

## GREATER MORGANTOWN MPO

Minutes June 18, 2009

City Council Chambers

7:00 PM

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Asel Kennedy, Perry Keller, Bob Bell, Joe Statler, David Bruffy, Joe Fisher, Mike Kelly, Bill Byrne, Don Spencer

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Janice Goodwin, Allen Sharp, Patty Lewis

**MPO DIRECTOR:** Bill Austin

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

**II. PUBLIC COMMENTS:** None

**III. INTRODUCTION OF NEW MPO DIRECTOR:** Joe Fisher introduced Bill Austin as the new MPO Director.

**IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** The minutes of May 21, 2009 were approved as submitted.

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

1. Mr. Austin stated he has received notification of TIP amendments the State would like the MPO to make available for review. The MPO will make the amendments available for review although none of the TIPs will be impacting Morgantown.

2. Letter received regarding the Mon Fayette Expressway

3. Mr. Austin stated he attended training in Charleston earlier this month on modeling theories.

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

A. Mr. Bell reported a beginning balance of \$35,170. After 17 checks were written and two deposits made, the ending balance is \$18,083.89. He noted that two checks were written to the Sheriff of Monongalia County, one for \$6,126 and one for \$20,787 as reimbursement to the County for the Director's salary. Mr. Kennedy noted that all financial updates to June 1, 2009 have been taken care of. The MPO Audit will take place in July, 2009.

### **VII. WVDOT REPORT:**

**STATE REPORT:** Mr. Keller advised there are no TIPs items to be presented. The DOH is working on the progress of the Scoot Traffic Signal systems. Funds for the system are available and the project is on track. Mr. Keller also noted he attended a meeting with the Secretary of Transportation in the Eastern panhandle who spoke on the Scoots Project. The Board inquired as to the number of signals that would be involved in the Study. Mr. Keller stated that the Traffic Engineering Department is pulling together the number of traffic lights that would be involved. The number will not be known until the engineers determine which signals would make the most significant impact.

Mr. Kennedy stated Congressman Mollohan's office is interested in the Scoots Program and questioned whether or not his office could make more funds available. Mr. Keller advised the funds for the project are available whether or not any additional funds may become available.

**LOCAL DOT REPORT:** Mr. Kennedy stated that Mr. Austin and the MPO Staff will begin looking at the number of apartment complexes and traffic counts at VanVoorhis and West Run Roads. They will look at the entire corridor to identify the existing traffic conditions and the traffic impacts of ongoing development.

**VIII. SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS.** There was no TAC/CAC meeting held in June, 2009

## **IX. OLD BUSINESS**

**A. AUDIT.** The State will perform the Audit as advised by Austin. He will advise when it will be scheduled.

**B. REVIEW of 2009/2010 UPWP.** Mr. Bruffy advised that the UPWP subcommittee worked through the UPWP items and received input from Mr. Austin. The Work Program includes many short term, medium length and longer term projects. The ongoing projects will continue as long as there is an MPO. Ongoing work will include traffic counts, mapping, and modeling.

Mr. Byrne stated the general public may not know what the MPO is or they may not understand that things don't happen overnight. Mr. Austin then explained that he will be preparing documents on the formation and duties of the MPO for the public. He went on to say it is his intention to invigorate the MPO process by reviewing and updating the by-laws, review committees to make sure they are working as they should. Public input is very important.

The DOH has placed a strong emphasis on traffic modeling. The MPO will purchase the Transcad modeling software to generate analysis for "what if" scenarios in the upcoming work program. The MPO will also contract with the Transcad software developers to convert the MPO's existing computer model to the new software. Data collection is very important and necessary to the process.

Mr. Bruffy moved to approve the plan of work recommended by the committee; Statler seconded it. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Keller added there will be another Transcad modeling training session scheduled in the next two or three months. The class previously provided was related to modeling theory. How to come up with future traffic projections will be done by the people who wrote the Transcad program. The program needs to be purchased by the MPO to convert QRS2 model to Transcad because Bill will actually bring Morgantown's model to the class. Mr. Austin noted that a laptop was ordered during the current fiscal year in order to load the model to take to the training.

Mr. Bruffy, referencing the Morgantown model discussion, stated that TDM (Transportation Demand Management) techniques will be part of the Transit Study. Mr. Bruffy asked Mr. Austin to describe TDM techniques for the Board so they would understand the project better. Mr. Austin stated that TDM is the name for a variety of techniques to reduce the number of single occupant vehicles making home to work trips. These techniques include park and ride, ride sharing, and vanpooling. The implementation of TDM is done in conjunction with employers. Van pooling has become one of the more popular TDM strategies. One person drives the van,

and is able to put a certain number of personal miles on it in return for driving the other workers to work. One key factor for any TDM strategy is that workers must be guaranteed rides home if there is an emergency. The ride home can be given by a public agency such as Mountain Line or by a private agency like a taxi company. Any TDM strategy developed would be customized with the participating employer.

## **X. NEW BUSINESS**

**A. Status of Potential Projects for American Recovery.** Mr. Austin stated that applications for stimulus funding have been sent to DOH. The City of Morgantown is planning to submit two High Street Projects; Granville is looking to submit Main Street Projects. WVU and Mountain Line will also be submitting projects. Recreational trail and Safe Route funding is also available. The MPO will be updating and sending out more information as it becomes available.

### **B. Committees for FY 2010 Work Program.**

**1. By-laws Committee.** Mr. Kennedy stated that a committee is being established to look at the MPO by-laws. Joe Fisher, Mike Kelly and Don Spencer agreed to serve. Kennedy stated it is important for the by-laws to state that if someone chooses not to serve on the MPO, it does not affect the quorum and the quorum should be the number of available members. It was suggested a provision also be made that if in an emergency situation, such as the Westover slide project, an actual request and vote could be sent and taken by email. Mr. Keller stated in order to use Federal funds; the project must be included in the TIP. To take that kind of action it needs to be advertised in the newspaper to make the public aware of what is taking place. The vote on a TIP amendment may be done by email. The project could then be reported at the next MPO meeting to confirm it so the public knows what was done. Mr. Statler cautioned this method should be used strictly in an emergency situation. It is important that the public does not think everything is done through email. Mr. Bruffy suggested using the website to update the public as well.

**2. Transit Study Committee.** Mr. Kennedy- stated that the work of this committee will be rather involved and that it may take a year or two. This information is being shared with the Board members to explain what would be involved before the committee is actually selected due to the amount of time it will take up. This matter will be forthcoming shortly.

### **Other Business**

Mr. Spencer provided a hand out that dealt with the closing of the Real Trail by MUB to place a 36' sewage line from Fayette Street to the sewage treatment plant in Star City, and to install a new water line to the water treatment plant near Greenbag Road. With the trail being torn up, traffic on the trail will be affected. MUB held meetings with the Pedestrian Safety Board asking for recommendations. The information needs to be provided by the end of June. He stated the Bicycle Board put a series of recommendations together that was approved by the Traffic Commission and endorsed by City Council. The recommendations are:

1. Install a "share the road" and "bike route" signs every 250 feet on Beechurst Avenue, Mon Blvd, Don Knotts Blvd, and University Avenue, and,
2. Install a bike lane ascending Mon. Blvd between 8<sup>th</sup> Street and Evansdale Drive. The current shoulder is not properly paved and not regularly kept clean.

Mr. Fisher was concerned that the shoulder is not properly paved for cars would it be ok for bikes? Mr. Spencer stated it would be better if the shoulder was paved, but there needs to be a designated bike corridor.

Mr. Byrne noted that since this was not an agenda item to be dealt with, how quickly does this need to be done. Kennedy stated even though it was not an agenda item and it was the recommendation of the Traffic Commission, the MPO would send a letter endorsing the recommendation. Mr. Kennedy also felt it was important to make the State aware that the Rail Trail closure necessitates alternate paths for bikes.

Mr. Bell asked what type of problem would be created since parking does occur on the Boulevard for athletic and CAC events. Mr. Spencer stated most activities are in the evening and he did not see a problem.

Mr. Byrne moved that the MPO endorse the recommendation of the Traffic Commission and Bicycle Board to address the Rail Trail closure; Mr. Bruffy seconded it. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Kennedy reminded the Board that any items discussed needed to be submitted before the meeting, so it may be added to the agenda so more official action could be taken.

Mr. Bruffy stated Mountain Line has identified bike rack parking on bus routes so riders may know where to leave their bikes.

Mr. Spencer also noted that the City of Morgantown has designated 2009 the Year of Active Transit. It is emphasizing moving without the use of automobiles. There will be a single focal event for each month of the year to enhance interest in getting more involved with walking, biking and riding public transit.

Mr. Bruffy also referenced "Dump the Pump" day where riding the bus (June 18) all day was free until 12:30 am to encourage everyone to try public transit.

Mr. Kennedy advised that with the approval of the MPO budget, it is the intention of the MPO and Monongalia County Planning Commission to come before the County Commission and place Michael Paugh on full salary with his work split between both agencies.

Spencer stated he hopes the Legislative Committee will be convened this summer as soon as the delegates will be able to meet.

Mr. Kennedy asked if there was a need for a July meeting. Mr. Austin said no agenda items are pending. Mr. Byrne moved to not meet in July and reconvene in August; Mr. Kelly seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Byrne then welcomed Bill Austin to Morgantown and looked forward to the new beginning and revitalization of the MPO.

Mr. Kennedy thanked Ron Justice and Allen Sharp for their dedicated work on the MPO. The City of Morgantown will nominate their member at next month's Council meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 7:50 PM.