

**New River Valley
Metropolitan Planning Organization
755 Roanoke Street
Christiansburg, VA 24073**

Minutes

June 6, 2013

PRESENT: Craig Meadows -Montgomery County
Anne McClung -Town of Blacksburg
Michael Sutphin -Town of Blacksburg
Richard Ballengee -Town of Christiansburg
Barry Helms -Town of Christiansburg
Becky Martin -Blacksburg Transit
Steve Mouras -Virginia Tech
Brian Booth -Radford Transit
Kevin Byrd -NRV Planning District Commission
Chris Arabia -VA Department of Rail and Public Transportation
Jim Quesenberry -Radford University
Jim Hurt -City of Radford
Andy McCready -Pulaski County
Dan Brugh -NRV MPO
Randal Gwinn -Recording Secretary

ABSENT: Annette Perkins -Montgomery County
Adam Carpenetti -Town of Christiansburg
Fritz Streff -New River Community College
Bruce Brown -City of Radford
Pete Huber -Pulaski County
Josh Baker -Radford Transit
Gary Heinline -Pulaski Transit
Rob Cary -VDoT
Tony Cho -Federal Transit Administration-Region 111
Tammye Davis -FHWA
Michael St. Jean -VA Tech/Montgomery Regional Airport Authority
Richard Alvarez -Radford University
Ranny O'Dell -Pulaski County

DECLARATION OF QUORUM AND CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Meadows declared a quorum and called the meeting to order at 2 P.M.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Craig asked for comments on the proposed agenda. Hearing none he asked to hear a motion for approval.

On a motion by Michael Sutphin seconded by Barry Helms and carried unanimously, the meeting agenda was approved.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF MAY 2, 2013 MEETING

Craig asked for comments on or corrections to the meeting minutes from the May 2, 2013 Policy Board meeting. Hearing none he then called for a motion to approve the minutes.

On a motion by Richard Ballengee, seconded by Anne McClung and carried unanimously, the minutes dated May 2, 2013 were approved.

PUBLIC ADDRESS

There were no public speakers seeking to address the Board.

OLD BUSINESS

A. Transit Operating Funds

Dan summarized the effect that funding cuts will have on both Blacksburg and Radford Transit services and reported on the actions taken to date to address the unanticipated shortfalls imposed by VDRPT. Thus far all efforts have been to no avail and Dan suggested sending an appeal to the Governor's office and offered a suggested resolution for consideration.

Jim Hurt reported that Radford has heard nothing further of use on the funding issues.

Becky Martin reported on the DRPT's recent efforts to test funding formulas. Legislation has set a goal to have performance based funding formulas going forward and DRPT is meeting with a group that includes the CTB, three transit providers and various other interested parties to discuss and develop an acceptable formula for future use. Becky to keep the group informed of developments as the meetings occur.

Steve Mouras commented that VA Tech's President contacted Delegate Yost about this year's funding shortfalls. Delegate Yost sent a letter to Thelma Drake at DRPT and received a generic response. VA Tech is now considering other available options for restarting the conversations on a higher level.

Jim Quesenberry commented that Radford University's President has been working through available channels in an effort to address the issues.

Jim Hurt commented that the Radford City Manager has also spoken to Delegate Yost and Thelma Drake on the issues.

Craig called attention to the letters included in the meeting materials. The contents of both letters are nearly identical. The first was recently sent by Dan to Secretary of Transportation Sean Connaughton in order to meet the June 7th deadline for Six Year Plan comments. The second letter has been prepared for submission by Craig to Thelma Drake should the board decide to do so.

There was a brief discussion on what actions to take and it was decided to send the Governor's office a request for assistance in the form of a resolution. Craig then called for a motion to adopt and approve Dan's suggested resolution.

Resolution regarding transit operating funds, FTA 5307, and State Funds in the MPO.

On a motion by Andy McCready, seconded by Michael Sutphin and carried unanimously,

WHEREAS, Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (VDRPT) has reduced both the Federal and State Transit Operating Funds for the two transit providers in the MPO, and

WHEREAS, the amount of operating funds will be a decrease of \$412,114 for Blacksburg Transit and \$309,467 for Radford Transit from the operating budgets that Blacksburg Transit and Radford Transit are receiving this year; and

WHEREAS, any cuts to transit funding will have a significant detrimental effect on both of the highly successful and efficient transit providers within the MPO, and

WHEREAS, these cuts will result in loss of transit service for residents of the New River Valley, and

WHEREAS, the MPO has requested VDRPT to find additional funding so that there is no funding reduction for either provider from the current funding levels to no avail so far.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the New River Valley MPO requests that the Governor review this request and find additional funding to replace the funding that is being reduced so that significant service cuts do not have to occur to either transit provider.

Craig Meadows, Chairman

Dan committed to sending a copy of the resolution and the letter to Secretary Connaughton to the elected officials on the state level. Craig also encouraged the policy board members to their send copies to all their elected officials for their information.

B. Transit Planning Funds

Dan reported that the resolution regarding use of Transit Planning Studies, passed at the May 2, 2013 meeting, needed clarification by the Policy Board. Past practice has been for the TAC to receive and review requests for studies then make a recommendation to the Policy Board. In light of the recent expansion of the MPO, Dan suggested the transit providers meet to determine candidate studies which the TAC could then review for recommendation to the Policy Board.

Andy asked if there were any deadlines to be met in order to encumber funding. Dan responded that there no hard deadlines and explained how the funding carries over from year to year and the life span of a project once it is identified.

The group discussed the benefits of having the transit operators participate in the selection of potential studies and agreed that it would be beneficial. Also discussed was the role of the Transit Planner at Blacksburg Transit in these study efforts. Historically the MPO has paid a portion of the Transit Planner's salary in return for work performed on items such as special studies, the UPWP, TIP, and LRTP. Dan and Becky committed to trying to find documentation on the agreement made for partial funding of the Transit Planner's position.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Study to Recommend Transit Operating Funds Distribution

Chris reported that, in recognition of the difficulties that arose from use of the State's current funding formula, VDRPT would like to offer the MPO 100% funding to hire a consultant to study and make recommendations on how to distribute future transit operating funds allocated to the MPO. Included in this offer is the ability to leverage the general planning contractors at VDRPT for this work, thus relieving the MPO of the need to issue a RFP. The planning contractors will be available in early July.

Steve Mouras commented that having an outside professionals involved in the study would be beneficial, then asked if it would be best to have the entire TAC involved or assign the necessary tasks to a select committee whose focus is primarily on transit.

Andy suggested that the Policy Board pass the recommended resolution to accept the offer and encumber the funds. Andy then made a motion to accept the suggest resolution. Richard Ballengee seconded the motion for discussion. Andy then withdrew his motion and Richard withdrew his second of the motion.

The group then discussed assignment of the work on the study and revised the last paragraph of the suggested resolution to substitute a policy board subcommittee in place of the TAC.

Andy offered the revision as a clarification of his existing motion. This left his motion on the floor without a second. Richard Ballengee asked if the subcommittee of the policy board would be made up of members of the policy board. Craig responded yes and they would be appointed. Richard then seconded the motion on the floor.

Resolution accepting VDRPT funding to secure a consultant to review and recommend how to split transit funding, FTA 5307, in the MPO.

On a motion by Andy McCready, seconded by Richard Ballengee, and carried unanimously,

Whereas, Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (VDRPT) has offered to fund hire a consultant to review and make recommendations on an appropriate method to split funding between the two transit providers in the MPO, and

Whereas, the need for this study is a result of reduction of funding for the two transit providers brought about by the change of Radford Transit from rural to urban and the change in the funding formula that VDRPT uses to distribute Federal funding (5307).

Now, Therefore, BE IT RESOLVED, that the New River Valley MPO accepts the funding from VDRPT to secure a consultant and conduct a funding split study.

FURTHER, BE IT RESOLVED, that the New River Valley MPO recommends that VDRPT conduct a study as well at the State level to determine an appropriate funding formula.

FURTHER, BE IT RESOLVED, that the MPO Executive Director is directed to prepare an RFP for a consultant to conduct this study with the Policy Board subcommittee on transit funding to make a recommendation to the Policy Board for a consultant to be used.

Craig Meadows, Chairman

Andy then suggested that the group next discuss the appointments to the policy board subcommittee on transit funding. Craig agreed and the group then defined the membership of the subcommittee as one appointed member each from Blacksburg Transit, Radford Transit, Pulaski Transit, VA Tech, Radford University and New River Community College. Dan will also be included as a non-voting member.

Andy then made a motion for adoption of the policy board subcommittee on transit funding with membership consisting of one appointed member each from Blacksburg Transit, Radford Transit, Pulaski Transit, VA Tech, Radford University and New River Community College. Richard Ballengee seconded the motion and Craig then called for a vote.

Resolution regarding creation of an MPO committee on transit funding in the MPO

On a motion by Andy McCready seconded by Richard Ballengee, and carried unanimously,

Whereas, Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (VDRPT) allocates Federal and State Transit Operating Funds to the MPO for distribution to Transit Operators in the MPO, and

Whereas, the division of operating funds will need to be discussed and agreed upon as being fair and equitable; and

WHEREAS, VDRPT has agreed to fund an MPO study on how to equitably split transit operating funds within the MPO; and

WHEREAS, it is the opinion of the MPO Policy Board that a committee be formed to discuss and make recommendations pertinent to the study to analyze and make recommendations for the division of transit operating funds to the Policy Board; and

WHEREAS, it is also the opinion of the MPO Policy Board that the membership of said subcommittee be made up of one appointed member from Blacksburg Transit, Radford Transit, Pulaski Transit, VA Tech, Radford University and New River Community College; and

WHEREAS, the Chairman is designated to appoint committees with the concurrence of the Policy Board; and

WHEREAS, the Chairman has requested the Policy Board's concurrence in appointing a Transit Funding Committee.

Now, Therefore, BE IT RESOLVED, that the New River Valley MPO concurs in the Chairman's appointing a committee comprised of representatives listed above, hereafter known as the Transit Funding Committee, for the purpose of coordinating the study and making a recommendation to the Policy Board .

Dan Brugh, Executive Director

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

A. Exit 118 Park & Ride lot update

Dan reported that there is no funding at VDOT to do further improvements to the Park & Ride lot. Nothing in the way of funding is anticipated in the six year plan either so any additional improvements to the lot are on hold for the foreseeable future.

B. VDOT Project Report

The representatives from VDOT missed the meeting due to an accident stopping traffic on I-81 however Dan reported that there are three VDOT meetings coming up. The first is on June 18th at VDOT headquarters in Salem for the Southgate Interchange project, the second is a public meeting on June 20th 5 PM – 7 PM at the Auburn elementary school for the RT 8 intersection improvement at Fairview Church road in Riner, and the third is again a public meeting on June 25th at the Radford municipal building 5 PM – 7 PM for the I-81 bridges near Radford.

C. Livability Initiative Project Update

Kevin reported that the NRV Tomorrow interactive survey is coming to a close with nearly a thousand responses received which approaches the target hoped for. The information exchange meeting originally scheduled for June 26th has been postponed until the fall, perhaps in September or October. The meeting may be coordinated with our annual PDC dinner meeting so once the date is fixed we will more formally inform everyone by email.

Becky thanked Kevin for all the information on the livability initiative project that the PDC has posted on their website as it was very useful when Becky recently applied for a federal grant.

D. MPO Bicycle/Pedestrian Master Plan Update

Kevin reported he and Eli are currently reviewing population density information in the projected residential areas and comp plans in the projected employment centers in an effort to identify corridors between the two. Eli is planning a June update meeting for the workgroup and will be sending out an invitation when the date is determined.

E. MPO Special Studies

Dan explained the purpose of the MPO Special Studies and asked the locality representatives to send him any suggestions for roadway studies desired in the upcoming year by the end of June. Once requests have been received the TAC will review them and make recommendations to the Policy Board. Blacksburg and Christiansburg already have made one request each but more can be added and all the localities are encouraged to send in suggestions.

Steve Mouras spoke on behalf of VA Tech and asked that a special study be done on a “Western Perimeter Road” that would relieve traffic on the northern side of campus. A recent study conducted in preparation for the MMTF revealed that West Campus Drive and Duck Pond Drive are both anticipated to have a 40% increase in traffic in the near future and options for improvements to those avenues are very limited. The study would utilize the MPO on-call consultant to do a concept analysis of the routing, provide an understanding of the road’s footprint and a cost estimate. The study will not draw down funding from the MPO.

Dan commented that the request from VA Tech will be added to the list of requests that the TAC will review.

F. 2040 Long Range Plan Update

Dan reported that he recently met with VDOT and the MPO on-call consultant on the 2040 LRP. Work will begin during the next budget year on the update as the due date is to have it completed by 2015. A schedule is being developed and the MPO policy board will have to review and approve the scope of

work and the cost of the contract. VDOT does a part of the study, specifically creating the model to be used and the MPO generates the data that goes into the model and then runs the model. Work with VDOT will begin in the next few months.

G. Other items

Dan answered Mayor Brown's request for information on programmable MPO funds. Recently the Roanoke MPO was featured in the news due to the fact that they were programming some funds and Mayor Brown asked if the NRV MPO was doing anything similar. Dan explained that the Roanoke MPO is different from ours due to the population they represent being over 200,000 which allows them the opportunity to program certain funds, specifically the RSTP funds, which come directly to the MPO. They also get to program a portion of the enhancement funds directly. Unfortunately the NRV MPO represents a much smaller population and therefore these opportunities are not available to us.

Dan also reported on the need to update and advertise our TIP document due to having received revised numbers from DRPT. The UPWP document also needs to be updated and advertised due to the need to include a DRPT project that is not currently listed. We will probably advertise both revisions at the same time to minimize advertising costs and this will be happening in the next few months.

OTHER BUSINESS

Becky reported on BT's artwork project and presented pictures of the results on one of their buses. The project and artwork won three awards, one being a national award.

NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING

The next scheduled meeting is July 11, 2013. Please note the date change.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further agenda items to discuss, Craig adjourned the meeting at 3:20 PM.

Approved: _____

Craig Meadows, Chairman