

# **MONTACHUSETT METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION (MMPO) MEETING**

Held at  
**Montachusett Regional Planning Commission**  
**464 Abbott Avenue, Leominster, MA 01453**

**Minutes July 17, 2019**

B. Pounds representing MassDOT Secretary Stephanie Pollack called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

## **I. Introduction**

### **SIGNATORIES PRESENT**

Bryan Pounds, MassDOT OTP; Arthur Frost, MassDOT Dist. 3; Mary Jo Bohart, Fitchburg; Gordon Robertson, Leominster; Guy Corbosiero, MRPC; Mohammed Khan, MART; Tracy Murphy, Subregion 1; Rosemarie Meissner, Subregion 2; Tim Kilhart, Subregion 3

### **MEMBERS AND GUESTS PRESENT**

Derek Krevat, MassDOT OTP; Mike Bolduc, MassDOT Dist. 2; Sarah Bradbury, MassDOT Dist. 3; Chris Timmel, FHWA; Bonnie Mahoney, MART; Steve Nims, Ashburnham DPW; Travis Brown, Hubbardston DPW; Adam Lamontagne, Templeton; Veronica Kell, Townsend

### **STAFF PRESENT**

Brad Harris; George Snow; Sheri Bean; Brian Doherty; George Kahale;

## **II. Public Comments**

No public comments were made.

## **III. Approval of June 19, 2019 Minutes**

A motion was made to approve the June 19, 2019 MPO Meeting Minutes as presented. The motion was seconded and passed with Guy Corbosiero abstaining.

## **IV. Montachusett FFY 2019-2023 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)**

- *Review and Discussion of Adjustment or Amendment*
- *MPO Action on Adjustment or Amendment*

G. Snow indicated that the MRPC had received an email from MassDOT related to a cost change for a statewide bridge project in FFY 2019. The project is #607127 in Hubbardston – Bridge Replacement of H-24-009, Evergreen Road over Mason Brook. The project is listed in Section 2A – Bridge Program/Off System. The cost of the project is to be reduced from \$3,365,860 to \$2,762,767.90, a reduction of \$603,092.10. These are statewide bridge funds and there is no impact to our target projects or the fiscal constraint aspect of the TIP. Because the cost change is a reduction of approximately 18% by the guidelines in the TIP, this change could trigger an Amendment and therefore require a 21-day public review and comment period. However, the guidelines also state that the MPO will review any changes and decide if an Amendment or Adjustment to the TIP is appropriate. Because the change request does not impact any other TIP project or fiscal constraint, the staff feels that an Adjustment could be done for this project.

The MPO then discussed the project, its projected advertisement date and the merits of an Adjustment versus an Amendment.

A motion was made to approve an Adjustment to the FFY 2019 Element of the FFY 2019-2023 TIP. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

**V. Montachusett 2020 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)**

- *Presentation and Review of Draft RTP*
- *Review and Discussion of Comments Received on Draft RTP*
- *MPO Action to Endorse Montachusett 2020 RTP*

S. Bean referenced a presentation and handout that reviewed the comments received on the draft RTP as well as the responses developed. Starting with the MassDOT comment letter each comment was discussed along with the response to correct or clarify the RTP. Additionally, comments were received from MassDOT's Statewide Bike and Ped Coordinator and the general public that were incorporated into the final RTP. Information and comments that were provided at the two RTP presentation meetings were discussed.

B. Pounds asked how the project scoring used to prioritize TIP projects incorporates equity into the process and if there is a mapping component to the equity review process that identifies the various Environmental Justice populations. B. Harris indicated that within the Transportation Evaluation Criteria (TEC), there are questions specifically related to possible impacts to EJ populations. The updated mapping of these populations done for the RTP will improve our ability to assess potential impacts either positive or negative. The mapping component of this review gives us a clearer picture as to where these populations are and what projects need further review. However, most of the projects that are identified are considered "operating and maintenance" of existing facilities and not new construction.

B. Pounds also asked about a prior survey conducted for the RTP and whether the feedback received is reflected in the future funding scenarios developed for the RTP. B. Harris indicated that yes, the information from the survey helped us to develop funding levels for the scenarios. In addition, a lookback was conducted on prior projects in order to see what the historical program breakdowns were and how we will need to monitor future allocations in order to be in line with the survey results and the RTP scenarios.

A motion was made to endorse the 2020 Montachusett RTP based upon the comments provided being incorporated into the final RTP. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

B. Harris then informed the MPO that an endorsement was needed related to the Global Warming Solutions Act (GWSA) for the Commonwealth. He indicated that an endorsement was done in May during the TIP process. However, since then MassDOT has sent us some updates related to references in the certification. Therefore, we need to reaffirm that certification of the GWSA and vote to endorse the updated certification.

The updated GWSA certification was endorsed as part of the RTP vote.

**VI. Air Quality Memorandum of Understanding - Draft**

- *Review and Discussion of Draft MOU and Timeline for Endorsement*

- *MPO Action Related to Draft MOU*

B. Doherty referred members to a handout related to an Air Quality MOU between MassDOT, the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection, the MPO's and the RTA's. It outlines roles and responsibilities related to air quality planning and coordination. The MOU needs to be endorsed by all before the end of the year. It is being presented to the MPO today so that a decision can be made whether to endorse the MOU today or bring it back before the MPO at the next meeting.

D. Krevat indicated that all MPO's are being asked to endorse this MOU as well as the RTA's in the state. MassDOT will sign on behalf of the MPO's. MassDOT is comfortable if the MPO wishes to endorse today or to delay it. The MOU has been reviewed already by the parties involved and comments have been incorporated.

A motion was made to endorse the Conduct of Air Quality Planning and Coordination for Transportation Conformity. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

## **VII. Updates**

- *MassDOT Highway Division*

M. Bolduc from MassDOT District 2 indicated that the Athol bridge replacement of Washington Ave over Athol Pond Outlet was advertised in March and awarded to New England Infrastructure in June.

A. Frost of MassDOT District 3 stated Clinton Route 110 (High Street) was advertised on June 15<sup>th</sup> with an opening scheduled for August 6<sup>th</sup>; Hubbardston, project no. 607848 resurfacing is due to be advertised on June 22<sup>nd</sup> and bid opening on August 20<sup>th</sup>; Westminster no. 607446 Route 2A at Route 140 intersection was advertised in December and was awarded to PJ Albert; Townsend bridge replacement no. 608259 is at PS&E with an advertise date of August 17<sup>th</sup>; Hubbardston - Evergreen Road over Mason Brook, which was just voted on by the MPO, with an advertise date of September 14<sup>th</sup>; and Lancaster/Harvard/Littleton, resurfacing & related work on Route 2 was advertised in December 8<sup>th</sup> and awarded to PJ Keating is pending. Also, the Fitchburg/Leominster Twin Cities Rail Trail PS&E was received and is to be advertise on September 14<sup>th</sup>.

A question was asked about the status of Gardner Road in Hubbardston. A. Frost indicated that it was advertised on June 22<sup>nd</sup> and a bid opening is expected on August 20<sup>th</sup>.

- *Transit*

M. Khan indicated that in terms of demand responsive service, MART is number two in the state in the number of total trip provided. Pioneer Valley is number one. G. Kahale mentioned that the Ayer parking garage is well under way. A ground breaking was held in May. The project is scheduled for completion by December. The MRPC is also completing a review of On Time Performance Measures for MART.

B. Mahoney stated that they have adjusted the Devens routes based upon discussions with Devens. MART also received two new buses. MART is also leading a joint procurement purchase with 13 other RTA's that we will hopefully hear about in late July.

- *Montachusett Regional Planning Commission (MRPC)*

G. Corbosiero referred to a handout related to the MRPC status report. He stated that the Secretary of the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EOEEA), Kathleen A. Theoharides, will visit MRPC Offices Friday, July 19th at 2:15 p.m. for a Roundtable Discussion on Governor Baker's Legislative Proposal (Senate Bill 10) to provide for Climate Change Adaptation Infrastructure Investments and the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Program. Recently, several MRPC communities received an MVP grant award: Athol, Devens, Fitchburg, Gardner, Lancaster, Royalston, Shirley, and Templeton.

MRPC received a draft two-year contract in the amount of \$104,039 from the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources (DOER) Affordable Access Regional Coordination Program (AARC) to increase energy literacy and provide low and moderate-income homeowners, affordable housing developers, landlords and tenants with clean energy technology and energy efficiency education. DOER anticipates forwarding a final two-year contract to MRPC in August.

- *Montachusett Joint Transportation Committee (MJTC)*

B. Harris stated that the MJTC met on July 10<sup>th</sup>. Unfortunately, there was no quorum so the election of officers was again postponed until the next meeting. The slate remains the same as the current officers – Jon Wyman of Westminster as Chair; Paula Bertram of Lunenburg as Vice Chair; and Doug Walsh of Athol as Secretary. Floor nominations will also be accepted at the next meeting.

The July MJTC meeting also served as a public meeting presentation for the draft 2020 RTP. The map journal version of the RTP was reviewed and discussed.

The MJTC also decided to cancel the August 14<sup>th</sup> meeting unless there is a major item that needs to be discussed. The Next MJTC meeting will therefore be on September 11th at 6:30 pm here at the MRPC Offices.

#### **VIII. Administrative Matters**

- *Next MPO Meeting*

B. Harris indicated that the next MPO meeting is scheduled August 21st at 1:00 PM in MRPC offices. There are currently no pressing issues for the MPO so if it is decided to cancel in August, the next meeting would then be on September 18<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 p.m.

The MPO decided to not meet in August unless some issue comes up. Therefore the next meeting will be in September.

#### **IX. Adjournment**

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 1:57 p.m.

#### **DOCUMENT/EXHIBITS PRESENTED AT MEETING**

MPO 7 17 2019 Agenda REVISED

MPO 6 19 19 Minutes

FFY 2019 Highway Amend Adjust #4 Summary 7 17 2019

Montachusett - RTP Comment Letter

RTP Comments Presentation

RTP Executive Summary JULY MTGS

Air Quality Planning MOU - 6-20-19 (DRAFT)

Invitation to EOEEA Listening Session at MRPC Friday July 19