

MONTACHUSETT JOINT TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE MEETING  
MINUTES OF WEDNESDAY JULY 15, 2009

J. Oelfke called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

**I. INTRODUCTION/ MEMBERS PRESENT**

Noreen Piazza, Lancaster; Andrew West, Royalston; Margaret Whitney, Ashburnham; Robert Saiia, Lunenburg; Chantell Wead, Templeton Planning; John Oelfke, Shirley; Pauline Hamel, Ayer

EX-OFFICIO

Joanne Weinstock, EOT; Laurie Scarbrough, MassHighway District 2

ORGANIZATION

GUESTS

Peter Johnston, Ayer Planning Board; Frank Maxant, Ayer; Caroline McCreary, Ayer

STAFF

George Snow, Brian Doherty, Stephanie Brow, Sheri Bean, George Kahale, Glenn Eaton

**II. APPROVAL OF JUNE 17, 2009 MINUTES**

J. Oelfke made a motion to approve the minutes of June 17, 2009 with an amendment to add discussion on the Unified Planning Work Program. The minutes were approved with the amendment and the motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

**III. ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

N. Piazza presented the Slate of Officers: Chairperson, Paula Caron; Vice Chair, John Oelfke; Secretary, Robert Saiia.

J. Oelfke moved that nominations be closed. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

J. Oelfke moved that the Montachusett Joint Transportation Committee cast one ballot and approve the slate of MJTC Officers. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

#### **IV. PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE FY2009 ELEMENT OF THE FY2007-2010 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM**

S. Bean indicated that in the amendment the Mill Street Bridge has been switched with the Oxbow Wildlife Refuge. There also may be a change in the dollar figures; however the numbers are not official yet. Discussion followed.

J. Oelfke made a motion to endorse the amendment pending any comments from the public, as well as any dollar figure changes on the Water Street Bridge Project. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

#### **V. FFY2010-2013 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM – UPDATE AND DEVELOPMENT**

G. Snow stated that at the last meeting, the MJTC did not endorse any of the TIP options made available, and that there will be a new option made available today for the MJTC to discuss. G. Snow stated that the projects listed in the new option are the same as listed in the Draft TIP from June 2009. Based on the work being done on the TIP, Option A is the preferred option because it allots for all of the target figures.

G. Kahale stated that the Baldwinville Road project is going to cost over \$5 million, which is almost the entire target figure. MRPC looked into using Advanced Construction for the project because of the dollar amount, but it currently doesn't meet the requirements. G. Kahale also indicated that MassHighway cannot confirm if the Baldwinville Project will be ready for construction in 2010, but it is guaranteed to be ready for construction by 2011; which leaves \$5.5 million in target figures to spend. There is a bridge project in District 3 that is not on the list yet, but if we cannot utilize the money with any other project in our area, we will be able to add that project to our list for \$2.8 million.

A. Frost indicated that there is the Route 12 Bridge over Route 2, which is missing a beam. It was on the 2010 Special Bridge Funds list, however there were cost increases on other projects and that bridge was removed, and now its on the draft Federal Aid list for 2012. It would be replacement of the super-structure of the bridge and signaling the ramps north and south on Route 2, which will eliminate the weave pattern, with the traffic exiting westbound.

J. Oelfke stated that in the TIP today, there is a project listed for \$5.4 million which may or may not be able to go to construction for 2010; the question being would the MJTC like to leave it there and risk it maybe not being used, or replace it with something else and moving it out to another year.

M. Splaine stated that Route 2 Resurfacing could be put in place of Baldwinville Road, because it will be ready for construction. The other project that could be moved to 2010 is Route 140 in Gardner which could be put on the TIP for that year if that was desirable for the MJTC.

J. Oelfke asked if the Committee needed to make a decision tonight on which option is preferable, because of the limited information provided at this point.

M. Splaine stated that MassHighway doesn't have many of the answers that the MJTC is looking for currently.

J. Oelfke asked about the risks with waiting to endorse a TIP option at this meeting and waiting another month.

J. Weinstock indicated that if the MJTC postpones their decision making another month, there could be complications with getting the TIP document out on time, which would delay the entire process for the state. Also, the MPO can make a recommendation for the TIP and then the MJTC could make all necessary comments during the 30 day comment period.

S. Bean stated that there is also the ability to amend the TIP in the future if necessary.

J. Oelfke asked if the MRPC staff could gather together the information for a new Option on the TIP, and to distribute it to the MJTC.

G. Kahale indicated that it was possible and the information would be sent out via email as soon as it was available.

## **VI. JARC/New Freedoms**

G. Kahale indicated that the deadline for applications for funding was June 30, 2009. Only one application was received from MART, to fund operational assistance from JARC, for \$125,000 for service run in this area between Gardner and Greenfield and Winchendon called G-Link service.

Mr. Kahale stated that this project has been going on for several years and has approximately 70-100 passengers per day, and it also runs in an area with no public transportation at all.

P. Hamel made a motion to endorse the G-Link Project as presented by MART. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

## **VII. CONTRACT STATUS REPORT**

### **a. FTA/RTA**

G. Kahale indicated that there was a bid opening for the MART Storage Facility Expansion Project. The sub-bidders were for masonry, roofing, water proofing, windows, glass, painting, plumbing, heating and electrical. All sub-bidders came in on target.

McMahon Associates held several stakeholder meetings for the Wachusett/Gardner Commuter Rail Expansion Facility in order to discuss

Phase One alternatives, and Phase Two Analysis to expand service to Gardner. They are currently working on an application for the new commuter station and parking facility at Wachusett area.

MRPC recently completed a draft of the assessment study for the Ayer Parking Facility, it is being kept in-house because the lawyer for the town is still investigating the Right Of Way to get from Main Street to the Station, and the study will be fully completed by the end of July.

G. Kahale stated that MART is looking at dedicating stops for Shirley for their shuttle trips to Boston.

J. Oelfke stated that Senior Center would be the best location for a stop on the route. Mr. Oelfke asked for MART to contact him to coordinate times for the Senior Center van to pick up people from their homes.

**b. MASSHIGHWAY DEPARTMENT 3C**

S. Bean indicated that Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) draft is available, and also out for public comment at this time, which is a summary of all the projects MRPC is working on in the next year.

R. Saiia made a motion, pending any other comments, for the MJTC and MPO to endorse the work plan.

S. Bean stated that the Route 140 Task Force traffic counts and turning movement counts have almost all been completed. The study will be moving forward as soon as the counts are completed.

**VIII. OTHER BUSINESS**

P. Hamel asked how the Transportation Reorganization Plan is going to affect the towns in the area.

L. Scarbrough stated that the impacts to the MPO will only be in the titles of the representatives, from the transportation authorities. Ms. Scarbrough also stated that there is a presentation on the reorganization that's available for the local transportation committees and MPO's. The MJTC requested that a presentation be given at a future MJTC meeting.

**IX. NEW BUSINESS**

**X. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, J. Oelfke adjourned the meeting at 9:05 p.m.