

JOHNSON CITY MTPO
Minutes of the Executive Board / Executive Staff Meeting
Thursday, December 10, 2015 at 10:00 a.m.
100 West Millard Street, Johnson City, TN
Johnson City Public Library, Jones Meeting Room

Executive Board Present

The Honorable Mayor Irene Wells, Town of Bluff City
Jon Hartman for the Honorable Mayor Curt Alexander, City of Elizabethton
The Honorable Mayor Clayton Stout, City of Johnson City
Bob Browning for the Honorable Mayor Kelly Wolfe, Town of Jonesborough
The Honorable Mayor Dan Eldridge, Washington County
Nick Weander for Governor Bill Haslam, State of Tennessee
John Deakins, Jr., Tennessee County Highway Officials Association

Executive Board Not Present

The Honorable Mayor Johnny Lynch, Town of Unicoi
The Honorable Mayor Leon Humphrey, Carter County

Executive Staff Present

The Honorable Mayor Irene Wells, Town of Bluff City
Jerome Kitchens, City of Elizabethton
M. Denis Peterson, City of Johnson City
Bob Browning, Town of Jonesborough
John Deakins, Jr., Washington County Highway Department
Jeff Rawles for Eldonna Janutolo, Johnson City Transit
Nick Weander, Tennessee Department of Transportation
Jack Qualls, Tennessee Department of Transportation

Executive Staff Not Present

Chris Craig, First Tennessee Development District
Larry Rea, Town of Unicoi
Roger Colbaugh, Carter County Highway Department

Others Attending

Glenn Berry, Johnson City MTPO
Mary Butler, Johnson City MTPO
Angie Carrier, City of Johnson City
Jason Carder, Mattern & Craig
Dave Wilson, Mattern & Craig
Gary Tysinger, TH&P
Anthony Todd, City of Johnson City
Matthew Balogh, City of Elizabethton
Mike Potter, City of Elizabethton

Summary of Motions Passed:

- **Approved** – Minutes from August 13, 2015.
- **Approved – Resolution 2015-04** – Recommend / Reaffirm the Priority Project List for TDOT's Three-Year Work Program
- **Approved – Resolution 2015-05** – Consider approval of Federal Functional Classification System for the Johnson City MTPO MPA
- **Approved – Resolution 2015-06** – Self-Certification Resolution
- **Approved – Resolution 2015-07** – Consider approval of amending the Fiscal Year 2014-2017 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to add construction funding to the Traffic Circle at Mountain View Rd and SR 381 (N State of Franklin Rd) at Indian Ridge Rd Projects
- **Approved – Resolution 2015-08** – Consider approval of amendment to the Fiscal Year 2016 Unified Planning Work Program to add funding to Task A2 to purchase LIDAR data

Note: all resolutions were approved by unanimous vote

Call to Order: Meeting called to order at 10:05 a.m. by the Chairman, Mayor Clayton Stout.

Agenda Item 1: Chairman Stout 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 August 13, 2015 meeting were reviewed.

Mr. Nick Weander made a motion for the board to approve. Mr. John Deakins, Jr. seconded the motion. All approved. **Motion carried.**

Agenda Item 3: Consider approval of Resolution 2015-04 to recommend / reaffirm the Priority Project List for TDOT's Three-Year Work Program

Mr. Glenn Berry opened the presentation by reviewing the fundamental operation of the Johnson City MTPO by stating the organization followed the basic transportation planning principle set out by Congress, often referred to as the three "C" transportation planning process. He explained this stood for "continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive" transportation planning. He noted that while the name of the MTPO was the Johnson City MTPO, it is comprised of various jurisdictions in the Johnson City Urbanized Area (as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau). He also pointed out during a briefing with the Executive Board Chairman, Mayor Clayton Stout, that funds like Surface Transportation Funds (STP) are allocated to the MTPO Region and all jurisdictions of that region must come to a consensus, by vote, on how to best use those funds for the region through the three "C" transportation planning process.

He then reviewed past transportation authorizations and announced the newest authorization, the FAST Act. Mr. Weander was asked to elaborate on the FAST Act, and he said that it is a five-year bill, with a two percent increase in funding, with several expanded categories on who can apply for funding; however, the spending bill had not yet been passed, which could result in another government shutdown on Friday.

Mayor Eldridge asked Mr. Weander to explain what other entities can apply for funding. Mr. Weander added that other entities can include nonprofit transit providers.

Mr. Berry then described the three projects in the area that the Board is voting on to prioritize with TDOT. He stated these were the same projects as last year, which were 1) Exit 17 on I-26, locally known as the "Boones Creek" exit; 2) Exit 24 on I-26, referred to as the Elizabethton / University Parkway exit; and 3) S.R. 91 Improvement project on Elk and Broad Street in Elizabethton. Mr. Berry then asked if Elizabethton had received final ROW plans on S.R. 91 project and Mr. Hartman stated they had not but they did have the preliminary ROW plans.

Chairman Stout asked if there was a motion to approve then rankings as presented. Mayor Dan Eldridge made a motion for the board to approve. Mr. Weander seconded the motion. All approved. **Motion carried.**

Agenda Item 4: Consider approval of Resolution 2015-05 to approve Federal Functional Classification System for the Johnson City MTPO MPA

Mr. Berry showed the Functional Classification System on the screen. He explained what the system was and how it affects eligibility for funding. He also upgraded a portion of US 19E in Sullivan County to match the other parts of the highway, which was Urban Principal Arterial. Mr. Weander commented that he had reviewed the system and felt the MTPO staff did a good job with it.

Mr. John Deakins, Jr. made a motion for the board to approve. Mr. Bob Browning seconded the motion. All approved. **Motion carried.**

Agenda Item 5: Annual Listing of Federally Obligated Projects

Mr. Berry explained that each year a listing is published showing all federally funded transportation projects were obligated during the previous federal fiscal year. He noted this was a federal requirement and was an informational item that is also available on the Johnson City MTPO website under the “Projects and Info” tab at <http://www.jcmpo.org>.

Agenda Item 6: Consider approval of Resolution 2015-06 to sign Self-Certifications

Mr. Berry stated that these self-certifications are required when making a TIP amendment to assure the federal government that the Johnson City MTPO is following regulations. He explained that since the Johnson City MTPO is classified as a small urbanized area and not a Transportation Management Area as defined by federal law, the Johnson City MTPO was allowed to “self-certify.” It was noted the “Big Four” MPOs (Chattanooga, Knoxville, Memphis, and Nashville) went through a federal certification review process and that Knoxville was undergoing their review this week. Mr. Peterson asked if the audit was like a federal audit on all activities of the MTPO. Mr. Weander stated it was and it was usually a two to three day onsite visit by FHWA, FTA and TDOT with a lot of preparation before the onsite visit.

Mr. Berry then stated the Johnson City MTPO was in compliance with all the self-certifications.

Mr. Weander made a motion for the board to approve the resolution for the Johnson City MTPO. Mr. Browning seconded the motion. All approved. **Motion carried.**

Agenda Item 7: Consider approval of Resolution 2015-07 for amending the Fiscal Year 2014-2017 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to add construction funding to the Traffic Circle at Mountain View Rd and SR 381 (N State of Franklin Rd) at Indian Ridge Rd Projects

Mr. Berry proceeded to describe the additional funding for two projects. Before these projects could move forward to the construction phase, additional funding for the construction phase had to be added to the TIP. He stated the original estimates that were developed were recently revised by engineering consultants working for Johnson City and there was not enough funding in the current TIP to construct the project. He stated the new estimate for Traffic Circle (Roundabout) at Mountain View Road with Browns Mill was \$1,300,000 for construction and the project needed an additional \$1,003,000 to meet this new estimate. The State of Franklin Road at Indian Ridge project would need an additional \$2,200,000 based on the revised estimate. He pointed out the revised estimates were developed by consulting firms and based on final estimated quantities, labor, CEI costs, with the State of Franklin at Indian Ridge project having additional cost for CSX railroad safety inspector, since the project included bridge work going over the CSX mainline.

He further explained the Traffic Circle at Mountainview project would be funded at 100% federal funds and the State of Franklin at Indian Ridge project would be funded at 80% federal funds and 20% local match and that Bob Wilson, Assistant City Manager over Finance for Johnson City, had been made aware of this during previous meetings with him.

Mr. Berry asked Mr. Anthony Todd if the traffic circle was ready to go to construction and Mr. Todd stated that TDOT had some additional paperwork requirements but would be ready for construction in 2016.

Mr. Pete Peterson stated that the project was started around ten years ago and went on to state that the process for delivering federally funded projects was slow. At this point Mr. Berry stated it was extremely frustrating for elected officials to understand the complexity of these projects and justify the timeframe for delivery to the citizens of their respective jurisdictions. Mr. Weander stated it would be very helpful to the State if documentation could be provided to TDOT of issues and the amount of time it takes to deliver a project. Mr. Peterson pointed out this was not a “complaint session” but that local jurisdictions truly want to work with TDOT to make the process more efficient and save federal money by delivering projects faster, before costs of materials and labor escalate after years. He also noted TDOT has to follow federal policies and they are also caught in the middle of this process. He stated there should be a way for all levels of government to work together to improve project delivery to local communities.

At this point Mr. Berry reviewed the projects and their respective TIP pages. He stated during the development of the original TIP in 2013, all anticipated funds were programmed for projects. Since the TIP is required to be fiscally constrained and all funds were programmed, there was nowhere else to get the money except from existing projects in the TIP. Mr. Berry referred to the outline and TIP sheets in the agenda packet stating Johnson City was removing two existing projects in the current TIP for “Adaptive Traffic Control” for Johnson City in addition to some funding slated for construction of the Knob Creek Extension project.

Mr. Browning asked if funding these two projects (the Traffic Circle at Mountain View and State of Franklin Road at Indian Ridge) would affect the construction date of the Knob Creek project. Mr. Peterson said he did not think it would because the project is currently in the right-of-way acquisition phase and it would take one to two years before the ROW phase was complete. Construction could not start in 2017. Mr. Berry pointed out that even if the funding was not removed from the Knob Creek project, additional funding for the construction phase of Knob Creek would have to be explored due to the anticipated cost and there was not enough money to construct the project.

Mr. Jon Hartman noted the city of Johnson City is removing two of their existing projects to help fund the projects that are ready to go to construction, as well as having the responsibility of the Knob Creek project.

Mr. Jerome Kitchens asked if a traffic circle, speaking from a non-technical aspect, costing over one million dollars was the best option for the intersection, versus a traffic signal that would cost under \$300,000.

Chairman Stout directed the question to Mr. Peterson and Mr. Anthony Todd. Mr. Todd responded by stating “roundabouts / traffic circles” did cost more; however, they are safer and more efficient at keeping traffic flowing and reducing congestion.

Mr. Browning stated that the traffic circle at the Five Points intersection in Jonesborough is working very well and was the best choice for them.

Mr. Deakins said the Five Point’s roundabout functioned well in moving traffic and large vehicles through that location. He asked if it was possible to review the design of Knob Creek project to decrease the cost.

Mr. Peterson said that it is a possibility to scale the Knob Creek project back to 2 lanes to save on costs.

Mayor Eldridge asked if these two projects were more important than the Knob Creek project, if they were the better investment for economic development. He asked if he could open dialogue with Johnson City officials to discuss the Knob Creek project, if the project needs to be scaled back, or perhaps fund it locally. Mayor Stout stated that he was open to discussing the Knob Creek project with Mayor Eldridge, along with city staff.

Mayor Dan Eldridge made a motion for the board to approve, based on opening dialogue to discuss the Knob Creek Project's future. Chairman Stout seconded the motion. All approved. **Motion carried.**

Agenda Item 8: Consider approval of Resolution 2015-08 for amendment to the Fiscal Year 2016 Unified Planning Work Program to add funding to Task A2 to purchase LIDAR data

Mr. Berry explained what LIDAR is during the presentation and that the U.S. Geological Survey would be providing the data which included the classified and unclassified point data, Digital Elevation Model (DEM), Hydro-flattened break lines, building foot prints and intensity images. He also stated the State of Tennessee would be providing the 2 ft. contours and that all the information would be delivered digitally. He showed the schedule for acquiring the data, how much the data is going to cost, and the local match that is required. The UPWP amendment will provide the federal funds to purchase the data and that he already had verbal commitments from Carter County, Elizabethton, Johnson City and Washington County for the local match. Mayor Eldridge stated Washington County already had the local match in their budget.

Mr. Bob Browning made a motion for the board to approve. Mr. John Deakins, Jr. seconded the motion. All approved. **Motion carried.**

Agenda Item 8: Other Business

Mr. Weander stated that the Tennessee Department of Transportation had completed the final State Transportation Plan and that the staff would be available in 2016 for meetings to brief elected officials and the public on the plan. He said they would be available through the "Book a Planner" process as they had done previously during the development of the draft plan.

Ms. Mary Butler announced that the Johnson City MTPO is using a new email notification system to follow federal guidelines regarding mass emails to avoid being flagged as spam. Members were added to the list and each member should have received an email notifying them they were added to the list; however, there is no action required – no account to sign up for. Ms. Butler said that anyone can unsubscribe at any time.

Mr. Weander also added that the TDOT Commissioner has planned to attend at least one meeting for all MPOs in the state.

Adjourn: With no further business, Chairman Stout adjourned the meeting at 11:10 a.m.