

## **REPORT FROM THE ROAD AND BRIDGE COMMITTEE: 6/23/2023**

**Highway Dept gets a new Foreman and a new laborer. Committee submits a proposal in response to the proposal received from the Union on the Laborer's wages.**

At the SPECIAL MEETING of the Road and Bridge Committee on 6.23.2023, the Committee voted to authorize Wendy Gregory, the Highway Department's Acting Engineer, to hire a Foreman and a Laborer.

The Foreman position had 6 applicants. We were blessed to have strong candidates to interview. Tim Baumgarten has accepted the Foreman position. He plans to start work on 7.3.2023. The County will be greatly served by Tim's depth of experience and professionalism.

Tim is an experienced operator and excavator, having worked out of the Terre Haute operators union for 24 years on major civil and private projects across the State. Tim has worked for a township previously and has run his own trucking and excavating business for many years managing drivers, equipment, and materials to meet deadlines with quality and service. Tim is a team player and respects his chain of command. The County is truly blessed to have such a talented and experienced person enter the Foreman position at the Highway Department.

The Committee discussed the idea of creating an assistant foreman position. The foreman would invest in and train the assistant foreman and this individual would run the Maintenance staff when the Foreman was not available. There is a great deal of value in making this designation and making a plan to pour into the next generation to prepare them for the width and depth of the responsibilities of the position.

The Committee is of one voice on the assistant foreman being Jordan Camic. Jordan has been with the Department for 4.5 years and before that has a long history in construction. He has demonstrated a desire to serve the public through his many years of volunteer fire fighting and has demonstrated leadership as the Chief of the Shelby County Rescue Squad for the last 4 years. We are very thankful for Jordan Camic and Cody Miller, who for the last month have alternated every other week to serve as Foreman of the Department after the resignation of Stacy Prosser on 6.9.2023.

The Committee voted on a recommended proposal for the wages of the Laborers to send to County Leadership and the State's Attorney after the County received a wage proposal from AFSCME. The Committee has no binding authority or negotiating authority, but it wanted to add its voice to the discussion. The Committee believes strongly that the wages for the Laborers, especially the starting wages, have to be strengthened to bring into adjustment the value of a CDL operator. It would be a travesty for the Laborers if AFSCME tries to turn the Committee's targeted and narrow fix at the Highway Department into a broader ask for wages across the whole County. We speculate that this AFSCME approach would stall or kill any discussion and would result in a dead-on arrival proposal before the Full Board.

The Laborer position had 3 applicants. We were blessed to have strong candidates to interview. Kyle Williams has accepted the position. He plans to start work on or around 7.10.2023. The County will be greatly served by Kyle's experience with a CDL A license and a strong background in welding and mechanical work.

The Committee has ramped up its search for engineering technicians following Reed Best's resignation. His last day of work is 7.5.2023. Reed has taken a local job with the federal government via USDA and we are excited for him. The Committee has delegated duties to reach out to various colleges who train civil engineering techs. The Committee has studied the need at the department and would like to find two (2) engineering technicians.

Wendy Gregory started on 6.15.2023 following Jessica Stiger's resignation on 5.26.2023. Wendy is doing incredible work and we are blessed to have such a quality person manage that office and cover many aspects of the Engineer's administrative work. Instead of having a bookkeeper who is forced to work outside of the guardrails of their job description and outside of the contract everyday, we now have an Admin Assist position that allows her to work within the job description and within the requirements of the service, especially in the absence of an Engineer.

The Highway Department is turning the page with new leadership and it has an exciting future and is starting to look a lot more attractive for any Engineer candidate! Anyone who is absolutely convinced otherwise is uninformed or misinformed.

BUT we need an Engineer!

Please spread the word that the County has added a \$30k sign-on bonus and a \$15k retention bonus for the position of County Engineer.

Sincerely,

Matthew Kessler  
Chair of Road and Bridge Committee

Committee:  
Matt Kessler  
Tim Brown  
Clay Hardy  
Mitchell Shuff  
Brent Wallace