



## POLICY COMMITTEE

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

**Meeting Minutes – June 17, 2015**

### 1. Call to Order

Mayor Bryce Ward, Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

### 2. Introduction of Members and Attendees

<b>Attendee</b>	<b>Representative Organization</b>
*Bryce Ward, Chair	Mayor, City of North Pole
*Kellen Spillman for Luke Hopkins, Vice Chair	Mayor, Fairbanks North Star Borough
*Jerry Cleworth for John Eberhart	Mayor, City of Fairbanks
*Judy Chapman for David Miller	Northern Region Director, DOT&PF
*Guy Sattley	FNSB Assembly Member
*Perry Walley	City Council Member, City of Fairbanks
*Denise Koch	DEC, Division of Air Quality
**+Donna Gardino	FMATS MPO Coordinator
**Deborah Todd	FMATS Administrative Assistant
**Alicia Giamichael	FMATS Transportation Planner
Linda Mahlen	DOT&PF Planning
Lee Borden	DEC
Randy Zarnke	Citizen

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

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

Randy Zarnke commented that he had noticed the renovation of Third Street had begun with tearing down a bunch of buildings and remembered when that project was projected for completion in 1986, so he was very pleased to see it getting started. Mr. Zarnke commented that the section of Cowles Street between Airport Road and the hospital was, in his opinion, one of the worst stretches of street in town and if and when funds became available, he requested that it be put on the top of their priority list. Mr. Zarnke commented that his primary comment was regarding the landscaping of the median and shoulders on Airport Road, the Steese Highway, and College Road. Mr. Zarnke stated that he spoke with DOT the other day and was told that with budget cuts they were only able to hire half the lawn mowing help that they normally had in the summer.

Mr. Zarnke stated that if the budget problems were going to be long-term for DOT, as much as he as he liked green grass and trees, he would consider having textured concrete like what was done on the Illinois Street or something that looked better than what they had now.

Mr. Sattley inquired if there was any reference made about the previous maintenance disagreement between the State and the Borough for Airport Road when Mr. Zarnke spoke with DOT. Mr. Zarnke stated that Mr. Miller had not mentioned it but that he was relatively new at DOT.

Mr. Sattley explained that the Borough had spent \$100,000 taking over the maintenance of the medians because there had been a big stink and the Borough had spent money to buy a truck, a trailer, and a water tank.

Mr. Zarnke stated that he remembered the years that the median was actually being watered when it was needed and it had looked great. Mr. Zarnke commented that if the funds were not available any more to maintain that median, anything would look better than what it did now.

Mr. Walley inquired if the question was posed to DOT about how many times the median would be mowed this year.

Mr. Zarnke stated that DOT did not say how many times they would mow, but that they had started to mow some portions and were gradually going from east to west.

Ms. Chapman stated that she believed DOT mowed the Airport Way median three times a summer.

Mr. Zarnke commented that if it was only mowed three times a summer, or once a month, it was guaranteed to look pretty bad for most of the summer.

\*Mr. Cleworth arrived at this point in the meeting.

**4. Approval of the June 17, 2015 Agenda**

**Motion:** To approve the June 17, 2015 Agenda. (Sattley/Walley).

**Discussion:** No discussion.

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

**5. Approval of the May 20, 2015 Meeting Minutes**

**Motion:** To approve the May 20, 2015 meeting minutes. (Sattley/Chapman).

**Discussion:** No discussion.

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

**6. Committee Reports**

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

Ms. Gardino apologized to Mr. Cleworth for not reminding him again the day before about the new venue for the meeting. Ms. Gardino stated that after contacting DOT, she had been informed that the construction contract for the public parking area in front of DOT would render it unavailable until at least September, so she recommended they continue to have the Policy Committee Meetings in the Council Chambers at City Hall for July and August. Ms. Gardino presented the highlights from meetings, open houses, conferences, events, and presentations she had attended since the last meeting.

**7. Old Business**

No old business.

**8. New Business**

**a. Gold Hill Road Phase 2 Increase (Action Item)**

Ms. Gardino stated that the recommendation from the Technical Committee was to approve the \$75,000 funding increase for Phase 2 of the Gold Hill Road Bicycle and Pedestrian Facility project using FCTP funding.

Ms. Gardino stated that the funding was to support the right-of-way process during design because there were 42 parcels that had to be dealt with and their Phase 2 budget was exhausted, and they also needed the money to put together the final contract and get the project out to bid. Ms. Gardino stated FMATS had the funding, so the Technical Committee recommended funding the project.

**Motion:** To approve \$75k for the Phase 2 increase on Gold Hill Road Bicycle and Pedestrian Facility using banked funds. (Chapman/Walley).

**Discussion:** No further discussion.

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

**b. TIP Amendment #9 Approval (Action Item)**

Ms. Gardino explained the purpose behind Amendment #9 had been to add the transit funding that the Borough did not realize they had access to and the rest of the revisions were administrative. Ms. Gardino recommended the Badger Road Bike Path project and the Steese to Front Street Project also be funded.

**Motion:** To approve FMATS TIP Amendment #9. (Cleworth/Walley).

**Amendment to the Motion:** To put \$1,450,000 towards the Badger Road Bike Path Project. (Cleworth/Chapman).

**Discussion:** No further discussion.

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

**Amendment to the Motion:** To move \$20K from FFY15 to FFY16 for the Steese to Front Street Project, Ph 3. (Walley/Sattley).

**Discussion:** Mr. Cleworth inquired if the project was the one coming down off the bridge and whether it was going to be maintained by DOT.

Ms. Gardino stated that the sidewalk on Front Street would be maintained by the Borough and the rest would be maintained by DOT. Ms. Gardino explained that the new design DOT proposed would coordinate the bike path with the Steese bike path. Ms. Gardino stated that the design had not been set yet and DOT was still looking at alternatives.

**Vote on Amendment to the Motion:** None opposed. Approved.

**Amended Motion:** To approve the FMATS TIP Amendment #9, put \$1,450,000 towards the Badger Road Bike Path Project, and move \$20,000 from FFY15 to FFY16 for the Steese to Front Street project, Ph 3.

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

**c. Public Participation Plan for the 2015-2018 TIP (Action Item)**

Ms. Gardino explained the requirements, goals, and objectives for the Public Participation Plan.

**Motion:** To approve the FMATS Public Participation Plan for the 2015-2018 TIP for public comment. (Sattley/Walley).

**Discussion:** No further discussion.

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

**d. 2015-2018 Draft TIP Conformity Determination for Air Quality (Action Item)**

Ms. Gardino explained the meetings and steps taken prior to the Conformity Determination for Air Quality on the 2015-2018 TIP.

**Motion:** To approve the Conformity Analysis for the 2015-2018 TIP for public comment. (Koch/Chapman).

**Discussion:** Discussion followed regarding non-attainment and compliance and whether Fairbanks would ever attain compliance.

Ms. Koch explained the two standards for PM<sub>2.5</sub> and the methods that were used to determine compliance. Ms. Koch explained that the Conformity Analysis that was used was correct.

Mr. Cleworth inquired what would happen if they were not in compliance.

Ms. Koch stated that the EPA would require the State and Borough to make five percent reductions in emissions each year and there were serious implications if the Borough did not come into compliance by 2019.

Mr. Borden stated that there were other implications such as programs that were voluntary now would be mandated.

Ms. Koch stated that for the last year, Fairbanks has shown a decrease and were approaching the standard and there was potential that Fairbanks could come into compliance with PM<sub>2.5</sub>.

Mr. Cleworth inquired if Ms. Koch meant the City of Fairbanks when she said Fairbanks.

Ms. Koch stated that the Fairbanks main monitoring site was located at the top of the State office building.

Mr. Cleworth inquired what had to happen to get the State off of the EPA hit list.

Ms. Koch stated that once they reached compliance they had ten years assuming they remained in compliance during that time. Ms. Koch stated that in 2014 and so far in 2015, the City of Fairbanks had been given a clean data year designation.

Ms. Gardino inquired if the standards were going to be stricter with the new compliance laws from EPA.

Ms. Koch stated that she had not heard from EPA that they were going to reduce the PM<sub>2.5</sub> standard to something stricter.

Mr. Sattley inquired how the emissions standards would be enforced.

Mr. Borden explained that the State would enforce those standards.

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

**e. 2015–2018 Draft TIP Approval for Public Comment (Action Item)**

Ms. Gardino explained the 2015-2018 Draft TIP and the basis for how each project had been programmed and subsequently funded in order of scores received.

**Motion:** To approve the 2015-2018 Draft TIP for public comment (Cleworth/Walley).

**Discussion:** Mr. Cleworth commented that with the diminishing funding in the last three fiscal years and projects like the South Cushman Street project that had all the amenities was going to be an anomaly. Mr. Cleworth stated that in future projects, we were not going to be afforded the luxury of having those same amenities.

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

**f. PL Fund Recommendation (Action Item)**

Ms. Gardino explained that the reason for the recommendation was to consider choosing different projects to use the PL funds, since the projects that were recommended were ineligible.

Ms. Gardino explained that she did not think the Policy Committee needed to take action today since they did not have the full information.

**Motion:** To recommend postponing the PL Fund recommendation for one month until DOT receives further information about funding for FFY17. (Chapman/Sattley).

**Discussion:** No further discussion.

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

**g. College Road Rehabilitation Construction Increase (Action Item)**

Ms. Gardino stated that this agenda item had not gone to the Technical Committee and she did not have the information for an action.

**Discussion:** Mr. Sattley inquired about the five bus shelters scheduled to be built on College Road this summer and was concerned about coordination between the Borough and the Contractor.

Ms. Gardino explained that there were five bus shelters going up on College Road and Adam Barth of the Borough was coordinating the effort for the bus shelters. Ms. Gardino stated that the shelters were ordered, but would probably not arrive until later this summer, and the contractor would probably be HC Contractors again. Ms. Gardino stated that HC would coordinate with the other contractors for the work that was being done on College Road so as not to interfere.

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

No public comment.

**10. Other Issues**

No other issues.

**11. Informational Items**

Ms. Gardino explained that STIP Amendment #16 was out for public comment.

**a. Obligations/Offsets**

Ms. Gardino summarized the obligations and offsets included in the meeting packet.

**12. Policy Committee Comments**

- Mr. Cleworth commented that on the Third Street project he noticed they had torn down all those buildings and wanted to know if the State bought the entire lot from each of those businesses.

Ms. Chapman stated that she did not know if it was always the entire lot but DOT generally tried to buy the whole lot if it was a huge impact. They were going to try to do a roundabout on Eagle and Third Street intersection where the Chowder House was located with a dedicated left turn and going through to the east.

Mr. Cleworth stated that it must have cost quite a bit to acquire all that property and inquired about the status of that project. Ms. Chapman stated that the project was moving forward with construction slated for 2017.

Mr. Cleworth commented that there had been a presentation in 2012 about Airport Way and several proposals were made for the median question that Mr. Zarnke had posed. Mr. Cleworth stated that DOT had a longstanding policy that they did not like taking care of grass, but if FMATS selected that option, DOT had stated that they would maintain it. Mr. Cleworth stated that he was puzzled as to the reason why DOT would not be mowing the median more than once a month and why they could not bid a contract for someone to mow that median and the City was doing that with the Clay Street Cemetery.

Ms. Chapman commented that she shared Mr. Cleworth's concern about the Airport Way median and agreed that it did not look very nice, but maintenance cuts this year would be even greater and DOT would be faced with choices of whether to spend their money to maintain major roads or medians.

Ms. Chapman stated that she had been looking into drought hardy species that could be planted in that median and thought it might require looking at other options rather than grass for the medians that would look better and require less maintenance such as stamped concrete with sun tolerant plants. Ms. Chapman stated that she would like to take that on personally and one of the projects might be to find affordable landscaping features.

- Mr. Walley commented that he would totally be in favor of stamped colored concrete and thought that the maintenance for that would be minimal and the life value would be much greater. Mr. Walley commented that the Goldpanners used to mow that area and did not know how they got around the liability issue to enable them to mow it. Mr. Walley commented that he

was also curious about the cone placement on the College Road project since they were hard to negotiate with a large vehicle pulling a trailer. Mr. Walley inquired if the hold up on the Steese project had been the Holiday Station and wondered what had happened with that.

- Mr. Spillman commented that he was hoping that Ms. Chapman would address the status of the State Rail Plan during her comments.
- Mr. Sattley commented that there was an email to the Assembly and the sender had used Illinois Street as an example of landscaping and his recollection was that even though they had \$100,000 in the budget; DOT had opted to close out the contract and opted not to use that money for beautification. Mr. Sattley commented that he was amazed that whoever sent the email had used Illinois Street as an example of beautification since he did not think that project was beautiful.
- Ms. Chapman commented that she had heard there was a movement on the State Rail Plan, but she had not yet seen the draft for that, but the Task Force had received the draft and were reviewing it and making comments so it was moving forward. Ms. Chapman stated that she was concerned about the lack of State funding and since those funds were so limited, we needed to figure out how much was required to keep FMATS going, in terms of non-federal funds. Ms. Chapman stated that in the next UPWP those that were contributing in-kind services might have to start contributing cash in order to keep FMATS funded and strong in the future.

**13. Adjourn**

**Motion to adjourn.** (Walley/Spillman). The meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

The next Policy Committee Meeting is scheduled Wednesday, July 15, 2015, at 10 a.m. in the Council Chambers, City Hall, 800 Cushman Street, Fairbanks, Alaska.

Approved:   
Mayor Bryce Ward, Chair  
FMATS Policy Committee

Date: 7/15/15

*vice chair*