



POLICY COMMITTEE

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

Meeting Minutes – September 21, 2016

1. Call to Order

Mayor Karl Kassel called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m. for Mayor Bryce Ward who had been detained.

2. Introduction of Members and Attendees

Attendee

- *Bryce Ward, Chair
- *Karl Kassel, Vice Chair
- *John Eberhart
- *Ryan Anderson
- *Janice Westlind
- *David Pruhs
- *Denise Koch (via telephone)
- ***+Donna Gardino
- **Alicia Giamichael
- **Deborah Todd
- **Linda Mahlen
- +Judy Chapman
- +Lee Borden
- Kellen Spillman

Representative Organization

- Mayor, City of North Pole
- Mayor, Fairbanks North Star Borough
- Mayor, City of Fairbanks
- Director, DOT&PF, Northern Region
- FNSB Assembly
- City Council, City of Fairbanks
- DEC, Division of Air Quality
- FMATS MPO Coordinator
- FMATS Transportation Planner
- FMATS Administrative Assistant
- DOT&PF Planning
- DOT&PF Planning
- DEC 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 September 21, 2016 Agenda

Motion: To approve the September 21, 2016 Agenda. (Eberhart/Westlind).

Discussion: No further discussion.

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

5. Approval of the August 17, 2016 Meeting Minutes

Motion: To approve the August 17, 2016 meeting minutes. (Westlind/Pruhs).

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, conferences, seminars, open houses, workshops, presentations, forums, and field trips she or FMATS staff had attended or participated in since the last meeting.

b. Coordinator's Office Reorganization Update

Ms. Gardino stated that they were working on a Bylaws change. In addition, Ms. Gardino was working on with the Union Steward to change the Union bylaws so that funds paid to health insurance premiums would be exempt

from union dues. The Union considers it part of their wages. Ms. Gardino explained that as long as it was considered part of wages, they would be charged union dues on it.

c. Air Quality Planning Subcommittee Meeting Update

Ms. Gardino stated that in the bylaws update they were incorporating the roles and responsibilities that were in the Coordinator's Office Agreement and hopefully they would be able to consolidate some things. Ms. Gardino stated that currently the air quality planning agency was the Fairbanks North Star Borough with no specific procedures or roles for how the transportation planning was done within the MPO for air quality. Ms. Gardino stated that she had asked the Borough to come up with some methods to address that in the bylaws update.

d. FMATS Improvement Program Subcommittee Meeting Update

Ms. Gardino stated that the list of projects submitted by different organizations was included in the meeting packet. Ms. Gardino stated that they were trying to beef up their FMATS Improvement Program but some of the projects that came in fit better into the Sidewalk Improvements Program or the Intersection Improvement Program. Ms. Gardino stated these were projects that were not required to be scored in accordance with FMATS policy and were exempt from conformity. Ms. Gardino stated that the projects would be reviewed by the DOT who would be coming up with estimates.

Ms. Gardino stated that DOT was also going out and looking at each project before they came up with those estimates. Ms. Gardino stated that the intent was to move forward with design of the projects to have shovel-ready projects in case funding became available. Ms. Westlind asked Ms. Gardino about the Old Richardson-Badger to Dennis shoulder widening project and whether they were still considering installation of sidewalks in that area.

Ms. Chapman stated that she did not think that was part of the project at this point.

7. Old Business

a. Travel Model Planning Assumption Recommendation (Action Item)

Ms. Gardino explained that the recommendation from the Technical Committee had been to approve the methodology used for the Travel Model Planning Assumptions. Ms. Gardino stated that they thought it would be best to run it through the Technical Committee again and what had changed was the recommended forecast for population and employment was lined out by number and not by percent. Ms. Gardino stated that Page 33 of the meeting packet contained the recommended Borough forecast. Ms. Gardino stated that in the interim years it was good that it was laid out by year specifically because in the serious SIP, the DEC would have to look at those interim years and not interpolate them so this methodology would allow them to have more precise estimates of population and employment in those interim years and not rely on a base percent each year.

Motion: To approve the resulting annual growth for population and employment as presented and forecasted in memos from Kittelson and the Borough. (Westlind/Pruhs).

Discussion: No further discussion.

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

b. FMATS 2017-2020 Transportation Improvement Program Draft Discussion

Ms. Gardino stated that this was a draft TIP and she hoped to come up with a TIP for them to review and potentially approve for public comment next month. Ms. Gardino explained and provided information about different projects in the TIP.

Mr. Anderson stated that he had a couple of questions about items in the TIP. Mr. Anderson stated that the first one was about the FMATS Coordinator's Office item and he noticed that the amount programmed for FY17 was \$489,000 but then it dropped to \$397,000 in FY19 and FY20 and wanted to know the details about that and whether it was a result of some of the funding starting to disappear from the Coordinator's Office.

Ms. Gardino stated that the amount for FY 17 was an error and appreciated that Mr. Anderson had pointed that out. Ms. Gardino stated that the amount would actually be dropped to about \$397,000 in FY17, because they were relying on funding that was already programmed. Ms. Gardino stated that they had \$500,000 of State funding that had been encumbered but not spent because the Coordinator's Office had been under budget for eight years.

Ms. Gardino stated that she thought that they would use some of that funding for FY17 that had already been encumbered under the Coordinator's Office which was why it was not shown in FY19 or FY20 either.

Mr. Anderson asked Ms. Gardino if there was any reason why they would not program money beyond 2020 for that purpose.

Ms. Gardino stated that it was just because the four year TIP was already reached and that was the only reason.

Mr. Anderson stated that other question was on the FMATS Advance Project Definition Funding where they had \$40,000 programmed for FY17 but no money was programmed beyond that and whether there was just no money available after that. Ms. Gardino stated that the idea was that there was probably no need with the \$51,000 dollars they already had, but what they were anticipating was using that money in the development of the new MTP. Ms. Gardino stated that it could be that in a couple years, like in late FY18 or early FY19, they might need some more money, but there was nothing that would preclude them from doing that. Mr. Anderson stated that those were funds that DOT and the CITY used when they were trying to figure out a project so that when they scoped it and started the project, they had a good understanding of it and there were no surprises, so those funds were important to them. Mr. Anderson stated that his last question on the TIP was regarding the FMATS Improvement Program that was programmed for a little over \$3 million in 2017, \$2 million in 2018, but there was no funding in 2019 or 2020. Mr. Anderson stated that his question was whether they had additional FMATS Improvement funds. Mr. Anderson stated that it was his understanding that this funding was for the FMATS preventative maintenance program and more discussion might be warranted about moving forward and allocating funds for preventative maintenance and how they wanted to go about that. Mr. Anderson stated that some of their Planning folks had been in discussions with Headquarters about how a flexible PM program could be developed under FMATS and that was how funding could be applied to

specific problem areas that needed preventative maintenance to preserve our infrastructure.

Ms. Gardino stated that the reason that there was no money shown for preventative maintenance in Fiscal Year 19 was due to the McGrath Road project and in Fiscal Year 20 they Cowles Street programmed for construction and that was the reason the PM money was not available in those years.

Ms. Gardino stated that things slipped and that was the reason that they wanted to have the PM projects ready in case the funding became available.

Mr. Anderson stated that he thought it was important to have projects ready and on the shelf so that if the money was available, they were ready to go.

Mayor Ward arrived and joined the meeting at 12:20 p.m. and Mayor Kassel turned the meeting over to him.

8. New Business

a. Freight Mobility Plan Draft Existing Conditions Report

Ms. Gardino explained that they had received quite a few comments on the Existing Conditions Report and she had been forwarding them to the Consultant and would meet with the consultant next week to address those comments. Ms. Gardino explained the comments that were received and the discussions they had. Ms. Gardino stated that they had not received cooperation from some key entities which was regrettable and so they hoped to have some more conversations about that. Ms. Gardino stated that there were unforeseen things that had come up such as the tank farm on Hansen Road and people thought their outreach effort had been good. Ms. Gardino stated that she had spoken with the consultant the day before and provided FMATS' input.

Mr. Anderson stated that DOT had some concerns with the report and in terms of Design and Construction and the M&O sections were not consulted and they felt they had a lot to offer for the report. Mr. Anderson stated that there was no discussion of the existing projects and it seemed like they missed the boat about Fairbanks and North Pole being a hub and how that worked here since it was such a unique geographic location. Mr. Anderson stated that the utilities discussion was limited. Mr. Anderson stated that he had a list of comments that he would forward to Ms. Gardino. Mr. Anderson stated that in light of today's budget climate, the road maintenance priorities, and the truck routes made it a very important discussion to include especially with the conditions that existed here in the wintertime. Mr. Anderson stated that the report had a lot of good, broad discussions but did not really link in to Fairbanks and North Pole.

b. Chena Riverwalk Funding for TIIP (Action Item)

Ms. Gardino stated that Page 51 of the meeting packet contained the City of Fairbanks' estimate which did not include DOT oversights and would be higher than this and when it was reviewed by the City again, the estimate had been significantly higher than it had previously been. Ms. Gardino stated that after reviewing the information regarding the soils in that area, they had to increase that amount so they would have to come up with the additional match funds for that increase. Ms. Gardino stated that the Policy Committee had approved \$400,000 for the City to design the project and there was \$168,000 left for the design and they were looking to federalize the project

under the new TIP. Ms. Gardino stated that the City's revised estimate was higher so the \$168,000 could still be used as the non-federal share, but before the project could begin, someone would have to come up with the remaining balance. Ms. Gardino stated that the estimate was about \$2 million just for the construction engineering and ICAP for the first segment and then there would be two more segments. Ms. Gardino stated that the intent was to design the entire project and then construct it in segments because that was how it worked in the federal world and you had to ask for authority to proceed to final design for the entire project and then you could break it into separate segments.

Mr. Pruhs explained that about a month ago, he, Mayor Kassel, and Mayor Eberhart had attended the Polaris Group meeting with Senator Murkowski and she had asked them to bring in other items and bigger things that could play into and support funding for the downtown redevelopment. Mr. Pruhs stated that he wondered if anyone here had a problem with them sharing the information about the Chena Riverwalk project costs with the Polaris Group to maybe federalize the funding that way.

Motion: To approve the use of \$168,000 in State funds as a match for the Chena Riverwalk Project Stage III, Phase 1. (Kassel/Westlind).

Discussion: Mr. Anderson asked Ms. Gardino to explain the scope for Phase 1 of the Chena Riverwalk project that they were using the funding for.

Ms. Gardino stated that it was from Peger Road east and there was approximately 1,000 feet of 8-foot galvanized steel walkway that was going over the wetlands in that area and would be on pilings and would connect to where the existing steel bridge was by Pioneer Park. Ms. Gardino stated that the entire path was about 5500-feet long and the first section of the path would be a little over 1,000 feet and probably less than 2,000 feet long.

Mr. Anderson asked Ms. Gardino if the estimate assumed that it was going to be a state-funded project. Ms. Gardino stated that this estimate assumed that it would be a federally funded project. Ms. Gardino stated that the estimate in the meeting packet was from last week and the new estimate for that same work including engineering and ICAP, and not including design, would be \$2 million and not \$1.1 as previously submitted. Ms. Gardino stated that there was an increase in excavation and borrow. Ms. Gardino stated that Mr. Pristash had looked at the estimate and determined that most of that was pretty poor ground and they would have to dig down to gravel to have a stable foundation for the path.

Mr. Anderson stated that the Phase 2 Environmental cost was the funding that would have to cover the entire project from termini to termini and the real focus right now was the environmental document and that could be quite a bit more than the estimate.

Ms. Gardino stated that the latest preliminary engineering estimate had already doubled. Ms. Gardino stated that the City had sent it over to DOT and they had broken that down into pre- and post-environmental. Ms. Gardino stated that they were told last week that they had to design the whole thing at one time. Ms. Gardino stated that if that was different, then they needed to know. Mr. Anderson stated that they would have to follow up with that.

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

c. FFY17 Technical and Policy Committee Meeting Dates (Action Item)

Ms. Gardino explained that this was the meeting schedule for the 2017 meetings.

Motion: To approve the FY17 FMATS meeting schedule as presented. (Kassel/Westlind).

Discussion: No further discussion.

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

d. Letter to EPA via DEC regarding the Non-Attainment Area and Highway Sanctions (Action Item)

Ms. Gardino stated that Mr. Pruhs had requested that she write a letter regarding the non-attainment area and reiterating their support for the division of the non-attainment area with a discussion about the highway sanctions.

Ms. Gardino stated that the meeting packet contained the letter that was written in January of 2016 and the resolution made by the Policy Committee supporting that request. Ms. Gardino stated that the draft letter in the meeting packet reiterated support for that request and included a list of those things that had been accomplished to mitigate the air quality issue. Ms. Gardino stated that she was still awaiting the list from the Fairbanks North Star Borough so the letter was currently incomplete.

Motion: To postpone action on sending the letter to EPA regarding division of the non-attainment area until the October meeting after the Fairbanks North Star Borough Clear the Air Conference. (Koch/Kassel).

Discussion: Ms. Koch stated that in terms of sanctions, they were talking about the withholding of highway funds and things like 2 to 1 offsets.

Ms. Koch stated that she wanted to provide some big picture timeframes for what they were talking about. Ms. Koch stated that before sanctions could come to bear in the non-attainment area, EPA would first have to designate and publish in the Federal Register a proposed action to re-designate the area from moderate to serious and then there would be a 30-day public comment period for that. Ms. Koch stated that at the close of that public comment period, EPA would have to publish their decision to re-designate the area from moderate to serious in the Federal Register. Ms. Koch stated that there would then be a delayed effective date of probably another 30 days.

Ms. Koch stated that when the decision to make the area "serious" was effective, an 18-month clock would start for the State and Borough to begin work on the serious SIP. Ms. Koch stated that the sort of actions that would trigger sanctions would be failure by DEC to submit a serious SIP to EPA, EPA deemed the plan unapprovable, or DEC submitted the serious SIP and they approved it, but the State failed to implement the approved plan.

Ms. Koch stated that there was an 18-month sanction clock for offsets and a 24-month sanction clock for withholding Federal dollars. Ms. Koch stated that her point for giving them the time frame was that we had time before sanctions would be implemented. Ms. Koch stated that given that there was a Clear the Air Conference next week, she thought it made sense to get all that information so that would inform the next steps that this Committee wanted to take on such a letter.

Mayor Kassel stated that he concurred with Ms. Koch and the Borough was hosting an Air Quality Conference next week beginning on Monday.

Mayor Kassel stated that part of that Conference would be to look at what information was available out there for them to chart a path to success and learning from other's experiences so they would be much better prepared to draft an appropriate letter going forward after the Conference. Mayor Kassel stated that it would be a topic of discussion at the Conference so it behooved them to wait a month and see what they learned next week.

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

e. FMATS Bylaws Review Discussion

Ms. Gardino stated that she and Mayor Ward had been working on updating the Bylaws and should have that to the Technical Committee for review in the next month and for the Policy Committee to review in a week or so.

Ms. Gardino stated that the changes to the Bylaws included changing the designation of the Policy Committee to a Policy Board. Ms. Gardino stated that in Title 23 the definition of an MPO was a "Policy Board" and thought it was important to change it. Ms. Gardino stated that she thought it was also important to put more roles and responsibilities in the Bylaws so that they were clear. Ms. Gardino stated that were also looking to have an annually elected Chair and Vice Chair for the Technical Committee similar to what AMATS had.

Mayor Ward stated that they were also looking a structural things as well as to how they operated as an MPO. Mayor Ward stated that things such as providing clarity about who replacements or substitutes were in the absence of a member, structurally how they operated as an organization, and making sure that their operations were consistent with their Bylaws and they made sense.

Ms. Gardino stated that another thing was changing the structure of how the meetings went to make it more consistent with how meetings for other entities involved in FMATS were conducted.

Ms. Westlind asked if the changes affected the number of members on the Policy Board or if their roles and responsibilities changed. Mayor Ward stated that in the beginning this was more as an arm of the State and had morphed into its own entity and the MPO really served more in a Board function versus a committee function and might make it more clear to someone on the outside looking in about how it was structured. Ms. Gardino stated that it need to be separated out as to what it was which was a "board".

Mayor Ward stated that when he first got elected as Mayor it took him a while to gain an understanding of exactly how the MPO operated and thought that part of this process would be to make sure it was clear and transparent how it functioned.

Mr. Anderson stated that he wanted to offer one other idea for consideration in the Bylaws. Mr. Anderson stated that when they were trying to find ways to leverage federal funds, more risk came about if they were not aware of the federal process. Mr. Anderson stated that he thought that having an additional member from DOT, such as a Preconstruction Engineer, on the Technical Committee would benefit them and give them more horsepower when discussing the scope, schedules, and cost of projects.

9. Public Comment Period (3 minute limit)

No public comment.

10. Other Issues

No other issues.

11. Informational Items

a. Banking Request Approval

Ms. Gardino stated that the packet contained a letter from Mike Vigue, the DOT Director of Program Development, regarding FMATS' banking request that had been approved and he referenced the total cumulative amount of banked funds. Ms. Gardino stated that the Noble Street project obligated on September 9, 2016 and once the Birch project obligated, they should be down to a zero banking scenario, which would be good.

Ms. Gardino stated that one of the things that Mr. Vigue referenced in the last paragraph of his letter was encouraging FMATS to explore the use of innovative finance techniques available through FHWA, such as "advance construct" to eliminate the need to set aside obligation authority before starting projects. Ms. Gardino stated that the handout she gave them explained the Advance Construct function and stated that she had requested that Ms. Chapman arrange a meeting with statewide folks regarding how they could incorporate the Advance Construct function into their TIP and reduce the amount of illustrative funding. Ms. Gardino stated that FHWA supported the use of Advance Construct at a reasonable level in the future. Ms. Gardino stated that they had not used it before but thought that it would behoove them to use it in the future. Ms. Gardino stated that they had an onscreen film presentation to provide an explanation of the Advance Construct funding process. Ms. Gardino stated that they would meet next week to get information about how the process worked and some examples from DOT.

Mr. Anderson stated that there were some advantages and risks to the Advance Construct program. Mr. Anderson stated that in the Advance Construct scenario you did not receive funding until you knew the actual cost, it required the match up front, and you could not Advance Construct anything without the match.

Ms. Westlind asked where the residual funds from one phase would go and whether they could be used on another phase. Ms. Gardino stated that they could use them, but they would just have to get authorization.

b. FTA 5339 Grant Award for Transit Maintenance Facility

Ms. Gardino stated that the Borough would receive \$12.8 million dollars for the renovation and expansion of its transit facility. Ms. Gardino asked Mayor Kassel if he would expound on that grant.

Mayor Kassel stated that it was exciting and was not the entire project, but was Phase I and they would be starting Phase I as a new structure farther east of the existing structure and when that structure was completed, they would be tearing down the existing structure and replacing it.

Mayor Kassel stated that they were using the real estate on that project as part of the match. Mayor Kassel stated that this was way overdue but felt that it had been a direct result of good communication with the FTA.

Mayor Kassel stated that the facility was aging and when the Division Manager from FTA saw the structure he thought it clearly qualified for this grant money. Mayor Kassel stated that he was pretty excited about it and

it had been a significant chunk of the \$200 million that had been available nationwide.

**c. FNSB's Clear the Air Conference and Expo: Paths to Attainment
9.26.16-9.28.16**

Mayor Kassel stated that the Borough was really excited about this and organizing the conference had been a bit of a challenge. Mayor Kassel stated that when the idea was presented they had wanted to do it before they came into the heating season when the air quality issue seemed to peak but looked at the timeline and thought that there was no way they could get it through the Assembly and approved using the normal path. Mayor Kassel stated that he stuck his neck out a little bit and they started planning the conference without funding and planned the funding parallel to that. Mayor Kassel stated that the Assembly had voted in favor of it and they had received the funding. Mayor Kassel stated that they were very interested in collecting expertise from all around North America and gaining better insight about what worked and what did not work so they did not repeat mistakes that had been made in other communities. Mayor Kassel stated that he thought it would be a great tool to better inform the folks in the community and they needed to have community awareness. Mayor Kassel stated that he thought this would be an excellent tool to explain it to them and gave the Borough better information to make informed decisions about air quality. Mayor Kassel stated that they wanted to get everyone engaged and on the same page. Mayor Kassel stated that he just wanted to get there as efficiently as they could and not overregulate which sometimes government had a tendency to do. Mayor Kassel stated that he did not think that was the best path to attainment and they needed people to be engaged and understand the process. Mayor Kassel explained that the Conference was free of charge and the information about the Conference was posted on left side of the Fairbanks North Star Borough website homepage. Mayor Kassel stated that they could register for the Conference, even though it was free, in order to be able to participate in the free lunch. Mayor Kassel stated that the Conference started on Monday morning and went through Wednesday at noon and there would be public forums Monday and Tuesday evenings from 5:30-7:00 p.m. Mayor Kassel stated that the evening programs would be inviting questions from the public. Mayor Kassel stated that DEC, EPA, and other would be there so they really had a good cross-section of different types of topics.

Ms. Koch stated that she wanted to thank Mayor Kassel and his staff for putting the air conference together and DEC would be sending up a large number of staff and it would be a great opportunity to have good discussions with the community and EPA, so they looked forward to being there.

d. Statewide Long Range Transportation Plan

Ms. Gardino stated that this was the policy document that was out for public comment until October 24, 2016. Ms. Gardino stated that she had read it and thought there was some interesting information in there and that there were already targets set for safety which she had not been aware of. Ms. Gardino stated that the Plan was worth the read and the

underlying tone was the limited fiscal environment we are currently in. Ms. Gardino stated that she would prepare some comments to be forwarded to the DOT. Ms. Gardino stated that overall she thought it was a well written document and had included a link in the meeting packet so they could access the website to review the plan.

e. Obligations and Offsets

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

12. Policy Committee Comments

- Mr. Anderson stated that he appreciated another good meeting.
- Mayor Eberhart commented that it was a good meeting and the Air Quality Conference would bring a lot of knowledgeable people here and would be interested in seeing the ideas that came out of it.
- Ms. Koch stated that she looked forward to seeing everyone in Fairbanks next week for the Conference.
- Mayor Kassel stated that they had applied for a grant from the Department of Defense Office of Economic Adjustment. Mayor Kassel stated that with the F35s coming here, it would obviously have an impact on their community. Mayor Kassel stated that the Office of Defense had a grant program where you could look at the effects of an increase in population due to the F-35s coming to Fairbanks. Mayor Kassel stated that there were a number of grants going out and all of them were for base reductions except for Fairbanks. Mayor Kassel stated that they would be looking at potential impacts so it was a planning tool for them and transportation was an item that they would want to look at to better accommodate the increases at Eielson. Mayor Kassel stated that DOT also had grants available for implementing solutions to the problems that were identified and in order to qualify for those you needed to convince them through this program that you had an issue. Mayor Kassel stated that it opened the door to the potential for even more money and he would keep them posted.
- Mr. Pruhs stated that it was good to see that Mayor Ward had made it to the meeting and the next time that he traveled on Mr. Anderson's road he might want to consult with him to get through quicker. Mr. Pruhs congratulated Mayor Kassel on the grant and on putting together the Clean Air Conference and Expo.

13. Adjourn

Motion to adjourn. (Pruhs/Westlind). The meeting adjourned at 1:29 p.m. The next Policy Committee Meeting is scheduled Wednesday, October 19, 2016, at 12 p.m. in the Fairbanks City Hall, Council Chambers

Approved: _____


Mayor Bryce Ward, Chair
FMATS Policy Committee

Date: _____

10-18-16