



POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING

Main Conference Room, State of AK DOT&PF, 2301 Peger Road, Fbks., AK

Meeting Minutes – February 18, 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

Attendee

*Bryce Ward, Chair
 *Christine Nelson for Luke Hopkins, Vice Chair
 *Jerry Cleworth for John Eberhart
 *Rob Campbell
 *Guy Sattley
 *Perry Walley
 *Cindy Heil for Alice Edwards
 **+Donna Gardino
 **Deborah Todd
 Kellen Spillman
 +Judy Chapman
 **Margaret Carpenter
 Meadow Bailey
 +Brian Lindamood
 **Linda Mahlen
 +Michael Schmetzer

Representative Organization

Mayor, City of North Pole
 Mayor, Fairbanks North Star Borough
 Mayor, City of Fairbanks
 Acting Northern Region Director, DOT&PF
 FNSB Assembly Member
 City Council Member, City of Fairbanks
 DEC, Division of Air Quality
 FMATS MPO Coordinator
 FMATS Administrative Assistant
 FNSB Community Planning
 DOT&PF Planning
 DOT&PF Planning
 DOT&PF Public Information Officer
 Alaska Railroad
 DOT&PF Planning
 City of Fairbanks

**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 February 18, 2015 Agenda

Motion: To approve the February 18, 2015 Agenda. (Walley/Sattley).

Discussion: No Discussion.

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

5. Approval of the January 21, 2015 Meeting Minutes

Motion: To approve the January 21, 2015 meeting minutes with suggested clerical edits submitted by Mr. Campbell. (Heil/Campbell).

Discussion: Mr. Campbell stated that he had several clerical edits that he wanted to submit for consideration.

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

6. Committee Reports

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

Ms. Gardino presented highlights from meetings and other activities FMATS participated in from the monthly report included in the meeting packet.

7. Old Business

No old business.

8. New Business

a. FMATS Improvement Program Recommendations (Action Item)

Ms. Gardino gave a brief explanation of the recommendation by the Technical Committee to fund the first four projects on the FMATS Area Surface Approach Upgrades FFY2015 project list and move the remaining funds to Stage IV of the FMATS Pedestrian Improvements Stage I project.

Mr. Cleworth inquired if there were maintenance agreements in place and who would be maintaining the pedestrian improvement projects that were recommended for funding.

Ms. Gardino stated that she had a meeting about the project regarding who would be maintaining what and the maintenance responsibilities would be determined when the final project design was finished and each segment of the project had proposed maintenance agreements from the City, Borough, and DOT, where applicable.

Mr. Cleworth stated that before it advanced too far there really needed to be a maintenance agreement in place.

Mr. Sattley inquired about the Davis Road divided with a median.

Ms. Gardino stated that it would be a separated path for bikes and pedestrians so there would not be a median in the middle of the road. Ms. Gardino stated that there was consideration in the project of the possibility of a crosswalk with a rectangular rapid flashing pedestrian-activated beacon.

Mayor Ward stated that there had to be a maintenance agreement in place prior to voting on the recommendations.

Ms. Gardino stated that she was sure there were agreements in place before they went forward. Ms. Carpenter stated that she would check on that.

Mr. Cleworth stated that he just hated to see them spend a lot of money and then not have a maintenance agreement so that was it.

Ms. Gardino stated that there was an agreement for the City of Fairbanks to maintain Wilbur and Lathrop; and the DOT would provide summer and winter maintenance on Peger and Davis.

Motion: To fund the first four projects on the FMATS Area Surface and Approach Upgrades FFY2015 project list and move the remaining funds to PH4 of the FMATS Pedestrian Improvements Program Stage I. (Cleworth/Walley).

Discussion: No further discussion.

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

b. Cushman Complete Streets Construction (PH4) Funding. (Action Item).

Ms. Gardino explained that she had received an estimate from the City and the proposal was to take the proposed Barnette Street funding and apply that to the Cushman Complete Streets project and then score a federally funded Barnette Street project. Ms. Gardino explained that there was also a Wickersham Street project and they were planning on a Stage II for that project but that the current funding would not go very far so they proposed to apply those funds to the Complete Streets project as well to completely fund the project.

Motion: To approve the Cushman Complete Streets funding proposal, as presented. (Heil/Walley).

Discussion: No further discussion.

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

c. Letter Regarding an Update to the Comprehensive Plan (Action Item)

Ms. Gardino explained that the reason behind the update was to bring the Comprehensive Plan up to date with FMATS' plans.

Motion: To approve the letter to the FNSB Assembly and Mayor regarding the need for a Comprehensive Plan update. (Heil/Walley).

Discussion:

Mr. Sattley inquired about the genesis of the update and who started the ball rolling to communicate in this way to the Borough.

Ms. Gardino stated that it had been discussed at the Technical Committee Meeting when they were discussing how FMATS updated the MTP every four years and how the Comprehensive Plan had not been updated since 1991 and they were trying to bring all the plans more up to date and consistent as opposed to being in conflict with one another.

Ms. Nelson stated that they were looking at the goals and polices of the MTP and how the Comprehensive Plan should be consistent with the MTP and the discussion that the Comprehensive Plan was the guiding document for all planning but the fact was that it was old and things had changed. Ms. Nelson stated that the biggest issue was how they would pay for that. Ms. Nelson inquired if the DUPP funds could be used for this.

Ms. Gardino stated that she did not think that planning funds could be used for the entire update but a certain portion probably could be funded.

Ms. Nelson stated that was the concern of the Mayor that it was needed but it was costly.

Ms. Gardino stated that they had not addressed funding at the Technical Committee but FMATS would like to be involved.

Ms. Nelson stated that it might be helpful to clarify that the update was applicable to the road plan in particular and that was the first step and the whole Comprehensive Plan contained ten or twelve elements.

Mr. Cleworth inquired if the Borough considered Vision Fairbanks as an element of the road plan in the update to the Comprehensive Plan.

Ms. Nelson stated that she did not think that the letter specifically addressed it, but it was an element of the plan.

Mr. Cleworth stated that it did address roads.

Ms. Nelson stated that it was a separate document.

Ms. Heil stated that she thought the letter was very clear and pointed out that the document was very old and it would be in FMATS best interest if it were updated.

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

d. Letter Regarding the Discretionary Urban Planning Program (Action Item)

Ms. Gardino explained that there had been no new information regarding the DUPP Program funds so the Technical Committee recommended that a letter be sent to request that funding information.

Mr. Campbell inquired if it was her intent that the projects were listed in the order in which they were to be prioritized for funding and suggested that they should not be listed in numerical order if that was not the case.

Ms. Gardino stated that the projects were not listed in any particular order to clarify priority or funding preference.

Motion: To approve the letter to the DOT&PF regarding the Discretionary Urban Planning Program and to eliminate the numbers 1 - 6 on the list. (Cleworth/Heil).

Discussion: Mayor Ward inquired about the TransCad modeling process and asked for clarification about how the funding would be allocated if funds were received.

Ms. Gardino stated that it was a contingency project within the UPWP to model projects prior to starting them to see what the level of service, air quality, and congestion benefits were to ensure that they achieved the desired goals. Ms. Gardino stated that the issue they might have was that if it was a reconstruction project, you might not see a drastic change so she did not think they would be doing that for all the projects since their projects were not that large.

Mayor Ward inquired why the project was on the list.

Ms. Nelson stated that the Technical Committee wanted everything to be included in the letter.

Ms. Gardino stated that they wanted to have all the projects included in case the funding was received they would be there.

Mr. Campbell stated that the reference in the funding received by the Mat-Su Valley was not clear from the letter and the implication was that it came out of the DUPP funding and that sentence needed to be clarified and was not sure it was relevant to the DUPP Plan and would suggest omitting it.

Amendment to the Motion: and to strike the last sentence regarding the \$1 million to the Mat-Su valley. (Campbell/Heil).

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

Amended Motion: To approve the letter to the DOT&PF regarding the Discretionary Urban Planning Program and to eliminate the numbers 1 - 6 on the list and to strike the last sentence regarding the \$1 million to the Mat-Su valley.

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

e. South Cushman Resurfacing, Sidewalk, and Drainage Improvements Construction Increase (Action Item)

Ms. Gardino stated that there had been changes during construction that necessitated increased funding and since the project was completed, she did not have the authority to do that. Ms. Gardino stated that she thought there had been issues with where they allocated the funding in the contracts.

Motion: To approve the requests for funding for the South Cushman Resurfacing and Sidewalk and Drainage projects. (Walley/Heil).

Discussion: Mayor Ward stated that he had heard nothing but positive things about the South Cushman project.

Mr. Walley stated that he thought that the construction crews had done an amazing job considering the rains and flooding that had hampered construction season, yet they still managed to get it done in time.

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

f. PL Funding Recommendations TIP Development Update (Action Item)

Ms. Gardino explained that extra funding had come available and precipitated the update to the development of the TIP.

Mr. Sattley inquired if the Freight Mobility Study was driven by the program a year or two ago for analyzing roads and bridges for a future pipeline project.

Ms. Gardino stated that it was not driven by that and FMATS could only look within their boundaries and could not extend beyond that.

Mr. Campbell stated that it was still an item that they wrestled with daily and anything they were replacing was being brought up to high standards and the focus was always where the weakest link was in the system.

Ms. Nelson inquired if the Freight Mobility Study was only within the MPO.

Ms. Gardino stated that was the restriction that FMATS had with their planning funds.

Motion: To approve the PL Funding recommendation for the Freight Mobility Plan. (Sattley/Walley).

Discussion: Ms. Heil asked for clarification about how the Freight Mobility Plan was derived.

Mayor Ward stated that he had come to Ms. Gardino with the request last fall and felt there was a need for the study in the City of North Pole, as well as in the City of Fairbanks, and the Borough.

Mr. Sattley inquired if the Railroad was part of this.

Ms. Gardino stated that they were not relocating the railroad but knowing what was coming in and how it was moving in the area was important.

Mr. Sattley stated that he did not understand what the necessity of the project was since it addressed only the area within the MPO boundaries and was not sure where it was going.

Ms. Gardino stated that a lot of the states were doing freight plans, but the State of Alaska did not want to do one and as an MPO they could only do what was in the MPO boundaries. Ms. Gardino stated that an example might be how truck routes were established and establishing some newer truck routes, identifying maintenance issues, highway grade separations and rail spur connections, and how they impacted travel on local and collector roads. Ms. Gardino stated that a comprehensive implementation plan would also be included in the final report.

Ms. Nelson stated that the area seemed narrow.

Ms. Heil stated that they could look at a bigger picture than just what was within the MPO boundaries.

Ms. Gardino stated that the model looked at the whole non-attainment area.

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

g. TIP Development Update

Ms. Gardino provided a brief explanation of the project scoring process that would take place at the meeting immediately following the Policy Committee meeting.

h. Boundary Modification (Action Item)

Ms. Gardino explained that Mayor Ward had come to her with a request to expand the MPO boundary to include the non-attainment area.

Motion: To task the Technical Committee with analyzing the pros and cons of modifying the MPO boundary to the PM_{2.5} boundary. (Cleworth/Walley).

Discussion: Mr. Sattley inquired what areas Mayor Ward was proposing to include in the boundaries particularly in the North Pole area.

Mayor Ward stated that he was looking at the expansion in regard to efficiency, since right now they had two different boards that could be

combined, and the PM_{2.5} area in particular, and it might be a good time to consider this because funding was not an issue since there was none.

Ms. Gardino stated that, by statute, when an MPO was smaller than the non-attainment area you had to formalize an agreement with the entities responsible for non-attainment areas which were not in the MPO.

Ms. Gardino stated that those decisions were not made by the Policy Committee and were made by a Board that received and scored project nominations and made recommendations to the Borough and the Borough made those recommendations to DOT for what projects should be included.

Mr. Sattley inquired what the other Board was called and who was on it.

Ms. Gardino stated that it was called the CMAQ Project Evaluation Board and consisted of seven representatives: one from DEC, one from the Borough, one from FMATS, two from the State DOT, one each from the Cities of Fairbanks and North Pole.

Ms. Heil stated that those items had been coming through FMATS fairly regularly as informational items and if they were to expand the boundaries they would have to change the rules for how they addressed CMAQ.

Ms. Gardino stated that currently there was two or three million dollars-worth of projects that were scored by the CMAQ Board and provided as informational items to the Policy Committee.

Mr. Walley inquired if the only duty of the CMAQ Evaluation Board was to evaluate those projects within the donut area and if they would go away if the Technical Committee decided that the boundaries were to be combined.

Ms. Gardino stated that Mr. Walley was correct.

Mr. Sattley stated that he thought they were attacking the wrong end of the stick in trying to match the MPO boundaries with the non-attainment boundaries. Mr. Sattley stated that it was his recollection that the MPO boundary was established for good reason having to do with population and roads. Mr. Sattley stated that the boundary changes to include the non-attainment area was politically motivated and this was the boundary they ended up with. Mr. Sattley stated that now the Assembly was dealing with the shrunken part of the non-attainment area that would be called the "Air Quality Control Zone." Mr. Sattley stated that he thought they were trying to match those two but were going about it the wrong way. Mr. Sattley stated that if anything they should effectively shrink the non-attainment area boundary to perhaps match the MPO boundary. Mr. Sattley stated that the expansion of the MPO boundary would dilute the funding allocation that was already stretched too thin and he did not support it.

Ms. Nelson stated that she would agree with Mr. Sattley.

Mayor Ward stated that it was not his intention waste anybody's time but since they were already considering part of the planning area he thought it was as good idea for the Technical Committee to review the pros and cons of the model.

Ms. Heil asked for clarification of the motion.

Mr. Sattley stated that for the record he would state that the affect of this aside from his previous comment would be to take available MPO money and spread it even thinner over a larger geographical area which made no sense at all.

Ms. Nelson stated that was her comment in terms of dispersing and diluting funds there should be a discussion about what the purpose and need was for extending the boundaries.

Mayor Ward stated that he would agree with those comments and all were very valid. Mayor Ward stated that in previous discussions he had with Ms. Gardino before this came before the Policy Committee had been about the kinds of projects that were going on in those areas and the kinds of things that needed to happen in those areas. Mayor Ward stated that he thought it was a very good idea for the Technical Committee to review it for the pros and cons as the Policy Committee had never seen a list of the pros and cons.

Ms. Nelson stated that it would take several meetings if they were going to pull road service areas in to gather data and wanted to make sure that they were not expected to turn this around in one meeting.

Mr. Cleworth stated he appreciated Mayor Ward's comments, especially the one about getting rid of a committee, but the dilution hurdle was one he could not get over so he was not going to be voting for it.

Mr. Campbell stated that he was not sure what the implications would be in terms of expanding their MPO boundaries but thought it would call into question a lot of previous work done in terms of studies such as the freight mobility study. Mr. Campbell stated that the MPO boundaries were set up on a certain urban density and a lot of that was based on how those things were set and there was an agreement that within those boundaries certain issues were paramount and people worked together to plan because of the density. Mr. Campbell stated that when you started looking at that map your were getting into some less dense areas and while he personally respected the idea of consolidating boards, he did not like the idea of taking on a whole new swath of territory in the face of increasing federal requirements, obligations to meet performance measures, and things like that. Mr. Campbell stated that all

those things tended to accumulate over time and he thought that their work would get nothing but more difficult in the future. Mr. Campbell stated that he would decline to vote for this as well, because he did not think it was really a good thing overall to expand their existing boundaries.

Mr. Sattley stated when Mr. Campbell used the word “density” it reminded him that when the MPO was set up to begin with it was based on census districts and those census districts had to have a certain population, and there was a provision for linking them and they were trying to get a population over 50,000 but as you got out there the density got thinner and thinner. Mr. Sattley stated that he was glad to hear some support.

Mayor Ward asked Ms. Gardino for clarification if they had the non-attainment area still had to be considered when planning.

Ms. Gardino stated that all of the projects in the non-attainment “donut” area were considered when preparing the TIP and there was a requirement in the long-range plan that they had to get a list of all the projects the State and Borough planned and look at all the projects in that area.

Mayor Ward stated that he was just asking for the consideration.

Vote on Motion: One in Favor (Ward). 6 Opposed. (Sattley, Walley, Cleworth, Hopkins, Campbell, Heil). Motion Failed.

9. Public Comment Period (3 minute limit)

No public comment.

10. Other Issues

No other issues.

11. Informational Items

a. FY16 Capital Budget Clarification

Ms. Gardino stated that she wanted to provide clarification because there was some confusion that FMATS had received \$10 million dollars and they had not.

b. Obligations/Offsets

Ms. Gardino stated that she was thrilled to report that 38 percent of their program was already obligated, so the DOT was definitely doing something right in her book, and then went over the list included in the meeting packet.

12. Policy Committee Comments

Mr. Sattley stated that he would like a nutshell version of the boundary shifts for the Northern Region and wondered whether Valdez had gone to Central Region or somewhere else.

Mr. Campbell stated that the original concept was to move most of the ferry-based communities into the Southcoast region which would include Valdez

but the new Commissioner decided that Valdez-Cordova needed to stay with Northern Region so it was now back with Northern Region.

Mr. Sattley inquired if there was part of DOT that was referred to as ferry-based.

Mr. Campbell responded that they were similar in their nature as to the type of work that went on there from the DOT perspective so it made sense to have all those grouped into one.

Mr. Sattley stated that it was so short of a duration of shifting that there wasn't a lot of efforts lost.

Mr. Campbell stated that it was three or four levels above them but the field work was still the same people doing the work.

Mr. Cleworth stated that it was good to be back and welcomed Mr. Campbell as the new face on the board.

Mr. Cleworth stated that he read the minutes of the prior meeting with a great deal of interest regarding the 1987 MOU and agreed with Mr. Campbell.

Mr. Cleworth stated that there was a motion made some years ago by this body to come up to date and get rid of the archaic 1987 MOU because that document reflected a time in history when DOT called the shots and it gave the cities and the boroughs protection and that had all changed with FMATS and the MPO. Mr. Cleworth stated that the Cushman project was a neat project, and a landmark street that absolutely had to be done this summer and had to be done in the same manner as the South Cushman since time was of the essence so we did not want to cut ourselves short and it was an absolutely needless step since there was no zoning, planning or other issues. Mr. Cleworth stated that the City of Fairbanks had not adopted anything in the Vision Fairbanks Plan. Mr. Cleworth stated that when the decision was made by FMATS to make the Illinois Street Bridge one way going south, it had been against the Vision Fairbanks Plan. Mr. Cleworth stated that the document, to him, was immaterial, but if the Cushman project went before the Borough and the Borough decided that it went against the plan, it would still go out to bid which might cause a turf war between the City and the Borough. Mr. Cleworth inquired how the process could be streamlined because the project needed to go out to bid this summer.

Mr. Cleworth stated that he would encourage them to look for ways to streamline this process for projects that were City streets in the same corridor.

Ms. Heil stated that she wanted to remind everyone that the air quality regulations for the State went into effect on February 28th.

Mayor Ward stated that he was driving down the Johansen the other day and there was a transition in the paving on one of the bridges that he thought they would fix last summer but had still not been fixed.

Mayor Ward stated that he appreciated everyone's' comments today and the lively discussion.

13. Adjourn

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

The next Policy Committee Meeting is scheduled Wednesday, March 18, 2015, at 10 a.m. in the Main Conference Room, DOT&PF, 2301 Peger Road, Fairbanks.

Approved: _____



Mayor Bryce Ward, Chair
FMATS Policy Committee

Date: _____

3/18/15