



POLICY BOARD MEETING

City of Morgantown
389 Spruce Street
Morgantown, WV
March 20, 2025, 6 PM

Members Present:

Chairman Russ Rogerson - Morgantown Area Partnership Board Vice-Chairman, Maria Smith-Mountain Line Transit Authority, Mike Kelly – Board of Education, Mayor Patricia Lewis - Town of Granville, Bill Kawecki – City of Morgantown, Mayor Joe AbuGhannam - City of Morgantown, Sean Sikora – Monongalia County, Jeff Arnett - Monongalia County, Brian Carr, WVDOT - DOH, Tom Bloom - Monongalia County, Ron Justice – West Virginia University, Steve Blinco – Star City, Jenny Selin - City of Morgantown, Bob Lucci - Mayor of Westover

Others Present: Jing Zhang, Jackie Peate, Mike Dodd (WVDOH)

MPO Director: Bill Austin, AICP

1. Call to Order

With a quorum present, Chairman Rogerson called the meeting of the Morgantown Monongalia Metropolitan Planning Organization (MMMPO) Policy Board to order at 6:02 PM.

2. Public Comment

No Public Comments.

3. Approval of Minutes

Commissioner Arnett moved to approve the minutes; seconded by Commissioner Bloom. The motion passed unanimously.

4. Committee Reports

a. Citizens Advisory Committee

Mr. Abildso, the Chair, was unable to make the last meeting, but the CAC did meet and had great attendance. Logan Thornsley, a new member, was able to attend. The CAC reviewed all action items and recommended approval.

b. Finance

Mayor Lewis provided the financial report for the month of January and February. The beginning balance in January was \$29,195.39, there were 5 deposits totaling \$70,189.49, 19 disbursements totaling \$50,421.32, leaving the ending balance at \$48,963.56. This carried over into February with 3 deposits totaling \$41,763.28, 23 disbursements totaling \$71,388.62, leaving the ending balance at \$19,338.22.

Mr. Kelly moved to approve the Financial Report; seconded by Commissioner Arnett. The motion passed unanimously.

c. Executive Director

Mr. Austin provided the board with his report. He attended the MAP Mon County Day in Charleston. He also stated there will be a public meeting on April 3rd, 2025 from 5:30pm-7:30pm at the Train Depot in Hazel Ruby McQuain Park. This public meeting will be about Pedestrian Safety Improvements in the Morgantown Area and Don Knotts Boulevard Pedestrian Bridge connecting First Ward to the Rail Trail. The Downtown Microsimulation Study Steering Committee will also be meeting on April 3. He also stated the Greenbag Rd Design Study is ongoing and there is a technical staff Committee on March 27th. Mr. Austin stated he will be traveling to Charleston, WV on March 25th for a Safety Meeting. He will also be in Wilmington, NC the week April 14th to present the Downtown Microsimulation Study with Kimley Horn at the North Carolina Planning Conference. He will also be representing AMPO and do a presentation on their behalf. At the end of June, he will be travelling to Denver for the AMPO Board Retreat.

5. TIP Amendment

Mr. Austin stated to please note that this item was not submitted in time to meet the regular requirements for public comment under the MPO's Public Involvement Policy. WVU requested special consideration of this project because delaying approval could endanger contracts for work to be done this summer. The proposed amendment has been advertised and the public comment period ends on March 31st. This amendment is being requested by West Virginia University (WVU) due to uncertainty around the awarding of a grant to fund upgrades to the PRT approved prior to January 20th. WVU is requesting that the TIP be amended to allow for regular funding to be used for the PRT upgrade.

WVU's requested amendment is shown below:

- Preventative Maintenance, Infrastructure Rehabilitation/Renovation for the Personal Rapid Transit System, FY2025, funding Source: FF22 State of Good Repair-Section 5337. Federal funding increase from \$1,209,121 to \$2,478,577.

It is respectfully requested that the Policy Board authorize the Executive Director to approve the TIP Amendment if there are no negative public comments received during the Public Comment period.

Commissioner Bloom moved to approve giving the Executive Director authorization to approve this TIP Amendment once the Public Comment Period is over; seconded by Ms. Selin. The motion passed unanimously.

6. UPWP 2025-2026

Mr. Austin stated that the initial draft of the UPWP was presented to the MPO's committees at their January meeting. The work proposed in the draft UPWP is essentially the same as previously discussed with the Policy Board. The two primary work items for the upcoming fiscal year are the completion of the ongoing Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) update and a study identifying the feasibility of the Mon Valley Greenspace Coalition's conceptual Greenbelt

Plan. There have been several changes to the amount of funding for various items since the committee's initial review in January but no significant change in the total amount of funding proposed for the MPO's operations. The most significant change is that the increase in funding for health insurance is budgeted as an 18% increase in cost rather than at 14%. This change was made to account for additional information we received from PEIA. The other significant change is that the MPO's contribution to staff's retirement funds was reduced to 9% from 12% to reflect recent changes to the required contributions to the State's retirement system. It is proposed that Staff get a 3% cost of living allowance increase as discussed in January.

Commissioner Sikora moved to approve the UPWP 2025-2026; seconded by Mr. Justice. The motion passed unanimously.

7. MPO Letter of Credit

Mr. Austin stated that in the last several months the MPO has experienced cash flow concerns due to the greater than usual number of consultant contracts we have been administering and to minor delays to reimbursements by the State. The issues with the State's reimbursement have been addressed however there are no guarantees that issues won't arise again. With the advent of suballocated funds staff anticipates that we will continue to administer more contracts than we have done in the past. There is also uncertainty about the stability of the Federal funding processes. Given these factors staff has researched reviving the MPO's line of credit. Staff's discussion with our bank as well as the MPO's Officers has indicated that the MPO should seek a \$75,000 line of credit. This amount will provide enough funding for 3 months of MPO operating expenses (not including reimbursements to consultants.) It is respectfully requested that the Policy Board authorize the Executive Director to institute a Line of Credit in the amount of \$75,000 with United Bank.

Commissioner Arnett moved to approve the MPO Letter of Credit; seconded by Mr. Kelly. The motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Bloom asked to clarify that there are two signatures on the checks, so Mr. Austin could not draw a check alone. Mr. Austin stated this is correct, and either the Treasurer (Mayor Lewis) or the Chair (Russ Rogerson) signs the check in addition to himself. Ms. Selin stated the MMMPO has done this before and it has been helpful.

8. Crash Report 2019-2023

Mr. Austin noted that a draft of the MPO's latest crash report was enclosed with the agenda packet. The data included in this report will be used as part of the update of the MTP. We appreciate any comments you may have on the report that may help improve it. The TTAC and CAC both unanimously recommended adoption of the crash report to the MPO Policy Board. It is respectfully requested that the Policy Board adopt the Crash Report.

Commissioner Sikora moved to approve the Crash Report 2019-2023; seconded by Mr. Kawecki. The motion passed unanimously.

9. Metropolitan Transportation Plan Update Work Program

Mr. Austin stated the outline of work to be performed as part of the MTP update was included in the agenda packet. It should be noted that a good portion of this work has already begun. The MPO's Metropolitan Transportation Plan Update 2026-2055 (MTP Update) aims to reassess and validate the plan's projects and priorities through a comprehensive community engagement and data-driven analysis process. By incorporating the latest data, projections, and stakeholder feedback, this update ensures that the MTP remains responsive to the evolving transportation needs of the urban area. This is not an action item.

10. Community Garden Update

Mr. Austin stated the MMMPO will be re advertising part of the Community Garden Grant as Westover has to rescind their grant money due to a staffing change. He told the board staff will advertise on the 21st of March, with April 4th being the deadline. The amount available is \$4,600. The other two organizations are ready to being the gardens this grow year and are in communication with staff.

11. Other Business

Mr. Carr introduced new WVDOH employee in the Planning Division, Mike Dodd. He is the bike and pedestrian coordinator.

12. Meeting Adjournment

The meeting adjured at 6:24pm.