

**MONTACHUSETT JOINT TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE (MJTC) MEETING
MINUTES OF JULY 20, 2016**

J. Wyman called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

I. Introduction

Members

Jeff Hoynoski, MassDOT District 2; Doug Walsh, Athol; Jon Wyman, Westminster; Sarah Bradbury, MassDOT District 3; Patrick Lawlor, North Central MA Chamber of Commerce; Nikki Tishler, MassDOT OTP; Noreen Piazza, Lancaster; John Kilcoyne, Sterling

Guests

Staff

Brad Harris, George Snow, Sheri Bean, Brian Doherty, Kaitlyn Olbrich, George Kahale

II. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

III. Approval of June 15, 2016 Minutes

It was the consensus of the MJTC to approve the June 15, 2016 MJTC minutes as printed.

IV. Election of Officers

The Chair asked if there were any nominations from the floor. There were none and the slate was closed. A motion was made to have the Secretary cast one ballot on behalf of the MJTC for the following slate of officers: Chair – Jon Wyman, Westminster; Vice Chair – Paula Caron, Fitchburg; and Secretary – Doug Walsh, Athol. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

V. Montachusett FFY 2016-2019 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendment #2

- Review of Draft and Public Comments

B. Harris referred members to a handout titled *Draft Amendment #2 Summary 7 1 2016* and indicated that that last month the MPO voted to release this draft for a 30 day public review and comment period. That comment period runs from July 1st to August 1st. As of this date, we have not received any comments on the Amendment. MassDOT had informed us of the need to amend the FFY 2016 Highway Element of the FFY 2016-2019 TIP due to cost changes to two projects, one a target eligible project the other is a non-target eligible project, i.e. it utilizes statewide funds; additionally, we need to add a statewide funded project to the list.

In addition, the FFY 2016 Transit Element needs to be amended due to the award of Community Transit Grant Program funds in the Region as well as changes to other transit project funding amounts. Additional projects are also added to the TIP as MART recognized some cost savings in other projects thus allowing them to expand their program in other areas.

Discussion followed on the projects and their scopes of work.

It was the consensus of the MJTC to recommend the MRPC authorize its Chair to endorse Amendment #2 and to also recommend that the full MPO also endorse Amendment #2 subject to any comments that may be received.

VI. FFY 2017-2021 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

- Review of Draft & Public Comments

B. Harris referred members to a handout related to the Draft FFY 2017-2021. Last month the MPO voted to release the draft TIP for a 30 day public review and comment period that runs from July 1st to August 1st. The MPO released a draft TIP that carried the Fitchburg/Leominster/Lunenburg Summer Street project in FFY 2017 and 2018 based upon further comments from MassDOT District 3. B. Harris then reviewed each Fiscal Year of the TIP as well as the fiscal constraint issue for each FFY. To date we have not received any comments.

Some discussion followed on the TIP project scenario.

It was the consensus of the MJTC to recommend the MRPC authorize its Chair to endorse the FFY 2017-2021 TIP and to also recommend that the full MPO also endorse the FFY 2017-2021 TIP subject to any comments that may be received.

VII. 2016-2017 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

- Review of Draft & Public Comments

B. Harris presented information regarding the Draft 2016-2017 UPWP. He referred members to a handout that detailed the UPWP tasks as well as the budgets for each item. Again at their last meeting, the MPO voted to release the draft UPWP for a 30 day public review and comment period that runs from July 1st to August 1st. To date we have not received any comments on the draft UPWP.

Staff reviewed various tasks contained within the UPWP and explained their focus and goals.

B. Doherty discussed the Stormwater Data Development Program task. MRPC will continue to provide communities assistance to comply with new EPA stormwater regulations and the use of the app now under development.

G. Snow discussed the task regarding a study for a new interchange on Route 2 and South Athol Road in Athol.

S. Bean discussed the development of community trail brochures that might assist in tourism and economic development.

It was the consensus of the MJTC to recommend the MRPC authorize its Chair to endorse the 2016-2017 UPWP and to also recommend that the full MPO also endorse the 2016-2017 UPWP subject to any comments that may be received.

VIII. Contract Status Reports

a. FTA/RTA

G. Kahale stated that Wachusett Station work is being expedited and it should be completed by October 2016 and hopefully in the early fall the train will begin service to the station. The Town of Ayer in May approved an article to take the land for a pedestrian access to the terrain station by eminent domain. This will allow the parking facility project to move forward. The Boston to Fitchburg commuter rail has had two trains added to the new schedule and the number of trains coming all the way to Fitchburg has increased to 17 trains out of the 19 operating along this line. Also, there are now two express trains from Fitchburg running under 73 minutes to Boston.

There is an issue related to a \$370,000 sidewalk project along Authority Avenue at the Wachusett Station that was approved by the MPO in 2014. MassDOT also approved the project and submitted a letter to FTA in April 2014. As of now it is unclear where the funds are located.

Discussion followed regarding the sidewalk and Wachusett Station projects and their status.

b. MassDOT 3C

B. Harris indicated that Kaitlyn Olbrich has joined the MRPC as a new Transportation Planner and is here tonight. The traffic count program is continuing. The Harvard Town Center study has been completed and submitted to the town.

The next meeting of the MPO will be on August 3, 2016 at 1:00 p.m. here at the MRPC Offices.

IX. Administrative Matters

It was the consensus of the MJTC to cancel the August 17, 2016 MJTC meeting and set the next meeting for Wednesday September 21, 2016 at 7:00 p.m.

B. Harris discussed a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) put out by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) in the Federal Register on June 27, 2016 related to MPO Coordination. The comment period for this NPRM runs until August 26th. Based upon his review it appears the NPRM would require one set of planning documents for each urbanized area (UZA) and because the Boston UZA enters into the eastern part of our current region, we would have to either: (1) coordinate efforts with the Boston MPO to produce one set of planning documents for the Boston UZA; (2) redraw the boundaries of the MPO's to maintain only one MPO for UZA; or (3) merge the two MPO's into one. Information will be sent to our member communities on this issue in order to call their attention to this NPRM and encouraging them to comment.

N. Tishler indicated that if this does move forward Massachusetts would essentially be one giant MPO encompassing Rhode Island and part of southern New Hampshire with a second MPO out in Berkshire County. It would have drastic implications. Also the timeline to implement this would be a major problem.

Discussion followed on the NPRM, its potential impacts and how to comment.

B. Harris indicated that he would send out an email notice to all with information and links regarding the NPRM.

X. Adjournment

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

DOCUMENTS/EXHIBITS AVAILABLE AT MEETING:

July 20, 2016 Agenda
June 15, 2016 MJTC Minutes
2016 Ballot
Draft Amendment #2 Summary 7 1 2016
Interested Parties Draft TIP UPWP Amend 2 Memo 6 30 2016
Summary Projects DRAFT FFY 2017 2021 TIP
DRAFT Summary UPWP 2016 17 5 4 2016