

JOHNSON CITY MTPO
Minutes of the Executive Board and Executive Staff Meeting
Wednesday, December 8, 2021 at 11:00 a.m.
Location: Johnson City Transit Center, Training Room

Executive Board Present

M. Denis Peterson for the Honorable Mayor Joseph C. Wise, City of Johnson City, Chairman
Matthew Balogh for the Honorable Mayor Curt Alexander, City of Elizabethton
Eli Bare for the Honorable Mayor Kathy Bullen, Town of Unicoi
The Honorable Mayor Patty Woodby, Carter County
Johnny Deakins, Jr. for the Honorable Mayor Joe Grandy, Washington County
Ronda Sawyer for the Honorable Governor Bill Lee, State of Tennessee
Johnny Deakins, Jr., Tennessee County Highway Officials Association

Executive Board Not Present

The Honorable Mayor Irene Wells, Town of Bluff City
The Honorable Mayor Chuck Vest, Town of Jonesborough

Executive Staff Present

M. Denis Peterson, City of Johnson City, Chairman
Matthew Balogh for Daniel Estes, City of Elizabethton
Eli Bare for Debbie Kessler, Town of Unicoi
Kim Kreckow for Eldonna Janutolo, Johnson City Transit
Johnny Deakins, Jr., Washington County Highway Department
Ronda Sawyer, Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT)

Executive Staff Not Present

The Honorable Mayor Irene Wells, Town of Bluff City
Glenn Rosenoff, Town of Jonesborough
Roger Colbaugh, Carter County Highway Department
Chris Craig, First Tennessee Development District
Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
Federal Transit Administration (FTA)

Others Attending

Glenn Berry, Johnson City MTPO
Mary Butler, Johnson City MTPO
Anthony Todd, City of Johnson City
Jon McCurry, NET Trans
Tracy Kissel, NET Trans
Randy Busler, TDOT Region 1
Jason Farmer, TDOT District 17
Steven Mott, Bristol MPO
Randy Dodson, Mattern & Craig
Jason Carder, Mattern & Craig

Summary of Motions:

- **Approved** – Minutes from August 24, 2021 meeting;
- **Approved – Resolution 2021-09** – Approved resolution to self-certify the metropolitan transportation planning process for the Johnson City MTPO;
- **Approved – Resolution 2021-10** – Approved resolution to amend the Fiscal Years 2020-2023 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to add Amendment 4 – a new project to improve pedestrian safety at crosswalks in downtown Johnson City for \$1 million in Fiscal Year 2022;
- **Approved – Resolution 2021-11** – Approved resolution to amend the Fiscal Years 2020-2023 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to add Amendment 5 – a new project to install traffic signals in various locations in Johnson City to increase safety for \$2,375,000 in Fiscal Year 2022;
- **Approved – Resolution 2021-12** – Approved resolution to support 2018-2022 Safety (PM1) Performance Targets by TDOT; and
- **Endorsed** prioritized projects for TDOT’s Three-Year Work Program.

Call to Order: Meeting called to order at 11:05 a.m. by the Acting Chairman, Mr. M. Denis “Pete” Peterson, standing in for the Honorable Mayor Joseph C. Wise. Mr. Peterson proceeded to call the meeting into order.

Agenda Item 1: Chairman Mr. Peterson asked if there was any input from the public. It was stated that there were none.

Agenda Item 2: The minutes from the August 24, 2021 meeting were reviewed.

Ms. Ronda Sawyer made a motion for the board to approve the minutes of the August 24, 2021 meeting. Mr. Peterson seconded the motion.

All approved. **Motion carried.**

Agenda Item 3: Chairman Mr. Peterson moved to Item 3, for the Executive Board to consider approval of a resolution to self-certify the metropolitan transportation planning process for the Johnson City MTPO that must accompany an amendment to the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

Mr. Berry provided a short explanation of the federal laws and regulations that the MTPO must follow in order to self-certify the planning process.

Mr. Johnny Deakins, Jr. made a motion for the board to approve the resolution to self-certify the metropolitan planning process. Ms. Sawyer seconded the motion.

All approved. **Motion carried.**

Agenda Item 4: Chairman Mr. Peterson moved to Item 4, for the Executive Board to consider approval of a resolution to amend the Fiscal Years 2020-2023 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to add Amendment 4 – a new project to improve pedestrian safety at crosswalks in downtown Johnson City for \$1 million in Fiscal Year 2022.

Mr. Berry explained that downtown is growing, adding 300 more residential units. There are more pedestrians. Part of the funding that is proposed to be allocated to this project is from the special COVID relief fund (CRRSAA) allocated to the MTPO. In addition to this funding a small portion of MTPO’s STBG funds would be used in conjunction with the CRRSAA funds, to fully cover the estimated cost. Mr. Berry stated the primary goal of this project was to improve safety for pedestrians. Mr. Peterson stated there had been several incidents involving pedestrians being hit by vehicles downtown and tragically one that resulted in a death. Mr. Deakins asked if all of these apartments were in downtown Johnson City, or did they also include those closer to ETSU. Mr. Anthony Todd responded that they were all in downtown Johnson City.

Mr. Berry also informed the Board members that there was one comment received during the public comment period from Ms. Ambre Torbett, Sullivan County Planning Director. She asked that Johnson City also consider other intersections in downtown, particularly the area on Roan Street near King Commons.

Ms. Sawyer made a motion for the board to approve the resolution to amend the Fiscal Years 2020-2023 TIP to add Amendment 4. Mr. Deakins seconded the motion.

All approved. **Motion carried.**

Agenda Item 5: Chairman Mr. Peterson moved to Item 5, for the Executive Board to consider approval of a resolution to amend the Fiscal Years 2020-2023 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to add Amendment 5 – a new project to install traffic signals in various locations in Johnson City for \$2,375,000 in Fiscal Year 2022.

Mr. Berry explained that Johnson City is also requesting a project to install multiple traffic signals throughout the city. Mr. Berry pointed out that the locations of each signal proposed has been added to the project page. The costs estimated for the project may seem high, but Mr. Berry said that costs for previous bids on traffic signals have been much higher than normal, so each signal is now estimated to cost \$475,000 each, for a grand total of \$2,375,000. Mr. Deakins said he appreciated the explanation and that they had seen cost for other projects go up. Mr. Berry asked Traffic Division Director, Mr. Todd if he thought by bidding multiple traffic signals as a group, that the city would get better pricing. Mr. Todd said it should.

Mr. Matthew Balogh made a motion for the board to approve the resolution to amend the Fiscal Years 2020-2023 TIP to add Amendment 5. Mr. Eli Bare seconded the motion.

All approved. **Motion carried.**

Agenda Item 6: Chairman Mr. Peterson moved to Item 6, for the Executive Board to consider approval of a resolution to support 2018-2022 Safety (PM1) Performance Targets by TDOT.

Mr. Berry stated the purpose of the safety targets, that they are set by the state and the MTPO is proposing to continue to support the state's targets. Unfortunately, crashes have went up during the pandemic, most likely due to speeding and stress. There are also concerns about pedestrian and cyclist safety. Mr. Berry informed the members that if they have concerns about any roads in their jurisdictions, that the MTPO can help assist with requesting a safety audit from TDOT.

Ms. Sawyer made a motion for the board to approve the resolution to support the Safety Performance Targets by TDOT. The Honorable Mayor Patty Woodby seconded the motion.

All approved. **Motion carried.**

Agenda Item 7: Chairman Mr. Peterson moved to Item 7, for the Executive Board to consider endorsement of prioritized projects for TDOT's Three-Year Work Program.

Mr. Berry briefly went over the history of the Knob Creek project and that the first section from Mizpah Hills to Marketplace Blvd is currently in the ROW phase, managed by Johnson City. Once this phase is finished, TDOT will take over the Construction phase of this section, along with managing the second section from Boones Creek Road to Mizpah Hills. Mr. Peterson asked if the cost estimate for the second section was accurate and Mr. Berry explained it was only for the PE Phase. The second section of Knob Creek is not as far along as the first section. Mr. Berry recommended that the first section of Knob Creek, which is almost ready for Construction, be ranked first, and the second section be ranked second.

Chairman Pete Peterson mentioned that the interchange of Interstates 26 and 81 needs to be upgraded, that the old cloverleaf design is functionally obsolete at this location. He stated that he and the City

Manager of Kingsport had discussed this and they both agreed it was an issue that needed to be address. Mr. Peterson then asked if anyone knew the status of interchange and Mr. Jason Farmer said he did not have his list project but he thought it was in the PE phase, but he would have to confirm that. Everyone agreed this was a needed improvement. This interchange is not within the Johnson City MTPO's area; however, Mr. Berry stated he would add it to the letter to TDOT noting the importance of improving the Interchange and how it affects transportation in our area.

Mr. Deakins made a motion for the board to endorse the project ranking as shown. Ms. Sawyer seconded the motion.

All approved. **Motion carried.**

Agenda Item 8: Chairman Mr. Peterson moved to Item 8, the Annual Listing of Obligated Projects.

Mr. Berry displayed the information graphic on the Annual Listing of Obligated Projects. It includes the funding sources, the number of projects for each category, the total amount obligated and the number of project closeouts. Mr. Berry noted that amounts in red are a good thing, because it means not all the money was spent for a particular project and the money was returned to the funding source. This information is also available on the Johnson City MTPO website.

Mr. Deakins noted one of the items that needed to be addressed both on the state level and the national level was continued funding, specifically considering the impact of electric vehicles on the funding source. He noted that it was not a major issue now, but in the very near future, as EV's become more prevalent, state and federal elected officials would have to find a way to address funding for transportation. Ms. Kim Kreckow said that the federal government is researching a mileage tax as a potential form of revenue. Mr. Deakins stated he had heard of that and that while some people had concerns about being "tracked" he pointed out most people with smart phones are already being tracked. Mr. Berry made the comment that funding solutions for transportation was an issue that needed to be addressed. He also stated major auto manufacturers were committed to producing electric vehicles. Chairman Mr. Peterson noted the new Ford facility announced for West Tennessee was a prime example of the commitment from the private sector to expand production of electric vehicles. In addition to this, Mr. Berry noted the new Bipartisan Infrastructure Law had a provision that would assist in the development of electric vehicle infrastructure. He went on to say this was a totally new provision and some issues still had to be worked out, including the ability of current electric charging equipment to meet "Buy American" regulations.

Agenda Item 9: Chairman Mr. Peterson moved to Item 9, where Mr. Berry proceeded to recognized that Mr. Peterson was retiring as City Manager of Johnson City and that he has served as Executive Staff Chairman longer than any other member. Mr. Berry showed a slide show of the many projects that have been implemented during Mr. Peterson's tenure. Mr. Berry also presented Mr. Peterson with a plaque to thank him for his service and dedication to the MPO program. Mr. Peterson said he has enjoyed working with the members.

Agenda Item 10: Chairman Mr. Peterson moved to Item 10, Other Business. Mr. Berry announced that he had several items to note from the Federal Highway Administration staff, who were unable to attend the meeting. Mr. Berry provided a handout of the announcement to the Board members and stated that there is a new federal transportation act, called the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), and also known as the [Bipartisan Infrastructure Law \(BIL\)](#) enacted on November 15, 2021. FHWA will be providing outreach on the new act at a future Board meeting. Mr. Berry also announced they are seeking

information on [guidance for electric vehicle infrastructure](#), and reaffirming that there is a problem with meeting Buy American requirements. FHWA is also seeking [public comment on the implementation of the IJA](#).

Mr. Berry also updated the members on the status of many of the MTPO's documents:

1. **Metropolitan Transportation Plan Update** – The MTPO has hired KCI Technologies to update the long-range Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP). He asked that everyone be thinking of future projects to add to the plan. The next meeting in January will focus on Goals and Objectives to drive the plan.
2. **New Transportation Improvement Program** – The MTPO will be developing a new Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). A handout with the draft timeline was passed out to the members. He asked that members please submit projects by mid-March. He also added that some projects may be shown as illustrative until such time the MTP is adopted, then the projects can be amended and programmed into the TIP.
3. **Regional ITS Architecture and Deployment Plan Update** - Kimley-Horn is the consultant who is updating the ITS architecture.
4. **Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan Update** – The MTPO has held 2 stakeholder meetings and one public meeting. We have published a survey and received 108 responses so far. We hope to present a draft plan in March.
5. **Public Participation Plan Update** – The MTPO staff is currently reviewing the effectiveness of the Public Participation Plan. We noticed several terms that need to be updated. The MTPO Staff is recommending the elimination of formal public hearings, as the public is afforded the opportunity to comment at the beginning of Board meetings and other public meetings. These hearings have not been well attended and all the information is available on the website, along with electronic comment forms.

Adjourn: There being no further business, Chairman Mr. Peterson adjourned the meeting at 11:49 a.m.