

THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF OHIO

IN THE MATTER OF THE CONSOLIDATION
PROJECT FOR CROSSINGS IN THE VILLAGE
OF BELMORE, PUTNAM COUNTY.

CASE NO. 17-628-RR-FED

FINDING AND ORDER

Entered in the Journal on April 12, 2017

I. SUMMARY

{¶ 1} The Commission authorizes CSX Transportation to install lights and gates at three crossings and close one crossing in the village of Belmore, Putnam County, by April 12, 2018, subject to the Commission's ongoing jurisdiction and oversight.

II. DISCUSSION

A. *Applicable Law*

{¶ 2} R.C. 4905.04 provides that the Commission has statutory authority to regulate and promote the welfare and safety of railroad employees and the traveling public.

{¶ 3} R.C. 4907.471 provides that the Commission shall survey all grade crossings and establish a priority list to determine which grade crossings are in need of additional protective devices.

{¶ 4} R.C. 4907.476 provides that where the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) enters into contracts and agreements for grade crossing protective device projects, the Commission shall work with and through the department. Federal funding for such projects is provided through the Ohio Rail Development Commission (ORDC), which is an independent agency of the state within ODOT, established in accordance with R.C. 4981.02.

{¶ 5} CSX Transportation (CSX) is a railroad as defined in R.C. 4907.02 and subject to the jurisdiction of the Commission under R.C. 4905.04.

B. Procedural Background and Other Details

{¶ 6} On March 2, 2017, Staff filed a memorandum indicating that ORDC has authorized funding for CSX Transportation to install lights and gates at three crossings and close one crossing in the village of Belmore, Putnam County. Details of the project are as follows:

DOT#	Street Name	Upgrade or Closure of Crossing
155744L	Oak Street	Upgrade to Lights and Gates
155745T	Main Street	Upgrade to Lights and Gates
155746A	Elm Street	Closure to Vehicles and Pedestrians
155747G	Ridge Street	Upgrade to Lights and Gates

Staff notes that the crossings were surveyed on September 24, 2015, and were found to warrant the upgrade. Staff adds that plans and estimates have been approved, subject to revision after bid tabulation, and will be paid fully by federal funds. The cost of all the projects is \$802,140. Staff requests that the Commission issue an order directing completion within one year.

{¶ 7} Upon review, CSX is hereby authorized to acquire project materials and to commence construction as detailed in the letter of construction authorization. CSX shall notify Staff at least five working days before the date work is scheduled to begin at the project so that arrangements can be made for any inspection. In addition, CSX shall timely notify Staff of any changes in the scope of work, cost overruns, materials, etc., which are not in the approved plans in order to estimate and secure approval before the work is performed.

{¶ 8} Within 30 days of the issuance of this Finding and Order, CSX shall file notice that it has initiated discussions with Ohio Power Company dba AEP Ohio (AEP) and any other applicable utility, to ensure that electric service will be available to enable the grade crossing improvements to be constructed and placed in service within the deadline specified by the Commission. Such filing shall identify the steps CSX has taken with AEP, any other electric utility, and the local highway authority to have electric service available during the construction and cut-in phases of the project. CSX shall serve a copy of the notice upon AEP and any other applicable utility. To ensure that the deadline is met, AEP and any other applicable utility shall timely inform the Commission in writing of any issues regarding the availability of electric service.

{¶ 9} The Commission will issue no further construction authorization. Further, the grade crossing improvement project should be completed by April 12, 2018.

{¶ 10} It is expected that all work necessary for Federal Highway Administration acceptance of the warning devices will be completed by the in-service due date and that CSX will be responsible for this work. This work includes, but is not limited to, any ancillary work to make the warning devices function as designed and visible to the roadway user, and Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices compliance, including minor roadway work if necessary.

{¶ 11} In order to expedite the activation of the warning devices, the Commission no longer requires a delay in activation pending final inspection by Staff. However, CSX should notify Staff and ORDC 30 days before the projected date of completion. At the time Staff or ORDC makes its final inspection of the devices and finds that the identified installations and modifications are complete and the warning devices have been put in service, Staff should file a memorandum in this docket indicating that the installations and modifications are complete and that the warning devices have been put in service. The memorandum should also include Staff's findings that the surface improvements are complete and the traffic signal preemption is in operation.

{¶ 12} With the intention of promoting increased public safety during the pendency of the project, the Commission urges the appropriate local government agency to make an immediate assessment of interim physical improvements, which would enhance driver awareness at the crossings. The Commission may provide assistance in funding improvements, such as rumble strips, illumination, signs or other safety enhancements for the project. Applications for such funding should be made to the Commission's Transportation Department, Rail Division, which shall review any proposal. In the event the department finds the improvements appropriate, the department director is hereby authorized to execute a contract with the local government agency, and obligate up to \$5,000 from the State Grade Crossing Safety Fund for such improvements at the project locations. However, the local government agency should not initiate any improvements until a contract has been executed.

III. ORDER

{¶ 13} It is, therefore,

{¶ 14} ORDERED, That by May 12, 2017, CSX file notice that it has initiated with AEP, or any applicable utility, the process to ensure that electric service will be available at the involved grade crossing as set forth in Paragraph 8. It is, further,

{¶ 15} ORDERED, That CSX follow the detailed instructions as outlined in the ORDC letter of construction authorization and proceed with and complete the project by April 12, 2018. It is, further,

{¶ 16} ORDERED, That CSX notify Staff at least five working days before the date work is scheduled to begin at the project sites so that arrangements can be made for any inspection. It is, further,

{¶ 17} ORDERED, That CSX timely notify Staff of any changes in the scope of work, cost overruns, materials, etc., which are not in the approved plans and estimates, and shall secure approval before the work is performed. It is, further,

{¶ 18} ORDERED, That CSX notify the Commission and ORDC 30 days before the projected date of completion. It is, further,

{¶ 19} ORDERED, That, at the time Staff or ORDC makes its final inspection and finds that the installations and modifications at the grade crossings are complete and the warning devices have been put in service, Staff will file a memorandum in this docket indicating that the installations and modifications are complete and the warning devices have been put in service. The memorandum should also include Staff's findings that the surface improvements are complete and the traffic signal preemption is in operation. It is, further,

{¶ 20} ORDERED, That a copy of this Finding and Order be served upon ORDC, CSX, Mayor of the village of Belmore, and any other interested person of record.

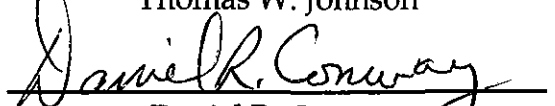
THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF OHIO


Asim Z. Haque, Chairman


M. Beth Trombold


Lawrence K. Friedeman

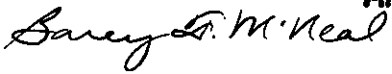

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