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Powell Valley schools' road project advances

by KATIE DUNN • Staff Writer

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WISE — Two proposals have been submitted for a road improvement project at Powell Valley Primary, Powell Valley Middle and Union High schools.

County schools Superintendent Jeff Perry told school board members Monday that two “viable” proposals had been submitted.

W&L Construction and Paving Inc. of Chilhowie assisted by Maxim Engineering Inc. of Coeburn submitted an unsolicited proposal last November offering to provide surveying, engineering and construction services to improve the road system between the three schools.

W&L submitted its proposal under the auspices of the Virginia Public-Private Educational Facilities and Infrastructure Act of 2002. This act requires the school system to allow other interested companies 45 days to also submit proposals. Thompson & Litton of Wise partnered with Glass Machinery and submitted the second proposal for consideration.

The board spent time Monday in closed session discussing both proposals, which Perry said are still “proprietary and confidential in nature.” The Freedom of Information Act allows public bodies to hold closed meetings to discuss or consider the “investment of public funds where competition or bargaining is involved.”

When the board reconvened in open session, it directed Perry to move forward with soliciting more detailed proposals from both parties. Each group will present its proposal next month, and Perry said the school board will then rank them and proceed with negotiations. The project will ideally begin this spring, he said, especially if all design work and required permitting can be completed in the next couple of months. He noted that the project could potentially conclude this fall.

School officials have established a \$1.3 million budget for the improvements. The county's coal haul road committee and board of supervisors have agreed to appropriate coal haul road money to fund the entire effort.

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