

US Route 501 Regional Coalition

January 11, 2006

The regular meeting of the US Route 501 Regional Coalition was held at the Community & Economic Development Conference Room, County Office Building, Rustburg, Virginia on January 11, 2006.

Those Present:

Supervisor J.D. Puckett, Campbell County
Bob White, Regional Commission
Paul Harvey, Campbell County
Mike Davidson, Campbell County
Sue Montgomery, Bedford County
Ron Lovelace, Bedford County, Chair
Don Austin, Virginia Department of Transportation
R.E. Abbott, Citizen Representative
Gerry Harter, City of Lynchburg
Bob Sutton, VDOT
Brad Marshall, Georgia Pacific (Big Island)

Also Present:

Jamie Banton, Campbell County, Administrative Assistant

Chairman Ron Lovelace called the meeting to order at 2:01 pm. At his request, Mr. Davidson gave the invocation.

The September 28, 2005 meeting minutes were presented for review. On a motion by Ms. Montgomery, seconded by Supervisor Puckett and duly adopted by unanimous vote, the September 28, 2005 meeting minutes were approved as presented.

Financial Report

Mr. Davidson provided the Coalition with a current financial report. A total of \$23,748.64 remains in the Coalition account.

Old Business

// Mr. Austin updated the Coalition on the US 501/Route 917 intersection in Naruna. Mr. Austin stated that he was trying to have the funds designated for the bypass project transferred to this project. The Route 917 intersection project will move forward as funding is approved.

// Next, Mr. Davidson stated that the last 501 Coalition newsletter was released in December 2005. The 501 newsletter was originally released twice per year, but funding constants (each newsletter costs approximately \$6,000) reduced the frequency. Mr. Davidson stated that he had extra copies of the newsletter for anyone interested. The Coalition discussed various ways to increase the circulation of the newsletters.

New Business

// Chairman Lovelace stated that it was time to review and updated Coalition's Top Ten priorities. As the Brookneal Bypass project is no longer viable for lack of

funding, a current list of priorities is needed. The Coalition discussed the priorities adopted in April 2004, and Mr. Davidson noted that the first project listed is not necessarily the top priority.

Supervisor Puckett asked Mr. Austin about the possibility of using the Brookneal Bypass funds to create more passing zones. Mr. Austin stated that VDOT was looking into that possibility. General discussion of priorities by the Coalition followed.

Chairman Lovelace stated that each locality should develop three projects to be submitted to VDOT to determine which are justifiable and would be accepted for funding. If the localities can submit their projects within the next 30-60 days, VDOT can review and provide general cost parameters for each prior to the next Coalition meeting on April 12, 2006.

// Next, Bob White (Region 2000 Local Government Council) stated that the Local Government Council can change the maps on the Coalition website that list the Top Ten Priorities.

Mr. White also stated that Governor-elect Kaine held a transportation meeting on January 2, 2006. At the meeting, the work of the 501 Coalition was discussed, and the Governor was made aware of the need for funding.

// Next, Mr. Austin stated that there was nothing new in Governor Warner's proposed transportation budget. Mr. Austin also advised that there was also nothing new on the VDOT front.

// Mr. Marshall (Georgia Pacific) advised the Coalition that the 65-foot overall length restriction on US 501 near the Big Island plant Georgia Pacific plant was a key priority for their operations. Mr. Marshall stated that there are many other businesses with the same issue. Mr. Austin explained that the STAA Act designated certain routes with vehicle length restrictions. Portions of US 501 fall under this Act. Mr. Marshall stated that most of the national carriers now use 53-foot trailers - taking the overall vehicle length over the maximum allowed. Because the longer trucks are not allowed on parts of US 501, and the CSX rail situation is dire, large truck traffic on Route 122 has and will continue to increase. Mr. Sutton (VDOT) stated that a project to straighten the curves and remove the restrictions on US 501 may be a project to investigate.

// Mr. Davidson presented the Coalition with a proposed FY2007 Budget. The budget includes the cost of producing and distributing one newsletter (\$10,500), and continued website maintenance costs (\$4,500). The dues structure will remain unchanged.

On a motion by Mr. Davidson, and seconded by Ms. Montgomery and duly adopted by unanimous vote, the US 501 Regional Coalition approved the FY2007 Budget as presented.

// The US Route 501 Regional Coalition adjourned at 3:11 pm. The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 26, 2006, 2:00 pm, in the Campbell County CED Conference Room, Rustburg, Virginia.