MINUTES
STREETS AND BRIDGES COMMITTEE
SPECIAL MEETING
FEBRUARY 20, 2024 – 1:00 P.M.
Lawton City Hall
3rd Floor Conference Room
212 SW 9th Street
Lawton, Oklahoma 73501

Chairman Gill called the meeting to order at 11:00 A.M. All required notices and agendas were posted in compliance with state law.

ROLL CALL

Present: Gill
Hampton
Harris (arrived at 1:08 P.M.)

Absent: None.

Also Present: Kobe Humble, City Clerk's Office; John Ratliff, City Manager; Cliff Haggenmiller, Streets Director; Larry Wolcott, Public Works Director; Joe Painter, Engineering; Chris Serrano, EST; Brent Frank, EST; Kim McConnell, Lawton Constitution; Eric Swansen, SW Ledger

BUSINESS ITEMS

1. **Receive a report for EST on working with the City of Lawton Engineering Department and establishing benchmarks on projects, and take action as deemed necessary.**

Chris Serrano, EST, stated that he and members of the engineering staff met earlier this morning to discuss several projects. During the meeting, EST was designated as the project manager for the 2017 Ad Valorem Residential initiative. He noted that Phase II-A of the project involves the reconstruction of nine street segments.

Chairman Gill inquired whether Serrano and Painter felt confident in their involvement and their current position regarding the ongoing projects.

Both Serrano and Painter affirmed that they are in good standing and feel confident about their current positions concerning the ongoing projects.

NO ACTION TAKEN.

2. **Discuss adding additional streets for milling and overlaying to the "On Target, On Time" street project list and take action as deemed necessary.**

Chairman Gill emphasized the importance of this agenda item, noting that there is a list of streets to discuss. However, he began by inquiring about the status of **Goodyear Boulevard** and where the project currently stands.

Painter explained that funding has been the primary issue, but he recently learned that they should receive updates from the banks this week regarding the funding status.

Chairman Gill asked if funding was the primary factor delaying buyouts, scheduling, and the preparation of plans. He pointed out that in order to proceed with bidding, funding should already be secured, as there is typically a 30-day window to receive and review bids once they are issued. He stressed the importance of being able to award the contract if the bids are within the engineering estimate. He further clarified that, aside from the inability to go out for bids, funding should not be impeding other parts of the process. He also stated that there should be no reason why all necessary preparations cannot be completed in advance so that the bid packet is ready to go out the very next day.

Painter confirmed that everything is ready to proceed.

Chairman Gill stated that this is great news and confirmed that Goodyear Boulevard is now ready to go out for bids.

Ratliff mentioned that he believes we are actively pursuing grant opportunities and asked Serrano to confirm if that was correct.

Serrano confirmed that yes, that is correct.

Chairman Gill clarified if they are working on two grants.

Serrano confirmed that this is correct.

Chairman Gill reiterated that everything for Goodyear Boulevard is ready to proceed, and once the funding is received, the project will immediately go out for bids.

38th Street – Gore to Lee Boulevard

Painter stated that the plans are being finalized and that they are currently inquiring about the right-of-way. Once that is secured, they will begin the waterline relocation, which is funded through the Public Utilities Water Resources Board funds. After the waterlines are relocated, they will proceed with the roadway construction.

Chairman Gill asked how long they have been trying to secure the right-of-ways.

Painter stated that the right-of-ways are being inquired in-house, but he is unsure how long they have been trying to secure them. He would need to check for more details.

Chairman Gill questioned whether it had been a year since they started trying to secure the right-of-ways.

Painter stated that he doesn't believe it has been a year and asked Serrano if he remembered the timeline.

Serrano stated that he did not have an answer regarding the timeline.

Chairman Gill asked how long it typically takes to secure a right-of-way.

Painter stated that the timeline can vary depending on how many people are involved, but it could take quite some time to secure a right-of-way.

Chairman Gill stated that his question was regarding the right-of-way, which has come up twice—once now on 38th Street. He asked how long the plans have been ready or if they are still being worked on.

Painter stated that they begin working on right-of-ways as soon as the right-of-way easements are received. He mentioned that the easements were delivered, and they met with Cindy Augustine, who started the process immediately.

Chairman Gill asked about the plans for this street and how long they have been working on them. He mentioned that he had heard the plans were 70% complete at the beginning of the year and asked if that was correct.

Further discussions were held regarding 38th Street, focusing on its current status within the plans, including the right-of-way considerations and the relocation of the waterline.

Chairman Gill clarified that the right-of-ways have not been purchased yet, the project is still awaiting funding and the completion of waterline work.

Painter stated that the project is currently awaiting right-of-way acquisition. The plans are finalized, and as soon as the right-of-way is secured and utility relocation is completed, the project will be ready to commence.

Chairman Gill inquired about the current status of the utility relocation.

Painter explained that utility relocation cannot begin until all right-of-ways have been acquired. He noted that Public Utilities Director Rusty Whisenhunt has already initiated the utility relocation plan for all utilities. Additionally, he mentioned ongoing efforts to negotiate with PSO regarding power poles along 38th Street, which will likely require special attention.

Ratliff sought clarification on whether the waterline relocation would be delayed until the right-of-ways have been acquired.

Painter confirmed, stating that is correct.

Chairman Gill explained the direction he was taking, noting that it would also relate to another project to be discussed later. He mentioned that while the projects are listed with completion percentages and tasks that are still pending, there are no clear benchmarks or timelines. He expressed that although he understands challenges can arise during road projects, it would be helpful to have an estimated date for when the work might realistically begin.

Further discussion was held regarding the establishment of timelines and benchmarks, as well as additional details on right-of-way acquisition moving forward.

Chairman Gill inquired whether the timeline for this project is estimated to be 60 days, 90 days, or a year.

Painter responded that he would need to get back to Chairman Gill with an answer on that.

Chairman Gill asked Serrano if he had any insight into the timeline for the project.

Serrano stated that he would like to say 60 days, but he would prefer to check on that before confirming.

Chairman Gill reiterated that it would be extremely beneficial for the Council, City Manager, and all department heads to have a clear timeline so they can inform the public, especially those who have been anticipating this road for nearly two years.

Harris inquired about the anticipated timeline for securing funding for the project.

Chairman Gill stated that he does not know for certain but emphasized that the goal is to secure the funding as soon as possible.

Ratliff stated that the plan is to try to allocate more than the $3 million that was designated for streets and roads last year, but it will depend on how the budget process unfolds.

Chairman Gill emphasized that the most important thing is to have these projects ready to proceed as soon as the funding is secured.

Lee Boulevard Projects

Chairman Gill mentioned that there are several projects on Lee Boulevard, and he is aware that there has been some discussion among the Council and the Mayor about doing a mill and overlay on certain roads on Lee Boulevard, instead of completely tearing them out at this time. He pointed out a particularly bad area in front of the Vo-Tech, which may require relocation. He noted that EST will be assessing the area and expressed confidence that they would value Painter's input on the matter.

Painter stated that EST did a study on Lee Boulevard. He also mentioned that it was budgeted in the next fiscal year to start the next phase of design.

Chairman Gill explained that the reason he wanted to discuss Lee Boulevard was due to the potential changes needed for existing programs, specifically for a mill and overlay program extending from 38th Street to the Interstate. He emphasized the importance of adjusting the plan for that section of road and expressed his appreciation for EST to work with Painter on this matter.

Harris and Hampton both shared their views on the proposed mill and overlay for Lee Boulevard.

Chairman Gill mentioned that the City of Norman has an ongoing mill and overlay program, which is a primary focus of their road repair and maintenance efforts. He also noted that our own maintenance program will be completely revised and presented at the next meeting.

Gore Boulevard Project to 82nd Street

Chairman Gill acknowledged that this project has been a setback for the City of Lawton, though he emphasized that it is no one's fault. He mentioned that there was an engineering firm involved that the city had not been very satisfied with. He noted that while the project is still not complete, it is nearing completion. He also pointed out that both AT&T and Summit Gas experienced delays, taking about a year longer than expected to get started.

Chairman Gill inquired about the current status of the project and how much longer the city will need to wait for its completion.

Painter stated that bids were opened last week, and, similar to the pedestrian bridge project, the bids came in over the estimated cost.

Chairman Gill asked how many bids were received for the project.

Painter stated that only one bid was received for the project.

Chairman Gill asked from whom the bid was received.

Painter stated that the bid was received from Do It. The estimated cost was approximately $10 million, but their bid came in at $13 million, which is $2.5 million over the estimate. He mentioned that he reached out to ODOT to explore the possibility of an 80-20 split of the overage, with ODOT covering 80% and the city paying 20%. He added that everyone agrees that if the project is re-bid, the price is likely to increase even further.

Chairman Gill stated that AT&T has caused a one-year delay on this project.

Painter stated that AT&T is causing ODOT headaches across the state, which is one of the reasons ODOT is willing to assist with the 80-20 split on the overage.

Ratliff mentioned that AT&T receives special dispensation, such as being exempt from paying franchise fees or taxes, due to its historic status as a telephone and telegraph company. This distinction sets them apart from many other companies laying fiber.

Painter stated that we haven't received an official response from ODOT yet, so let's keep our fingers crossed.

Chairman Gill sought clarification on if they were discussing an 80-20 split.

Painter clarified, yes.

Chairman Gill stated that once they hear from ODOT, which he hopes will be soon, they will know whether they can proceed with awarding the contract.

Painter mentioned that he has had discussions with Finance Director Joe Don Dunham about the amount of funds the city will need to secure for this project.

Chairman Gill asked how long it should take to complete the road once the funds are secured and the contract is awarded.

Painter stated that it would be a year-long project.

Bridges: Wolf Creek, Cache Road, and Gore Boulevard

Chairman Gill stated that the State of Oklahoma has advised that these bridges need to be addressed.

Painter explained that a federally required bridge inspection is conducted, with the city selecting the consultants while the state covers the costs to ensure compliance across all cities. He also noted that all plans for the bridges are complete.

Chairman Gill asked for clarification on which bridge Painter was referring to and inquired about the completion percentage of the plans.

Painter stated that the plans for both the Wolf Creek and Cache Road bridges are 100% complete.

Chairman Gill reiterated that the project is still awaiting easement buyouts.

Painter stated that they are still working with one remaining property owner.

Chairman Gill asked if Painter had any updates on the plans regarding the property owner, expressing frustration that the matter has not progressed to court yet, given that it has been at least a year.

Ratliff inquired about the identity of the property owner.

Painter stated that he did not know the property owner's name but would provide that information later.

Chairman Gill asked if Cindy Augustine from the Legal Department is the one handling this matter.

Painter confirmed, stating yes.

Chairman Gill stated that they need to speak with Augustine about this matter.

Chairman Gill inquired about the bridge on Cache Road.

Painter stated that the rehabilitation plans for the Cache Road bridge are 100% complete and ready to go.

Ratliff asked Painter if he had previously mentioned to the Council that the bridge was in bad shape.

Painter clarified that the bridge he had mentioned previously was the one on 11th Street. He explained that the Cache Road bridge had its weight limit lowered, which is why it can be rehabilitated, while the 11th Street bridge will require reconstruction.

Chairman Gill stated that there is a list of bridges to be discussed, but the ones covered today were just the top three on the list, and further discussion will take place later.

Chairman Gill stated that it seems everything is progressing well on both items discussed today, except for the right-of-ways on two different projects.

Ratliff noted that he will investigate the right-of-way situation further.

Chairman Gill clarified that the right-of-way issues on 38th Street and the Wolf Creek Bridge are the only two items still pending; everything else is ready to go.

Ratliff mentioned that a citizen wishes to address the committee, and he will coordinate with Kobe Humble in the City Clerk’s Office to have this added to the agenda for the next meeting.

NO ACTION TAKEN.

Motion by **HAMPTON,** Seconded by **HARRIS**, to adjourn the meeting. AYE: Gill, Hampton, Harris, NAY: None. *Motion Passed.*

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 1:42 P.M.