



POLICY COMMITTEE

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

Meeting Minutes – December 16, 2015

1. Call to Order

Mayor Karl Kassel, Vice Chair called the meeting to order for Mayor Ward, Chair, at 12:00 p.m.

2. Introduction of Members and Attendees

Attendee

*Bryce Ward, Chair
*Karl Kassel, Vice Chair
*John Eberhart
*David Miller
*Janice Golub
*Perry Walley (absent)
*Denise Koch
**Donna Gardino
**Alicia Giamichael
**Deborah Todd
+Brian Lindamood
+Lee Borden
+Pat Thayer
**Margaret Carpenter
**Linda Mahlen
Larry Zervos

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
FMATS Transportation Planner
FMATS Administrative Assistant
Alaska Railroad
DEC, Division of Air Quality
FNSB Planning Commission
DOT&PF Planning
DOT&PF Planning
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 December 16, 2015 Agenda

Motion: To approve the December 16, 2015 Agenda. (Eberhart/Golub).

Discussion: No further discussion.

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

5. Approval of the November 12, 2015 Meeting Minutes

Motion: To approve the November 12, 2015 meeting minutes. (Golub/Eberhart).

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 she and FMATS staff had attended or participated in.

****Mayor Ward joined the meeting at 12:08PM and Mayor Kassel turned the meeting over to him.**

b. Coordinator's Office Reorganization Subcommittee Update

Ms. Gardino explained that FMATS had submitted health application forms to the City for submittal to an underwriter to get insurance quotes. Ms. Gardino stated that she was hopeful that they would get some good options for health insurance and alleviate some of the issues that inhibited the retention of FMATS staff. Ms. Gardino stated that she was checking with the Acting Chief of Staff weekly to find out if they had received anything from the underwriter and hoped to receive quotes in a month or two.

c. FMATS Improvement Program Subcommittee Update

Ms. Gardino stated that the Improvement Program Subcommittee consisted of different agencies involved with FMATS and a meeting was held on 11/19/15 to discuss preventative maintenance or rehab projects that could be started one year and built the next. Ms. Gardino stated that everyone brought their proposed projects and DOT was working on the preliminary planning estimates. Ms. Gardino stated that once those estimates were received, the Technical Committee would review them and make recommendations as to which projects would move forward.

7. Old Business

a. STIP, TIP and Conformity Status Update

Ms. Gardino stated that Page 13 of the meeting packet contained the concurrence letter from FHWA and FTA about the Conformity Analysis which meant that FMATS was no longer in a conformity lapse. Ms. Gardino pointed out that the planning findings were on Page 7 of Attachment A in the meeting packet. Ms. Gardino stated that every four years FMATS self-certified that they followed all the Federal Highway rules contained in Title 23 and also needed to receive concurrence on their planning findings. Ms. Gardino explained that this was FMATS' self-certification process. Ms. Gardino stated that the letter stated that although the planning certification review was not conducted with FMATS, FHWA and FTA defined them as an MPO in good standing. Ms. Gardino stated that there had been a small glitch in September when DOT had not written a letter stating that FMATS concurred with all the rules. Ms. Gardino stated that FMATS was supposed to submit the UPWP and Conformity to the Region and they then submitted it to FHWA and FTA. Ms. Gardino stated that those needed to be submitted by the State rather than the MPO. Ms. Gardino stated that each TIP needed to be included in the STIP by reference and DOT needed to make sure that they were incorporated. Ms. Gardino stated that FMATS was looking at revising procedures and amendments to major revisions to the STIP. FHWA and FTA were working with DOT on that. Ms. Gardino stated that the Conformity findings were not included in the submittal. Ms. Gardino stated that there was also some language in MAP 21 that might make it more collaborative, but that guidance was not out yet. Ms. Gardino stated that the ADA Transition Plan had not been submitted and the deadline was given to the State of July 1, 2016. Ms. Gardino stated that the state's Long Range Plan had not yet been published. Ms. Gardino stated that all the illustrative funding projects remained illustrative. Ms. Gardino stated that there was a new need ID for CMAQ in STIP and she was working with Ms. Carpenter to get clarification

regarding CMAQ funding for the non-attainment area and which need ID's were FMATS' portion of funding.

8. New Business

a. Sidewalk Improvement Program Nominations

Ms. Gardino stated that FMATS Improvement Subcommittee meeting resulted in ideas for sidewalk improvement projects so those would be included under the FMATS Sidewalk Improvement Project. Ms. Gardino stated that all projects that were nominated would be scored with the highest scoring projects being included in the TIP. Ms. Gardino stated that the DOT ideas for sidewalk reconstruction included Badger Road from Hurst to the Richardson Highway and Santa Claus Lane from St. Nicholas Drive to 100 feet south on the east side. Ms. Gardino stated that UAF had some sidewalk issues on Yukon Drive that they wanted to address. Ms. Gardino stated that they were asking those entities to fill out nomination forms for scoring those projects.

b. FFY2015-2018 TIP Administrative Modification #1 (Action Item)

Ms. Gardino stated the TC had recommended approval of the modification and the purpose of the amendment was to accommodate an extra \$1.7 million needed for the Noble Street project based on the engineer's estimate. Ms. Gardino explained the funding sources that would be used for the extra \$1.7 million.

Motion: To move forward with the FFY15-18 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Administrative Modification #1. (Golub/Kassel).

Discussion: No further discussion.

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

9. Public Comment Period (3 minute limit)

No public comment.

10. Other Issues

No other issues.

11. Informational Items

a. Non-Metropolitan Local Official Consultation Process

Ms. Gardino explained that Page 45 of the meeting packet contained the Non-Metropolitan Official Consultation Process with the DOT and the Borough had questions, so Mr. Spillman was reviewing it and preparing comments.

b. MPO Freight Program Assessment

Ms. Gardino stated that she had received an email from FHWA last week requesting completion of the MPO Freight Assessment by the end of the year. Ms. Gardino stated she thought it was interesting and wanted to include it in the meeting packet. Ms. Gardino stated that this was the first MPO Freight Plan prepared by FMATS.

Mayor Ward stated that he was looking forward to it, thought it would be a good thing for the community, and thanked Ms. Gardino for her efforts.

c. Request to EPA to Divide the FNSB Non-Attainment Area

Ms. Gardino stated that Page 60 of the meeting packet contained the letter from the Governor to the EPA Region 10 Division Regional Administrator requesting division of the Fairbanks North Star Borough Non-Attainment area and asked Ms. Koch to provide further information.

Ms. Koch stated that the letter contained a request to split the FNSB PM2.5 non-attainment area. Ms. Koch stated that the DEC website contained a link to a dedicated webpage for this issue and contained a copy of the letter and the technical support document that went through the scientific explanation for the split request. Ms. Koch stated that the page contained a zoomable GIS map. Ms. Koch stated that there were a couple important items to note in the split request. Ms. Koch stated that every area in the non-attainment area would still be in the non-attainment area; and there was a dividing line roughly running along Badger Road that mirrored the Borough boundaries for air quality alerts to make it clearer for citizens and the second item showed a scientific justification for the separation. Ms. Koch stated that the rationale for the request was that DEC felt that there was enough scientific evidence to show that the situation was different between the Fairbanks and North Pole areas.

Ms. Koch stated that each area would have its own planning process and controls relative to the magnitude of the air pollution in that area. Ms. Koch stated that EPA had 18 months in which to consider the request and were not obligated to respond until May 2017. Ms. Koch stated that in June of 2016, the entire area would be designated as a serious non-attainment area. Ms. Koch stated that currently it was a moderate non-attainment area but when separated it would be based on the North Pole monitor that had the highest value. Ms. Koch stated that based on that monitor, they would have to designate it as a serious non-attainment area and that would start a new clock for a new planning process which would look at mitigation measures and the State would have 18 months to submit a plan to EPA for the serious non-attainment area. Ms. Koch explained that what they anticipated timing-wise was that EPA would designate the entire area as a serious non-attainment area this summer and the State would start its planning process for the entire area. Ms. Koch stated that while they were in that process they would get a decision from EPA as to whether or not they allowed them to split the areas. Ms. Koch stated that if EPA allowed them to split the areas, they would have two non-attainment areas and it was possible that Fairbanks would remain a moderate non-attainment area while North Pole would be a serious non-attainment area.

Mayor Kassel asked Ms. Koch what she thought the odds were of receiving a decision on the split by June 2016.

Ms. Koch stated that she did not think they would receive a decision by then.

Mayor Kassel asked what the Borough could do to facilitate that process.

Ms. Koch stated that it certainly would not hurt if the Borough sent a letter to EPA expressing the importance of the split and their position. Ms. Koch stated that the biggest constraint for EPA was the loss of staff and did not think they had the staffing capacity to provide an answer by this summer.

Mayor Kassel asked how problematic it was for DEC to be spending a lot of planning time on a plan that would need to be totally reworked.

Mayor Kassel stated that it was a significant expense in time and energy on the part of DEC.

Ms. Koch stated that Mayor Kassel was correct but they were trying to design it to make it as easy as possible to facilitate that split.

Mr. Miller stated that 18 months seemed like a ridiculously long time time and asked Ms. Koch if that time line was due to the staffing shortage.

Ms. Koch stated that the first issue was the shortage of staff and the second issue was that EPA was sued on a regular basis which necessitated a reshuffling of their priorities. Ms. Koch stated that they had discussions with EPA about the split so they knew that it was a potential and she thought the document had been reviewed, but did not think that EPA would be able to get into a discussion with DEC for quite some time.

Mayor Kassel inquired about Mayor Ward's concerns for splitting the non-attainment areas and if he could articulate them.

Mayor Ward explained that a large part of his concern was the potential for losing out on funding and economic development opportunities and the likelihood of approval of the split by EPA. Mayor Ward stated that there seemed to be a disparity between the locations of the two air quality classifications and would argue that there were just as many major emission areas in Fairbanks as there were in North Pole. Mayor Ward stated that he did not know if this would actually address the issue or just make it more bureaucratic but recognized that there was a desire to do that.

Mayor Kassel stated that he was under the assumption that the split would go through if approved by EPA and inquired if Ms. Koch thought that was the case.

Ms. Koch stated that they had received mixed signals from EPA and at the technical staff level they were more resistant to the idea but at the Director level they were more receptive to it; but was not sure which way EPA would go. Ms. Koch stated that it would increase workloads for both EPA and DEC and the other thing EPA would be doing was evaluating the

request through lens of national consistency and looking at the implications for how many other non-attainment areas might request a split. Ms. Koch stated that the EPA response had to be a technical response and not a workload-related response.

Mayor Kassel stated that he appreciated Mayor Ward's concerns and thought if they split the areas; it would allow a greater allocation of resources to North Pole, rather than less, due to the increased focus on North Pole.

Ms. Koch stated that she thought Mayor Kassel was correct and EPA would not let North Pole be forgotten with the numbers they were seeing at the ambient air monitoring stations. Ms. Koch stated that EPA would still have to pay attention to areas and sections in Fairbanks as well. Ms. Koch stated that she appreciated their concerns, but was hoping to have more resources to focus on North Pole and they wanted to help them.

Mayor Kassel stated that he would also like to focus more attention and resources on North Pole and the hot spots. Mayor Kassel inquired if Ms. Koch thought a resolution from FMATS would be helpful.

Ms. Koch stated that it certainly would not hurt, but ultimately the EPA decision would be based on technical information.

Motion: To draft a resolution from FMATS in support of the split of non-attainment area in a timely manner and in order to save DEC planning funds for approval at the next meeting. (Kassel/Golub)

Discussion: Mayor Ward stated that he was hesitant to pass a resolution without reviewing it first; especially since it was of concern to the City of North Pole. Mayor Ward stated that the allocation of resources was one of his main concerns and found it difficult to believe that there would be additional resources when it was known to cost more to split the non-attainment areas. Mayor Ward stated that if there were two non-attainment areas and one area was deemed "serious" and one was deemed "moderate" and things changed in Fairbanks edging it towards "serious"; his concern was that resources would be diverted towards improving the Fairbanks air quality.

Mayor Eberhart stated that he knew there was correspondence on this subject that came before the City Council and did not specifically recall if they had passed a resolution on it so Ms. Gardino should check with the Clerk's office to see if a resolution had been passed for that.

Mayor Eberhart stated that one of the concerns was the potential cost of the split to the businesses in the City. Ms. Koch stated that she wanted to address that. Ms. Koch stated that one of the things that happened when an area moved from a moderate to serious area, was that the stationary

sources like GVEA, Aurora Energy, UAF, and Fairbanks Memorial Hospital had to do what was called a “Best Available Control Technology Analysis.” Ms. Koch stated that this was part of the bigger process as you moved from moderate to serious and the stationary sources in the area that crossed a threshold of emissions of 70 tons per year of a particular emission source were required to do the Best Available Control Technology Evaluation. Ms. Koch stated that doing that evaluation cost money. Ms. Koch stated that DEC had already had discussions with those sources and sent them a formal letter in April 2015 to let them know that the whole area would be considered serious in the summer of 2016 which would require them to do the Best Available Control Technology Analysis. Ms. Koch stated that they did not want to surprise them and wanted to encourage them to get started on those evaluations sooner rather than later. Ms. Koch stated that some of the feedback DEC had received estimated it would cost \$100,000 to perform that analysis. Ms. Koch stated that if the area was not split and they had a full area they would have to do the evaluation and the concern was whether they would have to install those technologies. Ms. Koch stated that the cost of the evaluation would pale in comparison to the cost of the technology installation.

Mayor Eberhart added that it would increase the rates and steam heat costs for the City which was a real concern for the residents.

Ms. Koch stated that she could not speak to how much it would cost for the controls but it was fair to say that the controls would be quite expensive and those costs would be passed on to the residents.

Mayor Kassel stated that he had an ordinance in the works to focus on and target stove replacements in hot spot areas. Mayor Kassel stated that there was a legitimate opposite voice that said they probably should not be using their financial resources since the State had not been contributing. Mayor Kassel stated that if they could split that into two specific areas, it could justify the allocation of resources for stove change outs and help in getting a decision sooner from EPA. Mayor Kassel stated that if they could add to the letter and say that they wanted to focus attention on the poor air quality areas and if they split there was potential for Fairbanks to stay “moderate” and not go “serious” which was his hope.

Ms. Golub stated that Ms. Koch had stated that EPA wanted to recommend that the State monitor the area to determine whether they would approve the split and how long they would want to analyze it.

Ms. Koch stated that Fairbanks had a clean data year in 2014 and if they continued that in 2015, it would establish a pattern and strengthen their argument.

Mayor Kassel commented that they were days away from a “clean 15.”

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

d. Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act

Ms. Gardino explained the summaries contained in the meeting packet were from the government, AMPO, and she had received a press release from Congressman Young that was not included. Ms. Gardino stated that \$70 billion was transferred from the General Fund to the Highway Trust Fund and it was the first time they had a long-term transportation bill in a decade. Ms. Gardino stated that it was a five year bill. Ms. Gardino stated that there were new provisions included in the bill establishing a new national highway freight program with \$1.15 billion dollars. Ms. Gardino stated that the Alaska, Richardson, Glenn, and Parks Highways, some intersections, and airports would receive a share of the State percentage to total apportionment. Ms. Gardino stated that there would also be freight and highway projects that would be competitive grants and could be applied for by eligible applicants and the bill would provide 10 percent of the grant funds for smaller projects requesting at least \$5 million dollars. Ms. Gardino stated that there was some funding included for positive train control, but the State needed funds for 500 miles of track so this funding was a drop in the bucket. Ms. Gardino stated that the Surface Transportation Program was now called the Surface Transportation Block Grant Program. Ms. Gardino stated that this was where most of FMATS funding came from and was increasing by one percent annually, so she was looking forward to what the new distribution would be from the DOT on the FTP Program. Ms. Gardino stated that the TAP Program had not been implemented yet. Ms. Gardino stated that for CMAQ funding, the allocation language was the same in both the draft DRIVE Act and the approved FAST Act.

e. Obligations and Offsets

Ms. Gardino stated that STIP and TIP were approved which meant FMATS could program funding.

Mayor Ward stated that there was a Certificate of Appreciation for Guy Sattley who had served on FMATS Policy Committee for seven years and one for Jerry McBeath who had served on the Technical Committee for two to three years. Mayor Ward stated that FMATS wanted to give a special thanks to them both for their service.

12. Policy Committee Comments

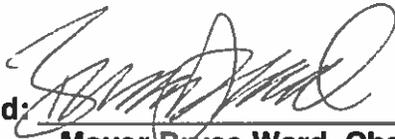
- Mayor Eberhart thanked Mayor Ward for all his work this year on the Policy Committee. Mayor Eberhart stated that he was still trying learn all the acronyms after a couple years. Mayor Eberhart wished everyone happy holidays.

- Mr. Miller stated that he wanted to extend holiday greetings to everyone and thought they were getting more efficient or did not have the issues they used to, but they seemed to move along pretty quickly which was good.
- Ms. Koch stated that if anyone had any future questions about the request for the split or what DEC was doing with regard to the PM2.5 non-attainment area they should give her a call and wished everyone happy holidays.
- Mayor Ward stated that he wanted to echo the previous sentiments and wished everyone a merry Christmas, happy holidays, and a Happy New Year. Mayor Ward commented that he appreciated the good discussion they had and how efficient they were at performing and executing their meetings. Mayor Ward stated that he looked forward to seeing everyone next year.

13. Adjourn

Motion to adjourn. (Golub/Koch). The meeting adjourned at 1:12 p.m. The next Policy Committee Meeting is scheduled **Wednesday, January 6, 2016**, at 12 p.m. in the City Hall Council Chambers, 800 Cushman Street, Fairbanks, Alaska.

Approved: _____



**Mayor Bryce Ward, Chair
FMATS Policy Committee**

Date: 1-20-16