

JOHNSON CITY MTPO
Minutes of the Executive Board and Executive Staff Meeting
Thursday, January 27, 2022 at 10:00 a.m.
Location: Johnson City Transit Center, Training Room

Executive Board Present

Cathy Ball for the Honorable Mayor Joseph C. Wise, City of Johnson City, Chairman
Logan Engle for the Honorable Mayor Curt Alexander, City of Elizabethton
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 Richard Bowling, Town of Bluff City
The Honorable Mayor Chuck Vest, Town of Jonesborough
The Honorable Mayor Kathy Bullen, Town of Unicoi
The Honorable Mayor Patty Woodby, Carter County

Executive Staff Present

Cathy Ball, City of Johnson City, Chairman
Logan Engle for Daniel Estes, City of Elizabethton
Jeff Rawles 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 Richard Bowling, Town of Bluff City
Glenn Rosenoff, Town of Jonesborough
Debbie Kessler, Town of Unicoi
Roger Colbaugh, Carter County Highway Department
Susan Reid, First Tennessee Development District
Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
Federal Transit Administration (FTA)

Others Attending

Glenn Berry, Johnson City MTPO
Mary Butler, Johnson City MTPO
Kim Kreckow, Johnson City MTPO/Transit
Jon McCurry, NET Trans
Tracy Kissel, NET Trans
Randy Dodson, Mattern & Craig
Jeremiah Davis, RK&K
Ben Claxton, RK&K
John Houghton, KCI

Summary of Motions:

- **Approved** – Minutes from December 8, 2021 meeting; and
- **Endorsed** the following items to support the update to the Metropolitan Transportation Plan:
 - Public and Stakeholder Engagement Plan;
 - Population and Employment Control Totals; and
 - Goals, Objectives and Performance Measures.

Call to Order: Meeting called to order at 10:08 a.m. by the Acting Chairman, Ms. Cathy Ball, standing in for the Honorable Mayor Joseph C. Wise. Ms. Ball proceeded to call the meeting into order. Mr. Glenn Berry wanted to acknowledge that we lost one of our Executive Board members, Mayor Irene Wells. She passed away in December. She was an active member of the Board and attended almost every meeting. The traffic signal in Bluff City was recently completed and Mayor Wells was especially excited to see that happen. Bluff City has also recently received a Multimodal Access Grant from TDOT, after Mayor Wells applied several times, and Mr. Berry wishes she had been able to see that come to pass.

Agenda Item 1: Chairman Ms. Ball asked if there was any input from the public. Mr. Berry asked for the staff from the firm RK&K (Rummel, Klepper and Kahl) to introduce themselves. Mr. Jeremiah Davis and Mr. Ben Claxton are from the Bristol office and wanted to drop by. Mr. Berry also introduced Mr. Randy Dodson of Mattern and Craig. There were no further comments from the public.

Agenda Item 2: The minutes from the December 8, 2021 meeting were reviewed.

Mr. John Deakins Jr. made a motion for the board to approve the minutes of the December 8, 2021 meeting. Ms. Ronda Sawyer seconded the motion.

All approved. **Motion carried.**

Agenda Item 3: Chairman Ms. Ball moved to Item 3, for the Executive Board to consider endorsement of several items that concern the update to the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP).

Mr. Berry provided a short introduction of the MTP project. The MTPO has hired the firm of KCI from Nashville to complete the update of the MTP. He turned the meeting over to Mr. John Houghton of KCI.

Mr. Houghton gave a presentation on the MTP and showed a timeline of the project process. The MTP document will be drafted by June to accommodate the state and federal review process. The goal is to adopt the new plan by February 18, 2023, which is five years from the adoption of the previous plan.

Mr. Houghton explained the process for public participation for the MTP is more involved than other plans. He explained the number of meetings that will be held over the entire update process, including four Executive Board meetings, three public meetings, and five stakeholder meetings. The public survey is now available on the MTPO's website.

Mr. Houghton explained how the population and employment control numbers are used by the Travel Demand Model (TDM) to forecast growth over the next 30 years. He showed a map that differentiates between the Metropolitan Planning Area boundary (which includes the Johnson City Urbanized Area and the areas expected to become urban over the next 20 years) and the whole county areas covered by the TDM. The exception is Sullivan County, where only a portion that includes Bluff City is included (the rest is in either Kingsport's or Bristol's MPAs). There are many sources to consider to establish population forecasts, including the Decennial Census, Statewide Travel Demand Model, Woods and Poole, and the University of Tennessee Boyd Center. It was determined by the MTPO staff and KCI that the data from the Statewide Travel Demand Model best represented the future growth for the MPA. Mr. Houghton also explained that employment data was available from Woods and Poole and Infogroup, but the Infogroup data is able to provide an employment count by location, which is more accurate.

Lastly, Mr. Houghton reviewed the goals and objectives that were proposed, that mirror the national objectives in the federal law. He also described that this plan will consider the performance measures for safety, bridge and pavement conditions, reliability, transit safety, and transit asset management.

Ms. Sawyer made a motion for the board to endorse the three items for the update to the MTP. Mr. Deakins seconded the motion.

All approved. **Motion carried.**

Agenda Item 4: Chairman Ms. Ball moved to Item 4, Other Business. Mr. Berry announced that the MTPO staff is working on the new Transportation Improvement Program. He reminded the members that they need to be gathering information about their projects, and to provide estimates by project phases, i.e., Preliminary Engineering (PE)- NEPA, PE-Design, Right-Of-Way, and Construction. He also asked that projects be provided by mid-March. The MTPO staff will be checking the eligibility of projects submitted with the current MTP.

Ms. Butler also updated the members to expect a link to the MTP survey. We would appreciate their help in distributing the survey throughout their jurisdiction, email lists and employees.

Mr. Randy Dodson asked for an update on the merging of MPOs. Mr. Berry explained there is no proposal to merge the MPOs. He explained the Census Bureau's process of defining urban and rural areas and the proposal of criteria to draw the boundaries of urban areas. The criteria have not yet been finalized, but Mr. Berry gave an overview of some of the proposed methods. He also explained that it will be up to the Census Bureau to draw those urban area lines and they will determine if two or three urbanized areas combine. When asked what he thought would happen with the urbanized areas, Mr. Berry said he truly did not know. It all depends on what criteria the U.S. Census Bureau decides to use. He further stated that after the urban areas are defined, FHWA would designate Transportation Management Areas which adds additional requirements for MPOs. It will be a local process to determine what happens to the two or three MPOs. KCI just completed a Transportation Management Area Study for the Johnson City MTPO that covers this issue, and the documents, along with a StoryMap, are available on the MTPO's website at <https://jcmppo.org/studies.html>.

Ms. Sawyer asked about the trend of working from home and how that would affect the employment numbers. Mr. Houghton said in her specific situation it would most likely be captured in Washington County. He stated that in Tennessee's Statewide Travel Demand Forecast employment population they worked with local MPOs across the state on issues like this, as they often know what is going on in their community better than national firms. He also stated in the case where a person has one job at an employer and another home base job, only one job was counted and it was the one using a "trip to work."

Adjourn: There being no further business, Chairman Ms. Ball adjourned the meeting at 11:15 a.m.