



POLICY BOARD MEETING

243 High Street Room 026, Morgantown WV 26501

March 17, 2022, 6 PM

Virtual Meeting Link:

<https://morgantownmonongaliampo.my.webex.com/meet/baustin>

Members Present:

Chair Ron Justice-WVU, Vice-Chair Mike Kelly-Board of Education, Treasurer-Mayor Patricia Lewis, Commissioner Jeffery Arnett-Monongalia County, Commissioner Tom Bloom-Monongalia County, Recorder Steven Blinco-Star City, Dave Bruffy-Mountain Line Transit, Mr. Brian Carr-WV DOH, Councilperson Dave Harshbarger-City of Morgantown, Commissioner Sean Sikora-Monongalia County, Councilperson Steve Solomon-City of Westover.

MPO Director: Bill Austin, AICP

1. Call to Order

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

2. Public Comment

No public comments

3. Approval of Minutes

Chair Justice noted that the minutes for the last meeting were included in the agenda packet. Commissioner Bloom moved to approve the minutes as presented; seconded by Mayor Lewis. With no discussion, the motion was approved unanimously.

4. Committee Report

a. Citizens Advisory Committee

Mr. Austin noted that the Chairman of the Citizens Advisory Committee had a quorum in the last meeting. The Committee reviewed and recommend approval of the proposed TIP amendments

and the UPWP for FY 2022-2023. The Committee also reviewed and recommend releasing of draft MTP document.

b. Finance Committee

Mayor Lewis briefed the Board on the financial report:

At the beginning of January, the balance was \$ 33,386.68. The expenditures were \$19,992.38 with no deposit, leaving a balance of \$ 13,394.30 at the end of January.

At the beginning of February, the balance was \$13,394.30. The expenditures were \$34,350.28 with two deposits of \$58,410.66, leaving a balance of \$37,454.68 at the end of October.

Mr. Kelly moved to approve the finance report as presented; seconded by Commissioner Bloom. With no discussion, the motion was unanimously approved.

c. Executive Director

Mr. Austin noted that the infrastructure ad-hoc committee has met yesterday and discussed the collaboration on developing infrastructure projects in the area, including applying grant application with MPO staff assistance. The meeting was well attended by the DOH District Four and MUB.

Chairman Justice noted that the meeting was productive and expressed his support to the partnership and leveraging the MPO expertise in infrastructure project development.

6. TIP Amendments

Mr. Austin noted that the WV DOH and WVU have requested TIP Amendments. The DOH requested increase of fundings for I-79 Bridge Rehabilitation with federal funds from \$40,139,040 to \$63,270,000. The increase is due to a more accurate estimation on the project cost at the engineering phase of the project.

Mayor Lewis moved to approve the amendment as presented, seconded by Mr. Kelly. With no discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Austin noted that West Virginia University requested to utilize the funds totaling \$1,674,325.00 for SGR activities that will improve and maintain PRT vehicles, stations, and guideway infrastructure.

Commissioner Bloom moved to approve the amendment as presented, seconded by Councilperson Harshbarger. With no discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

6. 2022 UPWP Amendment

Mr. Austin noted that as reported at the January Policy Board meeting, the Policy Board needs to amend the 2022 Unified Planning Work Program to complete payment for the ongoing update of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan can be made. This amendment is necessary because the project got off to a late start and a portion of the work budgeted for in the previous fiscal year was not completed that fiscal year. This work was carried over to the current fiscal year. MPO staff has coordinated with

WVDOH to ensure that the necessary funds are available. The MPO carried over the match required for these funds from last year.

Mr. Carr confirmed that the DOH has received the budget amendment request from the MPO.

Mr. Bruffy moved to adopt the proposed 2022 UPWP Amendment, seconded by Commissioner Sikora. With no further discussion, the motion passed.

7. 2023 Unified Planning Work Program

Mr. Austin noted that the draft Unified Planning Work Program for FY 2022-2023 is included in the agenda package. At the last Policy Board meeting the Policy Board requested that the MPO look at additional cost of living allowance pay increases over and above the 3 percent originally proposed. The draft document enclosed includes tables for 3%, 4% and 5% cost of living allowances for MPO staff. None of these proposed pay increases necessitate a significant increase in the budget as presented in January. To keep the total budget the same the MPO is proposing a decrease of \$4,000 in the *Consulting Services* line item and approximately \$1,000 decrease in *Travel Expenses*. Other than this very little has changed in the document since the Policy Board reviewed it. The TTAC and the CAC have reviewed and recommended approval of the UPWP for FY 2022-2023.

Mr. Bruffy recommended 5% cost of living allowances for MPO staff, considering the current rate of inflation.

Commissioner Bloom asked about the impact of the increase on the match required of the area's local governments for the shared position. Mr. Austin noted that since the total amount is not changed, there is no impact to the shared position.

Mr. Kelly moved to adopt the proposed UPWP for FY 2022-2023, seconded by Commissioner Bloom. With no further discussion, the motion unanimously passed.

8. Draft Metropolitan Transportation Plan

Mr. Austin noted that the consultant for the Metropolitan Transportation Plan Update has completed a draft document. It is requested that the Policy Board release the document to the public for comment. The TTAC and CAC have reviewed the draft Plan and recommended the it for release to the public.

Chairman Justice expressed his appreciation to the consultants, steering committee, and the communities for their contribution to the plan. He noted that the Board should hold a separate meeting to discuss the proposals of the plan in more details.

Mr. Bruffy noted that the information of the draft plan being presented on behalf of the public transit was not the most accurate and require some modification. He urged refining the transit part of the draft plan before its public releasing, to ensure a fair opportunity for the community to comment on transit items.

Chairman Justice noted that some demographic data needed to be clarified.

Mr. Carr noted that the MTP Update needs to be adopted by May to ensure the continuing allocation of federal funds to the region through the DOH.

Mr. Rutkowski did a presentation about the status of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan Update.

Commissioner Bloom expressed his concern that the implementation of non-tier 1 projects is pushed beyond 2030. Chairman Justice noted that the prioritization is not set in stone; it can be modified through amendments to reflect changing circumstance. Mr. Rutkowski noted that the implementation time frame is to incorporate the inflation factor into the cost estimation, as all tiers need to be finically constrained. Mr. Carr agreed and noted that the MTP should be considered as a living document and its project prioritization should be flexible. Mr. Kelly noted that the public should be aware that no change can be made on the project prioritization without going through the process required by the MPO's public involvement policy.

Commissioner Bloom asked how the prioritization scores were calculated. Mr. Austin noted that it is based on the objective criteria and their weighting decided by the steering committee. Chairman Justice noted that the Policy Board will hold a work session to discuss the prioritization in details.

Mr. Carr noted that while all the projects in MTP are eligible for funding from various resources, the DOH will only fund tier 1 projects, as they are identified as the regional priority. If a project is expected to be funded by the DOH, it has to be in the tier 1 category.

Commissioner Bloom noted that it often causes confusion to the public that some projects are in the Transportation Improvement Program but are not shown in the MTP's project list.

Commissioner Sikora noted that regionally significant projects, such as the Harmony Grove Interchange, should receive enough attention to move forward. Mr. Austin noted that some regionally significant projects are under the alternative funding category. Those projects are often open to wider range of funding resources and serve multiple purposes including economic development.

Chairman Justice noted that the Board will look into the project information in details during its work session.

9. Update on Transit Study

Mr. Bruffy noted that Mountain Line Transit has been working with the Morgantown Parking Authority and WVU to develop a consolidated fare system for the region. Currently, the team has completed the technical assessment, including identifying potential vendors and funding opportunities.

10. Demonstration of Online TIP Database

This item was moved to the Policy Board work session on MTP project prioritization.

11. Other Business

Mr. Bruffy noted Mountain Line is working with the United Way to improve its service on the Don Knotts route, and the project will be valuable to the community. Mr. Bruffy also noted that Mountain Line is working with Uber to provide transit serve in a designated zone including the Grafton Road and Mountain Heights areas. Transit users will be able to use the Uber app to request Mountain Line transit service.

Commissioner Bloom suggested that the MPO make a statement on the Greenbag Road project to clarify its standing on the project. Chairman Justice noted that the MPO included Greenbag Road in its 2013 Metropolitan Transportation Plan and reaffirmed it as a GO BOND project in 2016. The

MPO has the authority to identify projects to improve transportation system and to approve federally funded projects. The MPO does not have the authority to approve or deny the design of a project. Mr. Austin noted that MPO staff did a study on Greenbag Road in 2015 which identified the magnitude of issues along the corridor. The study has been turned over to the DOH for engineering design.

Mr. Carr recommended the Policy Board send a letter the West Virginia Secretary of Transportation Jimmy Wriston to echo the unanimous support of the Greenbag Road project as designed by the DOH. Chairman Justice agreed and stated the letter can correspondingly highlight the structure of the Morgantown Monongalia MPO and the ways it represents the community.

12. Meeting adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 7:22 PM.