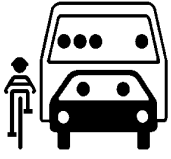


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WASHTENAW AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY

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MINUTES OF MEETING

POLICY COMMITTEE

DATE: April 15, 2009

TIME: 9:30 a.m.

PLACE: Scio Township Hall, 827 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48103

Members Present: City of Saline – Gretchen Driskell, Chair
Dexter Township/WCPAB – Pat Kelly, Secretary-Treasurer
WCRC- Doug Fuller
SWWCOG – Ron Mann
Ann Arbor Township – Mike Moran
AATA – Jesse Bernstein
City of Chelsea – Ann Feeny
Northfield Township – Deb Mozurkewich
MDOT Statewide Planning – Pam Boyd
Scio Township – Nancy Hedberg
Pittsfield Township – Barb Fuller (for Mandy Grewal)
WCBC– Wes Prater
Ypsilanti Township – Brenda Stumbo
City of Ypsilanti – Bill Nickels
Superior Township – Bill McFarlane
City of Ann Arbor – Carsten Hohnke

Members Absent: U of M – Hank Baier
Village of Dexter – Jim Carson, Vice-Chair
EMU – John Donegan

Others Present: MDOT – Kari Martin, Paul Lott, Jeff Reid
WATS – Terri Blackmore, Ryan Buck, Eric Bombery, Nick Sapkiewicz
WCRC – Steve Puuri

POLICY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

• CITY OF ANN ARBOR • ANN ARBOR TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY • ANN ARBOR TOWNSHIP • CITY OF CHELSEA • VILLAGE OF DEXTER •
• DEXTER TOWNSHIP • EASTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY • MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION • NORTHFIELD TOWNSHIP • PITTSFIELD TOWNSHIP •
• CITY OF SALINE • SCIO TOWNSHIP • SOUTHWEST WASHTENAW COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS • SUPERIOR TOWNSHIP • UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN •
• WASHTENAW COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS • WASHTENAW COUNTY ROAD COMMISSION • CITY OF YPSILANTI • YPSILANTI TOWNSHIP •
• EX OFFICIO: FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION • SOUTHEAST MICHIGAN COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS •

AN INTERMUNICIPALITY COMMITTEE ORGANIZED UNDER ACT 200 OF PUBLIC ACTS OF MICHIGAN (1957)
REPRESENTING WASHTENAW COUNTY

1. Call to Order

Secretary-Treasurer Kelly called the meeting to order at 9:35 a.m. She asked those present to introduce themselves.

2. Public Participation

Secretary-Treasurer Kelly asked if any members of the public wished to address the Committee. No one wished to address the Committee so public participation time was closed.

3. Approval of the March 18, 2009 Policy Committee Minutes

Mr. Prater made a motion to approve the March 18, 2009 Policy Committee minutes. Mr. Mann supported the motion and the minutes were approved as submitted.

Mr. Prater made a motion to add agenda item F to discuss the Use of Federal Funds for Preliminary Engineering and Right of Way. Mr. McFarlane supported and the agenda item was added.

4. Communications and Announcements

Ms. Blackmore reported that WATS switched the rural transit bus purchase from the stimulus to regular Surface Transportation Program – Rural funding. The change will ensure funding is available to purchase the bus. The Road Commission agreed to swap money from the 2009 Rural STP program and use the additional stimulus funds. The change has no impact on the total funding amounts for the stimulus or STP-Rural program.

Ms. Blackmore informed the Committee that there is a goal of having all stimulus funds obligated by December to ensure all money will be available and to provide the best chance of receiving additional stimulus funding.

Ms. Blackmore explained the handouts at each place, which included:

1. Upcoming meetings
2. Ann Arbor to Detroit Commuter Rail Update
3. Updated Policy Committee membership list
4. April Newsletter

5. Approval of Bills over \$500

Ms. Blackmore reported that there were three bills over \$500.

1. SEMCOG - \$2,215.87 to reimburse SEMCOG for the WATS portion of the Asset Manager NT Contract
2. MTPA - \$900 for three registrations for annual transportation planning conference

3. Terri Blackmore - \$765.84 for travel, Blackberry, training and flexible spending reimbursement

Mr. Fuller made a motion to approve the bills over \$500. Ms. Kelly supported and the motion passed.

6. Report on WATS Activities

Ms. Blackmore reported that the AATA has scheduled a WALLY meeting for April 27 at 10:00 am at the Northfield Township Public Safety Building. Ms. Blackmore added that AATA has hired consultants to help AATA manage the public side of the WALLY project.

Ms. Blackmore reported that a review of the 2008 HPMS counts showed a significant decrease in traffic. She stated that the decrease was as high as 32% on collector streets and as high as 25% on arterials. The average reduction on collectors was 8% on collectors and 3% on arterials. She noted that a map showing the changes was included in the April Vehicle.

Ms. Blackmore reported that the PAB reviewed and recommended WCBC approval of the Freedom Township Master Plan.

Ms. Blackmore reported that WATS is working with the Office of Highway Safety Planning and a consultant in anticipation of a safety summit this fall in Washtenaw County. The consultants work will review crashes at several locations across the county and will include a plan to address the safety concerns.

Ms. Blackmore reported that WATS received financial forecasts for STP Urban, Rural and TEDFD from SEMCOG. She reported that on April 1st WATS was informed that SEMCOG would not be providing financial forecasts for Bridge, CMAQ, Safety, Enhancement, Transit or local financial estimates which are needed by each transportation agency to create a financially constrained list of future improvements. WATS staff has been working to project the remaining revenue sources and will be sending out financials to all transportation agencies this week.

Ms. Blackmore reported that WATS has begun to schedule public participation meetings for the Long Range Plan which will be held in June and July. She added that meetings will be offered to all member agencies. Interested communities and groups should contact Mr. Sapkiewicz to schedule a public participation meeting.

Ms. Blackmore reported that she presented information on the Transit Plan for Washtenaw County to the Lyndon Township Board the previous night. She added that WATS and a County Board member continue to meet with County leaders to educate them on the plan and work to advance the recommendations.

Ms. Blackmore stated that the Mobility Manager is anticipating hiring call takers by May. Ms. Blackmore stated that the goal was to have one phone number to call when a person has mobility needs and the call taker would be able to provide transportation choices. Ms. Blackmore added

that although RideConnect met with the United Way, it was not possible to include the function as part of the 211 information system.

7. New Business

A. 3rd Quarter Financial Statements

Ms. Blackmore stated that the Agency is in good financial shape. The agency is at approximately 72% of expected revenue and at 68% of expenses for the year to date. Ms. Blackmore reported that no category of expense is higher than budget for the year to date.

Ms. Kelly made a motion to accept the 3rd Quarter financial statements. Mr. Fuller supported and the motion passed.

B. AATA amendment to the FY 2010 Unified Work Program -Action

Ms. Blackmore reported that AATA is requesting an amendment to FY 2010 Unified Work Program (UWP) to include funding from Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5304 for a transit market research contract and additional FTA Section 5307 funding as well as funds from the University of Michigan, the City of Ann Arbor and the DDA to undertake a Connector Feasibility Study. Ms. Blackmore stated that since WATS and AATA have a joint UWP that the change needed to be approved by the Committee.

Ms. Fuller asked if there was a net change in budget. Ms. Blackmore stated that the budget was increased by the additional federal funds but there was no change in local funding.

Ms. Boyd clarified that the FY 2010 UWP had not yet been approved by FHWA and that the amendment would be processed after approval of the UWP.

Mr. Fuller made a motion to approve the UWP amendment. Mr. Mann supported and the motion passed.

C. Approval of Funds for Retaining Attorney - Action

Ms. Blackmore informed the Committee that an employee recently terminated as a result of the WATS crash program ending has filed for unemployment. Although this employee was a temporary employee, WATS will still need to respond to the claim and if required, pay unemployment. During the investigation of the claim, it was discovered that WATS has never paid into the State or federal unemployment. Although WATS originally thought the Agency may have to pay into the system or establish an escrow account once the Agency's payroll reached a \$100,000 payroll which occurred in the late 80's, this is not the case for government agencies. The WATS Policy Committee officers were made aware of the issue and instructed the executive director to obtain legal advice on this issue. The executive director requested recommendations for an attorney who could provide this advice from the officers and the County's Human Resources and Labor relations staff.

Ms. Blackmore stated that the recommendation is to retain Paul Gallagher on an hourly basis to provide advice on this issue. He has agreed to provide a reduced rate of \$150 per hour. He indicated that they recently completed the necessary research for another client and did not feel this would take much time.

The approved Administrative Budget does not include any funds for legal services. However, this expense is an eligible expense for federal funding as part of the indirect expenses. The proposed administrative budget amendment recommends adjusting the indirect cost budgets to reduce telephone and postage by \$500 each, licenses and subscriptions by \$600 and equipment by \$900. This would allow the Agency to allocate \$500 for legal fees and \$2000 for unemployment expenses without increasing the Agency's budget.

Ms. Feeney asked whether or not every employee who leaves WATS is eligible for unemployment. Ms. Blackmore stated that if an employee quits or is fired for cause that those employees would not be eligible.

Mr. Fuller clarified that money would be reimbursed quarterly rather than paying into unemployment insurance.

Ms. Kelly made a motion to approve the administrative budget amendment. Mr. Fuller supported and the motion passed.

D. MDOT Five Year Plan – Presentation

Ms. Martin, Region Planner, from the MDOT University Region Office and Jeff Reid, Associate Region Engineer, presented information on the MDOT five year plan. The presentation included a discussion of the inability for MDOT to match all federal funds with anticipated State revenues in 2011-2014. Mr. Reid provided a project description for each of the MDOT reconstruction and rehabilitation projects planned in Washtenaw County in the plan. Mr. Reid also detailed the MDOT stimulus projects in Washtenaw County on I-94.

E. Evolving Washtenaw Avenue - Presentation

Anya Dale from Washtenaw County Office of Strategic Planning gave a presentation on the opportunity for redevelopment along the Washtenaw Avenue Corridor between Huron Parkway in Ann Arbor and the Water Tower in Ypsilanti.

The presentation highlighted the high rate of unoccupied retail properties and contrasted that with the relatively dense residential development in the area that feeds the most highly traveled transit corridor in the County. A focus of a potential redevelopment of the corridor would be to attract and retain talent from the two University towns.

F. Use of Federal Funds for Preliminary Engineering and Right of Way Acquisition

Mr. Prater stated that it was important for the Committee to take action on the recommended option for the use of federal funds for PE and right-of-way. He stated that the WATS

Committees discussed the issue two years ago and that it was time to move forward with a recommendation. Mr. Prater cited both MDOT and Oakland County as examples of transportation agencies that already allow the use of federal funds for PE and right-of-way.

Mr. Prater stated that the lack of action was holding up several projects which cannot be moved forward unless the policy is changed.

Ms. Kelly stated that she felt uncomfortable voting on something that she did not have time to review and did not completely understand the ramifications of such a policy change.

Ms. Driskell asked Mr. Prater if he would be comfortable with the formation of a task force to discuss the use of federal funds for preliminary engineering and right of way acquisition at the May Policy Committee meeting and to have the item included on the May agenda.

Mr. Prater agreed that the agenda item should be included for the May meeting.

A task force to make a recommendation on the use of federal funds for preliminary engineering and right of way acquisition will be appointed at the May Policy Committee meeting.

8. Agency Reports

A. City of Ann Arbor

Mr. Hohnke reported that the City Transportation Plan update will go before City Council in May. Mr. Hohnke also stated that the City is examining all funding possibilities for the Stadium Bridges which have been partially closed down due to safety concerns.

B. AATA

Mr. Bernstein stated that the AATA board will soon be interviewing the CEO finalist.

C. Ann Arbor Township

Mr. Moran had nothing to report.

D. City of Chelsea

Ms. Feeney had nothing to report.

E. Dexter Village

A representative was not present.

F. Dexter Township

Ms. Kelly had nothing to report.

G. Eastern Michigan University

A representative was not present.

H. FHWA

A representative was not present.

I. Northfield Township

Ms. Mozurkewich had nothing to report.

J. Pittsfield Township

Ms. Fuller had nothing to report.

K. MDOT Planning

Ms. Boyd discussed how much input had gone into getting the stimulus projects ready and she is hopeful that the money will be available on April 24th. Ms. Boyd reminded the Committee that SAFETEA-LU expires in September of 2009 and that it is unlikely a new bill will be passed prior to its expiration.

Ms. Boyd reported that because of the extra workload of the stimulus that the state may elect to postpone the development of the new TIP.

L. MDOT Region/TSC

Ms. Martin had nothing additional to report.

M. City of Saline

Ms. Driskell had nothing to report.

N. SWWCOG

Mr. Mann had nothing to report.

O. SEMCOG

A representative was not present.

P. Scio Township

Ms. Hedberg reported that the Jackson Rd. Phase III project is underway and that it is an example of great project management.

Q. Superior Township

Mr. McFarlane had nothing to report.

R. University of Michigan

A representative was not present.

S. County Board of Commissioners

Mr. Prater stated that the County Board is leaving all options on the table with regard to the budget shortfall for FY 2010. He stated that there is a 25 million dollar shortfall that could cost as many as 290 jobs.

T. WCRC

Mr. Fuller reported that the Road Commission will be evaluating projects for the next two years over the next two meetings. He added that the following week's board meeting had been switched to Tuesday from Thursday.

U. Ypsilanti Township

Ms. Stumbo had nothing to report.

V. City of Ypsilanti

Mr. Nickels had nothing to report.

9. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:40 A.M.