

MONTACHUSETT JOINT TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE (MJTC) MEETING

MINUTES OF AUGUST 8, 2018

Meeting Held at

MRPC OFFICES

464 ABBOTT AVENUE, LEOMINSTER, MA 01453

J. Wyman called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

I. Introduction

Members

Doug Walsh, Athol; Jon Wyman, Westminster; Noreen Piazza, Lancaster; Paula Bertram, Lunenburg; Tracy Murphy, Winchendon; Kenneth Chenis, Lunenburg; Sarah Bradbury, MassDOT District 3; Derek Krevat, MassDOT OTP

Non-Members

Nicholas Bosonetto, VHB

Staff

Brad Harris, George Snow, Brian Doherty, George Kahale

II. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

III. Approval of July 11, 2018 Minutes

It was the consensus of the MJTC to approve the July 11, 2018 MJTC minutes as printed. N. Piazza abstained.

IV. Election of Officers

- *Floor Nominations*
- *Election of Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary*

B. Harris informed the MJTC members that at the last MJTC, it was decided that the election of officers should occur this month. As such, the slate up for election consists of one candidate for each position. They are Jon Wyman for Chair, Paula Bertram for Vice Chair and Doug Walsh for Secretary. Both Jon Wyman and Doug Walsh are up for re-election.

J. Wyman asked if there were any nominations from the floor. There were none.

A motion was made to have the Secretary cast one ballot for the slate as presented. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

The officers for the upcoming year are therefore: Jon Wyman - Chair, Paula Bertram - Vice Chair and Doug Walsh - Secretary

V. Montachusett 2016 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)

- *Review and Discussion of Amendment to 2016 RTP and Comments Received*

B. Harris informed the MJTC that last month we discussed the fact that a recent court decision had triggered a revision in prior air quality conformity decisions and as a result the state of Massachusetts needed to have all MPO's amend their 2016 Regional Transportation Plans. This amendment will add an Air Quality Conformity Determination appendix to the RTP. The Montachusett MPO voted last month to release the RTP Amendment for a 21-day public review and comment period. That comment period commenced on July 23rd and will run until the close of business on Monday August 13th. This meeting of the MJTC acts as a public forum where comments can be made. In addition, the MJTC will review any comments received to date and make a recommendation to the MPO regarding the RTP Amendment.

When the RTP was developed, the state had been considered in attainment, however, the recent U.S. District Court decision struck down these past determinations related to ozone attainment areas and because of this Massachusetts is no longer considered in attainment. Thus, the need to review the RTP and conduct an Air Quality Determination. If this Amendment is not done soon, it jeopardizes the recently endorsed FFY 2019-2023 TIP being approved on the federal level and therefore would impact federal highway and transit projects from being implemented.

B. Harris indicated that as of this date, no comments have been received related to this Amendment.

A motion was made to recommend that the MPO endorse the RTP Amendment. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

VI. Merriam Avenue-South Street Bottleneck Study

– Update of Study

B. Doherty presented to the MJTC the status of the current Bottleneck Study under taken for the Merriam Avenue-South Street Corridor in Leominster and Fitchburg. Information was provided related to the study area, current congestion/bottleneck issues, and the constraints present along this corridor. This study is being conducted under our Climate Change program in the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). Because of our location, we are focusing climate change issues on congested roadways and the identification of potential alternatives that would reduce delays and subsequently improve air quality.

Discussion followed regarding issues identified and possible mitigation measures.

VII. Montachusett Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Subregion Election

- Subregion Representative Selection Process & Schedule

B. Harris indicated that we will shortly begin the process for the selection of new Representatives and Alternates for the four MPO Subregions. Current representatives and alternates were selected in early 2016 and began their terms in September of that year. Terms for these positions are for three years, thus, the need to begin the selection process. A schedule has been developed that will commence in October/November when staff will reach out to the member communities to solicit volunteers from the various Boards of Selectmen. Once that has been completed, we will hold special caucus meetings for each subregion to gather and officially select a Representative and Alternate from the candidates. This should occur in January/February. Once these individuals are named, they will begin their three-year term in September 2019.

In addition, B. Harris discussed the current vacancies in the Representative and Alternate positions for Subregion 3 and the process underway to fill these slots for the remainder of the current three-year term. This should be completed by the end of August.

VIII. Contract Status Reports

a. Federal Transit Administration (FTA)

G. Kahale indicated that there is no new information at this time.

b. Regional Transit Authority (RTA)

G. Kahale provided an update on the parking facility in Ayer project. The project was advertised and the bids were opened last week. There were only two bidders. Both bids were significantly over the \$4.3 million available budget. Therefore, both bids were rejected. The Transit Authority will hire a consultant to review the plans and specifications and if necessary make changes so that the project will fit the budget. MART will be meeting with the Board of Selectmen to discuss the project. Discussion followed on the possible reasons behind the bids, the type of bids and if there was any feedback from the bidders on why the bids were so high.

c. MassDOT 3C

S. Bradbury provided an update on a few of the regions TIP projects.

B. Harris indicated that staff is working to complete work under the current work program tasks. This includes the traffic count program that is moving along with reduced staff.

P. Bertram asked about the MPO's decision related to the MJTC's recommendation last month regarding the Transit TIP Amendment #6 and the need for further clarification. B. Harris indicated that the MPO discussed this Amendment and the changes between the draft and the MART comment that was submitted. The MPO Chair stated that the MPO does take the MJTC recommendation very seriously and that it is important that there be communication between agencies to avoid confusion in the amendment process. The MPO Chair also indicated that although the MJTC's recommendation is important and valid, he believes the MPO can support the amendment without another comment period. The MPO then endorsed the TIP Amendment. S. Bradbury provided additional information on the Amendment and the reasoning behind the MPO's decision to support it and endorse.

IX. Administrative Matters

- *Next MJTC Meeting Location*

The next meeting of the MJTC will be on September 12, 2018 at 6:30 p.m. here at the MRPC Offices. On the agenda will be a presentation by MART on Federal Transit Administration funding programs and the TIP.

X. Adjournment

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 7:25 p.m.

DOCUMENTS/EXHIBITS AVAILABLE AT MEETING:

8 8 18 Agenda
7 11 MJTC Minutes
2018 Ballot
Amendment #1 RTP MPO Summary 7 18 2018
Int Parties Draft RTP Amendment #1 7 20 2018
Mont MPO 2016 RTP Amendment #1 7 2018
MPO Subregion Reps Alts 7 18 2018
Subregion Selection Schedule 7 18 2018
Merriam Ave South St Bottleneck Presentation