

JOHNSON CITY MTPO
Minutes of the Executive Board / Executive Staff Meeting
Wednesday, August 28, 2019 at 10:00 a.m.
137 West Market Street, Johnson City, TN
Johnson City Transit Center, Training Room



Executive Board Present

The Honorable Mayor Jenny Brock, City of Johnson City, Chair
The Honorable Mayor Irene Wells, Town of Bluff City
Daniel Estes for the Honorable Mayor Curt Alexander, City of Elizabethton
Bob Browning for the Honorable Mayor Chuck Vest, Town of Jonesborough
The Honorable Mayor Johnny Lynch, Town of Unicoi
The Honorable Mayor Rusty Barnett, Carter County
Ronda Sawyer for the Honorable Governor Bill Lee, State of Tennessee

Executive Board Not Present

The Honorable Mayor Joe Grandy, Washington County
John Deakins, Jr., Tennessee County Highway Officials Association

Executive Staff Present

M. Denis Peterson, City of Johnson City
The Honorable Mayor Irene Wells, Town of Bluff City
Daniel Estes, City of Elizabethton
Bob Browning, Town of Jonesborough
Jeff Rawles for Eldonna Janutolo, Johnson City Transit
Chase Milner for Chris Craig, First Tennessee Development District
Ronda Sawyer, Tennessee Department of Transportation

Executive Staff Not Present

Debbie Kessler, Town of Unicoi
Roger Colbaugh, Carter County Highway Department
John Deakins, Jr., Washington County Highway Department

Others Attending

Glenn Berry, Johnson City MTPO
Mary Butler, Johnson City MTPO
Bill Albright, Kingsport MTPO
Kim Kreckow, Johnson City Transit
Troy Ebbert, TDOT
Michelle Christian, TDOT
Trampus Grindstaff, TDOT
Camren Yarberry, TDOT
Randy Dodson, Mattern & Craig

Summary of Motions:

- **Approved** – Minutes from November 14, 2018;
- **Approved – Resolution 2019-01** – Adopted the Fiscal Years 2020-2021 Unified Planning Work Program;
- **Approved – Resolution 2019-02** – Adopted Transit Asset Management targets for Fiscal Year 2020;
- **Approved** – Approved for the Chair to sign the Planning Agreement between the Johnson City MTPO, TDOT, JCT and NET Trans; and
- **Approved** – Approved for the Chair to sign the Performance Measures Agreement between the Johnson City MTPO, TDOT, JCT and NET Trans.

Call to Order: Meeting called to order at 10:07 a.m. by the Chair, the Honorable Mayor Jenny Brock.

Agenda Item 1: Chair Mayor Brock proceeded to ask if there were any comments from the public. There were no comments from the public attending the meeting.

Agenda Item 2: The minutes from the November 14, 2018 meeting were reviewed.

Ms. Ronda Sawyer made a motion for the board to approve the minutes of the November 14, 2018 meeting. The Honorable Mayor Johnny Lynch seconded the motion. All approved. **Motion carried.**

Agenda Item 3: Consider approval of adopting the Fiscal Years 2020-2021 Unified Planning Work Program.

Mr. Glenn Berry reviewed the major tasks accomplished in the current Fiscal Year (FY) 2019 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), including drafting the new two-year UPWP, drafting a new TIP, the I-26 Multimodal Corridor Study and the new grant management and invoicing process from TDOT. He pointed out that there were still issues to be resolved with the new invoicing process for grantees with TDOT, but they were making progress.

Next, he covered the major tasks to be undertaken in the next two years in the new UPWP. FY 2020 will include the conclusion of the I-26 study being conducted by TDOT with input from the MTPO, finalize the new TIP for adoption, and oversee TDOT's review of the 5307 small urban transit funding formula for its effects on Johnson City UZA. He noted TDOT will be hiring a consultant to assist them with the distribution of FTA section 5307 funds for small urbanized areas. Next he highlighted the Johnson City MTPO will be hiring a consultant to conduct a sub-area study for Johnson City. This will be done in partnership with the Johnson City Planning Division and targeted to begin in the fall of 2019.

He then moved on to the second year of the new UPWP, FY 2021 in which the Johnson City MTPO would, of course, be developing a new UPWP. He encouraged the members to be thinking of studies or plans that, from their perspective, would be beneficial to enhance transportation in the region. He stated the MTPO had two federal required documents they would be completing, including hiring a consultant to assist the MTPO. The two documents are the update to the Coordinated Public Transit – Human Services Transportation Plan and the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (formerly the Long Range Plan), both of which are federally required to remain eligible for various types of federal transportation and transit funds.

He then explained that the MTPO needed to be forward thinking and look to the future, specifically regarding the U.S. Census rural / urban designations and the possibility of becoming a Transportation Management Area (TMA). He recalled the Tri-Cities faced this issue in the past after the 2010 U.S. Census and the region was unprepared for the potential impacts of becoming a large urbanized area with a population of over 200,000 when the U.S. Census Bureau presented the Kingsport/ Johnson City Urban Agglomeration. While that issue was resolved and our region did not become a TMA, he stated it was prudent to study this issue to provide leaders with accurate factual information and not just people's opinions. By providing the members of the Johnson City MTPO with accurate information, this would allow them to make informed decisions. To assist with this task, the Johnson City MTPO included a task to study the impacts, responsibilities and other issues of becoming a TMA. He clarified this was a study and any recommendations would be left up to the members.

Mayor Brock asked if the area boundary is the Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). Mr. Berry said that no, the Metropolitan Planning Area is actually a different boundary. Mayor Brock also asked who decides the designation of an MPO area. Mr. Berry responded that he has heard two different answers – one is the Governor of Tennessee decides and the other is where locals decide. The Honorable Mayor Rusty Barnett asked if that decision is made locally, as he did not want individuals from the outside making that decision.

Mr. Berry agreed with Mayor Barnett that it may be a joint decision among local governments, along with the Governor. He stated this was one issue they wanted to confirm with the TMA study.

Mr. Bob Browning asked if the MPO had considered a bike and pedestrian plan and if we can use funds in the UPWP to fund it. Mr. Berry said that it is something he would like to find additional funding for and he feels the area is much more receptive to such a plan than it was 12 years ago.

Mayor Barnett made a motion for the board to approve the Fiscal Years 2020-2021 UPWP. Mayor Lynch seconded the motion. All approved. **Motion carried.**

Agenda Item 4: Consider approval of adoption of resolution to support Transit Asset Management targets.

Mr. Berry asked Ms. Mary Butler to speak about the Transit Asset Management targets, or TAM. Ms. Butler explained that last year the first set of TAM targets were adopted and federal law requires they be updated annually. The targets benefit transit agencies by helping them prioritize investments and remain eligible to apply for several grants. Ms. Butler outlined the rolling stock and equipment targets and defined the useful life benchmark that is used to measure when a vehicle needs to be replaced. Ms. Butler explained the baseline and target of each vehicle type. She also went over several updates on purchases by Johnson City Transit and NET Trans in the past year. Ms. Butler outlined the facilities targets and how they use a different type of score than rolling stock, the TERM scale, in which a score of 3 (Good) is needed. All passenger and maintenance facilities in the MPO area in good or better condition. Ms. Butler congratulated JCT on the 40th Anniversary of opening the transit system in October 1979. She then displayed the final targets and asked the Board to vote to adopt them.

Mr. M. Denis Peterson made a motion for the board to approve to adopt the TAM targets. Ms. Ronda Sawyer seconded the motion. All approved. **Motion carried.**

Agenda Item 5: Consider approval of the Chair to sign the Planning Agreement between the Johnson City MTPO, TDOT, JCT and NET Trans.

Mr. Berry explained that federal law requires that the process for transportation planning be in writing and agreed to by all parties involved. The agreement is basically spelling out the federal laws that we already follow. It defines the roles and responsibilities for each organization. The agreement was reviewed by all the agencies and revised with input. It is now ready for execution.

Mr. Berry said there will be a new transportation authorization act that will need to be passed by Congress when the FAST Act expires in September 2020 and the new act could change some of the provisions in the agreement in the future. He further explained a new act has been introduced in Congress but it will be a slow process to see it passed into law. Mr. Berry stated he anticipates several continuing resolutions of the FAST Act.

Ms. Sawyer made a motion for the board to approve the Chair signing the Planning Agreement. Mr. Browning seconded the motion. All approved. **Motion carried.**

Agenda Item 6: Consider approval of the Chair signing the Performance Measures Agreement between Johnson City MTPO, TDOT, JCT and NET Trans.

Mr. Berry explained that this is a separate agreement specifically for the performance measures and targets. He said that the MPOs all tried to provide feedback to TDOT to add these provisions to the main Planning Agreement but TDOT chose to keep them separate. The Performance Measures Agreement defines how

each organization involved cooperatively develop, share, and report information related to performance measures and targets. The agreement was also reviewed by all the agencies and is ready for execution.

The Honorable Mayor Irene Wells made a motion for the board to approve for the Chair to sign the Performance Measures Agreement. Mr. Chase Milner seconded the motion. All approved. **Motion carried.**

Agenda Item 7: Presentation of Projects in the Fiscal Years 2020-2023 Transportation Improvement Program.

Mr. Berry showed the members a presentation on the draft FY 2020-2023 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). A handout was provided of the projects funded with Surface Transportation Block Grant Program funds from the Johnson City MTPO. He started out explaining that the FAST Act expires September 30, 2020 and that a new act will need to be passed to continue to fund transportation projects. In analyzing the existing projects either in this TIP or a previous TIP, Mr. Berry discussed the funding shortfall of approximately \$17.7 million. Mr. Berry then proceeded to give an overview of each of the six projects included in the new TIP. He also discussed two illustrative projects. The Knob Creek project is an ongoing project that included funding in previous TIPs for Engineering and Right of Way phases; however, due to cost escalations and final designs, the project could not be included in the new TIP at this time, as all funding sources for construction have not been identified. It was noted the City Manager of Johnson City was diligently working with his Public Works staff and consultant engineer to find ways to reduce costs. Mayor Brock concurred and stated the project costs needed to be reduced. Mr. Peterson stated, yes, this started out as a \$10 million project and has escalated to a \$30 million project.

Mr. Berry noted he had talked to TDOT last week and the Jonesborough Parkway project is currently being studied by TDOT. He stated while the study is under way and has the attention of TDOT, projects in the IMPROVE Act, passed by the Tennessee General Assembly, have priority over other projects, but the Jonesborough Parkway is being handled by the Strategic Transportation Investments Division.

He then discussed a potential Transportation Alternatives Program grant to repair the Covered Bridge in Elizabethton, which is a very important icon to the community. Mr. Peterson then stated the Covered Bridge was an important landmark for the entire region. Mr. Berry concluded the presentation by reviewing major state projects. He noted TDOT staff is working diligently to get the SR 91 project through Elizabethton ready for construction but the Right of Way relocations was taking longer than anticipated and that TDOT was following all federal requirements with the Right of Way relocation process. The last new project was the new state route for Knob Creek Road from near Mizpah Hills Drive to SR 354 (Boones Creek Road). It was stated this project was very early on in the environmental process and that no final alignment had been identified at this time. He then reviewed all of the projects in the current TIP that have been completed or are under construction; most notable was Exit 17 on I-26 (Boones Creek Road). He stated the contract called for this project to be completed on or before September 30, 2020.

Agenda Item 12: Other Business.

Mayor Barnett made an announcement that there will be a ground breaking ceremony for the new resort at Watauga Lake on October 17, 2019 at 10:30 a.m. He said this development is slated to provide approximately 500 jobs. He said the location is at the entrance to the Deer Ridge subdivision off Highway 67, just past the Butler Memorial Bridge.

Adjourn: There being no further business; the meeting was adjourned at 11:01 a.m.