



**MINUTES OF THE ABILENE
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
TRANSPORTATION POLICY BOARD**

December 12, 2016

The Abilene MPO Transportation Policy Board met at 1:30 p.m., Monday, December 12, 2016, in the City Council Chambers, Abilene City Hall, 555 Walnut Street, Abilene, Texas.

Members Present:

Mayor Norm Archibald, City of Abilene Mayor and Policy Board Chairman
Judge Downing Bolls, Taylor County
Councilman Bruce Kreitler, City of Abilene
Mr. Stan Swiatek, P.E., TxDOT Abilene District Engineer
Judge Dale Spurgin, Jones County, and Policy Board Vice-Chairman

Members Absent:

None

Others Present:

Mr. James Oliver, CityLink General Manager
Mr. Wayne Ekdahl, TxDOT Abilene Area Engineer
Mr. Larry Wright, City of Abilene City Engineer
Ms. Kelly Messer, City of Abilene Assistant City Attorney
Mr. James M. Rogge, P.E, Traffic and Transportation, City of Abilene
Mr. Bill Frawley Texas Transportation Institute (TTI)
Mr. Michael Haithcock, TxDOT Abilene District TP&D Director
Mr. Cliff Hallford, TxDOT Project Controller II
Mr. Brandon Vinson, TxDOT, Engineering Assistant
Mr. Michael Rice, City of Abilene Public Works Director
Mr. James Childers, City of Abilene Assistant City Manager
Mr. Dana Schoening, City of Abilene, Director of Planning and Development Services
Ms. Danette Dunlap, City of Abilene, City Secretary
Ms. Alaisha Guerra, City of Abilene, Communications Media Relations Manager
Mr. James Condry

MPO Staff in Attendance:

Ms. E'Lisa Smetana, Abilene MPO, Executive Director
Mr. Ed McRoy, Abilene MPO Transportation Planner II

1. Call to Order.

Chairman Archibald called the meeting of the Abilene MPO Policy Board to order at 1:32 p.m. He noted that a quorum was duly present.

2. Consideration and action on the Minutes of the October 18, 2016 Meeting.

Chairman Archibald called for any additions or corrections to the meeting minutes as they were presented. Hearing none, he asked for a motion. Councilman Kreitler made the **motion** to approve the minutes as presented with a **second** by Judge Bolls.

Motion carried.

(Agenda Item #4 moved forward by action of the Chair)

4. Consideration and possible action on MPO Funding and HB 20 Ten-Year Project Plans.

In moving this item forward, Mayor Archibald explained that this item is related to agenda Item #3 (Remington/Clark Road Project). He indicated some discussion of it now will be enlightening and helpful in determining how the Board will approach Item #3.

Mr. Swiatek provided the Board with information on history, timing and requirements of various transportation projects and funding categories. He discussed project delivery in terms of time requirements for more and less complex projects and how this relates to project priorities.

Councilman Kreitler asked about the timing of the Buffalo Gap Road Project. Mr. Haithcock responded that following environmental clearance, and ROW acquisition, the project is expected to let for construction in the 2020 fiscal year. The Remington/Clark project is simpler in comparison so letting is expected in August of 2018.

Councilman Kreitler asked if the bridge work on Hwy 83/84 will affect work on other projects. Mr. Haithcock responded that all four projects (Buffalo Gap 1 & 2, Remington/Clark and Landfill Road), are in progress today. The Landfill Road project is very difficult due to the presence of a landfill, tremendous overhead utilities and large ROW acquisitions. Mr. Swiatek noted that he had prioritized Remington/Clark over the Landfill Road project due to the deliverability of projects in relation to funding.

Judge Bolls inquired about accountability, who makes these decisions and why the time frame is so constrained? Mr. Swiatek referenced a State scoring system for projects and competition with other districts for these funds. He added that everyone is racing to get projects developed because of this new funding. Delivery in the first, second, and third years is where the shuffling is taking place. Once this initial development hump is over, things should level out. He added that the TxDOT process is also being affected by the Sunset Review as the agency attempts to implement recommended improvements.

Mayor Archibald stated that the list before them came as a recommendation of the Technical Committee. Mr. Swiatek noted that if the State awards us Category 4 money it may be possible to move MPO money to other projects or carry them over into future years.

Judge Spurgin stated that the project on FM 3034 is very necessary for safety. With the landfill traffic and industrial development in this area, the intersection is inadequate for the number of trucks. He referenced a fatality accident north of here that involved someone running into a truck at night. He encouraged TxDOT to look into a solution north of this location if this project is again delayed given the trucks coming out of the oil field and gasoline tank farm.

(Chair holds further action on this item and moves to Item # 3)

3. Presentation and discussion on the US 83/84 Remington/Clark Road Project

Mr. Michael Haithcock introduced Mr. Brandon Vinson (TxDOT) to make a presentation. Mr. Vinson said this would be a basic bridge project to create a grade separated intersection. He noted that to reduce the project width and ROW take, the four separate lanes would be brought together for the bridge and retaining walls would be used on all four corners. About 12 parcels must be acquired and Remington will be widened under the bridge.

Mayor Archibald asked if signalization is planned on this project. Mr. Vinson answered no. Stop signs will be used for now. He stated that he does not believe the intersection would meet warrants for signalization.

Mayor Archibald asked if turn around lanes would be used. Mr. Vinson answered yes. The standard Texas turn-around will be used.

Mayor Archibald asked about the timing of the Project. Mr. Vinson stated the design would take a year ROW acquisition, ROW relocation and utility relocation will take 18- 24 months after environmental clearance has been achieved. This would mean construction would be sometime in 2019. Mr. Swiatek noted that a brand new acquisition process has been established that should allow quicker acquisition of the land. Mr. Haithcock noted that ROW acquisition should be easier on this project due to the minimal impacts and reduced utilities. He estimated that although it is aggressive he believes a let date for construction of August 2018 may be possible.

Item Closed. No Motion or vote taken.

4. Consideration and possible action on MPO Funding and HB 20 Ten-Year Project Plans
(Item re-opened by Chair)

Mayor Archibald identified that this comes as a recommendation from the Technical Advisory Committee from their last meeting.

Councilman Kreidler asked Mr. Swiatek if the first Phase of the Buffalo Gap Road project would move forward on time as shown regardless of its priority number on the list. Mr. Swiatek stated that as long as they don't stumble on public involvement, right-of-way purchasing, environmental, or utilities that yes this is so.

Mayor Archibald made a **motion** to approve as presented and recommended by the Technical Advisory Committee with a **second** by Judge Spurgin.

Motion carried.

5. Consideration and possible action on the appointment of a Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson for the Technical Advisory Committee.

Mayor Archibald noted that the Board had previously discussed appointing Michael Haithcock as the Chairman of the Technical Committee. This was not possible at that time however due to notification requirements. The Mayor then stated that he recommends naming Michael Rice,

Director of Public Works, for the City of Abilene as the Vice Chair and asked for discussion.

Councilman Kreidler stated this was a good choice. Councilman Kreidler asked if both the Chair and Vice chair are absent must it be a member of the committee that would lead the meeting. Mayor Archibald stated that this situation does not appear to be covered in the Committee's by-laws. Ms. Messer stated she would need to research this question further. Judge Spurgin stated that if the Chair or Vice chair are not available the schedule needs to be adjusted to deal with that.

Mayor Archibald made a **motion** to appoint Michael Haithcock as Chairman of the Technical Advisory Committee and Michael Rice as its Vice Chairman with a **second** by Councilman Bruce Kreidler.

Motion carried

6. Discussion on the operation of the Technical Advisory Committee.

Mayor Archibald stated he wanted there to be great cooperation and partnership between the MPO, the MPO Staff and, TxDOT and TxDOT staff. He stated FOR THE RECORD "I want to say this today. This Policy Board looks to Elisa Smetana as our Executive Director to be the person that helps us put together packets and communicates information." He then added that the changes in the Technical Advisory Committee are a good move forward and discussed the need to partner with Michael Haithcock on its' (TAC's) agenda preparation.

Judge Spurgin suggested that creating a sub-committee at some point to review this new structure might be good. Mayor Archibald noted that the term limit for Officers of the Technical Advisory Committee is one year based on the Federal Fiscal year (October 1 – Sep 30) and that there are no limits on the number of terms an officer can serve.

Councilman Kreidler asked if members of the Policy Board can attend Technical Advisory Committee meetings. Ms. Smetana answered that yes they can. She clarified that the Technical Committee is not currently subject to the Open Meetings Act. It was then discussed that Policy Board members should notify staff if they intend to be present at a Technical Advisory Committee meeting so that appropriate Open Meeting Act notices can be posted when necessary.

Item Closed. No Motion or vote taken.

**7. Discussion and Review of Transportation Projects.
(By TxDOT Staff, City Staff, CityLink Staff)**

Mr. Wayne Ekdahl provided a status update on the following projects: 1) SH 351 Access management 2) Treadaway repaving and 3) SH 351 Bridge replacement at IH 20. Councilman Kreidler asked if the bridge replacement on SH 351 would be 6 lanes. Mr. Ekdahl confirmed that the new bridges are planned to be 6-lane capable.

Mr. Larry Wright provided an update on a number of projects including: Catclaw Rd. - is finalized. N 5th and Victoria - is also final. S. 11th Street sidewalk - is almost complete and may be done within a month. Elm Creek Bridge Guardrail at Rebecca - this project is currently under

construction. N. 10th and Mockingbird Intersection (concrete construction) – bids have been accepted. Ambler Ave – Notice for bids are out – bids are expected to be opened on Dec 20. Texas Ave - information is out for an expected bid opening in January. N 3rd from Willis to Grape Street - information will soon be release for an expected bid opening. Multi-year projects anticipated in 2017 include CBD hotmix, CDB concrete, SODA hotmix, and Signal Lights - all are being prepared for bidding. Elm Creek pedestrian bridge on Clack – final easement has been acquired for this project and plans have been sent to TDLR for review. Bidding anticipated in January and construction in February or March.

No report from CityLink at this meeting.

8. Discussion and Review of Reports:

- **Financial Status**

August and September billings have been provided. The remaining balance for the fiscal year 2016 is \$171,957.54. Carry over numbers are not available yet but the current authorization for fiscal year 2017 is \$53,007.

- **Operation Report**

Full report is included in the packet.

- **Director's Report**

- **FY 2017 Meeting Dates**

A proposed meeting schedule for 2017 has been included in the packet. Of note - the February meeting will be on February 21 and the December 26 meeting will likely be moved due to the holidays.

9. Opportunity for Members of the Public to Make Comments on MPO Issues.

No comments received

10. Opportunity for Board Members or MPO Staff to Recommend Topics for Future Discussion or Action.

Councilman Kreitler commented that he hopes to see continued cooperation between the MPO, TXDOT, City, and Counties relating to anticipated funding in the coming years.

11. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned by the Chair at 3:03 pm