

## GREATER MORGANTOWN MPO

City Council Chambers

August 20, 2009 Minutes

7:00 PM

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Asel Kennedy, Joe Fisher, Joe Statler, Bob Bell, Charles Byrer, Patty Lewis, Mike Kelly, Don Spencer, Bill Byrne

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** David Bruffy, Perry Keller, Janice Goodwin

**MPO DIRECTOR:** Bill Austin

Charles Byrer was introduced as the new MPO member, replacing Ron Justice.

**I. CALL TO ORDER:** Mr. Kennedy called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

**II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Mr. Kelly moved to approve the minutes of June 18, 2009 as submitted; seconded by Mr. Bell. The motion unanimously passed.

### **III. PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

**Bill Rice / 1225 Bakers Ridge Road.** Mr. Rice addressed the traffic problems on the northeast side of town. With the new entrance from Baker's Ridge Road to the new University High School being completed, residents in the area would like to see the installation of a traffic light. The DOH had previously stated a major traffic study should be done reflecting the intersection at Stewartstown Road and Point Marion Road. A DOH official recently appeared on the morning radio show and he stated the intersection at West Run and Point Marion Roads, near Easton School, was an unsafe intersection. They would try to obtain federal monies and apply for grants to remedy the situation. Frank DeVano, Superintendent of Schools, has arranged with the Sheriff's Department and a private firm to assist in traffic control at the school. DOH would like a traffic study done within the next few months. Mr. Rice is concerned with traffic flow and congestion in these areas and would like to know what is being done as far as a traffic study and when a traffic study will be performed.

### **IV. DIRECTOR'S REPORT:**

#### **A. CORRESPONDENCE:**

1. Correspondence has been received from the DOH regarding the MPO's recommendation for a bike trail on Monongahela Blvd. since the Rail Trail will be closed;
2. A TIP request was received from the DOH;
3. Letters have been received from the Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Authority approving the UPWP;
4. The match from both the County and City has been received;

## **B. MPO OPERATIONS STATUS REPORT:**

MPO staff activities since the last MPO meeting included:

Preparation of a draft of the MPO by-laws has been completed; The MPO offices have been moved to their new location in the lower level of the Airport; An outline for a TDM Study, involving major area businesses staggering their starting times to alleviate heavy traffic flows has been prepared; Staff has coordinated with DOH for traffic counts at West Run at 15 minute intervals to better understand peak traffic times at that corridor. The office computer system has been updated with new traffic modeling software. The existing MPO traffic model network is being converted from QRS II to Transcad by the Transcad developers; An agreement has been received and signed with the State Auditor's Office for the MPO's audit; A draft for the MPO's Personnel Policy is being developed; He met with the Bicycle Advisory Board to review the bike path on Monongalia Blvd.

Mr. Austin then introduced Mr. Bill Wood of the DOH's Program Planning Administrative Division to discuss possible changes for Rt. 119 signage. Mr. Wood advised the Policy Board that the American Association of State Highway Offices (AASHTO) is responsible for the placement of state highways. With the building of the two remaining sections of the Mon-Fayette Expressway, the State of Pennsylvania will ask AASHTO to resign that section of the Mon-Fayette Expressway as U.S. 119. Pennsylvania wishes to immediately place U.S. 119 signage on the interstate and overlap from Exit 1 on I-68, across Cheat Lake. Mr. Wood stated he would much rather see the signage remain through downtown Morgantown, follow out the Mileground to Easton and remain at the bottom of 857 where it ties in and overlaps 857, get onto the interstate and follow across Cheat Lake. Mr. Wood advised this is an informational item and has mapping available for an informal discussion after the meeting. There is a deadline of mid September since Pennsylvania has made application to ASHTO. Mr. Wood will be meeting with the Traffic Engineering Department.

Mr. Kennedy suggested the MPO Director, the County, City and members of the Board of education arrange a meeting with Mr. Wood on Monday, August 23 to more thoroughly discuss this issue. Mr. Kennedy asked Mr. Wood what impact, if any, this would have if Stewartstown Road was downgraded.

Mr. Wood stated Stewartstown Road would lose its signage, but could still be eligible get federal funding, but it would no longer be a U.S. highway.

Mr. Bryne stated that, at this time, he doesn't want to take 119 outside of the downtown area.

Mr. Statler questioned whether a signage change would adversely affect snow removal near the new University High School. Mr. Wood advised it would not.

## **C. Presentation on MPO Operations:**

Mr. Austin presented a PowerPoint presentation that discussed the need for and formation of an MPO; their lists of duties and responsibilities; how they are funded and what is expected. As part of the presentation, Mr. Austin detailed how the proposed Bylaws would change the MPO's structure and its guiding principles which will not change as a result of the revision to the Bylaws. He also discussed the MPO committees, addressing their powers and duties, membership and representation, organization, meetings and voting, financial obligations, committees and amendments. Mr. Austin also advised that once the website is up to date the presentation and by-laws will be available on the website. Mr. Kelly thought the presentation

was a good idea and would like to see this done once a year to keep the public updated on the MPO's progress.

## **V. SECRETARY/TREASURER'S REPORT:**

Mr. Bell reported a beginning balance of \$18,044.22, a total of 14 checks were written, 5 deposits made, leaving an ending balance of \$70,194. Mr. Kennedy advised that both Michael Paugh and Bill Austin are county employees and their exact monthly costs are billed to the MPO. The MPO then reimburses the county. Effective July 1, 2009, Michael Paugh was hired as a full time employee, and his time will be split between the MPO and Monongalia County Planning Commission. Mr. Kelly moved to accept the financial report; seconded by Mr. Fisher. The motion unanimously passed.

## **VI. OLD BUSINESS:**

### **A. Audit**

Mr. Kennedy advised the audit for fiscal years 2007 and 2008 will begin the week of August 23.

## **VII. NEW BUSINESS:**

### **a. Memorandum of Understanding Between the Greater Morgantown MPO and Monongalia County Urban Mass Transit.**

Mr. Kennedy called on Mr. Austin to present the item. Mr. Austin explained that a memorandum of understanding is required by the Federal Transportation Administration to formalize the relationship between the MPO and Mountain Line Transportation System. The Memorandum states that the agencies are working together to on their planning efforts and there is work to minimize duplication of efforts since they utilize the same funding sources. He is requesting the MPO authorize him to sign the memorandum on behalf of the MPO. Mr. Kelly moved Mr. Austin be authorized to sign on behalf of the MPO; seconded by Mr. Byrne. The motion carried unanimously.

### **b. Approval of MPO Bylaws.**

The Bylaws Revision Committee (Joe Fisher, Mike Kelly, Bill Austin and Don Spencer) proposed a list of 14 changes to be made to the MPO Bylaws. The revisions, as reported by Joe Fisher, are:

The name is changed to the Morgantown Monongalia Metropolitan Planning Organization.

**Article 5.** *Removing any member who has been absent from Policy Board Meetings for two consecutive meetings from the number required for a quorum.*

**Article 3.** *The Policy Board may request that an appointing board replace a member who has been absent for three consecutive meetings,*

**Article 3.** *It is noted that Board Members serve at the discretion of the appointing board.*

**Article 3.** *Eliminate the provisions for establishing the organization written into the document since the organization has been established.*

**Article 4.** *The Secretary-Treasurer position was renamed the Treasurer. The Treasurer is given the responsibility for oversight of the MPO's finances with the responsibilities for Minutes transferred to the Executive Director. Payments for the organization are prepared by the Executive Director and approved by the Treasurer.*

**Article 4.** *The Executive Director position was defined to include the Secretary's responsibilities. The Executive Director must be hired or dismissed by a two-thirds vote of the Policy Board. The Executive Director is charged with executing contracts approved by the Board in the absence of the Chair as well as developing personnel policies for the approval of the Board and employing personnel on behalf of the MPO under the policies established by the Board.*

**Article 7.** *The MPO Board Finance Committee is established as the Chair and the Vice Chair of their designees and the Executive Director.*

**Article 5.** *A quorum is defined as 50 percent plus 1.*

**Article 5.** *In special instances an advertised emergency meeting may be held by conference call which will be available to the public. (Research showed that a provision for e-mail voting would not be in accord with open meetings laws.)*

**Article 7.** *It is proposed that the Transportation Technical Coordinating Advisory Committee (TTCAC) be reconstituted to consist of staff appointments from the member agencies. (Please see the draft Bylaws for the new membership.) The Executive Director of the MPO is designated chair of this committee.*

**Article 7.** *The Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) is revised to include citizen appointments for each agency participating in the MPO. Each agency will have the same number of CAC members as the appointing agency has on the MPO Policy Board.*

**Article 7.** *Establish Policy Advisory Committee consisting of an Executive Committee made up of the MPO Director and the two Policy Board Members and a Committee of the whole representing government agencies and the community. The PAC is to advise the Policy Board on upcoming legislative issues. The Committee of the whole is to meet at least once a year.*

**Article 7.** *It is clarified that an ad-hoc Committee Chair may appoint committee members to an ad-hoc committee from outside of the MPO for their expertise.*

Mr. Byrne moved the Bylaws be approved as amended, subject to grammatical errors; seconded by Mr. Kelly. The motion carried unanimously.

Mrs. Lewis advised in Article 7 Section 4, Granville was accidentally omitted. Mr. Byrne also advised Article 4 goes from Section 1 to Section 3, with no Section 2. Mr. Austin stated these errors would be corrected.

### **C. Transportation Improvement Program Amendments**

Mr. Kennedy asked Mr. Austin to discuss the proposed TIP Amendments. Mr. Austin deferred to Mr. Warner of the Division of Highways. Mr. Warner discussed Item b. Mr. Austin discussed item a.

**a. Signalization at US 119 and I-68.** The project would cause the installation of a traffic signal stretching to and from the West near the Wal Mart. Presently, signalization is only to and from the East. This project will coordinate to create a fully functional signalized area.

**b. Removal of Project X3331 109 0005 Mon-Fayette Expressway interchange.** Mr. Warner of the DOH reported that proposed traffic does not justify this 19 million dollar project. This will free up the funds to possibly be used on other needed projects. Mr. Byrne asked if this money may now become available to Morgantown for other projects. Mr. Warner stated the MPO could try to get a portion of the funds, although the DOH cannot make any commitment for those funds.

Mr. Kelly moved for a joint motion to amend the TIP to include signalization at US 119 and I-68 and remove Project X331 109 005; Mr. Fisher seconded it. The motion carried unanimously.

#### **D. Recommendation of Section 5310 Application for purchase of van for In Touch and Concerned.**

Mr. Austin reported that In Touch and Concerned Inc. is seeking a Section 5310 grant for the purchase of a wheel chair accessible van that would enable them to provide more services to residents of the area. They currently coordinate with Mountain Line to augment Mountain Lines services. Mr. Austin stated that the grant process requires applicant agencies to coordinate with other agencies in the area to insure that efforts funded by the same grants are not duplicated. Mr. Austin stated that In Touch and Concerned has performed their due diligence in this respect and the MPO needs to certify that there has been appropriate intergovernmental coordination. Mr. Kennedy stated he has received a number of these requests from different agencies that involve federal highway dollars. To date, they have just been logged in. The Board authorized Mr. Austin to send a letter to In Touch and Concerned. Mr. Austin will include these types of requests as an agenda item. Mr. Fisher suggested preparing a consent agenda and approving all requests at one time.

#### **E. Recommended Bicycle Lane Striping on Monongahela Blvd between 8<sup>th</sup> Street and Evansdale Drive.**

Mr. Austin stated correspondence from the DOH indicated there was the possibility that the bicycle lane recommended by the Morgantown Bicycle Board could be implemented. They asked if the sponsoring agency could submit a well defined plan and if they would be responsible for signage and striping costs. Mr. Austin will take this recommendation to the TAC and continue to work with the City for a plan to outline that would be acceptable to DOH for implementation. Mr. Spencer told Mr. Austin the City is considering the striping of the bicycle lanes. The TAC will meet the 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> week of September and coordinate with the MPO, City and DOH. Progress will be reported to all Board members.

#### **Other Business**

Mr. Kennedy called on Board Members for other business they may wish to discuss.

Mr. Byrne stated he will be meeting with the Mayors of Westover, Star City and Commissioner Kennedy on the 2010 census count. He then asked when an improvement at Easton Hill could be expected. Mr. Warner stated that a project like this would take time, and that the DOH is aware of the problem that exists there. They hope to finance improvements to that intersection.

Referencing the comments made by Mr. Rice, Mr. Fisher asked when something would be done in that area. Mr. Austin advised he has gotten all DOH counts in Morgantown and compiled a count book to find traffic counts and their locations. Counts have been requested on West Run to build a data base for existing conditions and the estimates of future conditions for capacity improvements.

Mr. Austin stated we are looking at a spot intersection improvement for which funding may be more readily available if it is for safety issues. A project such as a new traffic signal, striping, etc, depends on safety funding. That could be done quickly or it can be a few years. It depends on what it is competing with.

Mr. Williams, of the DOH, stated the Bakers Ridge area, referred to by Mr. Rice, when the designers did the project, it was done with site distance and capacity issues without the light, but if a light would be needed, one could be added. It is safe as it is. A traffic study is always performed after a project is completed so the signal could be designed as warranted by existing traffic.

Mr. Kennedy stated the new census count is important. We need to know where everyone lives, and the numbers of people in each house. The area needs to get as many people in this census as possible.

Mr. Bell moved the next regularly scheduled MPO meeting be held in October. Mr. Kelly seconded it. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Fisher asked for an informational update on the Westover Bridge and the interchange study. Mr. Warner said that DOH would be providing information shortly.

The meeting was adjourned at 8: 20 PM.

**Approved:** \_\_\_\_\_

**MPO Chair:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Secretary:** \_\_\_\_\_