

# MINUTES–CITY OF ASHTON

## SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL MEETING

**Tuesday, October 17, 2017**

**10:00 a.m.**

**Fremont County Courthouse**  
Commissioner's Chamber

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*The purpose of the Agenda is to assist the Council and interested citizens in the conduct of the public meeting. Careful review of the Agenda is encouraged. Testimony from the public will be solicited for any item or issue listed under the category of **Public Hearings**. The Mayor will not normally allow audience participation at any other time. Idaho Law prohibits council action on items brought under this section except in an emergency circumstance.*

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**Minutes were taken by County Clerk Abbie Mace. They are as follows:**

### **FREMONT COUNTY COMMISSIONERS SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES** **October 17, 2017**

**Present for the meeting was:** Commissioners Jordon Stoddard, Lee Miller and Bill Baxter

**Also attended by:** Clerk Abbie Mace, Sheriff Len Humphries, Ambulance Director Bob Foster, EMS Assistant Kena Ricks, Public Works Director Brandon Harris, Treasurer J'Lene Cherry, City of Ashton Councilmen Teresa Hansen, Jerry Funke, and Becky Harrigfeld, Ashton Chief of Police Greg Griffel, and Ashton Officer Wes Owens, and State Representative Karey Hanks

Commissioner Stoddard called the meeting to order and welcomed those in attendance.

Commissioners met with ITD Representatives Karen Hiatt District 6 Engineering Manager, Jason Mizghor Engineer, Lee Gagner state board member for nine county area.

Ms. Hiatt led the conversation. Started with introductions. She reviewed the aerial photos of the City of Ashton. Mile post 360.5 is the area of concern. The 2<sup>nd</sup> map shows the speed limits through the city of Ashton. There are some concerns with speed limit by the High School. She also referenced the 3<sup>rd</sup> map and 4<sup>th</sup> map.

The speed limit south of Ashton on map 1. There seems to be a consensus that the speed limit should be changed from Chester to Ashton from 70 to 65. The speed study shows the rate of speed is 66 to 77. The decision was made to increase to 70 based on that information by ITD. There has been a couple of fatalities in this area.

The state is looking at improving this stretch of highway 20 to change to 4 lanes or at least 3 lanes. That will occur in 2023. They are looking at accesses along the highway. If they have to purchase right of way it will add a couple of years to the process. There are 2 county accesses and several home accesses along this area. They are reviewing option to have 4 lanes divided, 4 lane with jersey barrier, 3 lane, or do nothing.

There is enough area for a 4 lane with a jersey barrier currently. The question of homes that access directly will need to be answered. They hope to have preliminary plans in the summer of 2018. They have talked about interchanges also. The weigh station is something they are looking at possibly putting one on the east side of highway 20. They are looking at the alignment of Highway 20. They may move the current weigh station to a better location.

The question was asked. How will Ashton work with a 1 lane in all directions coming from a 4 lane highway as they enter the City of Ashton? ITD is hoping to have 3 lanes with room for 4 lanes and a signal light, with warning lights.

There are concerns with the curve coming into Ashton by the elementary school. Buses access highway 20 on the south side of the school. Ms. Hansen feels that the speed needs to slow down before the curve for safety of

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the buses. She is concerned with farm trucks. Ms. Hansen would like to see the speed limit from Chester to Ashton 65. Then have the 45 come into Ashton be slowed down before the current signs. Chief Griffel stated that their observation is, people are still doing 65 when they hit the curve. They would like the 65 and 45 farther south to start slowing traffic because of a blind curve.

Ms. Hiatt explained they can only drop 20 miles per hour when dropping speed limits by state regulations.

The city and county see a lot of speeding tickets for people going 80 to 90 mph.

Ashton Elementary School is only 150 feet off Highway 20. Why is that not marked as a school zone? It should be. It is in other areas in the county on state highways. We have had accidents that end up on school property. The buses have an uphill entry onto Highway 20 on the south side of the elementary school. The highway is deceptive on the curve where the buses enter the highway.

The construction of Highway 20 from a 4 lane to a 2 lanes highway. Will have a create bottleneck in Ashton.

Mr. Funke stated the condition of the road from Chester to Ashton is bad. Would like to see a slower speed limit for trucks. It is very difficult to get from 65 to 45 in the space that are there.

Ms. Hiatt stated the studies shows at the 45 mph sign most people are going 60 mph. It is helping but not enough. Most don't slow to 45 mph they go about 50 mph through Ashton on Highway 20. They only thing that changes behavior is the feel of the road. That is why the state is suggesting 3 lanes through Ashton.

It is hard to pass from Chester to Ashton that it backs traffic up. Once they get to Ashton there are 5 lanes going through Ashton so they all try to pass through that area, which is short.

Sheriff Humphries would like the speed through Ashton to be 35 like all the other cities in the county on state highways. It may reduce the severity of the crashes. The 2 lane no passing area will help.

Ms. Harrigfeld would like to see no passing clear from Chester to Ashton. There are so many bad corners. People are passing illegally. Forcing people off the road. The sheriff's office receives many calls reporting this.

Ms. Cherry stated they have people pass on the left as they are turning left into their home. They have had many close calls.

Commissioner Miller compared Highway 26 having to Highway 20. It has a lower speed limit with a better road than highway 20. He feels until improvements are made to Highway 20 it won't handle the speed limit of 70 mph.

Mr. Harris is concerned with 45 mph to 35 mph in Ashton will cause more traffic jams. If you lower the speed limit you will need the 4 lanes. The stoplight is planned to be installed in 2020.

Ms. Hiatt stated, the state have the same questions internally.

Ms. Hanson likes the idea of a 4 lane for agriculture equipment through Ashton. She suggested the use of rumble strips.

Representative Hanks stated she drives semi-trucks and buses in the area. She slows down because of the curve.

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Trucks can't slow down on the curve that fast. If the trucks aren't used to the area this is bad curve. We appreciate ITD listening to us as locals.

Also discussed was the curve by Loosli's spud cellar on Highway 20. It is fairly sharp and the traffic crowds the lanes because of the sharp curve.

Mr. Funke asked. What is the annual traffic count average is. It is 3000 per day. It pecks at 9000 in summer, with a low in winter of 1000.

Ms. Hiatt asked. Is there ever a time when we would bypass the city? The economics would be hurt. If it is the only solution we would do what needs to be done. It may be as much as 50 years down the road.

The discussed the School zone on Highway 47 by the high school. It is 35 in front of the school it should be 25 past the school to at least to highway 32. They use flashing lights in Rigby. Could use flashing lights for time of day or time of year. There are 3 access for the high school. A seasonal light would be very helpful. Need to meet with the school officials for their concerns.

ITD has committed to these changes:

Highway 20 from Chester to Ashton drop the speed limit to 64 mph

Highway 20 drop the speed limit to 45 mph at mile post 360.15 with standard spacing backwards

They can't do no passing from Chester to Ashton

4 lanes for now through Ashton.

25 mph speed limit on Highway 47 to mile marker 1.15 with school zone ahead flashing lights. With black and white signs.

ITD will look at school zone on Highway 20 by the elementary school. They will look at 35 mph at the intersection of Highway 20 and Highway 47. It is very difficult to enter Highway 20 with the 45 mph speed limit. They will look at 3 verse 4 lanes on Highway 20 through Ashton with a 35 mph to 45 mph speed limit. They are willing to try to see if the signs will help.

ITD will do a press release of the changes on Highway 20 and Highway 47.

ITD does not put flashing lights on stop signs for uniformity. They may put rumble strips at the stop signs approaches.

There being no further business to come before the board the meeting was adjourned.

**The above minutes are approved as accurate.**

Attest

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Cathy Stegelmeier

City Clerk

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Theo R. Stronks

Mayor

### **NEXT MEETING**

- ◆ Regular Council 7:00 p.m. – Wednesday, November 8, 2017, Council Chambers, Ashton City Building – 714 Main, Ashton. Questions concerning items appearing on this Agenda or requests for accommodation of special needs to participate in the meeting should be addressed to the Office of the City Clerk or call 208-652-3987.