



## POLICY COMMITTEE

**Council Chambers, City Hall, 800 Cushman Street, Fairbanks, AK**

**Meeting Minutes – January 20, 2016**

### 1. Call to Order

Mayor Bryce Ward, Chair, called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m.

### 2. Introduction of Members and Attendees

#### Attendee

\*Bryce Ward, Chair  
 \*Karl Kassel, Vice Chair  
 \*Bob Pristash for John Eberhart  
 \*David Miller  
 \*Janice Golub  
 \*Perry Walley  
 \*Denise Koch (via telephone)  
 \*\*Donna Gardino  
 \*\*Alicia Giamichael  
 \*\*Deborah Todd  
 \*\*Margaret Carpenter  
 \*\*Linda Mahlen  
 +Brian Lindamood  
 +Patricia Thayer  
 Kellen Spillman  
 Rich Felsing  
 Shelli Severa  
 Larry Zervos  
 Erik Shoen (via telephone)

#### Representative Organization

Mayor, City of North Pole  
 Mayor, Fairbanks North Star Borough  
 Mayor, City of Fairbanks  
 Director, DOT&PF, Northern Region  
 FNSB Assembly Member  
 City Council Member, City of Fairbanks  
 DEC, Division of Air Quality  
 FMATS MPO Coordinator  
 FMATS Transportation Planner  
 FMATS Administrative Assistant  
 DOT&PF Planning  
 DOT&PF Planning  
 Alaska Railroad  
 FNSB Planning Commission  
 FNSB Planning  
 FNSB Planning  
 FNSB  
 Citizen  
 Citizen

*\*FMATS Policy Committee Members, \*\*FMATS Staff Members, +FMATS Technical Committee Members*

### 3. Public Comment Period (3 minute limit)

No public comment.

### 4. Approval of the January 20, 2016 Agenda

**Motion:** To approve the January 20, 2016 Agenda. (Kassel/Golub).

**Discussion:** No further discussion.

**Vote on Motion:** None opposed. Approved.

### 5. Approval of the December 16, 2015 Meeting Minutes

**Motion:** To approve the December 16, 2015 meeting minutes. (Kassel/Golub).

**Discussion:** No further discussion.

**Vote on Motion:** None opposed. Approved.

### 6. Committee Reports

#### a. Coordinator's Office Report and Technical Committee Action Items

Ms. Gardino provided information and highlights for all meetings, briefings, open houses, workshops, and presentations FMATS staff had attended or participated in.

**b. Coordinator's Office Reorganization Subcommittee Update**

Ms. Gardino explained that she had checked with Jeff Jacobson, the new Chief of Staff for the City of Fairbanks and the Human Resources Director, and was told that the City had sent in the applications and received notice from the Underwriter that they needed to have more complete information on some of the applications that were submitted so they were working to complete those and get them resubmitted. Ms. Gardino stated that the City was continuing to work on getting new health insurance options.

**7. Old Business**

**a. Yankovich/Miller Hill Project Nomination Update**

Ms. Gardino stated that the Technical Committee scored the three different project options and they were included on Page 14 of the meeting packet. Ms. Gardino explained what each of the different project options entailed.

**b. Sidewalk Improvement Program Nomination Update**

Ms. Gardino reported that they were still awaiting scores from the Technical Committee and would then address them at the next Technical Committee meeting and bring forward a recommendation to the Policy Committee.

**8. New Business**

**a. South Cushman Sidewalk and Drainage Improvements PH4 Increase (Action Item)**

Ms. Gardino stated the project was completed the summer of 2014 and they were still struggling with the accounting since this was a project that had both federal and State charges and some of those charges were considered betterments and non-betterments for the utilities on the project. Ms. Gardino asked Mr. Pristash if he could explain the cost overruns.

Mr. Pristash stated that one reason for the cost overrun was due to contamination in the top two feet of material which necessitated bringing in new material. It was discovered that the existing aluminum storm drain was corroded and had to be replaced which generated more material to backfill over and rebuild the pavement structure. Mr. Pristash stated that he thought the amount was reasonable for the changed conditions during construction. Mayor Ward inquired why they were seeing the cost overruns now and not the previous year. Mr. Pristash stated that he did not have a good answer for that since the DOT had been doing the accounting on the project.

Ms. Gardino stated that it was highly unusual to request funding this late which was the reason she was putting it before the Policy Committee for approval. Ms. Gardino stated that she thought the reason for the delay was that it had been a complicated project accounting-wise.

Mayor Ward inquired if they anticipated any further charges to the project.

Ms. Gardino stated that she hoped not, but did not have a good answer for that question.

Mayor Kassel inquired what would happen if it were not approved.

Ms. Gardino stated that she thought there was still money in the bank and they just did not know how much so maybe there would be money returned to them and that it was more an issue of not knowing what their balances were after an audit and when they ran out of money they would know.

Mr. Miller stated that he did not have direct knowledge, but speculated that it had been a project that had been a push to complete and unanticipated things had occurred in the field as well as the new State of Alaska accounting system had been problematic which made it difficult to say exactly where they were on this project since they were not receiving budget reports. Mr. Miller stated that it was difficult and somewhat embarrassing to not be able to say what was spent or left on the project but he thought it was a fair cost.

Mayor Kassel inquired if there were money left over if that money was returned to FMATS. Mr. Miller stated that in the normal course of business the funds would be returned to FMATS.

**Motion:** To approve \$54,156 for the South Cushman Sidewalk and Drainage project. (Kassel/Walley).

**Discussion:** Mr. Pristash stated that the overrun was probably driven by the schedule to complete the project on time in one construction season.

Mr. Pristash stated that if the material was left in place it would have taken a lab analysis which would have taken time so the choice had been whether to leave the material in place and stockpile it or remove it; which generated a higher cost to haul it away.

Mr. Walley stated that he remembered the weather had been a challenge that year and it had rained continually which had hampered progress.

Mayor Kassel stated that he thought it had been a complicated project and appreciated the choices that were made to move the project along in a timely fashion.

Mayor Ward stated that he did not question the merits of the request, but the timeliness of it. Mayor Ward stated that he understood there were accounting issues with the State, but was definitely concerned about the time it had taken to come forward and whether there was any way to get preference for putting the returned monies towards the Yankovich project.

Ms. Gardino stated that she would have to find out if that would be possible, but there were agreements in place with the utilities and the money had been encumbered, so she did not think any refunded money would be available for that project.

**Vote on Motion:** None opposed. Approved.

**b. Resolution of Support for Division of the Non-Attainment Area (Action Item)**

Ms. Gardino explained that at the last Policy Committee meeting there had been a discussion about the division of the non-attainment area for PM<sub>2.5</sub> and a motion had been made and approved to draft a resolution in that regard.

Ms. Gardino stated that she had drafted a resolution and the recommendation from the Technical Committee had been to approve the resolution, but the vote had not been unanimous as some people felt there was not enough information available to make an informed decision.

**Motion:** To forward the Resolution of Support for the Division of the Non-Attainment Area to the EPA. (Walley/Golub).

**Discussion:** Mayor Kassel stated that it had been his motion that originally generated this and thought it was important to the community to put their efforts towards the most serious non-attainment area. Mayor Kassel stated

that splitting the area into two parts would help to expedite that effort. Mayor Kassel stated that it made more work for DEC and EPA, but it was still important that we did it. Mayor Kassel stated that one or two point sources within the non-attainment area did not provide adequate representation so the more we broke down the non-attainment area to reflect what was going on with all the meters would help to provide much more data. Mayor Kassel stated that it was still a work in progress and he wanted to focus efforts on the existing hot spots and separating those areas helped to achieve that goal.

Mayor Ward stated that at this point he was not in support of it and definitely wanted to be part of those discussions, but he had hesitations about funding allocations and diverting resources when they were already constrained with those resources. Mayor Ward stated that there were only so many resources available and it definitely compromised the ability to allocate those resources to North Pole. Mayor Ward stated that although he could not support it today, he was committed to continuing to learn more about it and looked forward to those discussions.

Ms. Koch stated that she wanted to provide more information to Mayor Ward and report that review of the preliminary data indicated that the two monitors in Fairbanks had a clean data year which was very encouraging and if the final data supported that, it would be significant with respect to the design value which was what EPA used to assess whether it was a clean data year or not and was based on three years of data. Ms. Koch stated that 2012 was the highest value year and the next highest year was 2015, so there was potential that Fairbanks' design value might be in compliance, but that was not official yet. Ms. Koch stated that the State had proposed the division and knew there were hot spots that needed to be addressed in Fairbanks as well. Ms. Koch stated that she knew that EPA would be looking very closely to make a final evaluation for Fairbanks. Ms. Koch stated that she believed that EPA was waiting to see that information before they discussed the division. Ms. Koch stated that it would require extra work for DEC, but DEC was happy to do that work. Ms. Koch stated that it was DEC's intent to try to funnel those resources or recommend allocation of those resources towards North Pole if the area were to be split. Ms. Koch stated that there was some indication that EPA might have a grant available in 2016 to address non-attainment areas issues with the 24-hr standard of PM<sub>2.5</sub>. Ms. Koch stated that in the past the only areas eligible for those grants were those areas that were violating the annual PM<sub>2.5</sub> standard in non-attainment areas. Ms. Koch stated that she brought that up as an example to let them know that DEC was sensitive to the resource constraints and doing everything within their power to try and gather more resources towards that area. Ms. Koch stated that if she heard anything more about that, she would be in touch with the Borough and City of North Pole.

Mayor Kassel stated that he was hearing from folks mostly in the North Pole area who thought that they would be focusing more towards Fairbanks and those in the Fairbanks area thought that they were focusing more on North Pole. Mayor Kassel stated that those folks thought they were more likely to attract grant dollars if they did not split it. Mayor Kassel stated that he had no secret agenda and was just trying to clean up the air as much as possible.

Mayor Kassel stated that if they kept it one area; it would likely raise utility rates in Fairbanks due to the burden on the Aurora Plant and he did not want to see utility rates go up in Fairbanks as it did not help solve the air quality problems. Mayor Kassel stated that he would much rather focus on cleaning up the air and thought it helped them in both regards.

Mayor Ward stated that he agreed with Mayor Kassel and he wanted to help support the clean air initiative, but wanted to do more homework and more work with Mayor Kassel and his staff to find the best course of action.

**Vote on Motion:** Six in favor. One opposed. (Ward) Approved.

**c. Location for February Policy Committee Meeting (Action Item)**

Ms. Gardino explained that the City of Fairbanks annually held the NEC conference in City Council Chambers and it was being held the same week as the Policy Committee Meeting which meant that the Policy Committee would need to be moved. Ms. Gardino stated that the DOT&PF Main Conference Room was available to them for that date.

**Motion:** To move the February 17, 2016 Policy Committee meeting to the DOT&PF Main Conference Room. (Walley/Golub).

**Discussion:** No further discussion.

**Vote on Motion:** None opposed. Approved.

**d. CMAQ Funding for FFY16**

Ms. Gardino explained that Pete Christensen of DOT had attended the Technical Committee meeting to provide an explanation of the different funding sources and projects that were currently funded by them. Ms. Gardino stated that she had written a letter to DOT requesting clarity on the funds available and who made the funding decisions within the MPO non-attainment area.

**9. Public Comment Period (3 minute limit)**

No public comment.

**10. Other Issues**

No other issues.

**11. Informational Items**

**a. Steese Highway/Chena Hot Springs Road Ramp Termini Roundabouts and Bypass Lane Open House 01.27.16**

Ms. Gardino explained that DOT would be holding an Open House for the project at Weller Elementary School in the Commons Area from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. with a brief presentation at 7 p.m. on January 27, 2016 and invited everyone interested to attend.

**b. UPWP Amendment #1 Approval**

Ms. Gardino stated that UPWP Amendment #1 was approved by FHWA and FTA. Ms. Gardino stated that she was awaiting notification of what their allocation would be for FY17 and 18 to figure out what the planning budget would be.

**c. Letter from Commissioner regarding FMATS' Funding Request**

Ms. Gardino stated that the letter was submitted on November 12, 2015 requesting up to \$16 million dollars in capital project funding and received a response encouraging FMATS to continue to look for way to provide the local match for the non-federal share component for their planning efforts which historically came from State funds. Ms. Gardino stated that State funding was dwindling and FMATS would need to figure out where they were going to obtain non-federal funding.

**d. Response to FMATS' STIP Comments**

Ms. Gardino stated that the comments were submitted in mid-August and she had received a response. Ms. Gardino stated that the consistent theme had been fiscal constraint and larger projects that limited the number of new project starts.

**e. Obligations and Offsets**

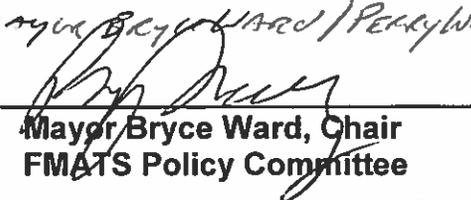
Ms. Gardino explained the obligations and offsets that were included in the meeting packet.

**12. Policy Committee Comments**

- Mr. Miller stated that he spent the past week traveling around the State discussing the Department's budget and closure of maintenance stations in Central, Salcha, Northway, O'Brien Creek, and Chitina as well as summer operations in Thompson Pass. Mr. Miller stated that they had gotten rid of extra equipment and cut the fat last year but this year they were cutting the meat. Mr. Miller stated that if the Legislature decided to continue to cut, it would get worse and include road closures. Mr. Miller stated that there were a lot of challenges ahead for the State.

**13. Adjourn**

**Motion to adjourn.** (Golub/Miller). The meeting adjourned at 1:13 p.m. The next Policy Committee Meeting is scheduled Wednesday, February 17, 2016, at 12 p.m. in the AK DOT&PF Main Conference Room, 2301 Peger Road, Fairbanks, Alaska.

*For Mayor Bryce Ward / Perry Welling*  
Approved:   
Mayor Bryce Ward, Chair  
FMATS Policy Committee

Date: 2/17/16