



## MINUTES

Policy Board Meeting

City Council Chambers 389 Spruce St.

May 21, 2020, 6:00 PM

### Member Present

Chairman Joe Statler, Vice - Chair Commissioner Tom Bloom - Monongalia County, Treasurer Mayor Lewis - Granville, Commissioner Edward Hawkins - Monongalia County, Commissioner Sean Sikora - Monongalia County, Councilperson David Harshbarger - City of Morgantown, Councilperson Steven Blinco-Star City, Ron Justice - West Virginia University, Brian Carr - WVDOH, Dave Bruffy - Mountain Line, Mayor Bill Kawecki - City of Morgantown, Councilperson Jenifer Selin - City of Morgantown.

### Absent:

Mike Kelly - Board of Education, Councilperson Janice Goodwin - City of Westover

### 1. Call to Order

With a quorum present, Chairman Statler called the meeting to order. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this Policy Board meeting was held as a teleconference.

### 2. Public Comment Period

No public comment.

### 3. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Austin noted that the minutes of Policy Board meetings in November, January, and March are included in the agenda package. Commissioner Bloom moved to approve the minutes as presented; seconded by Councilperson Selin. With no discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

#### **4. Committee Report**

##### *a. Citizens Advisory Committee*

Mr. Austin noted that CAC recommended approval of requested TIP amendments and reports. Mr. Austin noted that the CAC will elect a new committee chair at the next meeting. Mr. Austin noted that there are some vacant CAC positions to be filled.

##### *b. Finance Report*

Treasurer Mayor Lewis noted that the financial transaction records of the MMMPO from January to April were included in the agenda package. Mayor Lewis noted that she will make a combined report for the four-month period unless the Board prefers to do it otherwise. She noted that the beginning balance of January was \$6, 133.89. There were deposits of \$191,577.85 and expenditure of \$131,996.96, leaving a balance of \$65,714.78 at the end of April.

Commissioner Bloom made a motion to approve the finance report as presented; seconded by Councilperson Selin. Without discussion, the motion unanimously passed.

##### *c. Executive Directors Report*

Mr. Austin noted that the MMMPO staff has been working on revising the Public Involvement Policy and enhancing the virtual public involvement process. He noted that the MMMPO staff has also added a chat function to the MMMPO's website and created accounts for Twitter and LinkedIn. The MMMPO staff has also been assisting the County planning staff on developing subdivision guidelines. Mr. Austin noted that the MMMPO is working with Mountain Line, WVU and the City of Morgantown on a grant application to integrate advanced technology for transit and parking services in the area. The MMMPO staff is also working with Dr. Address of the WVU School of Public Health on an AARP grant application to enhance outreach to the underserved population in the area. Mr. Austin noted that he has been updating the board with the staff activities every two weeks since the pandemic began. Councilperson Selin expressed her appreciation of the biweekly update on staff activities.

#### **5. Introduction of New Employee**

Ms. Shuey introduced herself to the Policy Board. Chairmen Statler welcomed Ms. Shuey to the MMMPO Staff.

#### **6. Update on Mountain Line Transit Study**

Mr. Bruffy made a presentation on the development of the Mountain Line Transit Study. Chairman Statler asked if the study looked into similar communities for best practice. Mr. Bruffy noted that one of the reasons for choosing the consultants is their experience in communities of similar situations. Several examples from other places were cited.

Mr. Carr noted that low income families often have limited internet access and they are more likely to use transit service. He noted that it is a challenge to reach out to those populations through virtual public

meetings during the pandemic. Mr. Bruffy agreed and noted transportation equity is a key element of the study. The study team is to develop strategies to improve regional transportation equity in 3-5 years.

Councilperson Selin asked if the PRT structure could be used as a walking path if the PRT service is suspended due to the pandemic. Mr. Austin noted that he thought it could be used with modifications to prevent pedestrians from electronic hazards. Mr. Justice concurred that there are several potential hazards that would need to be modified if the PRT track were to be used for pedestrians.

## **7. Transportation Improvement Program**

Mr. Austin noted the West Virginia Department of Transportation-Division of Highways has requested the TIP amendments, including deleting the Deckers creek landslide repair project, adding the Cheat Road project, adding the University Ave Campus Dr Widening project, and adding the I-79 Uffington Bridge Substructure Repair project.

Mr. Bruffy moved to approve the requested TIP Amendments; seconded by Commissioner Bloom. Mayor Kawecki asked about the deletion of the Deckers Creek project. Mr. Austin noted that the project has been folded into a resurfacing project in the vicinity..

Councilperson Selin noted that the Deckers Creek project has safety elements and it is important to keep those elements in the new project. Councilperson Selin asked for more updates about the project in the future. Mr. Carr noted that he will get in touch with the WVDOH's administrative staff for information on this project.

Mayor Kawecki asked about the schedule for the Campus Dr project. Mr. Carr noted that he does not know the specific timeline of the project. The construction is expected to start soon, but it is unlikely to take place within this fiscal year.

Without further discussion; the motion passed unanimously.

## **8. Coordinated Human Service Transit Plan**

Mr. Austin noted that the local human services transportation providers are required to update their Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan approximately every four years. The West Virginia Department of Transportation Public Transit Division has this task performed for each agency in the State through a consulting contract. The draft Plan establishes goals and objectives for Mountain Lion and the MMMPO to maintain and grow our human services transportation as well as alternative forms of transportation including the Van Pool program.

Mr. Bruffy noted that the plan reviewed the coordination of transit providers in the region, including neighboring counties. The adoption of the plan is required for many types of federal grant applications.

Commissioner Bloom moved to adopt the plan as presented; seconded by Mayor Kawecki. Without discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

## **9. Amendment of Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan**

Mr. Austin noted that the amendment is to add the recommendations of the January Policy Board prioritization meeting to the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan. The language for adoption is presented as part

of the attached Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan's Executive Summary under the heading MMMPO Policy Board Implementation Strategy. Mr. Austin noted that the TTAC and CAC have both recommended adoption of the "MMMPO Policy Board Implementation Strategy" as part of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan.

Commissioner Bloom moved to adopt the amendment as presented; seconded by councilperson Selin. Councilperson Harshbarger asked the difference between the project No. 9 and the project No. 4. Mr. Austin noted that they represent two alternatives for pedestrian crossing on Don Knotts Blvd. Without further discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

## **10. Acceptance of the 2019 Traffic Count Report**

Mr. Austin noted that a draft report for the 2019 traffic count has been shared with the board. The Report includes a summary of all of the MMMPO's traffic counts taken for the last three years. The TTAC and the CAC have both unanimously recommended that the Policy Board accept this document.

Mr. Carr noted that the overall traffic volume had decreased. Mr. Austin noted that potential causes of the decrease include the changes of class schedule and location at WVU and new developments in the Westridge and Mylan Park area. Mr. Bruffy noted that there are fast growing housing developments near the campus, making the campus more accessible by walking, which further decreased the demand for driving. He also noted that WVU has been working toward developing a more walking oriented campus.

Councilperson Selin moved to accept the 2019 traffic count report; seconded by Mr. Bruffy; with no discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

## **11. Update on Ongoing Projects-WVDOH**

Mr. Carr noted that the WVDOH plans to hold additional meetings for the Greenbag Rd project and the Van Voorhis Rd project. The Division is waiting for approval from the FHWA on the use of virtual public meetings to replace traditional face-to-face public meetings.

Mr. Carr noted that the project at the intersection of Greenbag Rd and WV 7 is to begin construction in the summer.

Mr. Carr noted that both the Mileground Rd project and the Collins Ferry Rd/University Ave intersection project are in the right-of-way phase. The two projects will move to the construction phase once right-of-way issues have been resolved.

Chairman Statler asked about the Mon Blvd slide project. Mr. Carr noted that he has no information regarding the project at this time.

Chairman Statler noted that some construction signs have been posted on the highway between Star City and Mountain Morris for a long time without any work in progress. Mr. Carr noted that there has been some contract issues with that project. Mr. Carr noted that he will contact the district office for an update on it.

Mayor Kawecki asked if the lighting project along the Mon Blvd has been completed. Mr. Carr noted that the project has been completed.

Councilperson Selin noted that it is expected that more pedestrians will be on Mon Blvd commuting between the WVU campuses. The roadway condition on Mon Blvd is of great importance to pedestrian safety.

She also noted that the WVDOH set up a temporary traffic light on Greenbag Rd and Deckers Creek Rd as a reroute because of the construction on WV7. She noted that the traffic light works well and hopes the WVDOH would consider keeping it at the intersection.

## **12. Recognition of Outgoing CAC Chairman**

Mr. Austin noted that Mr. Rice submitted his resignation as Chairman of the Citizens Advisory Committee at the March meeting. To recognize Mr. Rice's service to the committee, a resolution of appreciation has been drafted. Mr. Austin then read the resolution.

Mayor Kawecki moved to adopt the resolution of appreciation as presented; seconded by Mr. Bruffy; With no discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

## **13. Other Business**

Mr. Carr noted he just checked the DOH's project tracking system and found out that the slide repair project on Mon Blvd will move into the design phase in June. The district office will identify specific solutions for this project. Councilperson Selin expressed her appreciation for this information.

Mr. Statler noted that the US Census Bureau is conducting a decennial census survey. He encouraged the community members to complete the survey, as its data is essential to the allocation of federal funds. He also encouraged the public to exercise their right-to-vote in the upcoming election.

Councilperson Selin asked if there are any new FHWA funding programs aimed to boost local economies impacted by the COVID-19. Mr. Austin noted that the WV Association of MPOs is discussing with the WVDOH and the FHWA on the use of COVID-19 grant for the local transportation project and potential federal grant with local match. He is tracking with ASHTO and the national association of MPOs on the development of new federal funding streams associated with the pandemic.

Councilperson Selin asked if there are any shovel-ready projects to take advantage of potential increase of federal funds. Mr. Carr noted that most shovel-ready projects are resurfacing projects. For large construction projects, it is very difficult to be shovel-ready due to the complexity of environmental process and right-of-way issues.

## **14. Meeting Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 7:23 PM.