



POLICY BOARD MEETING

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

January 18th, 2024, 6 PM

Members Present:

Chairman Mike Kelly – Board of Education, Tom Bloom - Monongalia County, Mayor Bob Lucci – City of Westover, Ron Justice – West Virginia University, Steve Blinco – Star City, Bill Kawecki – City of Morgantown, Brian Carr – WVDOH, Sean Sikora – Monongalia County, Maria Smith – Mountain Line Transit Authority, Mayor Patricia Lewis - Town of Granville, Mayor Jenny Selin, Morgantown

Others Present: Christiaan Abildso, Jing Zhang, Jackie Peate

MPO Director: Bill Austin, AICP (Called in due to sickness.)

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 6:10 PM.

2. Public Comment

There were no public comments.

3. Election of Officers

Mr. Kelly noted that the Officer nominating Committee nominated Joe Statler for Chairman, Maria Smith as Vice-Chairman, and Mayor Lewis as Treasurer. Mr. Justice moved to approve the nomination; seconded by Commissioner Bloom. Without further discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Smith acted as the Chair for the January meeting, as Mr. Statler was absent.

4. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Justice moved to approve the minutes as presented; seconded by Mr. Kelly. With no discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

5. Committee Reports

a. Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)

Mr. Abildso stated that the CAC approved and discussed the Safety Improvement Targets. They recommended adding some safety enforcement measures such as speeding, red light running, and

distracted driving. The committee discussed and recommended the Pedestrian Study, and provided MPO Staff with feedback on the Crash Report.

b. Finance Committee

Mayor Lewis provided the Finance Committee Update. She provided the financial report for the month of November. The beginning balance was \$150,388.08, there were 4 deposits totaling \$39,683.43, 23 disbursements totaling \$59,368.24, leaving the ending balance at \$130,703.27. This carried over into December. There were no deposits in December, and there were 17 disbursements totaling \$94,929.90, leaving a balance of \$35,773.37

Commissioner Sikora moved to approve the Financial Report; seconded by Mr. Blinco. Without further discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

c. Executive Director

Mr. Austin apologized for calling in, as he was sick. Mr. Austin stated there was a scoping meeting with WVDOH for the Greenbag Rd. Design Project, and this project is moving forward. There is also a feasibility study being done for a pedestrian trail parallel to Greenbag Rd. The MPO is also helping the state prepare a RAISE grant for the City of Westover to do a design study for the entirety of Fairmont Road. Mr. Austin reminded the Policy Board that he will be out of town for two weeks in February. He also stated there will be a Crash Report presented to the Policy Board in March.

6. Presentation – WVDOH Traffic Engineering – Vulnerable Road Users Initiative

This presentation was moved to the March Policy Board meeting.

7. Safety Performance Measure Targets

Ms. Peate stated that each year the MPO needs to adopt performance measures for a variety of items. Please find enclosed with the agenda packet a memorandum identifying the proposed Safety Performance Measure targets for this year. The Safety Performance Management Measures support the State's Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) and requires State Departments of Transportation (DOTs) and Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) to set HSIP targets for 5 safety performance measures (Fatalities, Fatality Rate, Serious Injuries, Serious Injuries, and Non-Motorist Combined Fatalities and Serious Injuries). According to 23 CFR § 490.209, MPOs must establish safety performance targets within 180 days of the State DOT establishing and reporting targets in the State HSIP annual report. Part of the MPOs federal funds is utilized for these targets. The CAC and the TTAC unanimously recommended the adoption of the proposed Performance Measures to the Policy Board.

Mr. Kelly moved to approve the Safety Performance Measure Targets; seconded by Mayor Lewis. Without further discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

8. Patteson Drive/Maple Drive Pedestrian Study

Mr. Zhang and Ms. Peate, MPO Staff, stated that this study was initiated at the request of a CAC member. Staff collected data and analyzed the pedestrian movements as well as identifying the number of Mountain Line passengers that use the area under consideration. This study identifies the need for potentially significant changes to the pedestrian infrastructure in the area to improve safety. The TTAC and CAC reviewed the Study and unanimously recommended its adoption to the MPO Policy Board.

Mr. Blinco moved to approve the Patteson Drive/Maple Drive Pedestrian Study; seconded by Mr. Kelly.

The floor opened for discussion, and Mayor Selin asked about how this Study intersected with Patteson. This was an error, and MPO Staff will adjust the name of the Study to 705, as Patteson is not involved.

Commissioner Bloom asked what happens if the Board approves the study. He did not feel comfortable with the recommendations from the study, as he did not know enough about the analysis. Mr. Austin stated it is a preliminary study recognizing needs and issues that will be turned over to WVDOH if approved. They will evaluate the recommendations, and WVDOH is able to adjust as they see fit. Mr. Kawecky agreed with Commissioner Bloom, and raised concern.

Mr. Kawecky moved to substitute the original motion, and change it to accept the Study and pass it along; seconded by Commissioner Bloom.

Mayor Selin expressed appreciation for the Study.

Without further discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

9. Audit

Mr. Austin stated the MPO's Audit for FY 2022-2023 is enclosed with the agenda packet. The auditor did not find any issues with the MPO's records. It is respectfully requested that the Policy Board accept the Audit.

Mr. Kawecky moved to accept the Audit; seconded by Mayor Selin. Mayor Lewis commented she reviewed the report as well, and the report looks fine. Without further discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

10. Agreement with the City of Morgantown for a Community Garden Program

Mr. Austin explained the ongoing Greenbag Road project's environmental document found the need to mitigate the loss of a community garden. The City of Morgantown and the MMMPO proposed a community garden initiative to mitigate this loss. This proposal requested \$15,000 in Federal funds to purchase supplies and equipment for three or more community gardens throughout the urban area. This request was approved by the Federal Highway Administration and WVDOH as part of the approval of the environmental document for the construction of the

project. The City of Morgantown and the MMMPO have developed an agreement for the implementation of this initiative which includes the creation of an oversight committee consisting of representatives of the City and the MMMPO.

When this item was last discussed with the Policy Board, staff was asked if the community garden program moved forward and there was a delay or other concern with the Greenbag Road project, would the entities be responsible for reimbursing the funds spent. Staff asked WVDOH and FHWA about this concern, the response was that there would be no requirement to refund these funds to WVDOH or FHWA.

It is respectfully requested that the Policy Board approve the execution of this agreement by the Executive Director. A copy of the agreement is included with the agenda package. Staff anticipates that the City and the MMMPO will have a program in place for applicants to apply for these funds in February so any proposed community garden could begin in time for spring planting. It is respectfully requested that the Policy Board authorize the Executive Director to execute this agreement.

Mr. Kelly asked about the \$15,000 budget, and Mr. Austin said it was lease, and that the Steering Committee would not allow funds to go over.

Mr. Kawecki asked how this will be administered and how the money will be allocated. Mr. Austin said there have been discussion between Mr. Yeager and Mr. Tennant and MPO Staff. There will be a Steering Committee that reviews applications based on a well-defined criterion, and the money will mainly go towards seeds and setting up new gardens. Mr. Austin said there is already some local interest. He stated this agreement is the first step in getting the program started.

Commissioner Bloom raised concern about number 5 on the agreement. He wanted to know who is responsible for what. Mr. Austin clarified that the audit is the responsibility of the City of Morgantown. Commissioner Bloom expressed frustration with the Greenbag Rd Project.

Mayor Selin suggested updates for the group.

Commissioner Sikora asked who the intended recipients will be. Mr. Austin said we are looking for non-profit organizations, neighborhood associations, community groups, etc. No individuals. Commissioner Sikora asked if this program will affect the Greenbag Rd Project. Mr. Austin said this is a mitigation effort, and as long as there is a good faith effort, there will be no issues. Mr. Justice asked that the Board be updated as this project progresses. He raised concern about liabilities, and how to upkeep the garden. Mr. Kelly asked if this money can be used for purchase of property, Mr. Austin said it cannot be used for purchase of property, but can be used for raised beds and fencing.

Commissioner Sikora asked if there were groups interested, Mr. Austin said there were two organizations interested. Mayor Selin also said she has had many groups request community gardens, so there is an interest in the community. There needs to be a community aspect. Commissioner Sikora asked if a school could apply and be considered a community garden, Mr. Austin said yes.

Mr. Justice moved to approve the Community Garden Agreement with the City of Morgantown; seconded by Commissioner Sikora.

Without further discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

11. Bylaws Revision

Vice Chair Smith stated that at the last meeting of the Policy Board the Board discussed potentially adding the President of the Morgantown Area Partnership (MAP) to the Policy Board. A subcommittee of the Policy Board consisting of Mayor Selin, Commissioner Bloom, Mr. Kelly, Mr. Statler and Mrs. Smith met to discuss the proposal. This subcommittee agreed that it would be appropriate to have the MAP President participate on the Board as a non-voting member for a two-year term. They also recommended that the Board could reappoint the MAP President at the end of the two-year period. The proposed language for this Bylaws Amendment is:

Section 4. The MPO Policy Board may appoint the President of the Morgantown Area partnership, a broad-based community organization which has multiple organizations as members, as a non-voting member for a two-year term. As a non-voting representative this member will not be counted in the definition of a quorum. This representative may be reappointed by the Board.

Vice Chair Smith stated that in addition to this provision, it is proposed to add the Morgantown Area Partnership as part one of the member agencies that are not to be responsible for the operating match of the MPO in Article 4 of the Bylaws. Other member agencies on this list are the Monongalia County Board of Education, WVU, and Mountain Line.

Mr. Justice moved to approve the Bylaws revision; seconded by Mr. Blinco. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Kelly asked if there are other non-voting members, and if so, who are they. Mayor Selin clarified that this is a part of a process to see if they will become a voting member. Commissioner Sikora asked what the purpose of a non-voting member was, and members responded that communication with them is important so that requests to Charleston fully reflect the needs of the community.

Commissioner Sikora asked if there could be a designee for the President of the Morgantown Area Partnership (MAP), as MAP is involved in many organizations and the board does not want to overwhelm them.

Mr. Blinco mentioned bringing in a person from the Cheat Lake area as it continues to develop.

There was a motion by Mr. Justice to amend the Bylaws revision to allow for the President of MAP to have a designee; seconded by Mr. Kelly. Without further discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

12. Draft Unified Planning Work Program Summary

Mr. Austin noted that a memorandum identifying the work proposed for the upcoming Fiscal Year is included in the agenda packet for your information. This information includes a proposed budget which would require the MPO's local contributions to go up by \$2,500 for the City of Morgantown and \$2,500 from Monongalia County. Under the proposed budget both the City of Morgantown and the Monongalia County Commission would be asked to provide a total of \$20,000 in match for the upcoming fiscal year. We would appreciate any suggestions for work to be included in the Work Program for the upcoming year the TTAC may have. The complete UPWP will be presented for adoption at the March meeting. No action is required on this item.

Vice Chair Smith mentioned some numbers were incorrect with Operating Expenses for Software, and Mr. Austin said he will correct it.

Mr. Blinco asked what trail counters were, Mr. Austin clarified it counts users on the rail trail, and it is useful for the MPO Regional Demand Model.

13. Executive Directors Review

Due to Mr. Austin calling in on the phone due to sickness, the board decided to move the Executive Directors Review to the March Meeting.

Mr. Justice moved to approve this action; seconded by Mr. Blinco. With no discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

14. Other Business

Mr. Justice talked about working on the Tier 1 Richwood Ave project. He stated people and banks wanted to be certain about what they were funding. New zoning passed this week in the City of Morgantown for the Richwood Ave project. Due to this change, the process can move along. Mr. Justice wants to make sure the roadway infrastructure and signal is maintained correctly, and wants to make sure the correct entities can aid and be included in this process. Mr. Carr suggested reaching out to WVDOH.

Commissioner Sikora stated that the Chapel Hill Gateway Project is beginning, and discussion is happening with WVDOH on how this interferes with the project at Exit 155, and how to make sure both continue smoothly.

Mayor Selin expressed congratulations to the new Vice Chair, Maria Smith.

15. Meeting Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 7:22 PM.