



**POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING**

**Main Conference Room, State of AK DOT&PF, 2301 Peger Road, Fbks., AK  
Meeting Minutes – March 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**

<b>Attendee</b>	<b>Representative Organization</b>
*Bryce Ward, Chair	Mayor, City of North Pole
*Christine Nelson for Luke Hopkins, Vice Chair	Mayor, Fairbanks North Star Borough
*Michael Schmetzer for John Eberhart	Mayor, City of Fairbanks
*Rob Campbell for David Miller	Northern Region Director, DOT&PF
*Guy Sattley	FNSB Assembly Member
*Perry Walley	City Council Member, City of Fairbanks
*Cindy Heil	DEC, Division of Air Quality
**+Donna Gardino	FMATS MPO Coordinator
**Deborah Todd	FMATS Administrative Assistant
Kellen Spillman	FNSB Community Planning
+Judy Chapman	DOT&PF Planning
**Margaret Carpenter	DOT&PF Planning
Shelley Potter	DOT&PF Planning
+Brian Lindamood	Alaska Railroad
David Miller	Northern Region Director, DOT&PF
Janice Golub	FNSB

*\*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 18, 2015 Agenda**

**Motion:** To approve the March 18, 2015 Agenda. (Sattley/Heil).

**Discussion:** No Discussion.

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

**5. Approval of the February 18, 2015 Meeting Minutes**

**Motion:** To approve the February 18, 2015 meeting minutes. (Sattley/Walley).

**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 introduced Ms. Heil who was the representative for DEC until a new Director was appointed and Mr. Campbell who was sitting in for Mr. Miller, the new Regional Director of DOT&PF. Ms. Gardino presented highlights from meetings, presentations, and other activities that FMATS had participated in from the monthly report included in the meeting packet.

**b. FMATS' Policy Subcommittee Report**

Ms. Gardino stated that she was working on the policy manual and should have it out this week to for review by the Technical Committee and Subcommittee members.

**7. Old Business**

No old business.

**8. New Business**

**a. Cushman Complete Streets PH2 Funding (Action Item)**

Ms. Gardino presented the information included in the meeting packet regarding the shrinking State fund balances. Ms. Gardino stated that the money for the Cushman Complete Streets project came out of State funds, so they needed to come up with that funding through the various appropriations. Ms. Gardino stated that a balance of \$900,000 for change orders was not unreasonable in her estimation but they would be cutting it close and introduced Mr. Schmetzer to further explain the reason behind the request for additional funding.

Mr. Schmetzer explained that the goal was to advertise the Complete Streets project on April 10, 2015. Mr. Schmetzer stated that a miscommunication had occurred due to a \$300,000 request embedded in an email to FMATS and the other \$300,000 was missed by the City of Fairbanks during the accounting process.

Ms. Gardino stated that part of the problem was the way the TORAs were designed. Ms. Gardino stated that the TORA to the City was for a lump sum and the City thought they had more money than they actually had because the funding amounts were not broken down between design and construction. Ms. Gardino stated that FMATS had a policy that any requests for additional design funding had to be made to the FMATS Policy Committee and she did not have the authority to approve those requests.

Mr. Campbell inquired if the \$300,000 decreased the FMATS fund from \$900,000 to \$600,000.

Ms. Gardino stated that Mr. Campbell was correct.

Mr. Campbell inquired if there was a method to program the remaining funds and thought that there were going to be three projects competing for those funds this summer. Mr. Campbell inquired what method would be used to prioritize the distribution of those funds.

Ms. Gardino stated that the requests would be scrutinized by her office and it would be allocated on a first-come, first-serve basis.

Mr. Campbell stated that as a Policy Committee they needed to be thinking about where they would be placing their money and it would be an excellent discussion to have with DOT project managers to let them know that there was not an infinite amount of money available to them and they needed to keep their projects within budget and get their funding requests submitted to FMATS in a timely manner.

Mr. Campbell suggested that the Policy Committee receive a monthly update about those projects to keep them ahead of any funding requests, since the available funding was getting depleted.

Ms. Gardino suggested a weekly update.

Mr. Walley stated that he knew the project was important so he would make a motion to fund it.

**Motion:** To approve \$600,000 in design funding for the Cushman Complete Streets project, using SB230 funds. (Walley/Campbell).

**Discussion:** Mayor Ward asked what the contingency amount was for projects.

Mr. Campbell stated that ten percent was a reasonable ballpark number and did not know if DOT had a specific policy to retain ten percent contingency and hoped the project team would be able to keep that amount down to ten percent.

Mayor Ward inquired what the total project estimate had been for Cushman.

Ms. Gardino stated that the estimate was \$8.4 million dollars including engineering and ICAP.

Mr. Schmetzer stated that it was a complicated project and there was 18 inches of concrete throughout most of the Cushman road.

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

**b. TIP Development Update - Project Scores**

Ms. Gardino stated that she had received the project scores from everyone and she was programming the TIP. Ms. Gardino stated that the Technical Committee would review some of the scores and she wanted to keep the Policy Committee in the loop. Ms. Gardino explained that she would be amending the TIP to include FTA funds to give the Borough access to those funds for purchase of paratransit vehicles and buses.

Mr. Campbell asked Ms. Gardino how many dollars' worth of projects were currently in the TIP ranking system.

Ms. Gardino stated that it was fiscally constrained and based on all the projects in the short range of the MTP. Ms. Gardino stated that she would estimate that there were over \$50 million dollars' worth of projects over four years.

**c. North Pole Road/Rail Reduction Program (Action Item)**

Ms. Gardino explained the DOT letter in the meeting packet responding to FMATS' comments on the STIP Amendment. Ms. Gardino stated that they had made a comment on the North Pole Rail Reduction project and she wanted to bring it to everybody's attention that if they wanted to have this project included in the STIP, they needed to write a letter saying that. Ms. Gardino stated that she included the project in the TIP. Ms. Gardino explained that she also found a grade-separated railroad crossing project at

Peridot and the project called for eliminating the crossing and was concerning to her because that project was still in the STIP.

Mayor Ward stated that there were two conflicting projects in the STIP

Ms. Gardino stated that it looked like that in the ten year plan there was a grade separation project going on but in the meantime there was an FMATS-funded project that DOT had oversight on and she thought that they all needed to have a meeting to get on the same page with what they were going to do on this project.

Mayor Ward stated that he agreed and if the two projects were not jiving they definitely needed to find out where the breakdown in communication was and get to the bottom of it.

Mr. Lindamood explained the history of the project that he was aware of and stated that something was stuck in by DOT as a placeholder was moving to the top and they needed to sit down and try to make it all work.

Ms. Nelson inquired if the project scope was even broader than the original project.

Ms. Gardino stated that it realigned the railroad out of North Pole and eliminated nine at-grade crossings so it was a pretty big deal.

Mr. Sattley inquired if the project would be built in phases.

Mayor Ward stated that an appropriate action item might be to have FMATS meet with DOT and the Railroad to hash out the project details.

**Motion:** To request the DOT&PF, the City of North Pole, FMATS, and the Alaska Railroad meet to discuss the grade-separation projects planned for the 2016-2019 STIP. (Walley/Nelson).

**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. Response from DOT&P on STIP Amendment 12 Comments**

Ms. Gardino explained that the communication received from DOT was included in the meeting packet. Ms. Gardino stated that STIP Amendment #13 was approved and STIP Amendment #14 would come out any day.

**b. Old Nenana/Ester Hill Rehabilitation Open House March 18, 2015**

Ms. Gardino stated that the Old Nenana Open House would be March 18, 2015.

**c. McGrath Road Upgrades Open House March 31, 2015**

Ms. Gardino explained that the McGrath Road Upgrades project Open House was March 31, 2015.

Ms. Gardino stated that the DOT&PF Super Open House was April 18, 2015. Ms. Gardino stated that the Super Open House was at Hutchison High School from 10am to 2pm and there would be people available to discuss the various projects.

**d. Obligations/Offsets**

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

**12. Policy Committee Comments**

Mr. Campbell stated that he had three or four things that he wanted to talk about. Mr. Campbell stated that he wanted to reiterate that the DOT Super Open House was a collaborative effort and was really a big deal. Mr. Campbell stated that he thought the open houses were a much less confrontational and a much more dispassionate crowd and gave a fairer evaluation of projects with an exchange of ideas and community-based focus as well as being kind of fun.

Mr. Sattley inquired about the Bennett Road paving project this summer and how DOT weighed the options for a project like that.

Mr. Campbell stated that it began with a planning level discussion such as the ones at Policy Committee and eventually they rolled up in the system and they went forward with a scope that had already been decided through the planning process.

Mr. Sattley inquired if there was a maintenance savings on paving a project like that.

Mr. Campbell stated that it was easier to pave a road with Federal dollars and not spend a lot on maintenance, as opposed to having a gravel road where a State-funded grader had to be sent out to blade that road regularly.

Mr. Sattley inquired if there was any provision for a place for people to ride their horses on gravel for the Bennett Road project.

Ms. Gardino stated that she attended the Bennett Road Open House and there were concerns from people about not wanting the road paved, but their concerns were more about the fact that they did not understand the dust issue on the road. Ms. Gardino stated that at the end of the meeting everyone seemed to understand why it made sense to pave the road.

Mr. Campbell stated that Federal reauthorization was looming on the horizon sometime in May that the current extension expired and that could influence DOT's ability to spend money. Mr. Campbell stated that one of the unfortunate things that happened with an extension was that they received a portion of their

allowance so when they got only a percentage of their money, it was much more difficult to spend that percentage.

Mr. Campbell stated that an operational review was held the last three weeks on Badger Road since there had been a lot of concern about the safety of Badger Road in the past year. Mr. Campbell stated that they had reviewed turning movements, speed limits, sight distance problems, and driveways that were inappropriately located. Mr. Campbell stated that they did not have the final report yet but generally Badger Road was, for the most part, operating well in terms of speed limits and most people were going about 45 miles per hour out there.

Ms. Golub noted the Browns Quarry area had been built up so high that it was blocking the sun making big patches of ice in that area of Badger Road.

Mr. Campbell stated that he only received an overview and did not specifically walk the road.

Mr. Miller stated that DOT had shade issues everywhere and differential melting of the road surface. Mr. Miller stated that he was not sure they could affect what Browns Hill did with their stockpiles.

Mr. Campbell stated that the issue was everywhere there was a bridge and there would be icy spots and maintenance was aware of them and sanded them.

Mr. Campbell stated that he thought the Badger Road report was good.

Mr. Campbell stated that this was his final meeting and Mr. Miller was the new Regional Director and would be representing DOT. Mr. Campbell stated that he appreciated all their insights and thoughts on the projects and hoped that in their collaborative efforts they had done the people here well.

Mr. Sattley inquired if Mr. Campbell was still Acting Director in Anchorage.

Mr. Campbell stated that he had been the permanent Director in Anchorage for the past four years and was now the Acting Director in South Coast Region as well.

Mr. Sattley inquired what the South Coast Region consisted of.

Mr. Campbell explained the current boundaries for the South Coast Region.

Mr. Sattley stated that Mr. Miller should not assume that every Policy Committee meeting was as gentle as this one had been and that he was glad to have had Mr. Campbell on board for the time he was there.

Mr. Walley stated that he appreciated that Mr. Campbell had been on the Committee and thanked him for the knowledge, insight, and perspective he brought to it.

Mr. Schmetzer thanked Mr. Campbell and stated that it had been fun working with him and wished him luck.

Mayor Ward thanked Mr. Campbell for his time on the Policy Committee and stated that his input and knowledge had been invaluable. Mayor Ward wished Mr. Campbell the best of luck in the Central Region and South Coast Region.

Mayor Ward stated that he also wanted to say thank you to Ms. Edwards who had moved on to another position for her input and Ms. Heil for stepping in to replace her.

Mayor Ward wished everyone the best of luck in their future endeavors.

**13. Adjourn**

Motion to adjourn. (Campbell/Heil). The meeting adjourned at 10:48 a.m.

The next Policy Committee Meeting is scheduled Wednesday, April 15, 2015, at 10 a.m. in the Main Conference Room, DOT&PF, 2301 Peger Road, Fairbanks.

Approved:  Date: 4/15/15  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor Bryce Ward, Chair  
FMATS Policy Committee