

Highway shop update given

By Amy Smith, Union staff writer | Posted: Thursday, September 4, 2014 9:31 am

JEFFERSON — Several Jefferson County Supervisors were updated on the recent progress of the Jefferson County Highway facility during an Infrastructure Committee meeting Wednesday.

The \$15.37 million facility, for which a ground-breaking ceremony was held Aug. 11, has begun to take shape after near completion of the precast walls in the past month.

Located at 1425 Wisconsin Drive (County Highway W) on the west side of the City of Jefferson, the site of the former Countryside Home, the highway shop will be home to the Highway Department's entire fleet of 60-plus vehicles.

Crews also have finished laying the foundation footings, and have completed about half of the bar joists and metal deck for the roof. A roofer is expected to arrive next month, enclosing the facility before the winter months, according to the owner representative for the project, Chris Raykowski of The Sigma Group engineering consulting firm in Milwaukee.

Door frames and the structural frame for the cold storage unit also are expected to be under way later in the month, as well as construction of the fueling station.

With the significant progress development, the county also saw several budget deductions totaling about \$35,000 to bring its contingency to \$213,839. One money-saving deduction came for making use of the stone that was demolished to make way for the new facility.

The county also saw a deduction in tax savings for energy efficient insulation. An allowance of \$50,000 also was set aside for the concrete floor finishings, which came in at a lower cost.

The floors will be finished with an ashford finish and an armored plate that gives the floor more structural resistance to possible damage.

"A month into the project we are stabilizing our contingency," Raykowski said. "Each month now you are going to see a lot of progress."

The building, approved for a budget not to exceed \$15 million, will utilize approximately 11 acres of the 40-acre plot, and necessitated demolition of all of the existing buildings of the county's former nursing home.

Due to the delays, the project now is set to be completed by around March 2015.

Also Wednesday, the committee received updates on several topics that are expected to appear on the county board's upcoming meeting agenda, including updating Human Services to an electronic health record system.

An electronic health record system would allow Human Services to keep an up to date digital version of a patient's records, which would be available instantly to all authorized users. The system would help keep all documentation in place that Medicaid auditors will look for and will help Human Services keep up to date with the

constant changes in healthcare regulation.

Although the system does not come cheap, with a pricetag of about \$500,000, County Administrator Benjamin Wehmeier noted that the system could save the county money in the long run in programming costs. The half-million-dollar cost already is accounted for in the Human Services budget and drew approval from all committee members.

“It is just something we have to go forward with to keep up with the times,” Chairmen Richard Jones said.

“Without it, Human Services will fall behind,” Wehmeier added.

Meanwhile, in other business, the committee discussed a future capital project for the 2015 budget. Wehmeier proposed the county undergo a facilities assessment, which would assess the needs in each of the county’s 10 facilities.

Sigma Group, the project engineer for the new highway shop facility, proposed its services at a price of \$35,000 for a full assessment of the county’s 10 facilities not including the fairgrounds. Raykowski explained the first step in the facility audit is an assessment, followed by a full report noting the needs of each building. The audit takes approximately two months to complete. Supervisor Greg David questioned whether the assessment would address such issues as energy efficiency.

The assessment, Raykowski explained, is used to identify the areas, such as a lack of energy efficiency, to be explored further. He said the audit would help the county identify areas where it might be important to invest in additional studies.

“It separates the wants and the needs,” Supervisor John Kannard noted. The committee unanimously agreed to add the assessment to the 2015 budget.

Also Wednesday, committee members:

- Recommended the name of Countryside Way for the new access road for the county highway facility. Because the road falls within the City of Jefferson’s jurisdiction, the county’s recommendation will be taken to the city which will assign the task to a committee for approval.
- Received an update on an application for a brownfield grant through the Environmental Protection Agency, which would help fund the identification of brownfields throughout Jefferson County.
- Received an update on the Climate Quest Challenge. A presentation for the challenge will be held Sept. 19 where five to seven of the remaining 23 teams will move on.

Those that move on will receive minimal funding to begin initial work on their projects.