

## Newton Township Road Committee 5/10/23 Meeting Minutes

- Meeting called to order at 6pm.
- Committee member introductions and a brief summary about themselves.
- Review of 5/1/23 Meeting Minutes.
- Review of each committee member's vision for the Newton Township Road Committee and the future of Newton Township's roads. This doesn't have to happen one at a time. This can be more of a brainstorm where committee members voice support for certain ideas or opposition.
  - o Are you on the "do nothing" or the 45 miles of asphalt side of the spectrum?
  - o No millage up to 4 Mills. What do you think?
  - o How would you prioritize gravel roads and how would you improve them, or not?
  - o How would you prioritize asphalt roads and how would you improve them, or not?
- Chris Gallagher input – Clark Road
  - o My vision is 33 miles of paved roads and routine maintenance on those. 12 miles of gravel roads and routine maintenance on those.
  - o I see us allocating millage dollars on a 70/30 or some kind of split so some gravel roads are being addressed immediately just like some asphalt roads.
- Beau Bess input – 9 ½ Mile Road
  - o Everybody needs to be touched in a millage proposal.
  - o Depending on cost per mile, we'll have to adjust our plan.
  - o Special Assessment District is something we might want to consider.
  - o Take potential future dollars and present it to the county and the county go out to bond and get more, most or all of our roads addressed in a shorter time span.
- Tim Krueger input – I Drive South
  - o KCC Instructor
  - o We are going to pay one way or another, repair on our cars and decreased property values or millage.
  - o Wishes to find the most cost-effective way to improve and maintain our roads.
  - o Let's work to make Newton Township stronger.
- Mark Keefer – Willow Run
  - o Live in Newton Township for 7 years now.
  - o Roads need to be fixed.
  - o Needs to analyze more data to determine how road repairs are prioritized.
- Keith Eyre input
  - o We're trying to find a solution that will satisfy as many people as possible with the least amount of money possible.
- Opportunity to put millage on August ballot.
- Attempt to build a consensus on one vision?
  - o How much do we have to work with? 1 mill will bring \$146,000 annually to be put towards road repairs.
  - o How much is each individual stretch of road going to cost us? We asked the county for that information on May 1<sup>st</sup> and should have it by May 31<sup>st</sup>, but will follow up to see

about their progress so far and potential to see it sooner. **Chris will follow up with Christine Parsons on cost per mile proposal from the county.**

- Beau recommends that 2 Road Committee Representatives meet with John Midgely in order to get costs per road section by section.
- Beau spoke to a county representative about a large bond possibility and that idea is not 100% off the table. **Beau will continue to follow that up.**
- We need to be clear about the message that any plan we lay out has us earning 100% of matching funds every year and that may not be the case. So maybe our plan should be based on receiving only 60% of what we request. If we only receive 60% of matching funds, because other townships receive the other 40%, our 15-year plan may extend out to a 25-year plan.
- We will seek written commitment from the county, if possible, to guarantee certain road work on a certain timeline.
- Is 6 Mile between B Drive North to B Drive South a county primary?
- How do we reach that vision?
  - Do we need metrics from the County?
  - What information do we need to compile, and in what form, to better inform our voting public?
  - What is our timeline? There is the potential to have something on the August ballot; ballot language needed by 4pm Tuesday, May 16<sup>th</sup>. The committee was not in favor of rushing our process in order to achieve a proposal on the August ballot.
  - The county receives requests for 50/50 matching in March and we are either granted a share of those dollars or not.
  - Who needs to ask what questions and bring back answers to our next committee meeting?
  - What else?
  - **Mark will contact the engineer that Emmett Township worked with on their recent road improvements.**
  - Are there current dollars available in our Newton Township general fund for road repairs? That balance currently stands at \$843,000. There may be \$125,000 available this one time only from that general fund.
  - **Keith will approach the Township Board about spending all general fund dollar surpluses.** For example, the general fund needs to have one year of fire and general operation expenses banked. Maybe keep that + 20%. Anything in the general fund above that would go to roads.
  - Should we do another survey? Yes, to determine whether residents will support 3 or 4 mill and we will build the ballot proposal accordingly.
  - The longest millage we can do is 20 years.
  - **Beau & Chris will follow up with John Midgely about temporary fixes like “paver patch.”**
    - Section by section
    - **Mark will send Chris the other criteria he wants to see from the county.**
- Committee member input is anything any committee member would like to share that they haven't yet.

- Public comment.
  - If you're road isn't fixed until year 15, you're going to be paying more...for the millage and your auto repairs over those 15 years.
  - We're talking about miles of roads or even sections of roads. Paver patches or fixing 100 yards of a road at a time might be a good option. **Beau will discuss this option with John Midgley.**
  - Instead of an engineer to assure the county does all repairs correctly, consider an insurance policy.
  - What's the highest number of mills we could put on the ballot? Could we do a bigger millage over a shorter time period.
  - I like the idea of a brochure. Give the voters as much information as possible so everybody knows what they're voting on.
  - Was a deadline missed for matching funds for road repairs this year? Answer: if we had passed a millage in 2022 and failed to ask for matching funds in March of 2023, then one could say we missed the deadline. Being we didn't have millage dollars to contribute towards matching funds, we weren't planning on requesting them, and didn't really miss a deadline.
  - Get more data and drive road decisions by that data.
  - Can dollars be set aside for those that will experience hardship due to a millage passing?
  - Do we know how many roads are routed for school buses? Is there any funding available from the state for those road repairs? The opinion in the room was that state funding is not available for bus route road repairs.
  - **Mark will look for state and federal grants available for road repairs.**
  - If federal dollars are funneled to our township, can the millage be rescinded and banked dollars returned to the taxpayers?
  - Annual matching funds from the county to the 19 townships will be around \$1,000,000-\$2,000,000.
  - Roads that go back to gravel cannot be improved for 3 years.
  - A stretch of K Drive is going back to gravel???
  - D Drive between 8 and 9 ½ is going back to gravel.
  - 10 Mile between K and J is going back to gravel.
  - H Drive may have a petition to go back to gravel circulating now.
  - If a mile of road is \$370,000, but is ground back to gravel first, roughly \$45,000 will be saved when that road is ultimately paved.
  - Should we take a certain amount of roads back to gravel in order to save a big dollar amount overall when roads are paved.
  - **Keith will follow-up with Mary Aldrich on due dates.** There is a date that a resolution must be passed by the Township Board in order to show intent that they will be putting a ballot before the voters. Then there is another due date that the actual proposal language must be passed by the Township in order to put it on the ballot.
- Review of TODOs assigned to committee members and due dates.
- Schedule our next committee meeting. **May 22<sup>nd</sup>, 6pm, Newtown Township Hall.**
- Meeting adjourned.