

POLK COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
TUESDAY MEETING MINUTES
January 17, 2017

1. At 9:00 a.m., Commissioner Pope declared the Tuesday meeting of the Polk County Board of Commissioners in session. Commissioner Ainsworth and Commissioner Wheeler were present.
2. **MINUTES** **COMMISSIONER AINSWORTH MOVED, COMMISSIONER WHEELER
SECONDED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF JANUARY 10, 2017.**

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.
3. **HWY 99 @ CLOW CORNER RD** – Tim Potter, ODOT Area 3 Manager and Angela Kargel, ODOT Region 2 Traffic Manager attended the meeting to discuss the safety improvement options at Hwy 99 and Clow Corner Rd. Tim gave a brief history of the intersection. ODOT has been working on a corridor plan for Hwy 99 since the early 2000's, but has been at an impasse on this intersection for many years. In 2007, a signal warrant analysis was completed that found that this intersection met the signal warrants for the installation of a traffic signal. In April 2013, the intersection was awarded \$1.9 million in STIP (Statewide Transportation Improvement Program) funding. Over the next two years, ODOT cancelled two other projects in Polk County (at Western Mennonite School and Greenwood Rd./Hwy 51) and transferred that funding to this intersection project. The total available now for safety improvements is \$3.39 million. ODOT has looked at different improvements (offset T, center median, stoplight, etc.) for this intersection, but feels that a roundabout is the safest alternative. The Board and ODOT debated the pros and cons of a stop light (\$1.2 million cost) and a roundabout (\$5 million cost). As an immediate safety improvement, ODOT will be installing through-route activated warning signs (which flash when there is cross traffic) this summer.

Commissioner Ainsworth explained that the traffic signal at Hoffman Road and Hwy 99 has reduced serious injury and fatal accidents at that intersection by 71% in the last 15 years, and feels that a traffic signal would also make the Hwy 99/Clow Corner intersection safer, along with being more cost effective and has a faster construction timeline. In the 2007 signal warrant analysis, the Clow Corner/Hwy 99 intersection met the signal warrants for the installation of a traffic signal, and funding was available for this project in 2013. The Board questioned why ODOT did not install a traffic signal at that time. ODOT responded that they did not want to put a signal at this intersection. The Board reminded ODOT that between 2013 and 2016, at least one person was killed in this intersection, which may have been prevented if a traffic signal had been installed. Tim Potter claimed that although this intersection met the signal warrant in 2007, the results were erroneous and a 2016 signal warrant analysis found that this intersection no longer meets signal warrants for a traffic signal. Todd Whitaker, Polk County Public Works Director, does not agree that the 2007 analysis was erroneous, but is simply a difference in engineering judgment, and a different engineer could end up with a different result, but still be within the bounds of acceptability. The 2007 analysis engineer included the right turn traffic, and the 2016 analysis engineer discounted the right turn traffic. Todd does not support discounting the right turn traffic because the right turn traffic still impacts the movement of traffic.

Tim explained that although there is a \$1.6 million gap shortfall for the cost of a roundabout project, many ODOT projects get started without being fully funded, and have additional funds come in over the course of the project to fill the gap. With the funds already available, design, engineering, and land acquisition could get started immediately. A roundabout project would take approximately 3-4 years to be completed. Tim feels that the County is more likely to be successful in acquiring gap funding for the cost of a roundabout than getting State Traffic Engineer approval for the installation of a traffic signal (which Angela Kargel estimated at between 0% - 2% chance of approval).

Besides the gap in funding, the discussion of concerns with a roundabout revolved around the ag and freight industry's need to move farming and freight equipment along Hwy 99, in addition to the lack of experience of drivers in Polk County to navigate a roundabout. Tim explained that a bypass lane for super loads will be included as part of this roundabout design, and assured the Board that the freight community is on board with roundabouts after using them in various other areas around the state. If a roundabout design is selected, ODOT will get input from the ag and freight industries to ensure the roundabout would meet their transportation needs and community education discussions will be held.

The Board understands that a roundabout is a safety improvement to the Hwy 99 and Clow Corner Rd. intersection, but feels a traffic signal would be more cost effective and would also be a safety improvement. However, if ODOT is only giving the County the option of a roundabout or doing nothing, the Board agreed that doing nothing is not an option.

MOTION COMMISSIONER WHEELER MOVED, COMMISSIONER POPE SECONDED TO DIRECT STAFF TO WORK WITH ODOT ON THE ENGINEERING AND DESIGN FOR THE INSTALLATION OF A ROUNDABOUT AT HWY 99 & CLOW CORNER.

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

4. **RECLASS OF ASSESSMENT SPECIALIST I** – Matt Hawkins, Administrative Services Director, presented a reclassification of Becky Quiring from an Assessment Specialist I to an Assessment Specialist II. The effective date for the reclassification would be February 1, 2017, and the 12-month fiscal impact is approximately \$2,300.

BY CONSENSUS, THE BOARD APPROVED THE RECLASSIFICATION.

5. **NON-LISTED ITEMS** – (Pursuant to ORS 192.640, the Board of Commissioners considered the below identified non-listed items.) None.

Commissioner Pope adjourned the meeting at 10:30 am.

Minutes: Heather Chase
Approved: January 24, 2017