



POLICY BOARD MEETING

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

August 17th, 2023, 6 PM

Members Present:

Chairman Mike Kelly – Board of Education, Dave Harshbarger (representing Joe Abu-Ghannam) - City of Morgantown, Tom Bloom - Monongalia County, Jeffrey Arnett – Monongalia County, Steve Blinco – Star City, Maria Smith – Mountain Line Transit Authority, Mayor Bob Lucci – City of Westover, Ron Justice – West Virginia University, Bill Kawecki – City of Morgantown, Delegate Joe Statler – Blacksville, Sean Sikora – Monongalia County, Mayor Jennifer Selin – City of Morgantown, Brian Carr – WVDOH, Mayor Patricia Lewis-Granville

Others Present: Senator Mike Oliverio, MaryAnn Folz, Robert Shroyer, Jason Foster, Christiaan Abildso, Members of the Public.

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

Senator Mike Oliverio voiced his support for the project to build a southern bridge, as opening access to the Industrial Park is beneficial to the community.

MaryAnn Folz stated she is 100% supportive of everything occurring in the Industrial Park. She thinks if this bridge is built, to not complete the Harmony Grove project. Do one or the other. Possibly wait until economic benefits of southern bridge, then build the Harmony Grove interchange. Prefers Grafton Rd. alternative. Need to be aware of those living on Scott Avenue, and not impact that community.

Robert Shroyer is a project manager for JWCS representing and managing Jehovah's Witnesses construction locations. One of their properties may be affected by the bridge, how the connection may affect their location on Smithtown Road (379 Smithtown Rd, Morgantown, WV 26508).

3. Approval of Minutes

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

4. Committee Reports

a. Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)

Christiaan Abildso spoke on behalf of the CAC. The CAC recommended moving Southern Bridge to Tier Two of the MPO Priority List by a vote of 4 to 1, and recommended Alternative 3 to the Policy Board. Four (4) members voted for the alternative and one (1) member abstained. He mentioned a letter from the MRTC he presented to the CAC, opposing the bridge construction. Mr. Austin noted this had been shared with the Policy Board.

b. Finance Committee

Balance at the beginning of June was \$98,225.83. There was one deposit of \$18,464.28. 21 disbursements totaling \$24,378.89. Ended June with \$92,311.22. July had 4 deposits totaling \$74,583.33. 18 disbursements totaling \$127,418, and ended with \$39,475.87.

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

c. Executive Director

Mr. Austin reported that auditor review committee reviewed 2 proposals, scored, and choose BHM for their upcoming three years of audit reports. He also announced on September 6th, there will be a Vulnerable Road Users meeting at Mountain Line, organized by WVDOH. There is also a survey. The MMMPO was successful in the application for the Marine Highway Designation. The Monongahela River has been designated as part of M-79 by the USDOT.

Mr. Austin also noted that The MMMPO is proud to announce that Jing Zhang has joined the Advisory Committee on Transportation Equity for the U.S. Department of Transportation. He is looking forward to working with Secretary Pete to advance civil rights and expand access to jobs and economic opportunities in transportation for all.

WVDOH will be reaching out to consultants for the Greenbag Rd project soon.

Mr. Austin wanted to note that the MPO issued a check in the amount of \$100,000 to WVDOH for the match for the Downtown Microsimulation Study. Due to several issues and after discussion with WVDOH it was determined that the MPO could accomplish a contract with the selected consultant more quickly than WVDOH could by utilizing the MPO's On Call consultant contract. We therefore stopped payment on the check which is reflected in the July Finance Report.

Mayor Selin wanted to recognize those who helped with the Marine Highway Designation.

5. Transportation Improvement Program Amendment

Mr. Austin notes that MPO staff is requesting that the Policy Board amend the TIP to include suballocated STBG funding for the Downtown Microsimulation Study Scope of Work. The TTAC and CAC previously reviewed the scope of work for this project and the participating entities have provided the match necessary for the project. The details of the proposed TIP Amendment are below:

Downtown Morgantown Microsimulation Study Project: Number STBG2023315D Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) funds suballocated to the MMMPO \$500,000-Federal Funds \$400,000 Local funds \$100,000.

The TTAC and the CAC unanimously recommended approval of the TIP Amendment to the MPO Policy Board.

Mr. Justice moved to approve the Transportation Improvement Program Amendment as presented; seconded by Mayor Selin. With no discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

6. Metropolitan Transportation Plan Amendment

Mr. Austin informed the Policy Board about a proposal from the WVDOH Division of Highways (WVDOH) for the construction of a new bridge across the Monongahela River in the vicinity of and to connect to the roadway network of the Morgantown Industrial Park (MIP). According to WVDOH, this proposed bridge would be constructed in addition to the Harmony Grove Interchange. The primary purpose of the bridge is to provide a new employer, Mountaintop Beverage with access to I-79 as quickly as possible. The DOH provided three (3) alternatives, which was narrowed down to two (2), provided in the agenda packet.

The TTAC unanimously recommended approval of moving the Southern Bridge to Tier Two of the MPO's Priority List. The CAC recommended moving Southern Bridge to Tier Two of the MPO Priority List by a vote of 4 to 1. The TTAC did not express a preference for either alternative location for the proposed bridge. The CAC recommended Alternative 3 to the Policy Board. Four (4) members voted for the alternative and one (1) member abstained.

Mr. Justice moved to approve the Metropolitan Transportation Plan Amendment, choosing Alternative Three (3); seconded by Mayor Selin.

Commissioner Bloom asked where the exact locations will be for the bridge, raising concern for 73.

Jason Foster, from WVDOH, clarified where the location will be, but there may be changes as engineering goes from preliminary to final. Mr. Austin also clarified that funding sources have not been identified at this point.

With no further discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

7. Other Business

Mayor Selin asked about WV 7 paving, and the timeline attached to it. Mr. Justice said it was in next construction season's budget and timeline. There are concerns for accommodating for heavy

weight loads. Mr. Justice suggested that Mr. Austin could send information and support to DOH to help move project along. Next paving season, all of Brockway will be paved in problem areas. Mayor Selin mentioned concrete should be the paving material instead of asphalt.

Commissioner Bloom asked about paving Holland Ave sooner. Mayor Lucci said Holland Ave is not part of current paving project, but could occur afterwards.

Mr. Austin mentioned that City of Morgantown and Westover should be applying for suballocating funds soon.

Mr. Statler mentioned concern of trucks on sidewalks on Brockway Avenue.

8. Meeting Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 6:45 PM.