

DRAINAGE DISTRICT MEETING  
DISTRICT GRANT #5, MULTIPLE DISTRICTS  
DECEMBER 12, 2017

The Story County Drainage District Trustees met in Conference Room A in the Story County Administration Building to consider a request by Kent Rode to continue as Story County's Project Engineer for Drainage District Grant #5 and future district projects. Members present were Rick Sanders, chair, Martin Chitty, and Lauris Olson. Also present were County Engineer Darren Moon and Drainage Clerk Scott Wall and Kent Rode, Tyler Conley, and Matthew Ferrier of Bolton & Menk.

Sanders called the meeting to order at 2:30 p.m. The purpose of the meeting is to begin consideration of retaining I & S Group, Inc. (ISG) as Story County's Drainage District Project Engineer or switch to Bolton & Menk, Inc. for ongoing district projects.

Rode said ISG is closing their Algona, IA office where Conley and he were based. He was unwilling to relocate and approached Bolton & Menk who offered positions to Tyler, Rode, and a few other ISG staff and is in the process of opening an Algona office. Rode would like to be able to continue to work with Story County on drainage district projects.

Sanders asked if the county's relationship with Rode and Conley would change under Bolton & Menk from what it had been under ISG. Rode said he believed Bolton & Menk would retain the working relationship he has with the county and that their fee structure is similar to ISG's.

Sanders asked Ferrier if Bolton & Menk will give Rode and Conley the same level of support that ISG did.

Ferrier is with the Ames Bolton & Menk office which is the largest of their 5 locations. He said Rode will do the same work for Bolton & Menk as he did with ISG. Ferrier believes Bolton & Menk is better situated to serve Story County than ISG was. Most of their survey crews are based in Ames so if issues arise in a drainage district they have people right here who can respond without having to drive 1.5 to 2 hours to reach Story County.

Sanders said he is the only trustee who has dealt with a drainage engineer other than Rode. To him Rode is the face of ISG and he has been very satisfied with the services Rode has provided. Rode's interactions with landowners have been less acrimonious than with the previous engineer. That being said, Rode has been acting on behalf of ISG who has also requested that they be retained as the County's drainage engineering firm. Sanders wants the trustees to meet with representatives from ISG prior to making any decisions on who Story County will utilize for drainage district engineering services.

Olson said she remembers seeing a letter from Scott Renaud of Fox Engineering, the county's previous engineering firm asking why the trustees had changed from Fox to ISG. She feels that it is important to maintain continuity in projects that are in progress but wondered if, for future projects, the trustees should reconsider Fox Engineering. Like Sanders she has been satisfied with ISG's services as rendered by Rode and Conley.

Chitty echoed Sander's and Olson's comments regarding Rode. He knows many of the landowners in Grant #5 and they have been complimentary of their experience with Rode and other ISG personnel.

Moon said Fox Engineering has been difficult to work with in the past. Renaud has not had the same rapport with landowners as Rode has been able to establish. Boone and Story Counties just finished videotaping a tile in Joint District Boone-Story #4 where Fox oversaw a tile replacement project in 2009.

Moon requested construction drawings from Fox to resolve discrepancies found in the videotaping and Fox was unable to produce any documents. Drainage districts are not Fox Engineering's primary focus and, with ISG, it felt they were much more engaged with our projects.

Sanders said the trustees will need to meet with ISG representatives to hear their case for retaining their firm as soon as possible in light of a scheduled March meeting with Grant #5 landowners.

Rode said the drainage district work done by ISG is the property of Story County (Code of Iowa Section 468.17) but it will take some time to acquire the documents from ISG. The sooner the trustees can reach a decision the better with regards to the Grant #5 project in particular.

Chitty said Ferrier had alluded to having Ames staff nearby to assist with drainage district issues. Does this mean Story County will deal with Bolton & Menk's Ames staff instead of Rode and Conley?

Ferrier said while Ames staff can assist with work on-site Rode will still be the project engineer for drainage work with Story County. We will not see anything different from what we had with ISG.

Wall said he had requested information from Ethan Anderson in the Story County Attorney's Office regarding switching engineering firms. Ethan had replied that Code of Iowa Section 468.10.3 stipulates that the trustees may at any time terminate the contract with the engineer.

Chitty moved, seconded by Olson, to adjourn. MCU. Meeting adjourned at 2:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Scott T. Wall