

Building bonds OKd for county

By Ryan Whisner Union regional editor | Posted: Wednesday, April 22, 2015 9:45 am

JEFFERSON — Funding for the final phase of construction of the new Jefferson County Highway Department facilities was authorized Tuesday by the Jefferson County Board of Supervisors.

The board approved issuing \$3,885,000 in general obligation county building bonds to fund the final pieces of the Highway Department project.

A new highway shop was built on County Highway W in Jefferson. The final stages of the project is the construction of two new satellite Highway Department facilities in Lake Mills and Concord.

Combined, the total projects cost more than \$17 million.

The two satellite shops will be built on county-owned land in Lake Mills at the interchange of Interstate 94 and State Highway 89, and the site of an existing satellite shop in Concord at the interchange of I-94 and County Highway F.

Cost for the two structures calls for two 12,500-square-foot buildings at a cost of \$500,000, which is \$250,000 less than the initial price. The building price tags include the base cost, \$45,000 for the construction of a unisex restroom, and \$15,000 for a private well and septic.

On Tuesday, the board approved issuance of the final bonding, totaling \$3.86 million.

The debt accrued from the project will result in a tax rate of \$0.188 per \$1,000 equalized value for 2016, or less than a penny under 2015's rate of \$.195.

Also Tuesday, the board authorized the Parks Department to apply for state Department of Natural Resources grant funds through the Stewardship Program and Recreational Trail Act Program to assist in funding construction of a recreation trail between the cities of Oconomowoc and Watertown.

The proposed paved trail, slated to be 10.96 miles long, is set to be located along the inter-urban rail line which at one time connected Watertown to Milwaukee.

At its February meeting, the board approved a 15-year licensing agreement with We Energies for lease on the corridor after six years of negotiations.

The project carries an estimated price tag of \$1.4 million.

Funds for development of the trail are proposed to be sought through available state grants and contributions.

In 2014, the county failed in acquiring the \$700,000 DNR Stewardship grant after the City of Platteville pledged \$200,000 toward its own project.

The hope is that the county contributing \$81,520 toward the project will give it the edge in 2015. As presented Tuesday, the Stewardship Grant would fund 50 percent of the construction or \$700,000. The Recreational Trails Act Grant is expected to fund \$200,000. The county is contributing \$81,520 from the Carol Liddle fund. The

balance of \$418,480 actively is being raised through fundraisers and contributions. Upon completion, the county will be responsible for maintenance of the trail at a cost of approximately \$600 to \$900 per mill per year over the 10.96 miles of trail that would be added.

The board approved applying for the grant with a vote of 23-4 in favor. In addition, the board approved having the Parks Department apply for a DNR Stewardship Program for a grant to fund development of a 6.13-acre parcel adjacent to the Rock River in the Town of Watertown. Formerly owned by Watertown Outboarders, Inc., the intention is the county to work in cooperation with the DNR to manage the property as a river-based conservation area. A primary purpose is to provide non-motorized and motorized access to the Rock River. The site will be developed and maintained to accommodate low-intensity use opportunities. The board approved the grant application for the Watertown Outboarders property with a 25-2 vote.

In other business the board:

- Established board rules regarding procedures for elections of officers for all county governing bodies. In addition, the amended board rules require that all county meetings allow public comment. The exception, which primarily applies to the Zoning Committee, applies to meetings convened for the purpose of deciding an issue on which the public previously had the opportunity to comment.
- Authorized the Jefferson County Highway Department to purchase pre-mixed asphaltic concrete from Wolf Paving, Payne & Dolan Inc. and Rock Road Company in 2015.

In addition the board approved a bid from Henry G. Meigs Inc. of Portage as a primary vendor and Flint Hills Resources-Pearson Bros. for asphalt emulsion products to be used in all sealcoat operations.

Also, seasonal bids for various vendors were authorized for pulverizing and milling in 2015.

- Approved the asphalt bids for the 2015 Local Road Improvement Program projects for Jefferson County be award to Wolf Paving. Projects include County Highway A, from Lake Mills to Highway N, and County Highway J from County Highway G to Jefferson.
- Authorized a \$443,250 contract with Frank Brothers, Inc. for limestone crushing in 2015.