

MORGANTOWN MONONGALIA
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION POLICY BOARD
MARCH 15, 2018 MINUTES

Members Present:

Chairman Mike Kelly-Board of Education, Vice Chairman Bill Kawecki-Mayor of Morgantown, Treasurer Mayor Patricia Lewis-Granville, Commissioner Tom Bloom-Monongalia County, Brian Carr-WV DOH, Councilperson Janice Goodwin-City of Westover, Commissioner Edward Hawkins-Monongalia County, Ron Justice-WVU, Commissioner Sean Sikora-Monongalia County, Delegate Joe Statler-Blacksville

MPO Director: Bill Austin

Members Absent:

Dave Bruffy-Mountain Line, Dominick Claudio-Star City, Councilperson Jennifer Selin-City of Morgantown, Councilperson Ryan Wallace -City of Morgantown

1. Call to Order

With a quorum present, Chairman Kelly called the Policy Board meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

2. Public Comment Period

No public comment.

3. Approval of Minutes

Chairman Kelly noted that the minutes of the last meeting were included in the agenda packet.

Mr. Justice moved to approve the minutes as presented, seconded by Commissioner Bloom. With no discussion, the motion was unanimously approved.

4. Committee Reports

a. Citizens Advisory Committee

Mr. Rice, the Chairman of the Citizens Advisory Committee, noted that the CAC reviewed and unanimously supported all the agenda items presented in the last meeting. He noted that CAC is a viable group. Many CAC members have been engaged with the community in the recent initiative to promote pedestrian safety in the area. Mr. Rice expressed his appreciation to Donny Williams, the DOH district engineer, for supporting the recent pedestrian safety initiative.

b. Finance Report

Mayor Lewis presented the Finance Report for January and February as the following:

-- Beginning balance in January \$10,233.77 with expenditures of \$21,951.02 and one deposit of \$24,005.51, leaving a balance of \$12,288.26 at the beginning of February.

-- Beginning balance in February \$12,288.26 with expenditures of \$41,560.48 and two deposits of \$37,976.74 leaving a balance of \$8,704.52 at the beginning of March.

Commissioner Bloom moved to accept the Finance Report as presented; seconded by Mayor Kawecki. With no discussion, the motion unanimously passed.

c. Executive Directors Report

Mr. Austin noted that he attended an FHWA Regional freight coordination conference in Ohio, which focused on recent river freight transport issues. The manager of the Freight Planning SW Pennsylvania Commission made a

presentation about US Army Corp of Engineers Upper Ohio River System Study to the MPO's Freight Advisory Committee.

Mr. Austin noted that the MPO and the HEP MPO are working with the WV DOH to modernize the format of State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). The DOH attempts to develop an electronic management platform for the STIP.

Mr. Austin noted that the WV MPO Association is working with the WV Local Technical Assistance Program to hold a joint conference on April 14 in Morgantown. The theme of the conference is partnering for a better future.

Mr. Austin noted that in responding to the recent pedestrian crashes near the WVU campus, the MPO is working with the DOH, the City of Morgantown, and WVU to establish a working group to improve the pedestrian safety in the area. Mr. Justice, Mr. Kelly, Commissioner Bloom, Councilperson Selin participated in the group. Commissioner Bloom noted that it is a very productive and effective group. Chairman Kelly agreed and he appreciates the collaboration among different agencies.

5. TIP Amendments

Mr. Austin noted that the WV DOH requested that the MPO amend the TIP. The amendments are related to the WV 7/I-79 new interchange and construction project starting from 2021 to 2024. It is anticipated that the environmental work for the I-79 Access project may not be completed in time for the project to be included in the general obligation bonds to be issued in the next four years. It is assumed that if that work is completed in time, the project will be funded through the general obligation bonds as previously proposed by WVDOH.

Mr. Carr noted that the funding was split into different years in order to to keep balanced funding for multiple uses at different phases of the project. Commissioner Bloom noted that keeping the community informed about the status of the northern by-pass project will be essential to its success. He suggested that the MPO take an active role to reach out to the community for the project. Mr. Statler agreed and noted that the WV DOH, the MMMPO and other pertinent agencies should collaborate in their efforts to engage the community during the project design and construction phases.

Mr. Statler moved to approve the TIP Amendments; seconded by Mr. Justice. With no discussion, the motion unanimously passed.

6. Executive Session Pursuant to WV 6-9A-4-2a Personnel matters

The meeting was recessed during Executive Session Pursuant to WV 6-9A-4-2a Personnel matters.

7. Personnel Policy Revisions

Mr. Austin noted that in the last meeting, The Policy Board asked a committee consisting of Chairman Kelly, Vice-Chairman Selin, Treasurer Mayor Lewis and Mr. Justice to consider potential revisions to the Personnel Policy. The Committee met in early February and made several recommendations on sick leave, vacation leave, and the executive directors' contract. Mr. Austin then enumerated the recommendations as presented in the agenda package. Commissioner Commissioner Bloom moved to adopt the revised personal policy including extending the Executive Director's contract for 3 years; seconded by Mr. Justice. With no discussion, the motion unanimously passed.

8. Update on Pedestrian Plan

Mr. Austin noted that MPO Staff has been working on an ongoing pedestrian initiative with WVDOH District 4 and WVU and other stakeholders. This initiative is primarily due to several pedestrian incidents in the area. The MPO will reconstruct the scope of work for the pedestrian safety plan update. The new scope of work will have significant emphasis on public involvement and education programs for both pedestrians and motorists. Mr. Austin noted that the WV DOH indicated that additional funding may be available for developing the plan. The current UPWP may be modified to reflect the change of the expanded effort.

Mr. Statler noted that it is important to identify unsafe pedestrian behaviors and identify countermeasures to prevent potential crashes caused by those behaviors.

Chairman Kelly noted that the WVU student representatives in the pedestrian safety working group indicated that they are aware of the dangers of distracted walking and illegal crossing. He also noted that it takes time for people to get used to the traffic environment in the areas, especially for people coming from less urbanized regions. He noted that pedestrian safety education programs will be helpful in addressing pedestrian safety issues in the area.

Commissioner Bloom agreed and noted that he supports education and enforcement efforts focusing on the behavior of both drivers and nonmotorized road users.

9. Unified Planning Work Program

Mr. Austin noted that the MPO solicited ideas for planning projects to be included in the upcoming work program at both the November and January meetings. The draft UPWP included in the Agenda packet reflects the input we have received at those meetings. Aside from normal operations the draft UPWP includes the following initiatives: working with the Bike Board to update the regional bike plan; preparing an operational analysis including recommending improvements to the intersection of Willey Street and Richwood Avenue for the City of Morgantown; developing a guidebook for working with the MPO; developing an ongoing bicycle and pedestrian data collection program building on the work performed for the pedestrian plan update to be performed during the spring and summer of 2018 and the bike plan update to be conducted in the upcoming fiscal year. Mr. Austin noted that the MPO will discuss with the Bicycle Board to develop a joint active transportation plan for both bicycles and pedestrians, instead of updating the two plans separately. The UPWP includes a 2% salary increase for the MPO employees to keep up with the inflation rate.

Mr. Justice moved to adopt the UPWP as presented; seconded by Mayor Lewis. With no discussion, the motion unanimously passed.

10. Other Business

Commissioner Bloom noted that the date of the January meeting minutes is wrong. It should be corrected as January 18th, 2018, instead of January 18th, 2017. Mr. Austin noted that the date will be corrected.

Mayor Kawecki asked about the status of the Beechurst Ave Project. Mr. Carr noted that the DOH is working with consultants to finalize the scope of work for this project and the consultant has started data collection. In the meantime, the DOH is also working on the West Run Rd Project, the Van Voorhis Rd Project, and Greenbag Rd Project in the area.

11. Meeting Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 7:10 PM.