

BENTON COUNTY DITCH AUTHORITY
Tuesday, July 16, 2019
Benton County Board Room

The Benton County Ditch Authority met in special session on July 16, 2019 in the Benton County Board Room in Foley, MN with Board members Ed Popp, Jake Bauerly, Warren Peschl, Spencer Buerkle and Steve Heinen present. Also present was Chris Byrd, County Engineer; Monty Headley, County Administrator; and Vicki Feuling, Administrative Assistant.

Call to order by Chair Jake Bauerly was at 11:21 AM.

Heinen/Peschl unanimous to approve the agenda as written.

Heinen/Peschl unanimous to approve the minutes of May 21, 2019 as written.

Chris Byrd, County Engineer, presented a proposal from Houston Engineering, Inc. of Maple Grove to provide engineering services on County Ditch 6. He stated that discussions included determining what the original as-built construction was and providing direction on how to move forward (Ditch 6 has the documented issue, as it appears today, of deviating from the original plans). Byrd stated that the total cost of the proposal is \$39,500; the proposal includes four different phases—1) field survey of the way the ditch looks today, 2) plan development, 3) reviewing records of when the ditch was originally established and re-creating what the intent was—determining the original benefitted landowners and the original value of the benefit—also recommending whether a redetermination of benefits is needed; and 4) develop a repair report with preliminary construction plans. Bauerly inquired if an improvement could be recommendation if warranted. Byrd confirmed that a recommendation for moving forward would result from task three or task four. Peschl inquired if this ditch was “tampered with” originally. Byrd stated that, in the 1980’s, it was brought to the County Attorney’s attention that some landowners were straightening and realigning the ditch; no action was taken at that time. Byrd pointed out that we currently have a repair petition for County Ditch 6.

Referencing the proposal from Houston Engineering, Inc., Byrd noted that they have the expertise to perform the benefit versus cost test. He asked “...do we clean out up to the part that it starts deviating from the original alignment knowing that everybody from that point upstream is still going to be assessed...we do have some landowners upstream that are concerned with the current state of the ditch...do we skip a part...” Byrd clarified that County Ditch 6 is located between Silver Corners and Gilman; the proposal cost would be assessed against the benefitted landowners—there is no county ditch fund for Ditch 6. He explained that the field survey and re-establishment of drainage records is a public process; meeting with landowners would be included in the process.

Bauerly asked if there are any cost synergies to doing more than one ditch at a time. Byrd asked if the Board desired to expand the scope to other ditches; the next step would be to get into a professional services agreement with Houston Engineering, Inc. Peschl commented “...do we wait until somebody requests a cleanout or is it the county’s obligation every five years to do it...” Byrd confirmed that the county should be inspecting the ditches and repairing them as necessary without waiting for people to ask us to do it. Bauerly stated “...I’d like to see us repair two ditches a year...” Noting the proximity of County Ditch 7 to County Ditch 6, Popp suggested looking at Ditch 7 “to see what the issues are”. Peschl noted that County Ditch 7 was recently repaired. Byrd commented “...we have about 13 ditches...we just did a re-establishment on County Ditch 13 and County Ditch 15...”

Board consensus to move forward with County Ditch 6, Byrd to bring back a contract with Houston Engineering, Inc. for Board consideration. He will also inquire of any cost savings to expand the scope to additional ditches.

Heinen/Peschl unanimous to adjourn at 11:34 AM.

A. Jake Bauerly, Chair
Benton County Ditch Authority

ATTEST:

Montgomery Headley
Benton County Administrator