccurate information. Discussion was held on concern that Monticello and Wright County will use the study for their benefit at the expense of the other Coalition members. Dolan stated that we need a clean process when we go to the next step. O'Neill responded that it would only be clean if every jurisdiction is comfortable with it. Danielowski reminded the members that everyone came to the table with a full cooperative spirit to let the study guide the direction, noting that Monticello should have voiced their concerns with SRF's process at the beginning. Dolan stated that he feels Monticello and Wright County have thrown SRF under the bus. Wilfahrt discussed what the next step of the process should be if there was a consensus, asking what SRF would be looking at. Discussion was held that the next step would be to dig deeper into each option focusing on economic and environmental factors, and enter the NEPA process. It was asked if the study could include a column listing all community concerns and challenges with specific options. Vetsch stressed the need for the Coalition to take time to address all local community concerns. Dolan restated that listing out concerns at this stage would jeopardize the integrity of the study. Hawkins noted that SRF has already indicated that all options will be studied during the NEPA process regardless. Wilfahrt asked if we could close out the study and include community comments as an ancillary document instead of listing out concerns within the actual study. Dolan stated his concern that listing concerns at this point could hamstring us in the future. O'Neill stressed that they do not want to hide their comments. Vetsch felt it best to discuss the concerns now, instead of in the future when we are lobbying against each other. O'Neill stated that he wants the comments included as part of the study, noting that a draft study is still valuable. Dolan asked for comments from elected officials. Stumpf stated that he wants to move forward with Monticello's concerns documented in the study. Vetsch discussed the possibility of including a reference in the study that the ancillary document exists. O'Neill stated that he feels that including Monticello and Wright County's concerns won't get the study tossed out. Dolan stated that Monticello nor Wright County are willing to give a guarantee that it won't be tossed out. Steve Taylor suggested including meeting minutes as attachments to the study as they clearly show past concerns identified by Monticello and Wright County.

Motion by Darek Vetsch to table item no. 5 until January 2019 to allow time for Coalition Members to provide concerns on any of the options. Seconded by Tim Dolan, unanimous ayes, motion carried.

6. *Consideration of Approval of the 2019 Highway 25 Coalition Work Plan and Budget (tabled from 07/26/18 & 08/30/18 meetings)*

Brian Kolbinger motioned to table item no. 6 (Consideration of Approval of the 2019 Highway 25 Coalition Work Plan and Budget) until the January 2019 Coalition meeting. Seconded by Tim Dolan, unanimous ayes, motion carried.

7. *Consideration of Authorizing Expenditure for Development of Highway 25 Coalition Website (tabled from 07/26/18 & 08/30/18 meetings)*

Tim Dolan motioned to table item no. 7 (Consideration of Authorizing Expenditure for Development of Highway 25 Coalition Website) until the January 2019 Coalition meeting. Seconded by Brian Kolbinger, unanimous ayes, motion carried.

8. *Transportation and Related Economic Development/Land Use Updates* – No reports given.

9. *I94 Coalition Update*

Claudia Dumont reviewed the October 12, 2018 I94 Coalition Meeting discussing the approval for improvements to the I94 corridor from Monticello to Clearwater that is expected to be an \$80M investment.

Chair Danielowski apologized to the City of Monticello and Wright County for terms she used during the meeting.

10. *Other Updates* – No other updates given.

11. *Adjourn*

Motion made by Tracy Bertram to adjourn the meeting at 9:13 a.m. Seconded by Tim Dolan, unanimous ayes, meeting adjourned.

The next meeting is scheduled to be held on Thursday, January 31, 2019 at 7:30 a.m. in the North Mississippi Room at Monticello City Hall.

4.

2/25/2019

801 HWY 25 CORRIDOR TRANSP STUDY

	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Variance</u>
Receipts:			
Total Revenues	0.00	0.00	0.00
Other Financing Sources:			
Total Other Financing Sources	0.00	0.00	0.00
Disbursements:			
Total Disbursements	0.00	0.00	0.00
Other Financing Uses:			
Total Other Financing Uses	0.00	0.00	0.00
Beginning Cash Balance		223,617.63	
Total Receipts and Other Financing Sources		0.00	
Total Disbursements and Other Financing Uses		0.00	
Cash Balance as of 02/25/2019		223,617.63	

Memorandum

To: Highway 25 Coalition

From: Clay Wilfahrt, City of Big Lake City Administrator

Date: July 26, 2018

Re: Work Plan and Budget

Each year, the Highway 25 Coalition adopts a work plan and budget for the following year in accordance with the Joint Powers Agreement. Attached is a copy of last year's work plan and budget document. The budget and work plan can be amended by the Joint Powers Board at any time throughout the year. The work plan is a portion of the "Powers and Duties" section of the Joint Powers Agreement. The section indicates that the Coalition has the authority to expend funds for the following purposes:

- a. Approve a work plan and annual budget. In July of each year, the Highway 25 Coalition will establish a work plan and budget for the following fiscal year.
- b. Although projects are intended to be completed within a prescribed budget approved on an annual basis, the Board has the flexibility to modify work plan and associated expenditures as it deems necessary to support the mission of the Highway 25 Coalition. In addition, the Board has the option to seek additional funding from its Members outside of the budget as needs arise.
- c. Seek grant funds supporting planning efforts and to utilize funds on hand as necessary to meet grant program fund matching requirements.
- d. Apply for, receive, and expend State and Federal funds available for funding goals of the Highway 25 Coalition, as well as funds from other lawful sources, including donations.

- e. Enter into contracts with public or private entities as the Board deems necessary to accomplish the purpose for which the Board is organized, including, but not limited to, the use of consultants.
- f. Obtain such insurance as the Board deems necessary for the protection of the Board, its property, members of the Board, and Members.

The section also indicates that the Joint Powers Board is not limited to expending funds for these purposes. In a separate section of the agreement, activities of the Coalition are listed as well including:

- a. Examination of the impacts of continued growth in Member jurisdictions on traffic patterns.
- b. Conducting traffic studies defining and identifying priority improvements.
- c. Preparation of collaborative project design and delivery recommendations.
- d. Study of various transportation risks associated with improvement alternatives and associated timing of the construction of improvements.
- e. Identification and application for funding of activities via grant programs.
- f. Development of unified effort among local and state interests in obtaining funding of improvements to include: (i) providing input and leadership within each Member community on matters pertaining to Corridor improvement planning and implementation; and (ii) advocacy at the State and Federal level.
- g. Partnering with MNDOT on regional transportation decisions and involvement in regional policy decisions and discussions.
- h. Incorporation of public input in planning efforts.

Presumably, the Joint Powers Board has the authority to engage in any of the activities, powers, or duties listed.

The 2017-2018 work plan was sent out to the self-appointed chief contact person from each entity. The only comments received requested adding a few items, and making the work plan specific to those items. The thought is that if the list is general and unspecific, there is no tangible measuring stick to gauge success. If the work plan is specific, it will allow the Joint Powers Board to easily measure success. The items that were requested to be added were:

- A. Complete the Traffic Study
- B. Seek and apply for Federal construction grants in 2019, such as BUILD Grants (Formerly TIGER Grants). This requires our Federal Legislator's

support and the use of a consultant to assist with the development of the application(s).

- C. Hire a consulting firm to guide, represent and promote the TH 25 Coalition.

The argument in favor of a broad plan is that it will allow the authority latitude in its authority to complete a variety of tasks under the scope of the work plan.

The Joint Powers Board should discuss how it wants to approach the 2018-2019 Work Plan. Would it prefer to keep the plan very broad and inclusive of all options, or should it look to narrow its focus to include only a few measurable and attainable goals? If kept broad, the requested items could simply be added to the 2017-2018 plan. If the Joint Powers Board prefers a narrowly focused plan, it could contain the three items above and any additional items requested.

In addition to a work plan, the Joint Powers Board needs to adopt a budget. The budget for the past two years has been \$150,000. As of July 17, 2018, the Coalition had a cash balance of \$231,238.23. \$39,981.20 of the budgeted \$150,000 for the traffic study has been expended, and once the entire amount of the budget for the traffic study has been expended, the Coalition will have a cash balance of \$121,225.43.

Some items that may require funding in 2018-2019 include:

- A. Grant writing
- B. Lobbyist support
- C. Further research and follow up studies
- D. Feasibility Studies and preliminary drawings
- E. Web Site and other community outreach

The coalition should discuss its preference for a budget for 2018-2019.

Highway 25 Coalition 2018 Work Plan and Budget Discussion

1. Work Plan
 - A. Completion of Transportation Plan
 - B. Identification of key improvements by June 2018 for inclusion in member jurisdiction capital improvement planning.
 - C. Promote adoption of Transportation Plan by member jurisdictions
 - D. Promote and support Initiation of official mapping by member jurisdictions
 - E. Conduct feasibility studies on individual projects where enabled by Joint Powers Agreement.
 - F. Assist member jurisdictions with implementation of priority projects
 - G. Assist member jurisdictions with identification of Federal and State Funding Opportunities
 - H. Lobby for State and Federal project funding in support of member projects
 - I. Exploration of Private and Public Partnerships
 - J. Coordinate/Communication with - I 94 Coalitions
 - K. Coordination and support for CEDS initiatives
2. Budget Consensus during previous discussion was to keep budget same as 2017 at \$150,000
 - A. Ongoing Transportation Planning Efforts
 - A. Follow-up studies relating to priority projects
 - B. Feasibility Studies/preliminary drawings
 - C. General ongoing consultant support
 - B. Communications/lobbying
 - A. Consultant fees
 - B. Community Outreach
 - C. Web site