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First Phase of U.S. 67/Future I-57 Project in Butler County Continues

JUNE 15TH 2023 BY DEE LOFLIN

First Phase of U.S. 67/Future I-57 Project in Butler County Continues

Construction of the first phase of the U.S. Route 67/Future I-57 project in Butler County continues with reconstruction of the existing ramp at the intersection of the Route 160/158 interchange south of Poplar Bluff, Missouri.

The interchange will be reconfigured with two roundabouts in place of the current loop ramps in the northwest and southeast quadrants.

As work continues, northbound traffic exiting to Routes 160/158 will be rerouted to the East Outer Road, and Route 67 will remain minimally impacted. Traffic on the Outer Road will be two-way, so motorists should use extreme caution through the area.

This traffic change is expected to begin on Monday, June 19th.

Completion of the overall project is anticipated Wednesday, Nov. 1, 2023, weather permitting.

This phase of the project received funding through Governor Mike Parson's cost share program.

Motorists are urged to use extreme caution while traveling near the area.

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Route 114 in Stoddard County Reduced for Pavement Repairs	NB I-55 in New Madrid County Reduced for Roadside Work
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Stoddard County Commissioner Meeting - Monday, June 12, 2023

JUNE 12TH 2023 BY DEE LOFLIN

Stoddard County Commissioner Meeting - Monday, June 12, 2023

The Stoddard County Commission meeting opened with a full house of citizens. Presiding Commission Greg Mathis had everyone stand for the Pledge of Allegiance and then said a prayer asking for rain for the farmers!

Terry Bates, New Lisbon Township

He had bids for bridges to be done within the New Lisbon Township. He has requested ARPA Funds to repair those bridges at a previous meeting.

Commissioner Mathis will hand deliver the documents to Bootheel Regional Planning Commission as they are in training today and could not attend the meeting.

Doug Lowery, Duck Creek Township

Mr. Lower stated that fiber optic crews have caused damage on several roads in the area including County Roads 420, 481, 336, and 490. Loyd Rice, GoSEMO Fiber, was also in attendance and will make sure the company they have contracted with gets in touch with Duck Creek Township today.

Donnie Foster, property owner on County Road 527A Update

Mr. Foster went to the Castor Township meeting on June 6th and they have agreed to abandon the county road. As far as the two culverts they will repair it with concrete and then he will take over the maintenance of the road.

Foster asked if the Commission would close east of the bridge on County Road 527A as soon as possible so he can lay some gravel and work on building his home. Mathis will have it on the agenda for next week on Tuesday, June 20th as Monday is a holiday.

Lucille Mullins - Mayor for the City of Dudley

According to Mayor Mullins, the citizens of Dudley received a letter from the Stoddard County Clerk's office that they will no longer be able to vote in the city of Dudley and will have to travel to Dexter in order vote. Only 19 people voted in the April election.

Commissioner Mathis asked for Cecil Weeks to come into the meeting and explain. "We have a shortage of poll workers. Each poll must have a Democratic judge and a Republican judge and in some years more than one of each depending on if it is a national election. The issue at hand seems to be not enough Democratic judges available to work the polls," commented Weeks.

There were only 19 people from the city of Dudley that voted in the April election. Every two years the Clerk's office evaluates the number of polls in the area and judges to work the polls.

"It is unfortunate and I am sorry, but this is the only way to fix the issue. If no one steps forward and declares to be a Democrat and is willing to work the poll then we just have to

close it," stated Weeks.

"What can Stoddard County do for the City of Dudley," asked Mullins. "I thought the Commission was provided broadband for the county."

The answer is no, the County is not providing broadband for the Dudley area. Loyd Rice with GoSEMO Fiber explained that broadband is coming to Dudley area, but it is GoSEMO Fiber performing the work etc. and not the County.

Another issue that was brought up was the tipping fees. The Industrial Development Board oversees the tipping fees for the County. She is on the board, but had issues with how the tipping fees were distributed and wanted input by the Commission. WW Wood Products paid \$176,000 a month to bring their trash to Bloomfield landfill. Each of the cities receives tipping fees based on the number of residents in each city. Dudley only has 102 citizens, but has one of the largest contributors to the landfill and she felt they do not receive their proper share of the monies.

"It is not equally distributed," commented Mullins. "I'm on the IDA Board, but I do not feel our town receives enough money. How is a small town going to survive, we aren't as big as Dexter."

Mathis said he would contact Peter Coutavas, Director of the IDA, and find out how the tipping fees are handled and distributed throughout the county.

County Health Insurance Issue

An employee turned in a bill for lab work. The insurance handbook said the employees do not pay for lab work and the insurance broker, John McCarty, has not responded to his email requests. Mr. Mathis will get in touch with him and try to resolve the issue.

Broadband Project Bid

Motion to accept the bid from Ozark Physical Medicine for the CDGB Grant Broadband Project. There was no motion to accept the bid.

Motion to decline the bid from Ozark Physical Medicine for Broadband Project made by Commissioner Carol Jarrell. Commissioner Stewart seconded the motion. All three voted yes and the motion passed.

Presiding Commissioner Mathis will contact Jim Grebing, Bootheel Regional Planning Commission Director, to see if anything else needs to be voted on or discussed with the Commissioners on the CDGB Grant. The Commission does not wish to proceed with this

grant.

Mathis will send an email to Mr. Greene and Ozark Physical Medicine to notify them.

Loyd Rice, GoSEMO Fiber

Rice readdressed the opportunity of receiving the 1 million dollars of ARPA funds for internet/broadband in the rural Puxico area. Rice addressed the previous Commission in 2021 and asked for ARPA funds. The previous Commissioners voted to dedicate 1 million of the ARPA funds for broadband in the rural Puxico area and school district. Today's proposal was just another offer as to how the monies would be used to adequately serve those people who do not have internet or have poor quality internet in the Puxico School District.

Beau Bishop, Stoddard County Emergency Management Agency Director

He updated the Commissioner on the Stoddard County Emergency Radio Group (SCERG). This group of individuals want to have a communications system available to the citizens of Stoddard County in the event of an all-out outage. They believe every citizen in the county should have a voice during an emergency or disaster within Stoddard County.

An FCC license is required to operate the GMRS system. Licenses are issued for a ten-year term and can be renewed between 90 days prior to the expiration date and up to the actual expiration date of the license. GMRS Licenses are granted to individuals and are allowed to be used by their immediate family members. Citizens of Stoddard County would be introduced to this process through monthly meetings for the public. The citizens would bear the cost of their own radio equipment. Additional information would be shared with the Citizens about powering up their radio equipment without power at meetings. During an emergency, the Citizens would be able to make contact with our group and in turn we would relay to the appropriate agency.

They are asking for additional equipment though donation. At the present there are three repeaters which are all owned by the members. They would like to eventually have two additional repeaters or one high power repeater to be used in conjunction with the present repeater covering 90% of the County.

The request is for \$6065.00. They have also developed some rules for those wanting to use the radios etc.

The Commission will review the information and decide on the donation at a later date.

William Dowdy, Maintenance Supervisor for Stoddard County Buildings

A Standard Service Contract Agreement proposal for \$3,936.00 by Advance Systems Technology out of Indiana to have the annual inspection for the control panel for the Juvenile Detention Center was given to the Commissioners at a prior meeting. Advance Systems Technology has proprietary rights to the equipment etc and are the only ones that can work on the control panel.

Motion to accept the Standard Service Contract Agreement from Advance Systems Technology in the amount of \$3,936.00 made by Commissioner Stewart. Seconded by Commissioner Jarrell. All three voted yes and passed.

Other Business

Motion to approve the May 2023 Adds/Abates from County Collector Josh Spearman made by Commissioner Jarrell. Seconded by Commissioner Stewart. All three voted yes and passed.

Motion to accept the Minutes from Monday, June 5, 2023 made by Commissioner Stewart. Seconded by Commissioner Jarrell. All three voted yes and passed.

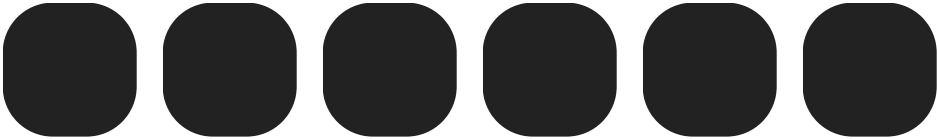
Motion to accept the Closed Meeting Minutes from Monday, June 5, 2023 made by Commissioner Stewart. Seconded by Commissioner Jarrell. All three voted yes and passed.

Custodial Help: Daytime cleaning for the various Stoddard County Government Buildings. If anyone is interested in applying they can send a resume to P.O. Box 110, Bloomfield, MO 63825. The ad will also be placed in the Dexter Statesman.

Letter from Garrett Payne who is currently serving on the SB40 Board. He has resigned as a member of the board and thanked them for allowing him to serve the last three years. If anyone has interest on serving on the SB40 Board please contact a County Commissioner or send a resume to P.O. Box 110, Bloomfield, MO 63825.

Motion to enter into Closed Session RSMo Section: 610.021 (13) Personnel at 11:39 a.m. made by Commissioner Jarrell. Seconded by Commissioner Stewart. All three voted yes and passed.

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Notice of Board of Equalization 2023

JUNE 12TH 2023 BY DEE LOFLIN

Notice of Board of Equalization 2023

The Stoddard County Commission hereby gives NOTICE of the 2023 Board of Equalization will be meeting on Wednesday, July 5, 2023 at 10:00 a.m. in the Commissioners' Chamber which is located in the Government Building, Bloomfield, Missouri.

Those wishing to appear before the Board of Equalization need to first contact the Stoddard County Assessor's office, at (573) 568-3163.

If the matter cannot be resolved with the Assessor's office, an appointment to meet with the Board of Equalization will be set up by the County Clerk's Office.

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Stoddard County Commission Meeting - Monday, June 5, 2023

JUNE 07TH 2023 BY DEE LOFLIN

Stoddard County Commission Meeting - Monday, June 5, 2023

The Stoddard County Commissioners began their meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance and Presiding Commissioner Greg Mathis saying a prayer. The Commissioners' meeting is open to the public and anyone can join them and listen or even speak their concerns.

Senate Board 40 Appointment

Two board members are up for reappointment as board members. They are Wayne Jean and Dale Holman.

Motion to re-appoint Wayne Jean and Dale Holman to the SB40 Board made by Commissioner C.D. Stewart. Seconded by Commissioner Carol Jarrol. All three voted yes and the motion passed.

Water District #5 Update

"We began last week on the valve projects and meters have been ordered and are in. We will need to get the computer and software to read those meters," stated Dave Cooper,

president of the board for Water District #5.

He also had bills that were pre-approved by the Commissioners to be paid out of the ARPA funds. Those bills will have to be approved through Bootheel Regional Planning Commission before a check can be issued. He also gave a summary of their work thus far and a list of the expenses incurred for reimbursement.

"We are very gracious as to what you have done for us for the water district," continued Cooper. "The board did vote to raise the rates. I believe it is \$24.50 for the first 1,000 gallons and then \$7 for each 1,000 gallons after that." That was required to maintain future expenses.

Jim Grebing, Bootheel Regional Planning Commission - Update on ARPA Funding

"I will have a revised sheet later this morning on the updates for the ARPA Funding. We will get all this processed tomorrow and give you an update. The only change was the city of Advance," stated Grebing.

"We need a copy of the bid for New Lisbon and the advertisement for the bid in the newspaper is also needed. This in regards to two bridges that need to be repaired," continued Grebing.

There was much discussion on the Broadband project for the Puxico Rural/Stoddard County - Economic Development may have some funds available, but not a total amount of the overage of \$900,000 bid. They can reduce the scope of the project, but the tricky part is you have to fall within a low income area to meet the CDGB grant. So the Commissioners are going to gather more information as to what to do with the broadband as Puxico and Wappapello rural areas are in great need of internet. It's taking way too long to decide on when this project will get off the ground. There are lot of layers to this onion of the grants awarded/available.

Josh Speakman, County Collector

Spearman recently attended the Cyber Security meeting in Cape Girardeau. He wanted to know if a company could come in and do some training with elected officials. "They can point us in the right direction on what to do for Cyber Security," stated Spearman.

"Would that be something you (the Commissioners) would entertain as it would take about 2 hours. I could reach out to the person and have all the office holders come in and do the training."

Mathis stated he had no problem doing it and the other two commissioners were in agreement. They will proceed with this training.

Homestead Tax - Missouri homestead law allows for a \$15,000 exemption, which is applicable to "a dwelling house and appurtenances, and the land used in connection therewith." In other words, the state's homestead law is limited to homes, corresponding buildings, and the land on which they stand.

Senate Bill 190 was discussed in detail. It is on Governor Parson's desk to be signed into law. This act modifies provisions relating to the taxation of seniors.

Courthouse Clock Update

Rain was pouring in on the workers who were updating the clock on the old courthouse.

William Dowdy, maintenance for Stoddard County, got a bid from R.L. Person Construction to repair the roof. The Steeple Repair on the Cupola of the old courthouse came in at \$120,998.00. With this large of an amount it would need to be bid out.

R.L. Persons Construction was the only one who bid last time on the repairs of the courthouse roof. No motion made, but the Commissioners should bid this out before proceeding.

Loyd Rice with GoSEMO Fiber Update

City of Puxico did not get any bids for the CDGB grant so GoSEMO Fiber decided to go ahead and put fiber within Puxico city limits without obtaining this CDGB Grant per Mr. Rice.

The Commission is looking for additional information before they decide on what to do with the rural CDGB broadband grant that has been approved; however due to prevailing wages the bid came in over \$900,000.

There are three options on the table for the Commissioners to choose from and they will discuss together and decide at a later date. They want what is in the best interest of those people who need internet and the County.

Motion to approve the minutes from Tuesday, May 30, 2023 made by C.D. Stewart. Seconded by Commissioner Jarrell. All three voted yes and motion passed.

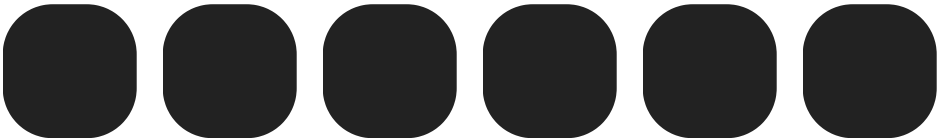
Motion to approve the closed session minutes from Tuesday, May 30, 2023 made by Carol Jarrell. Seconded by Commissioner Stewart. All three voted yes and motion passed.

Motion to go into Closed Session at 11:45 a.m. made by Commissioner Jarrell. Seconded by Stewart. All three voted yes and motion passed.

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Stoddard County Commissioner Meeting - Tuesday, May 30, 2023

Stoddard County Commissioner Meeting - Tuesday, May 30, 2023

The Stoddard County Commissioners began their meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance and a prayer. It was a full house with more than 15 people in attendance. Mr. Mathis began with the closing of County Road 570.

Closing of County Road 570 Update

Sally Cato and Mrs. Blackshire approached the Commissioner a few weeks ago regarding the Blackshirt property and wetlands and would like to close the County Road 570 which runs through their property. Rick Shipman was also in attendance today and is a property owner on CR 570. He is in agreement to consider the road abandoned as it is no longer being maintained by Castor township.

"I drove out there yesterday," stated Presiding Commissioner Greg Mathis.

Dale Moreland, Castor Township, had instructed and gave permission to Auten Land Services LLC to lay pipe along CR 517 which also crosses onto the easement of CR 570. Auten Land Services has destroyed some of the property and gates on the property owned by Mrs. Blackshire and Mr. Shipman.

"I have been told that they will put this back into working order with the gates and land," stated Rick Shipman, landowner.

"I will talk to my clients and see what they want to do with Auten Land Services and how they have conducted themselves. I am sure the family will want to receive some compensation for the damage. I have been dealing with Bob Conrad with Auten Land Services," stated John Scott, attorney for the Blackshirt family who was also in attendance.

County Road 527A

Donnie Foster had attend the Commission meeting a few weeks ago and has requested that County Road 527A be closed.

"I also drove out there yesterday," stated Mathis.

The discussion was more with the bridge out there and who would maintain the bridge if the road was considered closed. Will the township maintain the bridge or the property owner is the question.

"We took out the old bridge. It was an iron bridge with wood flooring," stated Moreland of Castor Township. "Foster owns 100 acres now around the bridge. We have replaced the bridge with pipes and rock around it to keep from washing out."

"If you look at the bridge, it is starting to cave in and needs more rock on the north side too," stated Foster.

"The Township and Mr. Foster will need to get together and decide who will be maintaining the bridge and where do we close it from the bridge, before the bridge," stated Mathis.

Moreland announced there would be a meeting at the Castor Township office on Tuesday, June 6th at 6:00 p.m. and they can work out all the details at that time.

New Business - City of Essex

"We have been trying to get a grant for our streets as nothing has been done to those streets since 1970's," commented Jena Mitchell, City of Essex Clerk.

"We wrote the application in December 2022 and it has been denied due to lack of funds. We believe it is because of the cash-match and not enough in-kind money. So we are thinking they are needing a little financial help with this application. I am thinking about \$50,000 in ARPA Funds," stated Tiffany Belcher from Bootheel Regional Planning Commission.

"Currently we are obligated with all of our Funds, however there are some of the projects might not spend all their money and we could be able to help," commented Mathis. "Get all your information together along with the amounts and we will at least get your name on the list for potential funding."

New Business - Harold Greene, Consultant for Ozark Total Healthcare DBA Ozark Physical Medicine

"We are the bidder for the Broadband Project," commented Harold Greene, consultant for Ozark Total Healthcare. "However the bid was over \$900,000 above the amount of money available."

The previous Commissioners dedicated \$1 million dollars for Broadband for the Puxico area and awarded that money to GoSEMO Fiber. Then Bootheel Regional Planning Commission helped with a CDGB government grant in the amount of \$1.4 million dollars.

Once the bid meeting occurred there was only one bid and it was for \$3.82 million dollars. If the bid is accepted the options are to either shorten the miles of fiber ran or ask CDGB for more monies.

Another option is to not accept the CDGB grant and just award the \$1 million to GoSEMO Fiber and allow them to go ahead with the rural portion of Stoddard County near Puxico and they will pay for the rest of the fiber.

Tiffany Belcher, Bootheel Regional Planning Commission stated, "Because the bid is over \$900,000 a committee has now been created because of prevailing wages and the costs of products keep rising. You can put a contingency on there if CDGB has the funding to cover the overage or cut back on the miles to get the cost down. There are 76 miles to cover in the Puxico rural area."

"We are willing to go in either direction. We can either scale the project back or if CDGB has the funds, we are more than willing to do either," stated Harold Green with Ozark Physical Medicine.

"The County would be the owner of this project for Broadband infrastructure if they so choose to go this route and accept the CDGB Grant from Bootheel Regional Planning Commission. It would be a five year contract then the Internet Service Provider (ISP) would take over both the maintenance of the fiber lines as well as from the pole to the homes.

Greene stated that there are several ISPs in the area including, but not limited to AT&T, Windstream in Wappapello, and GoSEMO Fiber. "We have a tendency to go with GoSEMO Fiber," stated Greene.

"I would have bid on the city of Puxico Broadband project; however I did not have time. GoSEMO Fiber didn't give me time to bid on that project and we would have been the only bidder there as well. If I can give my two cents worth if anything I would like someone in Stoddard county to get these grants," stated Greene.

Note: The Bid Announcement is placed in the print newspaper for two weeks and that was done by the city of Puxico in both the Dexter Statesman and the Puxico Weekly Press.

Board of Equalization Update

The Board of Equalization opens the first Tuesday in July; however that falls on July 4h so it will be open July 5th - 19th. Mary Worley and Mike Bollinger are on the board and can be available if anyone has questions..

"We had to raise countywide 10% on residential owners due to it being state of Missouri mandated." per Dan Creg, Stoddard County Assessor.

The Commissioners will open the Board of Equalization at 10:00 a.m. on Wednesday, July 5, 2023.

Other Business

Motion to approve the Minutes from May 15, 2023 made by Commissioner C.D. Stewart, seconded by Commissioner Carol Jarrell. All three voted yes and passed.

Motion to approve the Minutes from the Closed Session Minutes for May 15, 2023 made by Commissioner Jarrell, seconded by Commissioner Stewart. All three voted yes and passed.

Motion to approve the Minutes from the Closed Session Minutes for May 17, 2023 made by Commissioner Jarrell, seconded by Commissioner Stewart. All three voted yes and passed.

Motion to approve the Minutes from May 22, 2023 made by Commissioner Stewart, seconded by Commissioner Jarrell. All three voted yes and passed.

Motion to approve the Minutes from the Closed Session Minutes for may 22, 2023 made by Commissioner Jarrell, seconded by Commissioner Stewart. All three voted yes and passed.

Motion to go into Closed Session at 11:15 a.m. made by Commissioner Jarrell, seconded by Commissioner Stewart. All three voted yes and passed.

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