

TUESDAY, APRIL 28, 2015

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

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

**COUNTY ADMINISTRATION OFFICE
MANTORVILLE, MN**

2015-02 Meeting

The Dodge County Regional Railroad Authority met in special session April 28, 2015, in the Commissioner's Room at the Courthouse Annex, Mantorville, MN, at 6:22 p.m. CST. County Administrator Jim Elmquist opened the meeting at 6:22 p.m. CST.

Meeting Convened

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

Members present:	John Allen	District #1
	Tim Tjosaas	District #2
	David Erickson	District #4
	Steven Gray	District #5
Members absent:	Rodney Peterson	District #3
Also present:	Jim Elmquist	County Administrator
	Paula Rud	Administrative Assistant

Motion by Tjosaas seconded by Gray to approve and adopt the agenda as presented. *Motion adopted unanimously.*

Agenda Approved

County Administrator Jim Elmquist presented for the Board's review the Dodge County Engineer's comments in regards to the MnDOT/Olmsted Regional Railroad Authority sponsored Zip Rail Project and a proposed Zip Rail opposition resolution.

Zip Rail Discussion

The Engineer's comments were relative to the westerly corridor as outlined within the Scoping Study. At this time, the project has entered into the Tiered Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) stage of development which includes evaluating the no-build alternative along with the proposed corridors as to the social, economic, and environmental impacts of each option. At a recent Dodge County Regional Rail Authority Meeting, it was requested by a Board member that the Board consider preparing a new resolution as the project moves forward into the EIS stage.

In light of this request, Mr. Elmquist asked the County Engineer to review the scoping document from August 2014 and comment as to his concerns about the westerly alignment with special consideration to transportation and the land use impacts it has within Dodge County.

The Board discussed the proposed Zip Rail opposition resolution. Mr. Elmquist noted that while it would seem this would be more in light of the scoping analysis, the resolution is a restatement of the Dodge County Regional Railroad Authority's position letter to MnDOT dated August 14, 2014 stating the Authority's opposition to the Zip Rail.

Commissioner Gray offered the following resolution (RRA #2015-01), seconded by Commissioner Erickson:

Zip Rail Westerly Alignment Opposed by Resolution RRA #2015-01

Zip Rail Westerly Alignment Opposed

WHEREAS, the Minnesota Department of Transportation along with the Olmsted Regional Rail Authority prepared a final scoping document for a Zip Rail Study producing two primary routes as corridors between the Twin Cities and Rochester; and

WHEREAS, the westerly corridor route as described within the scoping study would parallel TH 56 to Dodge Center and then parallel TH 14 to Rochester; and

WHEREAS, the precise westerly alignment is not known therefore impacts to property and roads are yet to be defined, however the estimated impact to Dodge County is expected to be considerable; and

WHEREAS, this westerly alignment would cross more than 20 local roads and bisect properties within a corridor which was once a defined railroad route but has since been reclaimed and either farmed or developed; and

WHEREAS, the impact on township roads would be significant as the assumption is that township roads would be severed by the proposed rail line; and

WHEREAS, intersections with county highways are expected to have grade separation with either elevated roads or rail line. Grade separation would require bridges, imposing increased maintenance costs the county would not be amenable to inheriting; and

WHEREAS, Dodge County's mission statement emphasizes maintaining a rural character, this proposed westerly alignment shows significant impact to local tracts of agricultural land and bisecting areas resulting in a negative influence on the agricultural community of Dodge County; and

WHEREAS, initial indications show the benefit to Dodge County of this rail corridor would only serve as an impairment to the county rather than an economic benefit; and

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, Dodge County understands the final draft of the Tiered Environmental Impact Statement is currently being prepared, the Dodge County Regional Rail Authority believes that upon initial review of the corridor alignments, the westerly corridor will only negatively impact Dodge County.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Dodge County Regional Railroad Authority opposes the westerly alignment as proposed in the Tiered Environmental Impact Statement of this study. This statement was previously stated in a letter to Minnesota Department of Transportation dated August 14, 2014.

Resolution adopted unanimously.

Motion by Gray seconded by Tjosaas seconded by Gray to adjourn the meeting at 6:25 p.m. CST. *Motion adopted unanimously.*

Meeting Adjourned

ATTEST:

JOHN ALLEN
CHAIR, REGIONAL RAIL AUTHORITY

JIM ELMQUIST
CLERK

DATED: