



POLICY COMMITTEE

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

Meeting Minutes – March 16, 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
- +Lee Borden
- Rich Felsing

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
- DEC, Division of Air Quality
- FNSB Planning

**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 March 16, 2016 Agenda

Motion: To approve the March 16, 2016 Agenda. (Golub/Kassel).

Discussion: No further discussion.

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

5. Approval of the February 17, 2016 Meeting Minutes

Motion: To approve the February 17, 2016 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 she and FMATS staff had attended or participated in.

b. Coordinator's Office Reorganization Update

Ms. Gardino explained that the City of Fairbanks was meeting with the insurance provider on March 22nd to receive quotes. Ms. Gardino stated that the 43 IBEW employees received a 1.3 percent wage increase and were voting on how they wanted allocate that increase. Ms. Gardino stated that because they had a package rate, the increase could go towards health, wages, or pension or a combination of those. Ms. Gardino stated that she had

researched what it would take to get decertified out of the Union and try to get recertified into a different union, but did not think it was something they wanted to do. Ms. Gardino stated that if the healthcare option did not work out, FMATS should look into amending the Memorandum of Understanding for the Coordinator's Office. Ms. Gardino stated that meant they would continue to be housed at City Hall but no longer be City employees; so they would receive their paychecks from elsewhere. Ms. Gardino stated that the pension was still a sticky subject. Ms. Gardino stated that she would continue to research it.

7. Old Business

a. Local Planning Approval MOU Update and Discussion

Ms. Gardino stated that she had put the item on the agenda because she thought that she would have received information and could discuss it with them. Ms. Gardino stated that since she had not received that information, she would defer it to the next meeting

8. New Business

a. TIGER Grant Application (Action Item)

Ms. Gardino stated that this was the eighth round of the TIGER Grants which were Transportation Investments Generating Economic Recovery. Ms. Gardino stated that they had applied in the first round in 2009 for the Illinois Street Reconstruction Project. Ms. Gardino stated that they had made it to the final round with that application but did not get funded. Ms. Gardino stated that she would like to seek a TIGER Grant for the Cushman Street Bridge Replacement. Ms. Gardino stated that the minimum amount that could be requested was \$5M which was down from \$10M in an urbanized area. Ms. Gardino stated that they did not want to ask for 100 percent of the project cost because that decreased the likelihood of receiving the grant. Ms. Gardino stated that they wanted to show partnerships and that we were receiving money from different sources. Ms. Gardino stated that she proposed that FMATS requested the minimum amount which was \$5M. Ms. Gardino stated that she needed assistance from DOT and the Borough. Ms. Gardino stated that the grant required a specific benefit-cost analysis and was a bit more than she could take on so FMATS had issued an RFP to consult the work out. Ms. Gardino stated that she had spoken with Mr. Miller of DOT and he had agreed that DOT would be willing to pay the non-federal share which was 20 percent for this project.

Motion: To pursue a TIGER Grant Application for the Cushman Street Bridge Replacement Project if the benefit-cost analysis is under \$10,000. (Kassel/Golub).

Discussion: Mayor Ward inquired if the language would satisfy. Ms. Gardino stated that she would caution that they put in wording to keep the benefit-cost analysis under \$10,000 in order to stay within budget.

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

b. Scope Change for Tanana Loop and South Chandalar Drive Intersections (Action Item)

Ms. Gardino explained that the justification for the PDA revision was a change in the scope. Ms. Gardino stated that the intent of the project had not changed, but the scope of the project was not specific enough, so DOT had changed it. Ms. Gardino stated that the scope revision did not impact the funding estimates because it was always the intent, it was just not stated. Ms. Gardino stated that the project would be inserted into Amendment #3 of the TIP and go out for 30-day public review.

Motion: To approve the scope change for the Tanana Loop and South Chandalar Drive Intersections project, as presented. (Golub/Walley).

Discussion: No further discussion.

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

c. Wembley Improvement Project Recommendations (Action Item)

Ms. Gardino stated that two actions items had come out of the discussion at the Technical Committee. Ms. Gardino stated that she had included the scoring information in the meeting packet. Ms. Gardino stated that the resulting scope change was to build a pedestrian facility on the north side of the road and to address drainage. Ms. Gardino invited Mr. Pristash to provide further information.

Mr. Pristash explained that Danby would get a new roundabout with sidewalks that would connect to Wembley and Aurora Drive. Mr. Pristash stated that they looked at different alternatives for the placement of curb and gutter. Mr. Pristash stated that money would be saved by not cutting into the pavement structure and just repaving the whole road. Mr. Pristash stated that this year the City would be repaving and constructing sidewalks on Aurora Drive which would be tied into the Danby/Wembley sidewalks and provide a continuous path.

Mr. Walley asked Mr. Pristash if he could elaborate on the guardrails. Mr. Pristash stated that the existing guardrail could be raised adjusted up and was designed with an overlay in mind but if sections were deficient in any way, they needed to be replaced. Mr. Pristash stated that it was a judgement call as to whether to replace that guardrail or not but the cost for adjusting the guardrail had been included in the estimate.

Motion: To approve the scope change for the Wembley Improvement Project. (Walley/Golub).

Discussion: No further discussion.

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

Discussion and decision about whether to rescore the Wembley Improvement Project. (Action Item)

Ms. Gardino explained that since the project scope had changed so they needed to discuss whether the project needed to be rescored and which criteria would be used. Ms. Gardino stated that the Technical Committee felt the construction was integral to the pedestrian facility, so they felt the project did not need to be rescored.

Motion: To not rescore the scope change for the Wembley Improvement Project since the roadway work is integral to the construction of the pedestrian facility. (Kassel/Golub).

Discussion: Mr. Walley inquired if Ms. Gardino thought there would be any problems or issues in the future if they did not rescore the project.

Ms. Gardino stated that since it was a pedestrian project, in her opinion, she did not feel it was necessary to score it again. Also, since it was being designed to comply with the draft Green Streets policy for addressing stormwater runoff.

Mayor Ward stated that the intent behind the project was not being violated and since it had been scored, which was a requirement, he did not see an issue with a violation of their policy. Mayor Ward stated that he was not concerned with setting a precedent for future project scoring.

Mr. Walley stated that he was glad they were discussing it because he wanted to make sure that no further issues came up in the future.

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

d. TIP Administrative Modification #2 (Action Item)

Ms. Gardino explained that the Modification was approved by the Policy Committee last month and submitted to DOT Headquarters. Ms. Gardino stated that she was informed that two of the changes were not permitted in an Administrative Modification and needed to be done through an amendment process. Ms. Gardino explained that most of the items included had been previously reviewed. Ms. Gardino stated that her reason for amending this modification was in order to save time this construction season. Ms. Gardino stated that she would follow-up with TIP Amendment #3 included as the next action item.

Motion: To approve revised 2015-2018 TIP Administrative Modification #2. (Kassel/Golub).

Discussion: No further discussion.

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

e. TIP Amendment #3 Recommendation (Action Item)

Ms. Gardino explained the revision summary included in the meeting packet which outlined the revisions that were made in TIP Amendment #3.

Motion: To put TIP Amendment #3 out for public comment. (Kassel/Golub).

Discussion: No further discussion.

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

f. Cushman Street Reconstruction Phase 4 Increase (Action Item)

Ms. Gardino stated that the recommendation from the Technical Committee had been to approve the Phase 4 increase to the Cushman Street Reconstruction Project and introduced Mr. Pristash to explain the particulars.

Mr. Pristash stated that the Cushman project had been a \$10M project and with the Change Order increases it had been about 6.3 percent change orders for that project which he thought was pretty low for that type of project.

Mr. Wally asked Mr. Pristash what the average was for change orders.

Mr. Pristash stated that he thought for Cushman they would have been lucky if they had about 10 or 12 percent.

Mr. Miller inquired if Mr. Pristash thought that this was the last increase.

Mr. Pristash stated that project completion date was June 15th and the project was 95 percent complete. Mr. Pristash stated that he did not see any big ticket items that would generate any large change orders.

Mr. Miller asked Mr. Pristash about the utilities.

Mr. Pristash stated that the only thing remaining was to pull the conductor through the duct back that was installed which was relatively risk free.

Mr. Kassel stated that he liked the relatively risk free comment that Mr. Pristash made. Mayor Kassel stated that he would also like to commend Mr. Pristash on some really good planning because on a project of this complexity, six percent change orders was really a good number and was much less than he would have expected with the complexities involved with that type of project

Motion: To approve the \$246,057.29 Phase 4 increase on the Cushman Street Reconstruction Project. (Kassel/Golub).

Discussion: Mr. Walley stated that he also wanted to commend Mr. Pristash for his efforts on the project. Mr. Walley stated that he knew that there had been some issues that arose during the project with some duct work and there had been some pushback from the utility as to who was going to pay for it. Mr. Walley stated that the City had done some push back as well.

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

g. UPWP Amendment #2 Revised (Action Item)

Ms. Gardino stated that Amendment #2 was sent to DOT and were told that they had not submitted all the necessary changes. Ms. Gardino stated that she consulted with the Borough and was told that there were no changes to the narrative but when they sent in their application for the grant, new items were included in the narrative. Ms. Gardino stated that since she was redoing it, she had decided to incorporate some of the contingency projects such as establishing a Bike and Ped Count Program and the Metropolitan Transportation Plan update. Ms. Gardino stated that she would like to release the RFP for that by July 2016. Ms. Gardino stated that she would like to get it wrapped up or at least have the list of projects done by early 2018; so they could develop the new TIP for 2019. Ms. Gardino stated that if they did not receive the PL funds, they would have to use project funds to do the Long Range Plan update. Ms. Gardino stated that she hated to use project funds for planning purposes but this was one of the five things that FMATS was required to do.

Motion: To approve the revised UPWP Amendment #2. (Walley/Pristash).

Discussion: Mayor Kassel stated that he thought that the Borough had messed it up so that Ms. Gardino would have the opportunity to add in the contingency projects.

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

h. Repurposing of Earmarks

Ms. Gardino stated that repurposing allows states to repurpose funds that had been earmarked for specific projects. Ms. Gardino stated that they had only

one earmark in their area that was for the City of Fairbanks O'Connor Creek Bridge project which was located behind Geraldo's on College Road. Ms. Gardino stated that it was a \$250,000 earmark and had been out there several times with Mr. Schmetzer trying to figure out what they were going to do with that earmark. Ms. Gardino stated that it was just an informational item since they did not have any further guidance on where it was going to be implemented. Ms. Gardino stated that they had notified the DOT that they were aware of the earmark and were going to try to find out if they could use it on another city street like Noble Street.

Mr. Pristash stated that he would say the guardrails were probably deficient and the ADA access was probably a step and not a ramp to the bridge so pedestrians were in the road. Mr. Pristash stated that with \$250,000, by the time they got through with the environmental, there really would not be much money left to do anything which was part of the problem.

Ms. Gardino stated that was part of the problem with the earmarks was that they were underfunded.

Mr. Pristash stated that it was not that there was nothing to do, it was just not enough money.

Mr. Miller stated that there were only three projects that were earmarked in the Northern Region. Mr. Miller stated that Northern Region had been pretty aggressive about expending their funds, so there was very little left in Northern Region.

9. Public Comment Period (3 minute limit)

No public comment.

10. Other Issues

No other issues.

11. Informational Items

a. Obligations and Offsets

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

12. Policy Committee Comments


- Ms. Koch commented that a week ago Mayor Kassel notified her at DEC that the Borough would cease to operate the Regulatory Ambient Air Monitors in the Fairbanks area as of July 1, 2016. Ms. Koch stated that she knew that items related to the PM_{2.5} non-attainment area were generally of interest to this group. Ms. Koch stated that she wanted to mention that was a significant piece of information. Ms. Koch stated that those were federally-required monitors located at the State office building, the NCore site, and the newly federally-required North Pole Fire Station site. Ms. Koch stated that those three sites were sites that the State would have to operate starting on July 1st. Ms. Koch stated that they were all in some ways in the same boat in terms of funding, as all levels of government were experiencing fiscal shortfalls. Ms. Koch stated that included DEC Air Quality and it would be a challenge but

- they would all have to reshuffle their workload and something else would have to fall off their plate, but was a workload they were anticipating picking up starting in July 2016.
- Mayor Kassel stated that along the lines of what Ms. Koch talked about; they were all struggling with financial constraints right now. Mayor Kassel stated that the air quality monitoring on those regulatory sites was ultimately the State's responsibility. Mayor Kassel stated that they had some grant money available that was expiring. Mayor Kassel stated that it had been a challenge and they had been putting some General Fund money towards that, but were pretty strapped at the Borough, and were absorbing a number of other cuts. Mayor Kassel stated that it had just come down to a financial decision to say that ultimately this made about a \$350,000 difference to the bottom line of the Borough budget. Mayor Kassel stated that he felt they could not continue to do that facing the other cuts that they had coming from the State. Mayor Kassel stated that he felt bad about that because he knew that the State DEC budget was not looking any brighter than his. Mayor Kassel stated that it would be a challenge, but two things in response to that were: 1) This was in no way indicative of any kind of reduction in the Borough's interest in working towards resolving the air quality problem. Mayor Kassel stated that they still recognized this as a big issue in the community and were still dedicating quite a bit of funding to other parts of the program they expected to maintain, or in some cases, expand. Mayor Kassel stated that they were still pushing forward on trying to improve air quality and would do the best they could. Mayor Kassel stated that it was probably the highest priority in his administration. Mayor Kassel stated that this was not a reduction in priority, but a change in the mission. Mayor Kassel stated that he would also like to say that the door was still open from the Borough side of this if the State could come up with some funding from somewhere. Mayor Kassel stated that if they had a grant or funding coming from the State, they would be glad to continue the program. Mayor Kassel stated it was just a matter of the funding and that was the bottom line on it. Mayor Kassel that he had to give notice to three employees at the Borough that their job was potentially ending so if he could take those back he would be glad to. Mayor Kassel stated that it was just a matter of coming up with the funding. Mayor Kassel stated that he appreciated the efforts of Ms. Koch and the State DEC. Mayor Kassel stated that if they could get creative, they should get creative. Mayor Kassel stated that it was just something that he had to push off their plate at the Borough. Mayor Kassel stated that it hurt to do that and sign the notices to three good employees at the Borough but they were all struggling with financial times.
 - Mr. Miller stated that as long as they were talking about finances, DOT was in negotiations with the adjacent landowner to transfer the Fox Springs property to him. Mr. Miller stated that it was a bit of a process to go through but that transfer should be completed by the middle of summer.

Mayor Kassel inquired if the property owner intended to continue operating the well at Fox. Mr. Miller stated that he did not know if the owner would be able to continue to operate and absorb that level of expense to be a good neighbor. Mr. Miller stated that the expenses were real and documented. Mr. Miller stated that having a facility open year-round to the public was a large expense. Mayor Kassel stated that he appreciated that and maybe the owner would come up with a user fee.

13. Adjourn

Motion to adjourn. (Golub/Kassel). The meeting adjourned at 1:11 p.m. The next Policy Committee Meeting is scheduled Wednesday, April 20, 2016, at 12 p.m. in the Fairbanks City Hall Council Chambers, 800 Cushman Street, Fairbanks, Alaska.

Approved: 

Mayor Bryce Ward, Chair
FMATS Policy Committee

Date: 4-21-16
