



Sammy Rich, *City Manager*
Patrick Eidson, *Assistant City Manager*
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SERVICES
W. Kirk Milam, P.E., *Manager*
Public Works Division
Chris Jenkins, *Public Works Director*
Water and Sewer Division
Mike Hackett, *Director*
Engineering Services Department
Aaron Carroll, R.L.S., P.E., *Director*
Rome Transit Department
Kathy Shealy, *Director*

PUBLIC WORKS AND TRANSIT COMMITTEE
AND
TRAFFIC COMMISSION

April 13, 2017 10:00 a.m.
Sam King Room – 601 Broad Street

PRESENT: Commissioner Sundai Stevenson, Chairwoman
Commissioner Milton Slack
Commissioner Sue Lee
Patrick Eidson, Assistant City Manager
Mr. Kirk Milam, P.E., Public Services Manager
Mr. Chris Jenkins, Public Works Director
Ms. Denise Downer-McKinney, Rome Police Department Chief
Major Rodney Bailey, Rome Police Department
Ms. Kathy Shealy, Director, Transit Department
Ms. Sherry Shore, Finance Director
Mr. Aaron Carroll, Engineering Services Director

GUESTS: Mr. Michael E. Nash, GDOT Railroad Crossing Program Manager
Mr. Troy Brock, Fire Department Chief
Mr. Curt Pierson, Fire Department Deputy Chief
Dr. Toby Morgan, 202 Pine Valley Rd. SW, Rome

CALL TO ORDER

Commissioner Stevenson called the meeting to order.

REVIEW OF THE MINUTES

The minutes of the March meeting were approved by common consent.

NEW BUSINESS

Request for No Parking on Match Point Way

Mr. Milam presented a request from Tourism Director, Lisa Smith, and Tennis Center Director, Tom Daglis, for a 'No Parking' zone on Match Point Way. Because the parking is insufficient at the Center's complex, and although they have established overflow parking on nearby Berry property the Rome Tennis Center at Berry College has experienced vehicles parking on both sides of Match Point Way during tournament play restricting traffic flow and potentially obstructing emergency vehicles. Mr. Milam recommended a 'No Parking' zone be established on Match Point Way using signage alone and omit the optional yellow curbing in this instance.

Commissioner Slack moved to approve the request. Commissioner Lee seconded. The motion carried.

Fuel Station Upgrades

Mr. Jenkins reported on the fuel station upgrades at the Public Works complex. He noted that lower pressure at the pumps prompted us to investigate. We determined the pumps were not the likely source of the problem so we decided to dig down to the fuel supply lines to check for leakage between the pumps and the tanks. The original facility piping was determined to be the source of the problem. After the Street Department exposed the pipes a contractor specializing in testing fuel tank systems was hired to lay the new pipe. We vacuumed out the old lines, sealed them, and then replaced them with fiberglass pipe. Two quotes were received on the replacement pipe at \$30,000 and \$6,000. We accepted the \$6,000 quote and did as much of the work in house as possible. He noted this project was a high priority because the pumps serve not only the Public Works vehicles but also the Police Department, and we were down to only one working pump.

Broad Street Tree Pits

Mr. Jenkins reported we have had several issues over the years about how we would handle the tree pits on Broad Street. Originally we had grates over the pits which in some instances developed into potential trip hazards so we removed grates in those locations and tried to establish planting areas around the trees. In narrow areas like the front of Mellow Mushroom we had too much foot traffic

over the pits for plants to thrive so we reached out to a company in Ranger Georgia that makes a rubberized material that is mixed with glue to create a solid smooth surface. He noted that we have been assured that water does pass through the material so the tree will still get plenty of water. We have applied the material to one tree pit as a test and we have seen it soak up rain water very well. He presented photos of the tree pit before and after application of the material. Mr. Jenkins added the vendor priced the installations between \$500 to \$600 per tree for the material and labor, but has agreed to sell the City the product at a cost of \$150 per tree so we can apply it ourselves.

Additional 2017 LMIG Funding Application

Mr. Jenkins reported that after the first of the year, GDOT determines what funds will be available for an Off System Safety grant. Last year we used this grant for the Redmond Medical Center/Harbin Clinic cross walk on Redmond Rd. This is a 70/30 Grant where we must contribute 30% of the cost, which has been contributed in value of labor.

The application must be submitted by April 28th and we will use the funds for traffic cabinets and guardrails for a total project cost of between \$30,000 and \$50,000.

Glenn Milner/2nd Avenue RR Crossing

Mr. Milam reported that Dr. Toby Morgan wrote a letter to the Railroad in January reporting that he encountered a train along the 2nd Avenue track at Glenn Milner Blvd. when the traffic signal for 2nd Avenue was green. In response to his letter, the railroad got together with GDOT and inspected the crossing, which is a spur track used by a train that services Southeastern Mills. They did a complete inspection of the entire spur line in the area while they were reviewing safety issues.

Mr. Milam introduced Mr. Michael E. Nash, who is the DOT Railroad Crossing Program Manager and invited him to address the Traffic Commission. Mr. Nash said has contacted Norfolk Southern requesting overhead warning devices at the 2nd Avenue crossing at Glenn Milner, which will require the purchase of some right-of-way at the pharmacy. He noted there is no warning when a train is coming, and the first measure is to install a pre-emption function for the traffic signal that will put all traffic lights into red when a train is approaching. It will take some time to order the needed equipment.

He said there isn't much else that can be done at that intersection. Commissioner Stevenson asked how long it will take to complete it. Mr. Nash said it shouldn't take more than 30 days to complete the work but it is dependent upon the Railroad's schedule.

He added that four other crossings on Glenn Milner Blvd were inspected while reviewing the 2nd Avenue crossing. Upon initial inspection, GDOT inspectors feel the crossing closest to 2nd Avenue at Plaza Place should be closed. The crossings at East 3rd, 4th and 5th Avenues also had no advance warning so his team felt these would also be good candidates for closure since there is no way to bring these crossings up to standard.

Mr. Milam asked what standard is to be used in this situation. Mr. Nash replied the MUTCD along with the AASHTO Guide on hump crossings more than 3" higher than street. Mr. Milam asked him to explain Section 130. Mr. Nash replied Section 130 is a federally funded program where the Federal Highway Department gives state DOT's about \$9 million each year to improve safety or bring crossings up to standard across the country. Part of that money is also used to give local governments a cash incentive of up to \$7500 towards closing a crossing. He noted there hasn't been a complete study in Rome yet but a consulting firm they have hired has begun work on these crossings.

Mr. Nash noted there is a Georgia law that gives the Railroad a right to close a crossing, but they must first petition the City to get the crossing closed. They should come to the local government with their own cash incentive. If the City denies the petition, they can appeal to GDOT to evaluate the crossing and make a final ruling. If GDOT finds the crossing unsafe based on certain criteria, the crossing will be closed.

Mr. Milam asked Mr. Nash for his perception of what the Railroad will feel about these closings on Glenn Milner. Mr. Nash noted the Railroad did not initiate the closure request in this case and only came up and looked at the 2nd Avenue crossing. He has approached them to see if they would give the incentive to the City for the closings and they agreed. He added that GDOT can only offer an incentive if Norfolk Southern also offers one. Mr. Nash said Norfolk Southern indicated a willingness to offer approximately \$30,000 and GDOT would match that for the four crossings on Glenn Milner.

Dr. Morgan asked if they could just put a warning sign in advance of the 2nd Avenue crossing closer to the intersection which would be much cheaper than the overhead warning flashers. Mr. Nash replied the MUTCD guidelines specify a minimum distance for an advance warning sign and there is already one in place. The minimum distance requirement can't be violated. He added in a situation where there are multiple lanes, overhead signs which can be easily seen by motorists are preferred. Mr. Milam noted that GDOT will take as many measures as they can to make a crossing as safe as possible.

Fire Chief Troy Brock added that because traffic backs up on Glenn Milner Blvd., the Fire Department depends on the Plaza Place crossing as the quickest route to that side of town. The 6th Avenue crossing is also highly used. According to Chief Brock there is much more vehicle traffic than trains and the train that does use this track isn't an 'A' line and maybe isn't even a 'C' line. Commissioner Lee added that many people use these crossings to get to various places downtown and the train is clearly visible on Glenn Milner. Police Chief Denise Downer McKinney and Major Rodney Bailey both noted there is no accident history on those crossings. Major Bailey added there is usually only one engine with a box car and there is sometimes a flagman when a train does come. Closing the crossings will only push traffic into the residential areas. Mr. Nash stated the criteria for closings are based on the potential for danger and not on any accident history or traffic volumes.

Commissioner Lee asked who makes the final decision. Mr. Nash replied that GDOT will make the final decision. After performing a thorough investigation of the crossings, he will reach out to the City to report GDOT findings and recommendations. This report will also be forwarded to the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA). If the Railroad doesn't petition to have the crossings closed, and the FRA doesn't order GDOT to close the crossings, Mr. Nash indicated that the City should expect any future liability for accidents to fall on the City. Mr. Jenkins asked if the City would forfeit the incentive funds if we chose not to close a crossing and were overruled by GDOT. Mr. Nash replied in the affirmative. He added that having pulled the FRA into the problem resolution process before GDOT and the Railroad were able to address the initial complaint may affect the outcome.

Mr. Milam asked if the City could be copied on the report he submits to the FRA so we have an opportunity to respond to noted deficiencies. Mr. Nash agreed.

POLICE REPORTS

March Traffic Accident /DUI Report

Major Bailey presented the March Accident/DUI report. He noted that accidents were up from this time last year and private lot accidents were about the same. Injuries were down and there was one fatality year-to-date. DUI arrests were up significantly while DUI arrests under 21 remains the same. DUI related accidents and traffic cases are both up by almost 1000 which is largely due to increased staff. Following Too Close remains the number one cause of accidents.

TRANSIT OPERATIONS

Financial Report

Ms. Shore presented the February financial statements. She noted we are right in line with budget. We still have no operating reimbursements because we don't have our operating agreement executed yet. Expenses are almost exactly where we were this time last year. The cash balance is \$1.47 million.

Section 5307 Capital

Ms. Shealy noted that this year she has had to submit the FY 2018 grant application very early. The total of the capital request was \$1.825 million for buses, preventive maintenance, training and education, and safety equipment. She noted that GDOT has just sent a notification that there will be a funding cut reducing the \$1.825 million to \$1.455 million at 80/10/10. The remainder of the request will funnel into a Section 5339 grant which will be 80% Federal and 20% local. That grant should be about \$500,000 with our loss of the State share making Rome's cost share between \$40,000 and \$50,000.

She noted we have not received our FY 2017 funds yet because of a glitch when GDOT converted from paper applications to electronic filing in mid-year 2016. If the Commissioner will not sign off on all the paper copies we will have to refile electronically. She added the funding has been verbally approved and expects it will be awarded despite the delay.

MONTHLY REPORTS

Departmental Reports

The monthly reports were distributed for review.

ADJOURN

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Margaret Hollingsworth

Margaret W. Hollingsworth, Secretary