

A continued meeting of the Botetourt County Board of Supervisors was held on Tuesday, August 9, 2016, in the Circuit Courthouse's second floor conference room in Fincastle, Virginia, beginning at 6:00 P. M.

PRESENT: Members: Mr. L. W. Leffel, Jr., Chairman  
Mr. Todd L. Dodson, Vice-Chairman (arrived at 6:47 P. M.)  
Mr. John B. Williamson, III  
Mr. Billy W. Martin, Sr.  
Dr. Donald M. Scothorn

ABSENT: Members: None

Others present at the meeting:

Mr. Gary Larrowe, County Administrator  
Mr. David Moorman, Deputy County Administrator

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 6:01 P. M.

It was noted that Mr. Dan Collins, VDoT's Residency Administrator, Mr. Brian Blevins, Area Land Use Engineer, Mr. Michael Gray, District Planning Manager, and Mr. Kevin Hamm, Maintenance Operations Manager, were present at the meeting for a work session on gravel roads and other transportation issues.

Mr. Gray then discussed the FY 16 House Bill 2 (HB2)/Smart Scale application process. He stated that there will be approximately one-half of the funds available for this year's Smart Scale applications as were available last year. Mr. Gray stated that VDoT is requesting a listing of projects that the County would like to consider for this application process so that cost estimates can be calculated and the on-line application submitted prior to the August 15 deadline.

Mr. Gray stated that all applications have to be submitted to VDoT's Richmond office by the end of September when each project will be considered for funding against other Salem District projects and/or projects from across the State. He noted that each project has to compete against other for receipt of these funds.

Mr. Collins stated that there are currently three projects being considered for funding for the County—Exit 150 area park and ride, Fincastle bypass, and I-81 improvements in the "S" curves at Exit 168 (Arcadia).

Mr. Cody Sexton, Information Specialist, stated that the regional Transportation Planning Organization is also applying for SmartScale funding to construct an auxiliary lane on I-81 southbound from Exit 150 to the truck scales.

After questioning by Mr. Martin, Mr. Sexton stated that VDoT has decided to continue to make small improvements at Exit 168 to help reduce the number of accidents in this area but the County still has the option to apply for project funds if the need is determined.

Mr. Williamson stated that earlier this year the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) reallocated monies from the Exit 168 improvement project to the "S" curves on Route 460 in Montvale. He noted that this action "shows us how they feel about the I-81 project."

He then questioned if it "makes sense" for the County to submit a funding application for the Fincastle bypass since VDoT removed this project from the County's Secondary System Six Year Plan.

After discussion by Mr. Larrowe, Mr. Collins stated that the County will need to identify a general location and have a proposal and concept plan created for a new park-and-ride facility in the Exit 150 area. Mr. Blevins stated that, to anticipate future need, it is anticipated that this park-and-ride site will need to be large enough to have between 250-300 parking spaces.

After questioning by Mr. Martin, Mr. Blevins stated that the former truck stops property at Exit 150 is not available for use as a park-and-ride due to Federal Highway Administration requirements.

Mr. Gray stated that park-and-ride projects would normally score very low in the SmartScale process; however, there is a need along I-81 for park-and-ride sites so such an application from the County has the potential to score well. Mr. Collins agreed with Mr. Gray's statement.

After questioning by Mr. Martin, Mr. Collins stated that there is inadequate room at the current park-and-ride site in Daleville to enlarge the site.

After questioning by Mr. Williamson, Mr. Gray stated that transportation revenues change year-to-year based on gasoline/fuel usage. He noted that VDoT is forecasting flat funding from gasoline tax revenues for the near future.

After discussion, Mr. Gray stated that the SmartScale applications are on a two-year schedule.

Mr. Sexton stated that, unless additional funds are available, then SmartScale projects approved for funding this year would not be included on the Six Year Plan until 2021-22.

After questioning by Mr. Williamson, Mr. Collins stated that submittal of a SmartScale application for the Fincastle bypass is probably the only way to have this project funded for construction. He noted that the VDoT District Office staff will update the cost estimate for this project for inclusion in the funding application.

Mr. Blevins stated that VDoT and County staff are compiling information for the Fincastle bypass application and have found some justification that can be used to fund this project.

Mr. Collins stated that this project could qualify under the Urban Development Area (UDA) guidelines.

Mr. Larrowe then questioned if the Board had any other potential projects to be considered for SmartScale funding besides the three previously mentioned. None were mentioned.

Mr. Leffel stated that the Fincastle bypass would be considered a definite aspect of the County's strategic plan and he believes that the County needs to "go through whatever hoops are necessary" to obtain funding for this project.

Mr. Blevins stated that VDoT and County staff will review all SmartScale funding applications several times before they are forwarded to Richmond for final consideration. He noted that VDoT will offer the County whatever help possible during this process.

After questioning by Mr. Larrowe, Mr. Leffel stated that, as one member of the Board, he would agree to submittal of SmartScale applications for the Exit 150 area park and ride, the Fincastle bypass, and I-81 improvements in the "S curves at I-81 Exit 168 (Arcadia).

Mr. Martin and Dr. Scothorn agreed with this proposal.

Mr. Williamson stated that he does not question the need for any of these projects; however, he is concerned about their ability to receive appropriate scoring under the SmartScale guidelines.

Discussion was then held on gravel roads.

Mr. Blevins stated that VDoT is requesting assistance from the Board to determine which gravel road projects should be scheduled next for paving/surface-treatment. He noted that the County does have a "decent amount" of funding available over the next few years to pave gravel roads which have a traffic count of over 50 vehicles per day (vpd). He noted that the Board

members had been provided with two charts—the County’s Gravel Road Priority List and a list provided by VDoT of all County gravel roads.

Mr. Blevins stated that work on the two gravel roads currently on the Secondary System Six Year Plan is pending. He noted that work on McFalls Road (Route 806) is scheduled to begin next summer and construction on Buhrman Road (Route 696) is scheduled to begin later this year and VDoT is asking the Board which gravel roads they would like to prioritize for improvement next. He noted that for the last two years the County received approximately \$414,000 in funds for gravel road improvements.

After questioning by Mr. Martin, Mr. Blevins stated that Zimmerman Road (Route 603) is on the County’s Gravel Road Priority List. He noted that this 1.8 mile roadway has an average daily traffic count of 35 and would require a significant amount of engineering and grading as the roadway is narrow and has steep terrain. He further noted that this roadway does not qualify for VDoT’s pave-in-place program because of these issues; however, if the Board would like this roadway improved, it can be placed on the Six Year Plan as a construction project.

After discussion, Mr. Blevins stated that VDoT’s roadways are required to be a minimum of 16’ wide to allow for two vehicles traveling in opposite directions to safely pass each other.

Mr. Hamm stated that there are 150 miles of gravel roads in the County and there are other roads in the County that could be considered for paving besides those on the current Priority List. Mr. Hamm stated that, in developing the VDoT “red-white-green” listing of all County gravel roads, he discussed each roadway’s suitability for improvement with VDoT’s area headquarters personnel. He noted that these staff members are uniquely familiar with the roads in their districts.

Mr. Hamm stated that those roads highlighted in green are in good shape compared to those listed in black/white. He further stated that those roads highlighted in red either do not have traffic counts over 50 vpd or their field reviews indicated that a significant amount of work would be necessary to improve/pave the road.

Mr. Hamm stated that this listing was developed prior to the discussion on Trevey Road (Route 638) held at Board meetings earlier this year. He noted that Trevey Road is designated as a “red” project due to the amount of work and engineering that would be necessary before the roadway could be paved.

Mr. Hamm noted that VDoT has also been contacted over the past year or so by citizens of Roy Road (Route 677) which parallels I-81 off of Trinity Road requesting that the roadway paved. He noted that this road is approximately 1.4 miles in length and has a traffic count of 40 vpd and is shown as “green” on the chart.

After questioning by Mr. Williamson, Mr. Hamm stated that Trevey Road is approximately 1.2 miles in length and extends from Old Hollow Road to Wheatland Road.

Mr. Hamm stated that many of the gravel roads in the Buchanan area have drainage and environmental issues because of the terrain.

After questioning, Mr. Blevins stated that the County’s funding last year for gravel roads was \$414,000 and in the prior year it was \$212,000. He stated that some of these funds are allocated for the Buhrman (\$381,000 estimated) and McFalls (\$500,000 estimated) projects. He further stated that VDoT tries to construct the roadway within its existing right-of-way in the event that an adjacent property owner does not want to give any additional right-of-way for road improvements.

Mr. Leffel stated that he recalls that there was an issue on the Flowing Springs Road (Route 638) project whereby one property owner did not want to give the needed right-of-way to improve this roadway. Mr. Blevins noted that he does not know if this is still the case in this matter.

Mr. Hamm stated that Flowing Springs Road is in good shape at this time but it is a situation of one gravel road in the midst of many paved roads in this same area. Mr. Hamm noted that Derek Drive (Route 765) and Laymantown Road (Route 658) are small sections of dead-end roadways in an area of paved roads.

After discussion, Mr. Collins stated that updated traffic counts could be provided and VDoT personnel would be available for site visits on any projects that the Board considers for paving.

Mr. Blevins stated that in determining which roads to designate for paving, the Board could consider which projects would have “the most bang for your buck” and impact the most citizens.

After questioning by Mr. Williamson, Mr. Blevins stated that the County has more funds available for gravel road paving projects next year than there are roadways designated to be improved. He further stated that VDoT could review a few of the roadways to develop updated cost estimates but would need to know which roads the Board prefers.

Mr. Blevins stated that White Church Road (Route 666) was designated by the Board in 2010 as a Rural Rustic Road and VDoT would only need an indication from the Board to add this project to the Six Year Plan and work could begin.

After questioning by Dr. Scothorn and after discussion by VDoT staff, it was determined that the traffic count (968 vpd) for Pulaski Mines Road (Route 689) was incorrect as the roadway is only 0.2 miles in length. It was noted that this roadway is near Camp Bethel.

It was noted that Haymakertown Road (Route 600) has the highest traffic count (343 vpd) of any gravel road in the County and Trevey Road (Route 638) has a traffic count of 243 vehicles per day.

After discussion on school bus usage of Trevey Road, Mr. Hamm stated that he talked to School Superintendent John Busher a couple of months ago about gravel roadways in the County that have safety concerns, too narrow, etc., for use by school buses. He noted that there are currently eight roads in the County that school buses are not permitted to travel due to safety issues and the school system is currently conducting an evaluation to see if there are other roadways that are unsafe for buses to use.

After questioning by Mr. Leffel, Mr. Collins stated that the school system is responsible for making a determination on whether roadways are safe for school buses.

Regarding Trevey Road, Mr. Hamm stated VDoT receives many citizen complaints regarding the condition of this road.

Delegate Terry Austin stated that Goad Road (Route 724) also has many problems with washouts during heavy rains.

Mr. Dodson then arrived at this time (6:47 P. M.)

Mr. Hamm stated that the blind curve/dirt bank on Trevey Road causes the most issues.

After discussion regarding the owner of this property, Delegate Austin stated that Mr. John Hammond owns the property along Trevey Road where the blind curve/dirt bank is located. He further noted that a previous review of this roadway determined that Mr. Ham-

mond's driveway would also have to be relocated and the road improvements would cost approximately \$800,000; however, this figure is several years old.

Mr. Hamm stated that maintenance of gravel roads cost VDoT ten times the money used to maintain a paved road. He further stated that one-third of the Buchanan Area Headquarters' budget is used for gravel road maintenance.

After further discussion on Trevey Road, Mr. Hamm stated that all of the drainage pipes on Trevey Road have recently been replaced so this would not be an added cost for any planned upgrades.

Mr. Williamson stated that Trevey Road is used as an interconnecting roadway between Wheatland Road and Old Hollow Road/U. S. Route 11.

After questioning by Delegate Austin, Mr. Hamm stated that the accident count on Trevey Road was reviewed 3 – 4 months ago and it was minimal. Mr. Hamm noted that one option would be to designate the road for one-way traffic only.

Mr. Leffel noted that he believes that the County will have some issues to deal with when the school's school bus/gravel road study is completed.

Mr. Leffel then discussed the narrowness of Salt Petre Cave Road (Route 688) between Eagle Rock and Route 43. He noted that there is only 10' 1" of clearance on the narrowest section of this roadway which is used by four school buses each day. Mr. Leffel stated that this paved road is more unsafe than any gravel road.

After discussion, Mr. Ed McCoy stated that, following an article in *The Fincastle Herald* a few years ago, Mr. Jason Bond with VDoT investigated the right-of-way along Salt Petre Cave Road and determined that in some areas the road is located on CSX Railroad's right-of-way.

After discussion, Mr. Blevins stated that VDoT does not need a decision at this meeting on which gravel road improvements to add to the Six Year Plan; they only wanted to start a discussion with the Board so consideration could be held on which projects would be funded in the future. Mr. Blevins stated that, if any of the roads are chosen, it will help VDoT and the County's citizens.

After further discussion, Mr. Blevins stated that roads such as Trevey Road do not normally qualify for HBS/SmartScale funding. He noted that those types of upgrade/pavement projects would be funded through either revenue sharing or Six Year Plan monies.

After questioning by Dr. Scothorn, Mr. Hamm stated that there are at least 10 – 15 gravel roads in the County besides Trevey Road that have the same large-scale maintenance costs per mile.

After discussion, Delegate Austin stated that Boblett's Gap Road (Route 643) also has a high traffic count (155 vpd) and a high maintenance cost.

It was suggested that the Board obtain a copy of the school's study on roadways that have safety issues for school bus travel and then schedule site visits to some of the potential gravel road improvement projects.

Mr. Collins stated that it would help VDoT if the Board could develop a priority listing of 10 – 20 gravel roads to be paved over the next few years. Mr. Collins then stated that VDoT's revenue sharing program is being reduced over the next few years.

Regarding Roy Road, Mr. Hamm stated that the most recent traffic count is 40 vpd but this figure is several years old. He noted that VDoT conducted another traffic count and the number was exceedingly high so a different type of count was done and they now believe that this road has a traffic count of over 50 vpd which would qualify it for paving.

Mr. Larrowe then updated Mr. Dodson on the discussion prior to his arrival at the meeting including the County's application projects for HB2/SmartScale funding (Exit 150 area park and ride, the Fincastle bypass, and I-81 improvements in the "S curves at I-81 Exit 168 [Arcadia]), and discussion on gravel roads to be considered for addition to the Six Year Plan. Mr. Larrowe noted that a site visit to some of the roadways will be scheduled so that a listing could be provided to VDoT before the end of 2016.

Delegate Austin then questioned what is the Board's desire for roadway improvements on I-81 at Exit 168 (Arcadia). He noted that VDoT added illuminated chevrons to this area approximately 2 years ago and this has reduced the number of accidents in this area. Delegate Austin stated that VDoT has also installed high-friction pavement on the northbound lanes and adjusted the roadway's super-elevation through the "S" curves to help drivers safely maneuver through this area.

Delegate Austin stated that \$30 million is proposed to make additional safety enhancements in this area but there is no realignment proposed for this section to remove the curves.

Dr. Scothorn stated that he read a news article that these improvements have reduced the number of accidents in this area.

Mr. Blevins stated that VDoT made adjustments to the super-elevation on the roadway's southbound lanes in 2012.

Delegate Austin stated that he believes that the number of accidents was reduced by 1/3 along this section of I-81 after these safety improvements were installed.

After discussion, Mr. Blevins stated that they hope to see a further reduction in accidents in the southbound lanes when high-friction pavement is installed.

After questioning by Mr. Martin, Delegate Austin stated that most of the southbound accidents are due to a down-hill grade, the "S" curve, and the bridge in the mile marker 167-168 area. Delegate Austin stated that he feels that it will take a realignment of this section of I-81 to fix these problems. He noted that a realignment is estimated to cost \$90 million.

After questioning by Mr. Williamson, Delegate Austin stated that he has reservations as to whether these improvements would receive any funding under the HB2/SmartScale scoring formula.

Mr. Collins stated that the scoring system works but, "if you have a big project, it reduces the scoring" potential.

Mr. Blevins stated that the Board could apply for funding for a full realignment of this area of I-81.

After questioning by Mr. Williamson, Mr. Sexton stated that in the 2015 application for HB2 funds, the County included a request for \$30 million in safety improvements for the Arcadia section of I-81 and the Roanoke Valley/Alleghany Regional Commission applied for funding for a full realignment project which was estimated to cost \$100 million.

Delegate Austin then stated that under the provisions of HB2, I-81 does not qualify as a congested roadway. He encouraged the Board to adopt a resolution asking VDoT and the General Assembly to rectify issues with the program's scoring parameters.

After questioning by Mr. Dodson, Delegate Austin stated that HB2 funding is allocated based on the volume of accidents and the delay of traffic movements along the roadway, among other parameters. Delegate Austin further stated that the recently adopted "move over" law, which requires drivers to move over to an adjacent lane for police/fire/emergency vehicles,

creates congestion and impedes traffic flow on I-81 as a significant amount of the roadway has only two lanes in each direction.

After questioning by Mr. Williamson, Delegate Austin agreed that it is the “metrics of the scoring system” under the HB2 program that impact the scoring of improvement projects on I-81. Delegate Austin further stated that the northern Virginia and Tidewater areas of the State were allowed to implement a 0.07¢ increase in the Sales Tax to be used for transportation improvements. He stated that the I-81 corridor localities should be allowed the same opportunity and joint support of such legislation would help subsidize roadway improvements.

Under other transportation issues, Dr. Scothorn stated that a section of British Woods Drive across Alternate 220 from his office is located in Diamondback Subdivision. He noted that this section of roadway is not in the VDoT maintenance system due to language on the recorded plat which states that County funds cannot be used for improvements to bring this roadway into the Secondary System.

Dr. Scothorn stated that this private roadway contains 23 houses and is approximately one-half mile in length.

Mr. Larrowe stated that the residents have requested that the roadway be improved and accepted into the VDoT Secondary System and meetings between the residents, Dr. Scothorn, and County staff have been occurring for the past year. Mr. Larrowe stated that the Code of Virginia legislation was amended in 2014 to allow this restrictive plat language to be removed upon the unanimous support of all lot owners.

Mr. Larrowe stated that the County sent each recorded property owner a letter by certified, return-receipt mail, asking that they sign an enclosed Deed of Consent which gives their consent to the dedication of the right-of-way for public use and the roadway being taken into the Secondary System and that each person signing the Deed of Consent is the actual owner of the lot in question.

Mr. Larrowe stated that as of this time, all property owners, except one, have returned the signed Deeds of Consent.

After questioning by Mr. Williamson, Dr. Scothorn stated that the County did consider implementing a special taxing district for this subdivision which would allow each resident to pay a certain amount each year toward the roadway’s improvements. He noted, however, that it was estimated that the improvements would cost approximately \$400,000 and the mostly elderly residents could not afford this additional amount being added to their real estate tax bills each year.

Mr. Collins stated that the VDoT revenue sharing program is a 50/50 matching program.

Mr. Blevins stated that VDoT has reviewed this roadway and estimates that it would take \$300,000 at a minimum to bring this roadway up to VDoT standards. He noted that this roadway would not qualify for gravel road funds. Mr. Blevins stated that the roadway may be considered a Rural Addition project as 5% of the County’s total Secondary System allocation is dedicated toward these types of roadway improvement projects.

After questioning by Dr. Scothorn, Mr. Blevins stated that the County currently has over \$200,000 in the Rural Addition fund which could be used for this project.

Mr. Larrowe stated that the property owners have been informed that it will not be a simple or quick fix to bring this roadway into the VDoT secondary system for maintenance purposes.

There being no further discussion, on motion by Dr. Scothorn, seconded by Mr. Leffel, and carried by the following recorded vote, the meeting was adjourned at 7:34 P. M. (Resolution Number 16-08-01)

AYES: Mr. Williamson, Mr. Dodson, Mr. Martin, Mr. Leffel, Dr. Scothorn

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

ABSTAINING: None