

MORGANTOWN MONONGALIA
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION POLICY BOARD
VIA WEBEX
AUGUST 20, 2020 MINUTES

Members Present:

Chairman Joe Statler, Vice-chair Commissioner Tom Bloom, Treasurer Mayor Patricia Lewis-Granville, Dave Bruffy-Mountain Line, Councilperson Steve Blinco, Brian Carr-WV DOH, Councilperson Janice Goodwin-City of Westover, Ron Justice-West Virginia University, Commissioner Edward Hawkins-Monongalia County, Councilperson Dave Harshbarger, Bill Kawecki-Mayor of Morgantown, Mike Kelly-Board of Education, Councilperson Jennifer Selin, Commissioner Sean Sikora-Monongalia County

MPO Director: Bill Austin

1. Call to Order

Mr. Austin noted that due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the policy board meeting is being held virtually via teleconference.

Mr. Austin noted that Chairman Statler has called in, but he is on vacation and will not be able to preside at this meeting. Vice-chair Commissioner Bloom will preside at the meeting.

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

2. Public Comment

None.

3. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Austin noted that the minutes of the last meeting is included in the meeting package. Mayor Kawecki moved to approve the minutes as presented, seconded by Councilperson Blinco. The motion was approved unanimously.

4. Reports

a. Citizens Advisory Committee

Mr. Abildso, the Chairman of CAC, noted that the CAC met last week with a quorum of five members. The committee unanimously recommended approval of the proposed TIP amendments. Mr. Abildso noted that the committee reviewed the draft Public Involvement Policy and appreciated its enhanced layout and the information on virtual public involvement.

b. Finance Committee

Treasurer Mayor Lewis presented the financial report as the following:

-- Beginning balance in June \$55,522.94 with expenditures of \$ 32,147.25 and one deposit of \$22,659.82, leaving a balance of \$46,035.51 at the beginning of July.

-- Beginning balance in July \$46,035.51 with expenditures of \$42,917.59 and three deposit of \$42,650.31, leaving a balance of \$45,768.23 at the beginning of August.

Mr. Bruffy moved to accept the Finance Report as presented; seconded by Councilperson Selin. With no discussion, the motion unanimously passed.

c. Executive Director

Mr. Austin noted that the MPO has essentially paid off the credit lines and is in good financial shape. He noted that the MPO has been improving its the website and virtual public engagement strategies in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Mr. Austin noted that he will take a few days off in September for moving.

5. TIP Amendment

Mr. Austin noted that WVDOH has requested TIP amendments. They include the Brockway Ave Resurfacing project, Burrough St Resurfacing project, Carroll B Lilly Memorial Bridge inspection, WV100 resurfacing projects, and Willey St resurfacing project.

Mr. Austin noted that TTAC raised a question that the project length of the Burrough St Resurfacing project is not consistent with the cost of that project. He noted that the MPO will request more information from the DOH to verify its scope of work.

Councilperson Selin asked if the four resurfacing projects will include both milling and paving. Mr. Carr noted they will include both. Mr. Bruffy moved to recommend approval of the TIP amendment to the MPO's Policy Board; seconded by Mr. Justice. With no discussion, the motion was unanimously approved.

Mr. Austin noted that WVU has requested TIP amendments for PRT upgrades. It includes rebuilding electrical components, guideway, passenger stations, CCTV system, and preventative maintenance.

Mr. Bruffy moved to recommend approval of the TIP amendment to the MPO's Policy Board; seconded by Commissioner Sikora. With no discussion, the motion was unanimously approved.

Commissioner Bloom asked if the PRT is in operation. Mr. Austin noted that the PRT is not in operation due to the pandemic.

Mr. Austin noted that the MPO's Van Pool program has been approved for additional funding by WVDOH. Mountain Line Transit Authority has requested a TIP amendment to add Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Funds of \$20,000 for the Van Pool Program.

Councilperson Selin moved to recommend approval of the TIP amendment to the MPO's Policy Board; seconded by Mr. Justice. With no discussion, the motion was unanimously approved.

6 Draft Public Involvement Policy

Mr. Austin noted that a copy of the draft public involvement policy has included in the agenda package. Mr. Austin noted that the draft document has been duly advertised for public comment for 45 days and made available to the public for comment in accordance with the requirements of the adopted Public Involvement Policy. Mr. Austin noted that the revised document does more clearly elaborate on which electronic media may be used for public meetings and notifications and the contact list for notifications to

the public. It also includes improved graphics and a summary of the MPO's procedures in an appendix. There are no substantive changes to other subjects of the policy. Councilperson moved to adopt the draft public involvement policy as presented, seconded by Councilperson Goodwin. Councilperson Selin noted that the policy is well presented and is a good model for public engagement process. With no further discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

7. Informational Presentation on changes proposed to I-79 Exit 155

Mrs. Amy Staud of HDR Consultant made a presentation on the I-79 Exit 155 project. Vice-chair Bloom noted that he is excited about the project. He noted that the project will greatly improve the access to I-79 from the east side of Monongahela River and support the development in the region. Councilperson Selin asked about the funding mechanism for the project. Mr. Carr noted that it is funded by the General Obligation Bond.

8. Discussion of Roads to Prosperity Projects

Vice-chair Bloom expressed his appreciation to DOH for reporting the status of the Roads to Prosperity projects. He had not previously understood the large number of projects that has utilized this funding. He noted that his primary concern is the high profile projects that were advertised to be funded by the Roads to Prosperity Bonds within the Mon County during the referendum. He noted that the community was concerned about the implementation of transportation projects in the bound that they voted for, and there was confusion about the GO-bound projects and the road prosperity program.

Mr. Carr noted that besides the projects that were originally in the road prosperity program, other projects have been added the program. The road prosperity program includes not only GO-bound projects, it also includes repairing and resurfacing projects that are not otherwise funded. Mr. Carr noted that the Mon County has 39 Go-bound projects, 21 of which were completed and 18 of which are ongoing.

Vice-chair Bloom noted that he had a meeting with the judge of the Mon county circuit court and discussed the potential to expedite the legal process for the cases relating to the Mileground Road project.

Councilperson Selin asked about the status of the I-79 intersection access study. Mr. Austin noted that the I-79 access project is of significant impact to the region. It needs to undergo an extensive environmental impact study process as required by federal regulations. Concerned that the environmental process will not complete when the Go-bound funding expires, the DOH funded the initial NEPA process for the project. The DOH will split the federal funding for the construction of project into several years. It is expected that total cost for this project will exceed 200 million dollars. The project will be included in the upcoming update of the MPO's Metropolitan Transportation Plan.

Mr. Carr asked for any comments from the Board about the virtual public meeting held for the Van Voorhis Rd project. He noted that the DOH is waiting for the FHWA approval of using virtual public meeting for the Greenbag Rd project. Mr. Abildso noted that there were minor tech issues in the virtual public meeting. The overall process is good. Councilman Kawecki agreed and noted that the fly-over-video helps the public to understand the scope of the project. He noted that the virtual public meeting website could improve its function to immediately respond to questions submitted online.

Councilperson Selin noted that some residents in her constituency have commented to the DOH requesting an extension of sidewalks on Van Voorhis Rd to West Run Rd. Mr. Carr noted that the budget for the project only include installing sidewalk on part of the road. The cost of installing full-length sidewalk will be extremely high, due to the excessive slopes.

Mr. Carr noted that the presentation and document for this project is available on the DOH's website for comment until September 10.

9. Update on Mountain Line Transit Study

Mr. Bruffy noted that the transit study is back on track after the delay of public hearing caused by the pandemic. The public involvement for this study will take place remotely. The study team will also use social media to engage the community. Mr. Bruffy noted that the study will identify strategies to improve transit services for the next 3-5 years.

10. Other Business

Mr. Justice noted that crosswalk signal on Mon Blvd near the CAC and Coliseum parking lot has broken. The issue has been reported to the DOH.

Councilman Kawecki asked about the status of the Beechurst Ave project. Mr. Carr noted that the project is expected to begin construction in the upcoming year. Mr. Austin noted that the MPO is working with the DOH, WVU, and the City to identify a cost-effective way to relocate 1st Street on the river side of Beechurst Ave.

Mr. Bruffy noted that to enforce social distancing, the Mountain Line reduced the capacity of their buses. Passengers are asked to keep safety distance while waiting at bus stops. Mr. Bruffy noted that to provide information to help passengers to plan their trip, the Mountain Line has posted peak hours information and other COVID-19 related information on the website.

11. Meeting Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 8:21 PM.