

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 2012

**APPROVED MINUTES OF THE
DODGE COUNTY REGIONAL RAIL AUTHORITY
MEETING HELD**

**STATE OF MINNESOTA)
COUNTY OF DODGE)**

**COUNTY ADMINISTRATION OFFICE
MANTORVILLE, MN**

2012-02 Meeting

The Dodge County Regional Rail Authority met in regular session February 14, 2012, in the Commissioner's Room at the Courthouse Annex, Mantorville, MN, at 11:45 a.m. CST. Chair Don Gray opened the meeting at 11:45 a.m. CST.

Meeting Convened

The Chair acknowledged those present and established that there was a quorum:

Those Present

Members present: Jane Olive District #1
Lyle Tjosas District #2
David Erickson District #3
Don Gray District #4
David Hanson District #5

Members absent: None

Also present: Jim Elmquist County Administrator
Becky Lubahn Deputy County Clerk

Motion by Olive seconded by Hanson to approve and adopt the agenda as presented. *Motion adopted unanimously.*

Agenda Approved

Included in the Board packet for consideration was a resolution from Olmsted County to support a High Speed Rail study from the Twin Cities to Rochester.

High Speed Rail
Study From Twin
Cities to Rochester
Discussion

Commissioner Erickson reported that he received two calls regarding the High Speed Rail discussion. The individuals that contacted him would like to see whether the points of departure should be downtown.

Mr. Erickson clarified that regardless of Dodge's decision whether or not to pass the proposed resolution a study is going to be done, the Board needs to decide if they can trust the information that comes from the study.

Discussion took place on whether or not the rail should be from the center of a city (Rochester) to the center of another city (Twin Cities). Others felt that this was not part of the discussion.

Commissioner Erickson questioned why not support the study if the purpose of the study is just to obtain further information on the subject. Mr. Erickson again reiterated that the county needs to determine if they can trust the study.

Commissioner Erickson stated that the other question is do we want high speed rail. Mr. Erickson reported that the Board isn't being asked to approve a route or anything else. Also noted by Commissioner Erickson was that MnDOT feels there is a reason to do a study.

It was Commissioner Tjosaas' opinion that if you're going to go less than 100 miles, it just isn't feasible to do a study. Mr. Tjosaas was against spending money for a study.

High Speed Rail
Study From Twin
Cities to Rochester
Discussion -
Continued

Commissioner Hanson stated that the proposed corridor is between State Highway 52 and State Highway 56 which means Dodge County is going to have to be involved in the plan.

Mr. Hanson reported that Olmsted County will still get their \$2 million to do the proposed study. Dave Christianson from MnDOT has said that Dodge County does not need to weigh in on this and can remain neutral and Olmsted County will still get their money for the study. Olmsted County is however still asking that Dodge County pass the proposed resolution. Commissioner Hanson commented that he doesn't object to a freight rail study, however he doesn't see the need to sign a resolution when Olmsted County will still get their \$2 million for the study.

It was suggested that the following language be added to the resolution if the Board determines that they want to pass the proposed resolution from Olmsted County:

WHEREAS, while Dodge County has apprehension about the potential future location of a high speed rail line for passenger service and will not waive its right to document those concerns about placement at a later date, the county understands the merit of a study to determine the viability of this transportation corridor.

Commissioners discussed sending the resolution back to Olmsted County requesting that the above language be added to their resolution.

Mr. Hanson commented that he did not feel the county should be changing someone else's resolution.

Commissioner Olive reported that she agreed with everyone else's comments. In addition she didn't feel the county would benefit from signing the proposed resolution.

It was Commissioner Gray's opinion that \$2 million is a lot of money to spend on a study.

Mr. Gray expressed concern with passing the proposed resolution including the additional language because he felt Olmsted County may view it as a sign of support from Dodge County for their railroad plans.

Commissioner Gray commented that he feels the railroad routes being proposed through the county by Olmsted County would create a mess for road crossings in Dodge County.

Mr. Gray stated that commuter rail makes sense.

Commissioner Gray reiterated that he was opposed to signing the resolution because Olmsted County may say Dodge County is on board with what is being proposed if they have a signed resolution.

County Administrator Jim Elmquist informed the Board that he received two calls regarding the Regional Railroad meeting, one call was from Mark Moenning and the other from John Meyer.

High Speed Rail
Study From Twin
Cities to Rochester
Discussion

Considerable discussion took place on whether or not the Dodge County Board of Commissioners should sign the proposed resolution.

A majority of the Board members were in favor of letting Olmsted County know that Dodge County Commissioners discussed the proposed resolution and have decided not to take any action until they can see what the results are from the \$2 million high speed rail study.

Commissioner Gray stated that the Board needs to know the effect of the high speed rail on Dodge County before they take any action.

It was Mr. Gray's opinion that wherever the rail goes it will be a disaster for the agricultural community especially if it goes through prime farmland in Dodge County.

Motion by Erickson seconded by Olive to approve and authorize the January 24, 2012 Regional Rail meeting minutes as corrected on page 4. *Motion adopted unanimously.*

01/24/12 Regional
Rail Meeting
Minutes Approved

Motion by Olive seconded by Hanson to adjourn the meeting at 12:09 a.m. CST. *Motion adopted unanimously.*

Meeting Adjourned

ATTEST:

DON GRAY
CHAIR, REGIONAL RAIL AUTHORITY

BECKY LUBAHN
DEPUTY CLERK

DATED: