



New Courthouse News from Bob Schlaeger:

The weather is quite cold but McHan is setting red iron for the first floor anyway. On Wednesday, January 19, 2005, McHan started decking over the basement with metal flooring. A load of red iron for the first floor is scheduled to arrive on January 24th. Bob says when McHan starts setting that red iron, everyone will really be able to see the progress. Barring anything unforeseen and the weather holding, by the end of February, the building iron should be up and the roof trusses on. Waterproofing is being completed to the top of the basement wall, so McHan can finish the backfill. If you are watching

McHan's welder, he is welding beams to weld plates on the wall and welding angle iron on the side of the walls so the decking can be put up. Unfortunately, Bob reports the project is about 3 to 4 weeks behind now.

Planning & Zoning: The Comprehensive Development Plan for Dickinson County is a plan that reviews the past, present, and future direction of the county. It is a tool in assisting decision making for changes and development in Iowa Counties. The Plan has been used and tested by Counties in Iowa and those decisions following the County Plan has been upheld by Iowa Courts. Dickinson County's present plan was adopted in December of 1993 and has become outdated. The Planning and Zoning Commission is charged with the responsibility of developing the plan for the County and has contracted Northwest Iowa Planning and Development to assist in the rewrite. There have been public meetings over the past months and more are planned in the future. The county boards need as much public input as possible to achieve a quality plan. Sometime middle to late summer, NWIP is expecting to have a completed document for approval by the P&Z and then final approval by the Board of Supervisors.

Tech hiring Committee: The Tech hiring Committee met Friday, January 21, 2005. The committee revised the current job description, set up a schedule for interviewing and hiring, and determined that the position should be full time. The committee will present their proposal to the Supervisors for a decision on January 25th.

New Phone system committee: The phone committee has met 4 times since it was formed in late December, 2004. They have reviewed and revised the RFP to the point of their expertise. Several questionnaires are being circulated to the County and State Departments for their input. The committee will use these questionnaires to determine desired phone functions, number of lines, and number and type of telephones. The committee has discussed the benefits of a Voice over IP system and is recommending that type of system. They are also studying the benefits and cost savings of T1 lines for voice. The RFP document will reflect their findings. More expertise has been added to the committee through the addition of Travis Mier. He will help finish up the details of the RFP over the last week in January and it will then be presented to the Supervisors for their input and approval.

New Furniture for the Courthouse: Almost a year ago, the first new furniture report for the new Courthouse was presented to the Board of Supervisors. The estimated cost was \$917,346.25. As the Courthouse construction budget progressed through the months last year, a furniture budget of \$300,000 was set in the 95% of Construction Budget. After the Construction Bid was awarded to McHan, the new furniture budget was raised to \$400,000. On January 18th, 2005, RDG again met with the Board of Supervisors to present a revised furniture costing report for the new courthouse. Prior to this meeting, RDG had gone through most of the Departments identifying furniture that could be used, reused in another area, or refurbish. The Cost report presented by RDG on Tuesday, January 18th, was \$612,438.75. RDG is now scheduled to return on February 1st and 2nd to meet with each department separately to discuss their plans and identify additional reductions in needed furniture. The State and County Departments will be asked to identify areas built for growth that do not need furniture at the time they move into the new courthouse. They will also be asked to reduce their expense any other way they can identify. The goal is to get the furniture budget down to approximately \$400,000 or a reduction of such that the Supervisors will approve the expense.

Document Retention and Transition Committee: The Supervisors approved a \$2,000 expense for the purchase of tractor-trailers. At that time the thought was that the trailers would be used for storage of documents during the construction of Phase I and Phase II of the new Courthouse. Since then there has been discussion but no decision to proceed with that plan. In the meantime, after discussion with Cathy Neumann of RDG on January 21st, it was decided to get a cost quote for RDG services in planning for the transition. RDG has since given the Transition Committee a proposal of \$1595.50 for their assistance with the Department transition plan. If the proposal is accepted, Cathy Neumann of RDG will work on the transition plans with the Committee and the Departments on February 2nd.

Supervisor's Activities:

Union negotiations: The Supervisors and the Engineer have been in negotiations with the Secondary Roads Department's union. About midnight on January 13th, a tentative agreement was reached. The union members of Secondary Roads ratified the proposal on January 20, 2005. Approval or disapproval of the agreement is now on the Supervisors' agenda on Tuesday, January 25th. At 10:00 a.m. also on January 25th, the Supervisors, the Sheriff, the Sheriff's union, and the mediator continued the negotiations with the ASFCME union. This will be the first fact to face negotiations on the 05/06 contract.

Budget: In addition to the union negotiations, the Supervisors' will begin the budgeting process. With the move to purchase the Ferguson Manufacturing property, there is discussion of moving a portion or all of the \$860,000 of reserved funds for the Courthouse back into the General Fund and pay for the property with those funds. Those funds were previously budgeted for things like the new phone system, technology for the new Courthouse and the new furniture. The Supervisors will be working out the budgeting for these things and reviewing Departmental budgets in the upcoming weeks.