

Blacksburg/Christiansburg/Montgomery Area Metropolitan Planning Organization

Minutes

June 11, 2009 Policy Board Meeting

PRESENT: Richard Ballengee - Town of Christiansburg
Lance Terpenney - Town of Christiansburg
Leslie Hagar-Smith - Town of Blacksburg for Ron Rordam
Doug Marrs - Montgomery County
Carol Edmonds - Montgomery County
Elijah Sharp - NRVPC
Dan Brugh - BCMC MPO
Randal Gwinn - Recording Secretary
Michael Russell - VDOT (Salem) for Richard Caywood

ABSENT: Steve Mouras - Virginia Tech
Jeff Sizemore - Department of Rail and Public Transportation
Richard Caywood - VDOT (Salem)
Adele Schirmer - Town of Blacksburg
Rebecca Martin - Blacksburg Transit
Tammye Davis - Federal Highway Administration
Tony Cho - Federal Transit Administration
Ron Rordam - Town of Blacksburg
Michael St. Jean - VT Montgomery Regional Airport Authority

NON MPO PRESENT:

Erik Olsen - Blacksburg Transit

I. DECLARATION OF A QUORUM AND CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Lance Terpenney declared a quorum and called the meeting to order at 2 PM.

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

On a motion by Richard Ballengee, seconded by Leslie Hagar-Smith, and carried unanimously, the agenda was approved.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF MAY 7, 2009

On a motion by Richard Ballengee, seconded by Doug Marrs, and carried unanimously, the Minutes from the May 7, 2009 meeting were approved.

IV. PUBLIC ADDRESS

There being no speakers, the public address session was closed.

V. OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business to discuss.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

A. Approval of Transportation Improvement Program Amendment

Dan Brugh gave a brief overview of the proposed TIP amendment that was necessary because of the receipt of American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds. The funding received to date is for capital purchase of buses for Blacksburg Transit in the amount of \$4.6 million. The Amendment was developed by the TAC, advertised for comment in the local newspapers for 3 consecutive weeks, posted on the MPO website, sent to the MPO email list, and sent to the MPO Interested Parties and Governmental Regulatory Agencies. No comments were received and the TAC recommends approval of the Amendment.

At this point Lance ask for comments on the proposed amendment and there were none.

On a motion by Doug Marrs, seconded by Richard Ballengee, and carried unanimously,

WHEREAS, Blacksburg Transit received funding through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) in the amount of \$4.6 million for capital projects, and

WHEREAS, this additional funding needs to be included in the current approved TIP, and

WHEREAS, the TAC developed and advertised the Amendment for public comment, sent it to the MPO email list, posted it on the MPO website, and sent it to the MPO Interested Parties and Governmental Review Agencies, and

WHEREAS, no comments were received,

WHEREAS, the TAC recommends approval.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Blacksburg-Christiansburg-Montgomery Area Metropolitan Planning Organization approves Amendment Number 1 to the 2009-12 TIP.

VII. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Dan presented the group with his report as follows:

A. 2035 Long Range Plan Update:

We expect our on call consultant, Joe Springer from Parsons, to report back to us with results from the initial meetings with the localities within the next two weeks. This will include changes given to him by the localities plus the updated socio-economic data. The next steps in the process will be the review of the information by the Blacksburg, Christiansburg, and Montgomery County Planning Departments followed by VDOT traffic modeling. Currently we are scheduled to complete this work by the summer of next year.

B. Franklin Street/ Cambria Street Intersection Study Update

A draft report of recommendations from the Parson Transportation Group is now being reviewed by the town of Christiansburg. Once that review is completed, there will be advertisement for a public meeting, followed by a meeting of the TAC to discuss the comments gathered at that meeting. A final report and recommendation will be presented to the Policy Board. Dan and Lance are looking into a possible funding source through a grant from the Department of Energy which would fund 100% of the project with no requirement for local matching funds.

C. Christiansburg Bus Survey Update

Dan advised that an overview of the bus survey was presented to the Christiansburg Town Council at their April meeting and the expansion of the bus service was approved in the 2009-10 budget.

Erik added that he and Becky are working with Lance and a financial consultant on a memo of understanding that they hope to have in place soon.

Lance advised that there were four different parts to the expansion; a downtown loop, a shopping center loop, a commuter service to Blacksburg, and an on call "flex-route" so it covered a wide range of transit needs in Christiansburg. He closed by stating that it was a nice presentation and that the Council was pleased to get the expansion approved.

Dan added that often projects of this type go through similar phases of development with the need early on to put what you feel is needed in place and then watch how the public uses it, then make necessary changes from time to time to get the most out of your money. (He also used the Smart Way Bus System's development as a good example to follow).

Dan closed the subject by stating that recent discussions with Becky confirmed that everything is on schedule to have the buses ready for the first phase start up in October. Prior to that, Blacksburg Transit and the Town of Christiansburg need to meet to decide the specific routes and the look of the buses. The buses will not be Blacksburg Transit buses running in Christiansburg, they will have the BT logo on them but they will be Christiansburg buses running entirely different routes. Funds are provided in the project budget for promotional items as well in order to inform the public of the new services.

D. SmartWay Bus Update

Dan advised that we now have the 3rd quarter information in digital format to update our graphs and these should be available and sent out to interested parties next week. The data shows that ridership continues to increase and the only current issue to discuss is the announcement by the City of Roanoke pertaining to fare increases for the Smart Way Bus. The Smart Way Advisory Committee was formed to have oversight on route, schedule and fare modifications. The Smart Way Advisory Committee reviewed fare increases in January and decided against any at that time. The fare increase announced by the City of Roanoke was done without knowledge of the Committee and has since been placed on hold awaiting additional review by the Committee. There will be a meeting of the Committee in August to decide on having a public hearing in October with the intent of gauging the public's reaction to raising fares in January of 2010. This decision will hinge on rising gas prices and the potential arrival of replacement buses. These buses are over the road coaches that hold fifty seven passengers and have a much longer service life than the units being replaced. Discussions on the Capital Plan have been ongoing and it appears that due to a combination of price negotiations and funds contributed by the DRPT, the local match required will not change. The first three buses will cost \$1.5 million with the Roanoke and New River Valleys sharing the approximately \$80,000 in local match, resulting in the NRV paying \$20k a year for the next two years.

The Smart Way Advisory Committee is also currently looking into possible solutions to capacity issues at Park & Ride lots at Exits 140 and 118. The most pressing need is at Exit 140. VDOT is working to provide a short term solution to get riders out of the mud in unpaved sections, possibly followed by more permanent solutions in the upcoming year.

Mike Russell added that he had recently met with Valley Metro and may have identified a solution so that the new 45' coaches will be able to enter the Exit 140 Park & Ride lot.

E. VDOT Six Year Plan meeting

Dan discussed two letters sent by the MPO to the Commonwealth Transportation Board. The first letter asked that funding for upgrading the Exit 140 Park & Ride lot and considerations for study for the Exit 118 Park & Ride lot be included in the Six Year Plan and the second in support of Virginia Tech's request for project funding to develop an Interchange Modification Report (IMR) for an interchange on Route 460 in the vicinity of Southgate Drive (Route 314). Dan also advised the group that the public hearing for the VDOT Six Year Plan was June 3, 2009, 6 PM at the Northside Middle School, 6810 Northside High School Road, Roanoke, VA.

Richard asked Dan if he expected to hear anything soon from VDOT concerning the paving request for the Exit 140 Park & Ride to which Dan replied that he did not expect to hear anything other than requested funding for expansions did or did not make it into the six year plan. He then added that in all probability Richard would take care of addressing the muddy ad-hock parking area as best he could with the resources currently available to him. Mike added that he and Richard had submitted the request for immediate assistance and they were hoping that it would be answered, although VDOT was tight on maintenance funds for the rest of the current year.

F. Other items

None

VIII. OTHER BUSINESS

None

IX. INTO CLOSED MEETING

On a motion by Carol Edmonds, seconded by Leslie Hager-Smith carried unanimously,

BE IT RESOLVED, The MPO Policy Board hereby enters into Closed Meeting for the purpose of discussing the following:

Section 2.1-3711 (1) Discussion, Consideration, or Interviews of
Prospective Candidates for Employment;
Assignment, Appointment, Promotion,
Performance, Demotion, Salaries, Disciplining or
Resignation of Specific Officers, Appointees or
Employees of Any Public Body

1. Personnel Matter

X. OUT OF CLOSED MEETING

On a motion by Carol Edmonds, seconded by Richard Ballengee and carried unanimously,

BE IT RESOLVED, The MPO Policy Board hereby ends their Closed Meeting to return to Regular Session.

XI. CERTIFICATION OF CLOSED MEETING

On a motion by Doug Marrs, seconded by Carol Edmonds and carried unanimously,

WHEREAS, The MPO Policy Board has convened a Closed Meeting on this date pursuant to an affirmative recorded vote and in accordance with the provisions of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act; and

WHEREAS, Section 2.2-3711 of the Code of Virginia requires a certification by the Policy Board that such Closed Meeting was conducted in conformity with Virginia law.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the MPO Policy Board hereby certifies that to the best of each member's knowledge (i) only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements by Virginia law were discussed in the closed meeting to which this certification resolution applies, and (ii) only such public business matters as were identified in the motion conveying the closed meeting were heard, discussed or considered by the Policy Board.

VOTE

AYES

Richard Ballengee
Doug Mars
Leslie Hager-Smith
Carol Edmonds
Lance Terpenney

NAYS

None

ABSENT DURING VOTE

Steve Mouras
Jeff Sizemore
Adele Schirmer
Rebecca Martin
Tammye Davis
Tony Cho
Ron Rordam
Michael St. Jean

ABSENT DURING MEETING

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Rebecca Martin
Tammye Davis
Tony Cho
Ron Rordam
Michael St. Jean

Lance advised Dan that his job performance was very good and due to budget constraints, there would be no salary adjustment this year.

XII. NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING

The next scheduled meeting is July 2, 2009 at 2:00 PM in the Montgomery County Government Center.

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 2:40 PM

Lance Terpenney, Chairman