

**PUBLIC HEARING  
PERRY COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
AUGUST 2, 2021**

The Perry County Commissioners held a public hearing at 8:00 a.m. as was advertised. In attendance were President Tom Hauser and Randy Kleaving. A motion was made to continue the meeting at 6:00 p.m. before the Commissioners meeting.

The Perry County Commissioners continued the public hearing at 6:00 p.m. All three Commissioners were in attendance: President Tom Hauser, Randy Kleaving and Gregg Jarboe. Attorney Chris Goffinet was also in attendance.

Attorney Chris Goffinet made the statement that the public hearing was continued from this morning because the notice was published wrong and it was too late to readvertise. This public hearing is for a bond issuance for county short EDA Grant for the Port Authority for the purpose of providing funds to be used for the cost of construction of certain public infrastructure improvements including railroad bridge improvements, together with the incidental expenses in connection therewith and on account of the issuance of the bonds therefor, including the issuance of notes in anticipation of bonds and appropriating the proceeds thereof.

Alvin Evans with Perry County Development Corporation said they are replacing bridges over the Anderson River and also one near Chrisney, IN. He said this is a USDA bond for a loan that is a 20% match to the 80% provided by an EDA Grant. It is a 40-year loan with monthly payments of \$1,200.00 which is equivalent to about 3 railway cars that are running and delivered each month to the port. He said the annual maintenance on that bridge is increasing as time goes on. It has been \$15,000 to \$20,000 a year for the last several years and last year it was \$50,000.

Alvin commented that the steel structure that crosses the river was built in 1927 and one of the piers is right in the middle of the Anderson River which creates a lot of issues with driftwood and washing around the other two piers. The new bridge will span the entire river so it eliminates that issue. The design of the Anderson River bridge is such that it will be built next to the existing bridge and the substructure will be built through the existing bridge, so there will be a week to two-week closure of the bridge in order to jack it over onto the new substructure. It is better to do under a controlled closure or we could end up with something happen to it where it would collapse into the river, then it could be a three-week closure of the railroad if we find the money again. This means we couldn't cross the river going out or coming in. Most of the traffic comes in servicing the factories in Perry County and all the cars have to go back out and some are loaded. Alvin said this is the intent and we think the Port Authority is well positioned to make the payments over the years. This bond process is required by the USDA. It is a 2% loan for 40 years. Tom asked if it would then allow passengers. They are not allowing the excursion trains to cross the bridge now because we are not going to take that risk. Also, he said the standard amount for rail cars is 286,000 pounds and that is limited to 263,000 pounds, so, they are not hauling in cars as much as they could be which makes it more expensive for the customers in this situation. He said the rail industry is talking about going to 325,000 pounds and the bridge is being designed for 325,000 pounds and all the rest can do this amount. With the new bridge, it will be in good shape for the future.

Attorney Goffinet said he had a 45-page release that was drafted by the bond attorneys that contains the entire bond in it. He said it is payable over 40 years. This is a 6% short term bond loan. Once we get the EPA Grant and get all the construction finished and all, then this is called the bond anticipation note. It is a bond you issue in anticipation of the final debt. Once we issue the final bond then it will be at 2%. Alvin said USDA will not give you bits and pieces of money to a project like EDA does. You have to do the whole project, then they pay you the whole amount.

Since this is a public hearing, Chris asked if anyone has any questions from the public. Kelli Harding questioned who the loan was through. Chris said it is issued by the Commissioners and the Port Authority is paying the bond. Cindy Taylor spoke up saying then the County would be on the hook if the Port Authority cannot pay. Chris replied

yes. It would be the County share. Chris commented that the maximum rate is 6% but hope it to be less.

Gregg said think of it being the maximum amount but it could be less. He said if it comes back and is not right, we don't have to move forward.

Cindy Taylor asked if this bridge is in Perry County. Randy said it is at the county line but the rail on the bridge belongs to the Port Authority.

Gregg made the motion to approve the ordinance, seconded by Randy. Motion carried 3-0.

Gregg made the motion to close the public hearing. Randy seconded the motion. The public hearing ended at 6:15 p.m.

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Thomas J Hauser

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Randy Kleaving

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Gregg Jarboe

*Minutes prepared by: Pam Goffinet, Perry County Auditor*