

JOHNSON CITY MTPO
Minutes of the Executive Board Meeting (with Executive Staff)

Tuesday, December 8, 2020 at 10:00 a.m.

Location: Members met electronically via Zoom; Livestreaming was provided for public viewing.

Meeting Recording: <https://youtu.be/7YGgZqh7SS8>

Executive Board Present

The Honorable Mayor Jenny Brock, City of Johnson City, Madam Chair
Logan Engle for the Honorable Mayor Curt Alexander, City of Elizabethton
The Honorable Mayor Joe Grandy, Washington County
Ronda Sawyer for the Honorable Governor Bill Lee, State of Tennessee
The Honorable Mayor Irene Wells, Town of Bluff City
The Honorable Mayor Patty Woodby, Carter County
Glenn Rosenoff for the Honorable Mayor Chuck Vest, Town of Jonesborough

Executive Board Not Present

The Honorable Mayor Kathy Bullen, Town of Unicoi
Johnny Deakins, Jr., Tennessee County Highway Officials Association

Executive Staff Present

M. Denis Peterson, City of Johnson City, Chair
Chase Milner for Chris Craig, First Tennessee Development District
Kim Kreckow for Eldonna Janutolo, Johnson City Transit
Glenn Rosenoff, Town of Jonesborough
Sean Santalla, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
Ronda Sawyer, Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT)
The Honorable Mayor Irene Wells, Town of Bluff City

Executive Staff Not Present

Roger Colbaugh, Carter County Highway Department
Johnny Deakins, Jr., Washington County Highway Department
Daniel Estes, City of Elizabethton
Debbie Kessler, Town of Unicoi

Others Attending

Glenn Berry, Johnson City MTPO
Mary Butler, Johnson City MTPO
Ambre Torbett, Sullivan County
Jon McCurry, NET Trans
Pamela Kordenbrock, FHWA
Matt Meservy, TDOT Long Range Planning Division
Kwabena Aboagye, TDOT Long Range Planning Division
Stacy Morrison, TDOT Office of Community Transportation
Troy Ebbert, TDOT Office of Community Transportation
Michael Dick, TDOT Region 1
Randy Busler, TDOT Region 1
Eric Wilson, TDOT Region 1
Jason Farmer, TDOT District 17
Wendy Graham, Webmaster and Host of the Zoom Meeting
Kara Valor – Captioning Provider

Summary of Motions:

- **Approved** – Minutes from December 20, 2019;
- **Approved – Resolution 2020-01** – Approved 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);
- **Approved – Resolution 2020-02** – Approved resolution to amend the Fiscal Years 2020-2023 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to add additional funding to the Construction phase of the SR 34 at Industrial Park Rd Traffic Signal Upgrade Project and move it from FY 2020 to FY 2021;
- **Approved** – Approved the endorsement of prioritized projects for TDOT’s Three-Year Work Program.

Call to Order: Meeting called to order at 10:03 a.m. by the Madam Chair, the Honorable Mayor Jenny Brock. She proceeded to say that we are meeting electronically pursuant to the authority granted by the Governor's Executive Order Number 65 and that an electronic meeting is necessary to protect the health, safety and welfare of the public in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. Chair Mayor Brock asked for a roll call of attendance.

Roll Call No. 1 for Attendance:

Mayor Curt Alexander, who is represented by Ms. Logan Engle: Present; Mayor Kathy Bullen: Not Present; Mr. John Deakins, Jr.: Not Present; Mayor Joe Grandy: Present; Governor Bill Lee, who is represented by Ms. Ronda Sawyer: Present; Mayor Irene Well: Present; Mayor Patty Woodby: Present; Mayor Chuck Vest, who is represented by Mr. Glenn Rosenoff: Present; and Chair Mayor Jenny Brock: Present.

A quorum has been determined.

Agenda Item 1: Chair Mayor Brock asked if there were any comments from the public.

Mr. Glenn Berry stated for the record that there was a public hearing for the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendment and no comments were received from the public. No comments were submitted by email and the notice was advertised in the local newspaper over 2 weeks ago.

Agenda Item 2: The minutes from the December 20, 2019 meeting were reviewed.

Ms. Logan Engle made a motion for the board to approve the minutes of the December 20, 2019 meeting. Mr. Glenn Rosenoff seconded the motion. Chair Mayor Brock asked for a roll call vote.

Roll Call No. 2 for Agenda Item 2:

Mayor Curt Alexander, who is represented by Ms. Logan Engle: Yes; Mayor Kathy Bullen: Not Present and Not Voting; Mr. John Deakins, Jr.: Not Present and Not Voting; Mayor Joe Grandy: Yes; Governor Bill Lee, who is represented by Ms. Ronda Sawyer: Yes; Mayor Irene Well: Yes; Mayor Patty Woodby: Abstaining (due to not being present at the last meeting); Mayor Chuck Vest, who is represented by Mr. Glenn Rosenoff: Yes; and Chair Mayor Jenny Brock: Yes.

All approved. **Motion carried.**

Agenda Item 3: Chair Mayor Brock stated that the Board is 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. Glenn Berry explained that the TIP can't be amended until the MPO has self-certified that the metropolitan planning process was carried out according to the Federal laws and regulations.

Ms. Ronda Sawyer made a motion for the board to approve the resolution to self-certify the metropolitan planning process. Mr. Glenn Rosenoff seconded the motion. Chair Mayor Brock asked for a roll call vote.

Roll Call No. 3 for Agenda Item 3:

Mayor Curt Alexander, who is represented by Ms. Logan Engle: Yes; Mayor Kathy Bullen: Not Present and Not Voting; Mr. John Deakins, Jr.: Not Present and Not Voting; Mayor Joe Grandy: Yes; Governor Bill Lee, who is represented by Ms. Ronda Sawyer: Yes; Mayor Irene Well: Yes; Mayor Patty Woodby: Yes; Mayor Chuck Vest, who is represented by Mr. Glenn Rosenoff: Yes; and Chair Mayor Jenny Brock: Yes.

All approved. **Motion carried.**

Agenda Item 4: Chair Mayor Brock stated that the Board is to consider approval of a resolution to amend the Fiscal Years 2020-2023 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to add additional funding to the Construction phase of the SR 34 at Industrial Park Rd Traffic Signal Upgrade Project and move it from FY 2020 to FY 2021.

Mr. Berry explained the reason behind the increase in cost from a total of \$200,000 to \$435,000 for the traffic signal project in Bluff City. The signal is in need of an upgrade. In the past, the costs for signals were much lower and the construction estimate was based off of those costs back in 2017. Fast forward to 2020, Mr. Berry explained that the cost of signals has risen dramatically. The latest estimate was received from TDOT staff and requires more funding to complete construction.

Chair Mayor Brock asked if money was pulled from another project to fund this one. Mr. Berry answered that there were no new projects added to the current TIP. The money for the Bluff City signal project came from the unobligated balance of approximately \$10 million. The projects in the current TIP will take approximately another \$2 million from the balance, as we are committed to those projects. That leaves us with \$8 million. That money is reserved to go toward the Knob Creek project, the section from State Route 381 (State of Franklin Road) to Mizpah Hills, that is not currently included in the TIP because there is not enough money to fully fund its construction.

Ms. Sawyer made a motion for the board to approve a resolution to amend the TIP to add additional funding to the traffic signal project and move it to FY 2021. The Honorable Mayor Irene Wells seconded the motion. Chair Mayor Brock asked for a roll call vote.

Roll Call No. 4 for Agenda Item 4:

Mayor Curt Alexander, who is represented by Ms. Logan Engle: Yes; Mayor Kathy Bullen: Not Present and Not Voting; Mr. John Deakins, Jr.: Not Present and Not Voting; Mayor Joe Grandy: Yes; Governor Bill Lee, who is represented by Ms. Ronda Sawyer: Yes; Mayor Irene Well: Yes; Mayor Patty Woodby: Yes; Mayor Chuck Vest, who is represented by Mr. Glenn Rosenoff: Yes; and Chair Mayor Jenny Brock: Yes.

All approved. **Motion carried.**

Agenda Item 5: Chair Mayor Brock stated that the Board will consider endorsement of prioritized projects for TDOT's Three-Year Work Program.

Mr. Berry said one project was provided by TDOT for their next Three-Year Work Program. The Executive Board was asked to rank this one project, the new state route along Knob Creek Road from Mizpah Hills to State Route 354, which is Boones Creek Road. This is an IMPROVE Act project, which is included in the law. Also, the MTPO staff added the Jonesborough Parkway as a second project to the list. The Jonesborough Parkway has been included in the last two Long Range Plans, or the Metropolitan Transportation Plan as it is now called. He said we used the same ranking as last year, and although we rank our projects, it only counts for about ten percent of the overall concept to ranking projects for TDOT.

Chair Mayor Brock asked if there was an estimate for the Jonesborough Parkway project. Mr. Berry answered at this point, there was no estimate. Chair Mayor Brock asked Mayor Grandy and Mr. M. Denis Peterson if they had any further perspective on these two projects. Mayor Grandy stated it was good to get these projects on the list.

The Honorable Mayor Joe Grandy made a motion for the board to approve the project rankings as recommended (SR-XXX Knob Creek project being number 1 and the Jonesborough Parkway being number 2) for TDOT's Three-Year Work Program. The Honorable Mayor Patty Woodby seconded the motion. Chair Mayor Brock asked for a roll call vote.

Roll Call No. 5 for Agenda Item 5:

Mayor Curt Alexander, who is represented by Ms. Logan Engle: Yes; Mayor Kathy Bullen: Not Present and Not Voting; Mr. John Deakins, Jr.: Not Present and Not Voting; Mayor Joe Grandy: Yes; Governor Bill Lee, who is represented by Ms. Ronda Sawyer: Yes; Mayor Irene Well: Yes; Mayor Patty Woodby: Yes; Mayor Chuck Vest, who is represented by Mr. Glenn Rosenoff: Yes; and Chair Mayor Jenny Brock: Yes.

All approved. **Motion carried.**

Agenda Item 6: Chair Mayor Brock announced that the next item on the agenda is the Annual Listing of Obligated Projects.

Mr. Berry went over the annual listing of obligated projects. He said that Ms. Butler created the graphic summarizing the listing. He showed the spreadsheet that listed the projects and pointed out that information on the CARES Act was included, even though it was not required, considering the pandemic and vital need to keep transit going. He wanted to note that some projects on the list were completed many years ago and are now being closed out. For some, that means funds in red are returned to that specific fund, i.e. the STBG-M fund, to be obligated somewhere else. The listing was made available on the MTPO website and distributed to the members.

Agenda Item 7: Chair Mayor Brock stated the last item on the agenda is Other Business and the first part is an update from TDOT.

Mr. Matt Meservy introduced himself as the new Long Range Planning Director for TDOT. He discussed the new Urban Transportation Planning Grant Program initiative, which have a ceiling of \$200,000 and require a ten percent match. Mr. Berry displayed the eligible activities for the grant. Mr. Meservy said there will be an application template for the grant that is currently being drafted and will be released at a later date.

Chair Mayor Brock moved on to the next part of the item, which is an update from the Federal Highway Administration. Ms. Pamela Kordenbrock spoke about the FAST Act, which is the current authorization that was extended until September 30, 2021, at 2020 levels; however, the funding was extended only 70 days until December 11, 2020. That will expire this Friday. Ms. Kordenbrock also said she was looking forward to seeing the results of the TMA (Transportation Management Area) Study. They are awaiting the results of the Census and what will happen statewide and nationwide in transportation planning. If we need any technical assistance, they are happy to provide that.

Chair Mayor Brock brought up the last item, which was the upcoming Fiscal Years 2022-2023 Unified Planning Work Program. Mr. Berry stated that the MTPO staff will begin drafting a new two-year work program and he wanted to make the members aware of it. Mr. Berry also stated that we will need to have another meeting in February to adopt performance targets that were set by TDOT. Chair Mayor Brock commented that there may be 4 or 5 meetings for 2021, so everyone needs to be ready.

Mr. Michael Dick with TDOT Region 1 gave an update on several projects in the area. The Interstate 26 Exit 17 project is coming along, with an estimated completion date of April 21, 2021. The crew has one more wall to complete and traffic will be shifted again. He also mentioned that a new cost revision has been received on the Elk Avenue Bridge Project that will require more funding.

Chair Mayor Brock asked if there were any other questions. Mayor Grandy asked about the status of the project on the other end of Knob Creek, from Mizpah Hills to State of Franklin Road. Mr. Berry answered that there was not enough money to fund the construction phase of the project. The City of Johnson City is trying to reduce the cost of the project and has looked at an at-grade crossing as an alternative. Mr. Peterson also

responded that the City had an agreement with the railroad for an at-grade crossing; however, TDOT did not feel that was something they could approve. So, the City is back to considering an overpass, which adds up to \$16 million to the cost. The City has sent a letter to Mr. Paul Degges, the chief engineer, asking if TDOT could participate in the project. The other portion of the Knob Creek project, that the state is managing, is probably 15 years out from completion, with a super two-lane design consideration. The City feels the entire connector between the two state routes needs to be a state route.

Mayor Grandy said from his perspective, it wouldn't make sense to move forward with half of the project if there was not a way to get past the railroad tracks. He also stated it might be confusing for the public if the section of Knob Creek that the board ranked as a number 1 priority did not match the timeline for the other section of Knob Creek.

Adjourn: There being no further business, Chair Mayor Brock thanked Mr. Berry and Ms. Butler for an efficient meeting and she wished everyone a Merry Christmas and to stay safe. She mentioned the many challenges in the area. She is hopeful about the new vaccines and encourages the citizens to participate. The meeting was adjourned at 10:43 a.m.