

Minutes of the Berkshire Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)

Tuesday May 24, 2011 4:00 PM

At the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission office
1 Fenn Street, Suite 201, Pittsfield, Massachusetts

MPO Representatives and Alternates Present:

Clinton Bench, MassDOT (Representing Secretary Mullan)
Peter Niles, MassDOT District 1 (representing Acting Administrator Francis DePaola)
Jim Lovejoy, Town of Mt. Washington (Southwest Berkshire Representative)
Bruce Collingwood, City of Pittsfield (Representing Mayor Ruberto)
Mike Ouellette, (North Berkshire Delegate)
Gordon D. Bailey (Southeast Berkshire Representative)
Jim Huebner, Town of Washington (Southeast Berkshire Alternate)
Bob Malnati, BRTA

Others Present:

Peter Frieri, MassDOT District 1
Justin Diagle, MassDOT District 1
Mark Moore, MassDOT District 1
Nat Karns, BRPC
Clete Kus, BRPC
Anuja Koirala, BRPC
Douglas Plachcinski, BRPC

1. CALL TO ORDER-INTRODUCTIONS

Mr. Bench called the meeting to order at 4:05

2. MINUTES OF APRIL 26, 2011

ACTION: Motion by Collingwood, supported by Bailey, to approve the minutes of April 26, 2011.

DISCUSSION: None

VOICE VOTE: 5 Ayes, 2 Abstentions

MOTION CARRIED

3. TAC REPORT

Mr. Kus briefly summarized the TAC meeting report. Mr. Kus informed the MPO that the TAC Chair Jana Brule resigned and the TAC will select a new Chair at the next meeting. There was a question about the specifics of advanced construction that Mrs. Koirala explained.

4. OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments.

5. DISCUSSION ON RTP RECOMMENDATIONS

Mr. Plachcinski went through the policy recommendations, highlighting seasonal traffic rates, pavement conditions, non-motorized improvements, north-south rail, truck access, climate change, local technical assistance, and financing options. The TAC did not provide comments on the report when presented. Mr. Collingwood indicated that Pittsfield's priority for

economic development was a limited access connector route from I-90 to Pittsfield then North Adams. Mr. Karns elaborated how the concept was part of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy. Mr. Plachcinski indicated that BRPC would seek to implement the concept in RTP without including a specific project. Mr. Lovejoy, Mr. Bench, Mr. Niles, and Mr. Karns discussed how reinstated tolls could affect MassPIKE maintenance and toll equity. Mr. Bench indicated that transportation funding needs and options at the State and Federal and Mr. Lovejoy reminded staff that a focal point of this RTP should be evaluating finance options.

6. APPROVAL OF 2011-2014 TIP AMENDMENT

DISCUSSION: Mrs. Koirala reviewed the proposed TIP amendment. This amendment adds HSIP funding into the South Street project. As a result of the comment period, no public comments were received. Staff is recommending approval of this amendment.

ACTION: Motion by Lovejoy, supported by Malnati, to approve the TIP amendment

VOICE VOTE: 8 Ayes

MOTION CARRIED

7. DISCUSSION ON TIP EVALUATION SCORES

Mrs. Koirala explained the TIP evaluation of twenty submitted projects. Main Street in Great Barrington scored the highest. The Pittsfield East St. project needs a PNF. The Skyline Trail project in Hinsdale remains supplemental in the TIP because of environmental clearances. Project status for each of the current TIP projects was reviewed. Mr. Karns made some suggestions regarding future programming as well as developing smaller projects to expend the 'change' from the larger projects that did not consume all or focused funds, including bicycle paths. Mrs. Koirala indicated that MassDOT has not provided final target estimates for the TIP and Mr. Bench suggested that the estimates should be forthcoming within a week or two.

8. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON TCSP GRANT APPLICATION

ACTION: Motion by Lovejoy, supported by Huebner, to endorse the TCSP grant application.

DISCUSSION: Mr. Kus explained the purpose of the application to locate and analyze passenger rail station locations. MassDOT indicated that they would need to abstain from the vote. Direction was given for the Executive Director to sign and submit a letter of support for this grant application.

VOICE VOTE: 6 Ayes 2 Abstentions

MOTION CARRIED

9. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE TIP AMENDMENT

DISCUSSION: BRTA submitted a letter requesting a transfer of two projects from the 2011 supplemental list to the 2011 constrained list. These projects included a reconfiguration to move the customer service portal to the first floor of the intermodal center and the acquisition of a paratransit fleet. Mr. Bench indicated that the intermodal project should be \$121k, not \$100k and that the projects should be in the TIP before they begin construction. The cost and

TIP inclusion are part of MPO regulations and should be clarified before projects start. Mr. Malnati explained the cost estimates behind the paratransit vehicles.

ACTION: Motion by Bench, supported by Malnati, to release for public comment, 15 days, the TIP amendment, consisting of the following two items: \$121,000 for the Columbus Service Center Project (5309 funds) and \$1,448,377 total project amount (5310 funds) for van purchases.

VOICE VOTE: 8 Ayes
MOTION CARRIED

10. STATUS REPORTS FROM MEMBER AGENCIES

Mr. Frieri provided an update on the status of improvement projects within the region, most specifically projects that changed status or are slated for the FFY2011. Mr. Karns stated that BRPC received two MEPA review requests for projects.

11. OTHER BUSINESS

No other business was discussed.

12. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Douglas Plachcinski, AICP
Senior Transportation Planner

Materials Distributed:

- Agenda
- April meeting minutes
- RTP information
- TIP project evaluations
- TIP Amendment staff report / materials
- TCSP Grant Application
- Project status report from MassDOT District I