

GENERAL SERVICES COMMITTEE
August 15, 2023

Present: Ian Gilbert, Chair; Richard Chartrand, Vice-Chair; Phil Hathway; Josh Leviker; and Andrea Moroughan.

Others present: Legislators Larry Dolhof, Thomas Osborne, Lisa Virkler, Jessica Moser, and Jeffrey Nellenback; County Manager, Ryan Piche; County Treasurer, Eric Virkler; and County Attorney, Joan McNichol.

Committee Chair, Ian Gilbert, called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

Legislator Moroughan moved to approve the June 20, 2023 committee meeting minutes, seconded by Legislator Chartrand, and carried.

Rail Trail Master Plan services – Alta Planning + Design, Inc.

Kristie Di Cocco, PE introduced herself as the Project Manager for Alta Planning + Design, Inc. Kristie explained that Alta, a national active transportation firm, was established in the early 1990's, focusing on pedestrian and bicyclist trails and greenways which the whole team is passionate about creates a mission driven organization. Alta teams up with Environmental Design Research (EDR), H & T Engineering, PLLC who has 45-years experience, and Aubertine & Currier for consultants in surveying. Kristie has 18 years in transportation and trail engineering.

The three key components to managing this project are effective communication, informed data processing, and active listening & problem solving. Public engagement is one of four principles of success for this project. It is incredibly important to listen and engage with the public on this project. Project Phasing is making sure the project is realistic, feasible, and cost effective for grant applications. Year-Round Benefits is selling the project as more than just a trail and building support for it. Funding is the last principle, and it involves developing a strategy to get the project finished.

Public engagement is not a one size fits all approach, it is a critical process for success by creating community buy-in and public/private partnerships. This is done through a steering committee, focus groups, pop-up events, and interactive workshops. This is a chance for community members to voice their thoughts on what the trail should be used for and what concerns they might have.

Each section of trail will need to be developed for the area around it, it is not a one size fits all approach because what might be best for one farmer might not work for the next. It will be crucial that public engagement is done to understand what is in the area and what needs the landowners might have that surround the trail. Trail

elements are the details that make the difference between having a trail and having a trail experience. Signage is key to know where you are on the trail and where you can go.

In the Southern Section of the proposed trail the existing conditions show 1 bridge or culvert, 2 intersections, one with low complexity and one with moderate complexity, and 2 defined access points. This was done with desk analysis and some field inspections. The Northern Section of the proposed trail is much more complex. The existing conditions show 15 bridges or culverts, 24 intersections, ten with low complexity, seven with moderate complexity, and 6 complex, and 4 defined access points. There are multiple locations in the Village of Lowville where the tracks could be used to create new business ventures.

There are a minimum of 22 structures on the Northern Section, which highlights the importance of data collection to determine structural repairs, and then constructability & phasing. Any type of structural issue comes with a wide range of possible repairs and associated costs, for instance a bridge superstructure, substructure, hydraulic and scour concerns are all things that need to be thought out. To find out about the constructability and phasing research needs to be done as to what the limitations are, what structural capacity exists, physical constraints, what the effects on project phasing and access are, and what non-structural modifications are needed.

The benefits of having a rail trail are much more than just a trail. It can create economic growth by creating better access to local businesses, creating more businesses with trail access, create jobs while constructing the trails, and so much more. In order to get grant funding, the county needs to show movement with the rail trail but also a logical plan, which is what Alta will provide. There are many grants and state funding for these types of projects right now. Whether by cross-country skis and snowmobile in winter or by foot and electric bikes in summer, the Lewis County Rail Trail will create opportunities for improved connectivity, mobility, recreation, and economic development throughout the year.

Legislator Hathway questioned what was meant by the 22 structures that were referenced, Kristie responded that they would be anything with water going beneath the rail. In response to Legislator Hathway's question of having an open mind on what the trail could be used for, Kristie pointed out the example of the two rail lines right in the Village of Lowville, explaining that one rail could be used for just biking and walking, while the other rail line could remain and be used for rail bikes. Kristie assured Legislator Hathway that her team would be walking or using ATV's to cover all the rail lines so they can have first hand knowledge of what the conditions are. There are drones that can be used but it is better to have that firsthand knowledge.

In response to Legislator Hathway, the current project that Kristie is working on is the Sullivan County Rail Trail and her team is working on the Atlanta Belt Line.

Legislator Hathway questioned what the timeline would be, Kristie responded that the RFP called for one year, which is aggressive. The public engagement piece is vital, especially with the farming community which would likely have more time to attend meetings in the winter. Legislator Gilbert questioned the success in the past with grant writing, Kristie responded that they have a designated team for grant writing and to date they have secured over 845 million dollars. It is important to know the ins and outs of these types of grants because they are very competitive.

There was further discussion on making sure public safety is a high priority, making sure EMS and Ambulance can have access in case of an emergency, and graffiti tagging. The current package doesn't include grant writing built it does include breaking the rail trail down to very manageable pieces for development. Each Rail Trail has its own identity, but each time is like a new experience. There should be public engagement about once a month, but in the beginning, there could be more frequent meetings.

The following dockets were reviewed:

1. Authorizing five-year agreement between County of Lewis and the Unified Court System for court cleaning and minor repairs services at a cost of \$114,639.00 for the first year, April 1, 2023 through March 31, 2024.
AYE 5 NAY 0
2. Authorizing a change order to the agreement with Bette & Cring for the DSS Building Renovation under the Facilities Improvement Projects in the amount of \$22,958.00 for changing door handles to panic bars and adding a handicapped accessible door opener.
AYE 5 NAY 0
3. Authorizing extension of KT Construction & Consulting Co., Inc. agreement on a monthly basis commencing December 1, 2023 until the County determines final close out of their services, at a monthly compensation rate of \$21,305.00 and authorizing lump sum payment for past and future additional professional services in the amount of \$14,025.00.
AYE 5 NAY 0
4. Pursuant to Local Law No. 2-2007 finding and determining that an unsafe structure shall be demolished and removed and to set hearing for final order. Property located at 6314 East Main Street, in the Village of Turin, owned by Ignacio Ahumada.
AYE 5 NAY 0
5. Authorizing Lewis County Fire Coordinator to form a county-wide Fire Police Task Force from trained volunteers in the county to perform the duties to secure and protect emergency responders, firefighters, and the general public around emergency scenes and fireground operations, including but not limited to temporary restriction of road use, re-routing of traffic, and general guidance and safety.
AYE 5 NAY 0

6. Appropriating funds in the amount of \$222,600.00 to the County Road accounts for additional revenue from NYS CHIPs program.
AYE 5 NAY 0

7. Authorizing agreement between County of Lewis obo Lewis County Highway Department and Barton & Loguidice for design and bidding professional services and to send out an RFP for the 2024 culvert replacement project on Pine Grove Road for \$35,800.00.
AYE 5 NAY 0

8. Authorizing supplemental agreement no. 1 between Lewis County Highway Department and Barton & Loguidice for CR21 over Gulf Stream to provide additional engineering services for the Design and Construction Phases regarding the bridge replacement project at an additional amount not to exceed \$240,000.00.
AYE 5 NAY 0

9. Authorizing supplemental agreement no. 2 to the contract between the NYS Department of Transportation and Lewis County for the Transportation Federal-aid Bridge Replacement project known as CR 21 over Gulf Stream for the Final Design Phase funding of the project.
AYE 5 NAY 0

10. Awarding bid and authorizing an agreement between the County of Lewis and Alta Planning + Design, Inc. for professional design, consultation, and engineering services in completing a Rail Trail Master Plan in accordance with the specifications and requirements set forth in the RFP and all tasks and scope of services with a final version to be completed within twelve months from commencement at cost not to exceed \$579,560.00.
AYE 5 NAY 0

11. Amending Compensation with reference to the Sheriff's Office by creating one (1) Dispatch-Corrections Officer Working Supervisor that is permanent full-time at Grade 20 with a salary range of \$23.31 to \$25.56 due to the impending retirement of the current 911 Operations Coordinator.
AYE 5 NAY 0

Legislator Gilbert stated that there is an executive session for this committee, but it will be held until the end of Finance & Rules.

Legislator Moroughan reported that the Pine Grove hadn't been sealed but it was swept which has made a difference and she was thankful for that.

Highway Superintendent Tim Hunt reported that due to the flooding from all the rain, the Bailey Road Bridge had the road beyond the bridge completely washed out and due to the weight limit on the bridge itself, how to get the stone across is becoming an issue. There could possibly be FEMA funding available to repair the bridge. Eatonville Road needs repairs and his crew has been out inspecting all

bridges that might have been affected. So far there have been two bridges that show scour damage.

There being no other business to come before the committee, Legislator Hathway moved to adjourn at 1:46 p.m., seconded by Legislator Chartrand, and carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Cassandra Moser, Clerk of the Board