

MONTACHUSETT JOINT TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE (MJTC) MEETING

MINUTES OF June 8, 2022

Meeting Held Online through GoToMeeting.com - Hosted by the MRPC

B. Harris acted as Chair for this meeting and called the meeting to order at 2:30 p.m. D. Kilhart assumed the Chair at 2:33 p.m.

I. Introduction

Members

Dick Kilhart, Athol; Alan Manoian, Ayer; Mark Archambault, Ayer; Robert Swartz, Gardner; Tim Kilhart, Harvard; Janet Tice, Shirley; Veronica Kell, Townsend; George Kahale, MART

Ex-Officio and Organizations

David Kline, The ARC of Opportunity; Chris Klem, MassDOT; Laura Hanson, MassDOT District 2; Sarah Bradbury, MassDOT District 3

Non-Members

Dan Van Schalkwyk, Ayer; Amanda Reid, Lunenburg; Theresa Morse, Townsend;

Staff

Brad Harris; Brian Doherty

II. Public Comments

There were no comments at this time.

III. Approval of May 11, 2022 Minutes

A motion was made to accept the May 11, 2022 MJTC Meeting Minutes as presented. Consensus was given to accept the minutes.

IV. Report of Nominating Committee

R. Swartz reported that the Nominating Committee met at 2:00 p.m. before this meeting to compose a slate for the officers for the MJTC. After due deliberation, the Nominating Committee has the following recommendations: Chair – Dick Kilhart of Ayer; Vice Chair – Travis Condon of the North Central MA Chamber of Commerce; and Secretary – Guy Corbosiero of Winchendon and Robert Swartz of Gardner.

D. Kilhart asked for floor nominations for any of the positions from the MJTC members. There were no floor nominations.

The MJTC accepted the slate as presented by the Nominating Committee.

B. Harris then indicated that the election will occur at the start of the July meeting.

V. FFY 2022-2026 Montachusett Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

- Discussion on Draft Amendment #5 to the Highway & Transit Elements
- MJTC Recommendation to the Montachusett MPO

B. Harris reviewed with the members Draft TIP Amendment #5 that involves one (1) project in the FFY 2022 Highway Element of the FFY 2022-2026 TIP. MassDOT informed us that project #609314, Ashby - Intersection Improvements at Greenville Road (Route 31) and Turnpike Road, at 100% design and close to final design. There is an expected advertisement date of August 27th, and the overall cost has increased. This project is listed in the TIP under Section 2B/State Prioritized Modernization Projects – Intersection Improvements and does not impact any target funded projects or the TIP’s fiscal constraint. The design consultant has identified three major reasons for the cost increase:

1. In response to 75% design review comments, the Design Engineer (DE) was directed to move some of the earth work quantities to Unclassified Excavation. The unit price for Unclassified Excavation was significantly higher than the price for Earth Excavation.
2. Drainage costs increased as a result of revisions required per on-going permitting and comments from the Boston Environmental (MassDOT) section. All existing Catch Basins (CB’s) in the project area now have deep sumps as a Best Management Practice (BMP), for example.
3. All unit costs were updated to reflect current price trends with weighted average bid prices. There has been significant inflation, so the DE has used the most recent 4 months figure instead of the prior 12 months for the determining unit.

The new cost estimate for this project is now at \$3,224,713; an increase of \$721,315 or 28.8%. The MPO voted to release this Amendment for a 21-day public review that began on May 24th and will close next Monday on June 13th. To date we have not received any comments on this Amendment.

A motion was made and seconded to recommend that the MPO endorse TIP Amendment #5 as presented. Consensus was given to recommend endorsement by the MPO.

VI. MART New Automatic Fare Collection System Presentation

G. Kahale provided an overview of MART’s recently installed Automatic Fare Collection System. This was a \$1.5 million project. System installation began earlier this spring. The new system replaces the Charlie Card so there will be new fair cards, fair boxes and ticket vending machines. In addition, there is new mobile app and the option to purchase tickets online. The new fare boxes will still accept coins and bills, give change tickets and use smart cards but in addition, they will update the value of change tickets and have a bar code scanner for mobile ticketing. New card validators are also expected to be in use by the end of June. New ticket vending machines will be placed at several locations along the fixed route system that will allow for purchasing of bus passes and the reloading of stored value cards at all hours of the day. These machines will also be bilingual. Installation will occur this summer. The mobile ticketing app and the online site will allow for the purchase of full and reduced fare tickets and stored value cards. MART is also using Passio Go as a live map application that provides users with the location and status of buses on the routes. The MART live map feature can be found at:

<https://www.mrta.us/customer-information/passio-go/>

VII. Montachusett Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) Update

- Proposed Schedule
- Vision Statement and Goals
- Public Outreach

B. Doherty provided the members with a review of the development schedule of the next Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). The last plan was endorsed in 2019 and federal regulations require an update every four years. The RTP encompass all modes and methods of transportation in the region and outlines future growth and needs over a 20-to-30-year life span. The new RTP will need to be endorsed by the MPO next spring, so to accomplish that we have developed a draft schedule that outlines the major parts of the plan that

we need to address. We plan to begin with the overall Vision Statement for the RTP as well as the goals and objectives. This will begin with the MJTC next month at which we will discuss the prior Vision Statement and refine and update as needed. Public outreach will be maintained throughout the process and will be a major point of emphasis. B. Doherty then reviewed the planned schedule in more detail. In addition, the Executive Summary from the last RTP was presented in order to provide members with a glimpse as to what will be part of the RTP.

VIII. Contract Status Reports

- Federal Transit Administration (FTA)
- Regional Transit Authority (RTA)

B. Harris stated that from the MRPC view on FTA and RTA, staff has wrapped up development of the TIP and UPWP and are still working on the ADA bus stop review project for the Gardner fixed route system.

G. Kahale stated the Board of Selectmen for Phillipston voted to petition MART to join the Transit Authority. The MART Advisory Board then voted on May 17th to accept their petition and make them the 24th community in the Montachusett Regional Transit Authority. At the Fitchburg Intermodal Center (ITC), MART will be doing a rehabilitation project to the roof of the facility. MART also received notice of a grant award through the Shared Streets and Spaces program of \$180,000 for bus shelters. Funds will be available beginning in October 2022. Shelters are planned for Fitchburg, Gardner and Athol. As a side note, a shelter recently installed at 75 East Broadway in south Gardner that was funded with section 5303 funds was vandalized in the first 24 hours. Repairs are under way. The Ayer Depot Square Phase 3 construction project has begun. This includes restrooms and landscaping with an expected completion date of this fall.

- MassDOT 3C

B. Harris stated the next MPO will be next week on June 15th at 1:00 pm. The major action item will be the endorsement of the FFY 2022 TIP Amendment #5. In addition, MART will present an update for their Transit Asset Management Plan.

We have not had any responses in our search for a consultant to assist us with the traffic count program. We have updated our RFQ and have reached out to some additional consultant firms for possible responses.

One handout for discussion from MassDOT for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study from May. The next Working Group Meeting is set for June 22nd at 1:00 pm. Information and instructions on how to access the meeting are in the newsletter. The newsletter will be posted to the MRPC website soon.

The next scheduled MJTC Meeting is July 13th at 2:30 pm. The first order of business will be the election of officers. Typically, near the end of the federal fiscal year, we go to an every other month schedule until January. There are three options for the MJTC to consider:

1. MJTC meets in July, September, and November, skipping August, October, and December.
2. MJTC meets in August, October and December skipping July, September, and November. If the July meeting is skipped, the election of Officers will then occur in August.
3. Last option is to not skip any meetings at this time and continue to meet each month.

Whatever option is chosen, please note that if needed, a meeting can be set up and called for during one of the skipped months. This would likely occur due to the need to act on a particular item, such as a TIP Amendment. In either case, notices will continue to be mailed out one week prior to remind members if there is or is not a meeting.

After discussion by the members present, it was decided to meet in July, September, and November for the remainder of 2022.

IX. Administrative Matters

- *Next MJTC Meeting*

B. Harris stated that the next meeting is scheduled for July 13, 2022 at 2:30 pm.

X. Adjournment

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 3:25 p.m.

DOCUMENTS/EXHIBITS AVAILABLE AT MEETING:

6 8 2022 Agenda
5 11 2022 MJTC minutes
Nom Cmmtee Report
5 DRAFT FFY 2022 Highway Amendment #5 Summary
5 Int Parties Draft TIP Amendment #5
6 FareboxPresentationMPO
7 2020 RTP Executive Summary
7 RTP Draft Development Schedule
Northern Tier May 2022 News