



POLICY BOARD MEETING

Monongalia Board of Education
1751 Earl L. Core Road. Morgantown. WV. 26505

October 19th, 2023, 6 PM

Members Present:

Chairman Mike Kelly – Board of Education, Joe Abu-Ghannam - City of Morgantown, Tom Bloom - Monongalia County, Jeffrey Arnett – Monongalia County, Steve Blinco – Star City, Mayor Bob Lucci – City of Westover, Ron Justice – West Virginia University, Bill Kawecki – City of Morgantown, Sean Sikora – Monongalia County, Mayor Jennifer Selin – City of Morgantown, Mayor Patricia Lewis-Granville

Others Present: Christiaan Abildso

MPO Director: Bill Austin, AICP

1. Call to Order

With a quorum present, Chairman Kelly called the meeting of the Morgantown Monongalia Metropolitan Planning Organization (MMMPO) Policy Board to order at 6:00 PM.

2. Public Comment

There were no public comments.

3. Approval of Minutes

Commissioner Arnett moved to approve the minutes as presented; seconded by Commissioner Bloom. With no discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

4. Committee Reports

a. Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)

CAC Chairman Abildso provided an update on behalf of the Advisory Board. Mr. Abildso reported they discussed the Industrial Park Access Road TIP Amendments. The CAC separated the TIP into three, and voted on each element separately. They unanimously recommended Engineering, 3-1 for Right of Way, and unanimously did not recommend Construction. The CAC is concerned that while the Governor announced alternative 3 will be chosen, the process is still on going and open for choosing the location, and it has not been written down and officially approved. The CAC would like more communication and transparency with the community. They do not want to recommend funding for construction when they do not know for sure, on paper, where the bridge will be located. They were also disappointed in the WVDOH Public Meeting for the bridge.

Mr. Abildso also reported the CAC approved the Star City Interchange TIP Modification, and approved staff recommendation for the Suballocated Funds projects.

b. Finance Committee

Mayor Lewis reported that at the beginning of August, the balance was \$39,475.87, 5 deposits totaling \$157,141.55, 21 disbursements totaling \$28,295.85, leaving balance of \$168,322.57 to carry over into September.

In September we had 2 deposits totaling \$25,535.67 15 disbursements totaling \$25,150.58, leaving balance of \$168,707.66.

Commissioner Arnett moved to approve the Finance Report as presented; seconded by Mr. Justice. With no discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

c. Executive Director

Mr. Austin reported that he attended the AMPO Conference and a attended a Highway Safety Plan meeting with traffic engineering in Charleston. They are ready to move forward with an installation of a signal at exit 155, and with pedestrian safety data they received from WVU. They are working to install a crosswalk at Chestnut and Walnut, and other locations that have been discussed. There will be a public meeting. Mr. Ausitn also talked to them about the Vulnerable Road Users Plan.

Mr. Austin noted that two entities, the City of Morgantown and Mon River Trails Conservancy, had submitted applications for the suballocated funds did not show DOH coordination, but staff is recommending tentative approval pending proof of coordination. Traffic engineering in Charleston has agreed to look at both projects.

WVAMPO will be meeting with Secretary Wriston to discuss sub-allocated funding process on October 31th.

Mr. Austin is planning on attending National AMPO Board Retreat in Pittsburgh.

Mr. Austin reported there have been issues with the credit card. He is looking into purchasing card, and will brining the board a resolution next meeting.

Mr. Austin added a note to thank DOH traffic engineering for their work on the area's concerns.

5. Transportation Improvement Program Amendments

Mr. Ausitn asked Chair Kelly if the two proposed TIP Amendments could be separated into two resolutions. Chair Kelly approved that motion.

Chair Kelly asked to table the Star City Interchange TIP Amendment until the November meeting. Commissioner Sikora moved to table; seconded by Mr. Blinco. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Austin stated that the West Virginia Department of Transportation-Division of Highways has requested the following TIP Amendment:

FY 2023-2024

ADD MORGANTOWN INDUSTRIAL PARK ACCESS ROAD

Federal ID: STBG2023312D. Engineering. FY2023. Construction New Road & Bridge. Federal Funds: \$3,720,000; Total funds: \$4,650,000. Obligation Date: 10/28/2023.

Federal ID: STBG2023313D. Right of Way. FY2024. Construction New Road & Bridge. Federal Funds: \$6,400,000; total funds: \$8,000,000. Obligation Date: 10/28/2023.

Federal ID: STBG2024025D. Construction. FY2024. Construction New Road & Bridge. Federal Funds: \$57,600,000; total funds: \$72,000,000. Obligation Date: 2/28/2024.

The TTAC recommended the approval of the Amendments and the modification. The CAC recommended the approval of the modification. and the Engineering and Right of Way phases for the Bridge TIP Amendment. The CAC recommended reconsideration of the Construction phase of the bridge project due to uncertainty about the environmental and other impacts of the project along with wanting more information on the alternatives impact on traffic given the status of the Harmony Grove Interchange.

Commissioner Sikora moved to approve the Bridge TIP Amendment; seconded by Commissioner Bloom.

Mayor Selin clarified that the CAC recommended to separate Construction, and not approve that section until a location has been confirmed. Commissioner Bloom mentioned the governor announced they will choose Alternative three and committed to Harmony Groove. At the public meeting, the DOH must present all three alternatives. Mr. Abildso voiced concern that nothing has been written down. Commissioner Bloom expressed confidence that the governor's announcement is solid. Councilman Kawecky raised concern about the weight limit of trucks and the new bridge. Chair Kelly stated the bridge will accommodate the weight of these trucks.

With no further discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

6. Suballocated Funds Project Applications

Mr. Austin stated that the MMMPO has approximately \$1.8 million dollars in suballocated STBG and Carbon Reduction Programs funds available to program projects in our area. Please find enclosed with the agenda a memorandum identifying the project applications submitted for these funds as well as staff's recommendation concerning these projects. The TTAC and CAC both recommended approval of Staff's recommendation that the City of Westover's application for sidewalk on Fairmont Road be funded in the amount of \$400,000. The City of Westover has agreed to provide the \$100,000 match for the project and they have coordinated with WVDOH on the project.

MPO Staff recommended tentative approval of the City of Morgantown's request for \$500,000 in funding for the design of the proposed bridge over Don Knott's Boulevard pending coordination with WVDOH. Similarly, Staff also recommended funding the Mon River Trail Conservancy's request for approximately \$128,000 in funding for three RRFB's at locations where the Deckers Creek Trail crosses roadways pending coordination with WVDOH. The TTAC and CAC concurred with Staff's recommendation for these projects. Staff has facilitated the coordination of Westover's and MRTC's applications with WVDOH in recent discussions with WVDOH Traffic Engineering Staff in Charleston. If an entity requires more money they may apply again.

The board voted on all three projects separately to allow individuals involved with the projects to abstain from voting.

Mayor Lucci recused from voting for City of Westover's application. Mr. Blinco moved to approve; seconded by Major Selin.

Mayor Lewis asked about how far the sidewalk will go, and Mr. Austin stated there is a map of the project in the agenda package.

Without further discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Arnett and Mayor Selin recused from voting for Mon River Trails Conservancy.

Mr. Justice moved to approve; seconded by Commissioner Sikora.

Mr. Austin noted that MRTC requested three locations that require review by the state.

Councilman Kawecki stated support for this project.

With no further discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Selin, Councilman Kawecki, Councilman Abu-Ghannam recused from voting for City of Morgantown. Commissioner Sikor moved to approve; seconded by Mr. Blinco.

Commissioner Bloom raised concern about lack of design information from the City of Morgantown. Also, DOH has rejected this project in the past. Mr. Austin stated this is why this project is a conditional recommendation. Mayor Selin clarified this is just the design element.

Councilman Kawecki mentioned this project has been on the table for many years by many organizations. This project would help create a Morgantown Green Belt. He expressed support in helping this project move forward. Mr. Justice mentioned the Policy Board's support will give them leverage.

With no further discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

7. Draft Transportation Improvement Program

Mr. Ausitn stated that it has been approximately two years since the MPO has adopted a new TIP. Please find attached with the agenda a draft TIP for the Policy Board's review. This document had been released for public comment. The MPO anticipates that the Policy Board will adopt the new TIP at the November meeting. This is not an action item. The Star City TIP Amendment is included in this program as if the Board had passed it, if the amendment does not pass the Policy Board can remove it from the TIP.

8. Other Business

Commissioner Bloom announced that DOH District representatives and city council from all jurisdictions would possibly be at the next Policy Board meeting.

Councilman Kawecky asked for an update on the Downtown Microsimulation Study. Mr. Austin stated the MPO has given Kimley-Horn permission to proceed, and they will collect data on October 24th and 26th. The MPO gave them a completion date of this Spring. There will be steering and public meeting involved with this project.

Councilman Kawecky was approached by the Green Space Coalition and they would like to promote Morgantown having a Green Belt. They asked if the MPO would have data for them, Mr. Austin stated the MPO has the same GIS data the county has and staff can assist.

Mr. Blinco commended Senator Oliverio for supporting our region.

Mr. Austin stated that Staff is working on a Crash Data Analysis and a Pedestrian Data Collection for 705 and Maple Dr. Intersection. There will be draft reports at the November meeting.

9. Meeting Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 6:45 PM.