



MINUTES OF THE ABILENE METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION TRANSPORTATION POLICY BOARD

August 15, 2017

The Abilene MPO Transportation Policy Board met at 1:30 p.m., Tuesday, August 15, 2017, in the City Council Chambers, Abilene City Hall, 555 Walnut Street, Abilene, Texas.

Members Present:

Judge Dale Spurgin, Jones County and Policy Board Vice-Chairman
Mayor Anthony Williams, City of Abilene Mayor
Judge Downing Bolls, Taylor County
Councilman Bruce Kreitler, City of Abilene
Mr. Carl Johnson, P.E., TxDOT Abilene District Engineer

Members Absent:

None

Staff of Member Agencies in Attendance:

Ms. Alaisha Guerra, City of Abilene, Communications and Media Relations Manager
Mr. Michael Haithcock, TxDOT Abilene District TP&D Director
Mr. Cliff Hallford, TxDOT Project Controller II
Mr. Ben Herr, CityLink Interim General Manager
Ms. Kelley Messer, City of Abilene Assistant City Attorney
Mr. Paul Norman, TxDOT Abilene Area Office
Mr. Larry Wright, City of Abilene City Engineer
Mr. Michael Rice, City of Abilene Public Works Director
Mr. James Rogge, City of Abilene Traffic Engineer
Mr. Dana Schoening, City of Abilene Director of Planning and Development Services
Ms. Mary Belle Turner, TxDOT Public Information Officer

MPO Staff in Attendance:

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

1. Call to Order.

Judge Spurgin called the meeting of the Abilene MPO Policy Board to order at 1:30 p.m. He introduced Mayor Anthony Williams and Mr. Carl Johnson as new members to the Board.

2. Certificates of Appreciation for Mayor Norm Archibald, Mr. Stan Swiatek, and Colonel Brian Yates.

Judge Spurgin acknowledged the past service of Mayor Norm Archibald, Stan Swiatek and Colonel Brian Yates to the MPO and noted certificates of appreciation for such would be forwarded to them.

3. Consideration and possible action on the minutes of the April 18, 2017 and June 20, 2017 meeting.

Ms. Smetana stated that Ms. Messer's first name was misspelled in both sets of draft minutes and that this requires correction. She then noted that the April 18, 2017 minutes had been previously

approved in June with the exception of an item on page four relating to comments attributed to Ms. Rochelle Johnson. Ms. Smetana explained that staff had provided the Board with two potential options in the draft minutes. Option one was to use updated language (non-verbatim) taken from a recording of the meeting. Option two was to use an emailed statement (verbatim) provided by Ms. Johnson. Judge Spurgin indicated a desire to stick with testimony provided during the public meeting.

Councilman Kreitler made a **motion** to approve the minutes of both meetings as presented, correcting the misspellings, and including option one as presented regarding the statement of Ms. Rochelle Johnson in the April 18th minutes with a **second** by Judge Spurgin. *Motion carries.*

4. Election of Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the MPO Policy Board for a two year term.

Judge Spurgin introduced the item noting that the Chairperson must be an elected official and that the term of office for each position runs for two federal fiscal years. Judge Spurgin opened the floor for nominations for the Chairperson. Judge Spurgin nominated Judge Bolls. Judge Spurgin asked for any other nominations. Mayor Williams nominated Councilman Kreitler.

After discussion, Judge Bolls withdrew his name from consideration. With no other nominated candidates Judge Spurgin **called for the vote**. *Motion carries - Councilman Kreitler elected Chair.*

Judge Spurgin asked for nominations for Vice Chair. Mayor Williams nominated Judge Bolls. Hearing no other nominations Judge Spurgin **called for the vote**. *Motion carries – Judge Bolls elected Vice Chair.*

5. Discussion on the Draft FY 2018 Unified Transportation Program.

Ms. Smetana noted that TxDOT's Draft 2018 UTP is under public review with action by the Texas Transportation Commission expected to take place on August 31, 2017. She explained that Abilene's MPO funding is listed under Category 2U with projected funding for FY 2018-2027 being listed as \$64,220,000. She provided a handout to the members noting differences she found in the State's UTP and locally approved planning documents. She noted that the State's UTP should match the local Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) and the TxDOT programing system. Amendments to the TIP and MTP will be needed in some cases to accomplish this. She anticipates additional consultation with TxDOT in the near future will be needed.

Judge Spurgin requested an update on the status of the FM 3034 project. Mr. Hallford noted that the project is still on track and he expects some MPO money will be used on it. He indicated he has been seeking Category 4 funding for the project from the State. This necessitated making some changes to the project description because of limitations on this funding. He indicated that if this funding can be obtained, it could free up about \$14 million in local MPO dollars. Ms. Smetana noted that even small differences in the MPO plans and State documents could raise a concern with projects. Mr. Haithcock assured the Board that the current funding and UTP discrepancies would not slow the project down. *Discussion Item - No action needed.*

**6. Discussion and review of transportation projects.
(By TxDOT Staff, City Staff, CityLink Staff)**

TxDOT – Mr. Paul Norman updated the Board on the following projects:

Bridge replacement IH 20 at SH 351 – project is on schedule. 1st bridge construction is near completion. Project is expected to take 11 months with completion in spring 2018. US 83 near S 7th Street - project expected to begin in September. US 83 & Southwest Drive intersection - project is

in progress with expected completion in November 2017. Martin Luther King Jr Bridge (BI 20) widening and rehab - project expected to begin Sept 2017 and be completed in summer 2018.

City of Abilene - Mr. Larry Wright updated the Board on the following projects: Amber Ave - 85% complete with some concrete work still needed. Hardwick Rd. - substantially complete and expected to be complete before school starts. Elm Creek Pedestrian Bridge – sidewalks are now under construction. Bridge installation is pending. SODA Area and Seal Coat Projects – currently on hold. 2015 Bond Traffic Signal Project - 3 projects pending time frame expected to be 15 months. Projects expected next year are: A) N. Willis, B) Pioneer Dr. C) Old Anson Rd. D) Industrial Blvd E) SODA Ph. 2 F) CDB West (hot mix)

Citylink - Mr. Ben Herr updated the Board on the following projects: Fixed Route Modification Plan – is in progress. Citylink is looking to amend the fixed-route system moving from 12 routes to 8. Emphasis is on reaching employment centers, expanding service to one major medical provider and servicing neighborhoods most likely to use the system. Para-Transit Services - Non-CDL drivers are now being used in certain situations where allowed. Four new drivers are in training.

7. Discussion and review of reports:

• Financial Status

Ms. Smetana reported that April, May, and June billing statements have now been reported. The MPO has authorization for expenditures of \$406,650.54. Expenditures are \$152,385.82 leaving a remaining balance of \$254,264.72. The new fiscal year will begin on October 1, 2017.

• Operation Report

Ms. Smetana reported that work is proceeding on the Travel Demand Model. She also noted work was required in relation to the City's new budget cycle. Finally she reported completion of a required Transit Asset Management Plan and various mapping requests have been worked on with the rest of the report in the packets.

• Director's Report

None.

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

Mr. Mike Vandervoort addressed the Board regarding paratransit challenges. He also advocated for the establishment of a best practices guide and participation with disabled groups so that facilities are constructed in a usable fashion for disabled individuals. He specifically noted concerns with sidewalk ramps that point 45 degrees into the street rather than pointing to the receiving ramp on the opposite side as being dangerous.

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

Ms. Smetana noted that some administrative amendments to the UPWP would be needed at the next Policy Board Meeting on October 17, 2017. She also indicated she anticipates there will be an update and discussion regarding the Travel Demand Model.

Councilman Kreitler discussed a concern with inadequate access to the north side of I-20. He observed land in this area has recently seen rezoning and development activity. He suggested that

additional crossings may be needed and specifically asked how we might start the process of considering extending Judge Ely Blvd over the highway.

10. Adjournment

The meeting was **adjourned** by Judge Spurgin at 2:31 p.m.