



## POLICY BOARD MEETING

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

May 18, 2023, 6 PM

### Members Present:

Chair Mike Kelly – Board of Education, Treasurer Mayor Patricia Lewis – Town of Granville, Joe Abu-Ghannam - City of Morgantown, Commissioner Jeffrey Arnett – Monongalia County, Recorder Steve Blinco – Westover, Dave Bruffy – Mountain Line Transit Authority, Mr. Brian Carr – WV DOH, Mayor Bob Lucci – City of Westover, Ron Justice – West Virginia University, Councilperson Kawecky – City of Morgantown, Joe Statler – Blacksville, Commissioner Sean Sikora – Monongalia County, Mayor Jennifer Selin – City of Morgantown

**MPO Director:** Bill Austin, AICP

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### 1. Call to Order

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

### 2. Public Comment

Barry Pallay, the President of Upper Monongahela River Association, noted that the UMRA supports the marine highway designation of the Monongahela River. The designation will help easing congestion traffic, lowering transportation costs, and improving the livability of neighborhoods close to the river.

### 4 Approval of Minutes

Mr. Austin noted that the minutes of the last meeting were included in the agenda package; Mr. Justice moved to approve the minutes as presented; seconded by Mayor Selin. With no discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

### 5. Committee Reports

#### a. Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)

Mr. Austin noted that the CAC did not have a quorum in the last meeting. Attending members reviewed and expressed support of the agenda items.

*b. Finance Committee*

Mayor Lewis briefed the Board on the financial report:

At the beginning of March, the balance was \$65,597.50. There were three deposits for \$44,452.24. There were 19 disbursements totaling \$19,786.74, leaving \$90,263 at the end of March.

At the beginning of April, the balance was \$44,452.24. There were two deposits totaling \$30,308.97. There were 20 disbursements totaling \$22,750.37, leaving \$97,821.60 at the end of April.

Mr. Justice moved to approve the finance report as presented; seconded by Mayor Selin. With no discussion, the motion was unanimously approved.

*c. Executive Director*

Mr. Austin noted that the MPO has been working with DOH in finalizing the agreement on Greenbag Rd study. The MPO is also collaborating with DOH and the City of Morgantown on the matter of replacement community garden due to the loss of the community garden in the Greenbag Rd improvement. Mr. Austin noted that the construction of the Patteson RRFB pedestrian crossing project and the construction of the Beechurst Ave project is underway.

Mr. Austin noted that he will participate in the design workshop for the Smithtown Rd/Don Knotts Blvd intersection project. The workshop will be held in Charleston on April 29.

Mr. Austin noted that WV DOH has recently adopted its four-year Highway Safety Plan. The plan includes an initiative to incorporate pedestrian safety efforts throughout the state, including the current pedestrian safety initiative among the City of Morgantown, WVU, and DOH.

Mayor Selin noted that commercial trucks have difficult right-turns from Greenbag Rd to Don Knotts Blvd due to inadequate turning radius and superelevation. The intersection is very close to the Smithtown Rd project. Mr. Austin noted he will bring up this issue to the project team during the DOH workshop.

Councilperson Kawecky asked about the process of locating a replacement community garden. Mr. Austin noted that neighborhoods throughout the MPO urban area can apply for a grant to design and construct the community garden.

## **5. Monongahela River Highway Designation**

Mr. Austin noted that the City of Morgantown and the Port of Pittsburgh have been working on an application for the Monongahela to be part of the United States “River Highway” network. The most recent Federal legislation on this topic eliminated local government eligibility to sponsor a proposed “River Highway” and instead designated metropolitan planning organization’s as potential sponsors. The Port of Pittsburgh and the City of Morgantown have asked the MMMPO to become the sponsor of the application.

Mr. Timothy Pickering of the WV DOT Maritime Administration made a presentation on the WV DOT’s policy on Monongahela River Highway Designation.

Scott Harshman of the Port of Pittsburgh Commission also discussed the multijurisdictional partnership on the marine highway designation between the Port of Pittsburgh and the MMMPO. Chair Kelly read the resolution of for the MMMPO to sponsor the Monongahela River as part of Marine Highway 79.

Mr. Justice moved to adopt the resolution; seconded by Councilperson Kawecki. With no further discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

## **6. Project Selection Process for Suballocated Funds and TIP Projects**

Mr. Austin noted that he has been working with the West Virginia MPO Association and the WV DOH on federal funding suballocation, project selection, and programming for the MPO area.

Mr. Austin noted that the IIJA Bill provides that each MPO's with populations under 200,000 are suballocated funds from the Carbon Reduction Program (CRP). Our MPO's allocation under this program is approximately \$352,000 a year for 5 years. The bill also identifies that a portion of the State's Surface Transportation Block Grant funding is to be equitably distributed to the State's MPO's with populations of less than 50,000. WVDOH worked with WVAMPO to determine an equitable formula for distributing these funds. Our MPO's portion of these funds is approximately \$570,000 a year for five years. The MPO can also request use of STBG funds for projects above our suballocation in a competitive process.

Considering previous allocations, the MPO needs to select projects for the remaining CRP and STBG funds. The MMMPO has approximately \$500,000 of CRP funds to program for Fiscal Years 2022 and 2023. The MMMPO also has approximately \$700,000 in STBG funds from FY's 22 and 23 to program. A draft process description of the selection of projects for the MPO's suballocation funding is included in the agenda package.

Mr. Carr noted that WV DOH usually do not program the engineering phase of a project without its subsequent right-of-way and construction phases in line. He noted that 70 percent of the CRP funding will be available to all MPOs in the state on a competitive base. Mr. Carr asked about the minimum score for project eligibility. Mr. Austin noted that the MPO does not establish any minimum scores. All submitted projects will be reported to the policy board for review.

Mr. Carr noted that in case of unused funds, WV DOH will prevent any of those funds from expiring by allocating those funds to projects on behalf of the MPO.

Mr. Carr asked about the deadline for the application. Mr. Austin noted that the MPO will coordinate WV DOH on deadline details.

Mr. Bruffy noted that municipal budget schedule should be considered in setting up the deadlines. Mr. Austin noted that the applicants will have the flexibility to request project funds for next fiscal year.

Mr. Austin noted that the MPO is also working with the WV DOH to develop guidelines which will specify a process to submit projects for the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). The process is separate from the application process for suballocation fund mentioned

earlier. The STIP project application will allow the MPO submit big projects for funds in the STIP, such as major intersection and corridor projects and major new constructions. The STIP guideline will also specify a process for the MPO to request corridor pavement to local DOH offices.

Mr. Statler noted that this is an important piece of policy and suggested allowing more time for the board members to review and refine the process. Mr. Justice agreed. Mr. Statler made a motion to delay the action on this item until the next regular meeting.

Mr. Bruffy suggested developing a draft application form based on the draft policy. Mr. Austin agreed.

Mayor Selin asked if WV DOH will allocate the unused funds to the projects located in the MMMPO area. Mr. Carr noted that the funds will be spent on the projects located in the MMMPO area. However, it is unlikely to have an exact match between the amount of funds left and the amount the funds actually spent. The DOH may spend more or less, using the number of unused funds as a guideline.

Mr. Austin noted that besides the allocated funds, the MPO can apply for the rest of the CRP and STBG funds which consist 70 percent of the total funds available to the state.

Without further discussion. The motion passed unanimously.

## **7. Pavement Condition and System Reliability Performance Measures**

Mr. Austin noted that the agenda package included the updated 2023-2025 pavement and bridge maintenance performance measures that WV DOT has requested the MPO to adopt. The performance measures include targets for the interstate system, non-interstate national highway systems (NHS) and NHS bridge deck area. The measures include system reliability and pavement conditions. The State is required by federal regulations to update the performance measures and adopt them every year.

Mr. Bruffy made a motion to dispense the reading of the text of the performance measures; seconded by Mr. Justice. With no discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Bruffy made a motion to adopt the performance measures as presented. With no discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

## **8. Other Business**

There was no other business.

## **12. Meeting Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 7:48 PM.