

**Johnson City Metropolitan Planning Organization
Executive Board and Executive Staff Meeting, 10 a.m.
Johnson City Municipal & Safety Building Conference Room,
August 22, 2006**

Executive Board Present

David Ornduff, for The Honorable Mayor Mckinney (City of Elizabethton)
The Honorable Mayor Darden (City of Johnson City)
Bob Browning, for The Honorable Mayor Bledsoe (Town of Jonesborough)
Deborah Fleming, for Governor Bredesen (Tennessee)

Executive Board Not Present

The Honorable Mayor Jaynes (Washington County)
The Honorable Mayor Fair (Carter County)

Executive Staff Present

David Ornduff, (City of Elizabethton)
Bob Browning, (Town of Jonesborough)
Jane Fillers, for Eldonna Janutolo, (Johnson City Transit)
Charlie Stahl for M. Denis Peterson, (City of Johnson City)
Albert Teilhet, for Stan Harrison, (Office of Local Planning)

Executive Staff Not Present

John Deakins, Washington County Highway Department
Susan Reid, (First TN Development District)
Jack Perkins, Carter County Highway Department

Others Attending

Julie Ayers, City Johnson City Planning Department
Anthony Todd, City of Johnson City Public Works
Randall W. Lewis, Washington County Emergency 911
Mark Stidham, City of Johnson City Public Works
Donna Bridwell, Johnson City Transit
Jeff Rawles, Johnson City MTPO
Randy Dodson, Mattern and Craig Engineers
Mike Potter, City of Elizabethton
Phil Pindzola, City of Johnson City
Dorian Jones, Citizen of Johnson City
Steve Neilson, City of Johnson City Planning Department
Deborah Turner, Citizen of Johnson City
Glenn Berry, Johnson City MTPO
Jeremy Bryant, City of Johnson City Planning

Summary of Motions Passed:

- Minutes from February 22, 2006 approved.
- Minutes from May 10, 2006 approved with the exception of item #5.
- Approved Amended FY 06 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP).
- Approved Amended FY 07 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP).
- Approved Amendments to the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for Transit and MTPO.

Meeting Minutes:

Agenda Item 1: Meeting called to order at 10:15 a.m. by Mayor Darden.

Agenda Item 2: A sign-in sheet was passed to each member.

Agenda Item 3: The minutes from the February 22, 2006 meetings were reviewed. Mr. Browning made a motion to approve the document. Mr. Ornduff seconded the motion. All approved. Motion carried. Next the minutes from the May 10, 2006 meeting were reviewed. Mayor Darden raised a concern about item #5 from the minutes concerning the motion made to recommend the Board write a letter of support for delaying the removal of tracks until the Elizabethton Rail Study was complete. His concern was that the final vote of 2 in favor, 1 against, and 4 abstentions was not considered an approval according to the rules of parliamentary procedure. Mr. Stahl made a motion to approve the minutes with the exception of item #5. Mr. Ornduff seconded the motion. All approved. Motion carried.

Agenda Item 4: Mr. Glenn Berry gave an MTPO update presentation. The presentation included updated information on available meeting facilities, the long-range transportation plan, the regional ITS architecture, TDOT's 511 travel information service now available in Johnson City, dynamic message signs, the building construction at the Gray fossil site, and the renumbering of the mile markers on I-26.

Agenda Item 5: Mr. Randal Lewis, Assistant Director of Washington County 911, made a presentation concerning new mile markers along I-26. He explained that the mile markers contain more detail and are beneficial in reporting an emergency, especially for travelers reporting accidents from their cell phones and emergency responders trying to locate an accident.

Agenda Item 6: Mr. Berry introduced proposed amendments to the FY 06 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). Mr. Berry explained that the amendment added a task for the long-range transportation plan which included moving funds from one line item to another but without adding any additional funds. Mayor Darden explained that at this time there was not a resolution drafted to approve the amendment to the UPWP but that staff and board approval would reflect approval of the amendment and the resolution would be drafted as such. Mr. Browning, representing the staff made a motion to approve the amended FY 06 UPWP. Mr. Stahl seconded the motion. All approved. Motion carried. Mr. Browning, representing the Board made a motion to approve the amended FY 06 UPWP. Mr. Ornduff seconded the motion. All approved. Motion carried.

Agenda Item 7: Mr. Berry introduced the proposed FY 07 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). Mr. Berry explained that the plan was made available to the public for over 15 days and that he had not received any comments from the public on the plan. He stated that the Executive Staff approved the plan at their last meeting and that the resolution only requires Board approval. Mr. Browning, representing the Board made a motion to approve the FY 07 UPWP. Ms. Fleming seconded the motion. All approved. Motion carried.

Agenda Item 8: Mr. Berry introduced two resolutions to amend the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). He explained that the first one involved additional funding for the Johnson City Transit Department and the TIP amendment reflects the additional funding and how it is being allocated, in addition to the replacement of one paratransit vehicle. Mr. Stahl, representing the staff made a motion to approve the TIP amendments for Johnson City Transit. Mr. Ornduff seconded the motion. All approved. Motion carried. Mr. Browning, representing the Board made a motion to approve the TIP amendments for Johnson City Transit. Mr. Ornduff seconded the motion. All approved. Motion carried.

Mr. Berry introduced the second proposed resolution to amend the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Surface Transportation Program. He explained that the proposed amendment includes the placement of three traffic signals at various locations in Johnson City. Mr. Stahl, representing the staff made a motion to approve the TIP amendments for the Surface Transportation Program. Ms. Fleming seconded the motion. All approved. Motion carried. Mr. Ornduff, representing the Board made a motion to approve the TIP amendments for the Surface Transportation Program. Mr. Browning seconded the motion. All approved. Motion carried.

Mr. Pindzola urged the MPO staff to move forward on securing the funding for the proposed signals located at the Gray interchange and the Boones Creek Road interchange.

Agenda Item 9: Mayor Darden asked if there was anybody wishing to be heard on items not included in the Agenda. Mr. Dorian Jones discussed the rail study and stated that he felt that the motion made under item #5 at the May 10, 2006 meeting was a legitimate motion because there was a quorum present at the meeting. Mr. Jones expressed his concern that removal of the railroad tracks were being driven by the development of the General Mills property. He stated his desire to stop the removal of the railroad tracks for now and to wait for the results of the extended railroad study. Mr. Jones asked for one of the board or staff members to contact CSX Railroad to halt the removal of the tracks for the time being.

Mayor Darden stated that the number of abstentions concerning the vote on agenda item #5 from the May 10, 2006 meeting reflected that there was not enough understanding of the motion being made, and he asked if the particular section of track being discussed was a vestige of the past that will never lead anywhere or if it could have a promising future. Mr. Berry stated that he did not foresee the extension of the tracks ever being feasible. Mr. Jones stated that he felt that the extension of the tracks could be possible in 20 years. He also stated that the most important issue for him at this time was having a letter sent to CSX Railroad asking them to stop the removal of the tracks long enough to allow time to finish the Elizabethton Rail Study. Mayor Darden stated that the removal of the tracks could open the door to pedestrian trails in their place or they could be preserved for the potential use of commuter rail or another form of transit 20 years in the future.

Mayor Darden asked which route would most likely be used if there was ever passenger rail between Johnson City and Jonesborough. Mr. Berry stated that the Norfolk Southern Rail line would be the rail line most likely to be used for that connection because it runs from downtown Johnson City to Jonesborough.

Ms. Fleming suggested exploring all the potential costs associated with commuter rail such as upgrading the tracks and railroad crossings; the purchase of rail cars; and the upgrading of insurance for commuter rails versus cargo rail. She also recommended talking to TDOT's office of Public Transportation to find out all the potential costs associated with commuter rail.

Ms. Turner asked if there was a metropolitan transit authority that consists of representatives from around the region to offer input on these types of decisions. Mr. Stahl stated that this group of members was the closest thing to a regional transportation board. Mr. Ornduff stated that the First Tennessee Development District could provide more information on the existence of a board of that sort. Ms. Fleming stated that the Office of Transportation is looking for dedicated funding for transit in Tennessee because right now the funding is at the mercy of the state legislature.

Agenda Item 10: Meeting adjourned at approximately 12:03 p.m.