

Minutes
of the
Transportation Policy Committee
Lubbock Metropolitan Planning Organization
May 19, 2009

The meeting of the Transportation Policy Committee of the Lubbock Metropolitan Planning Organization was held in Room 103 at 1625 13th Street, at 8:30 a.m. on May 19, 2009.

Required notices were given to the members of the Committee and the public. The following Transportation Policy Committee members were present:

John Leonard, City Council, City of Lubbock
Patti Jones, Commissioner, Lubbock County
Tom Martin, Mayor, City of Lubbock
Jim Gilbreath, City Council, City of Lubbock
L.C. Childers, Mayor, City of Wolfforth
Lee Ann Dumbauld, City Manager, City of Lubbock
Doug Eichorst, District Engineer – TxDOT Lubbock
John Wilson, General Manager, Citibus

Visitors/Staff: David Jones, Lubbock MPO
Darrell Westmoreland, Lubbock MPO
Tera Davis, Lubbock MPO
Diane Lann, TxDOT - Austin
Steve Warren, Director of Transportation Planning & Development, TxDOT-Lubbock
Bryan Wilson, TxDOT - Lubbock
Larry Hertel, City of Lubbock
Randy Henson, City of Lubbock
Marsha Reed, City of Lubbock
James Loomis, City of Lubbock
Jo Stone, Golden Gazette
Norma Ritz-Johnson, Lubbock Chamber of Commerce

Call to Order.

Mr. Leonard called the meeting to order at 8:31 a.m.

The Committee moved to the next item.

Acknowledgement of Quorum by Chairman.

Mr. Leonard acknowledged a quorum of the Transportation Policy Committee.

The Committee moved to the next item.

Public Comment Opportunity / Acknowledgment of Guests

Mr. Leonard asked for any comment from the public. No comment was made.

The Committee moved to the next item.

Approval of the March 17, 2009 minutes of the Transportation Policy Committee Meeting.

Mr. Leonard asked for any corrections to the minutes. No corrections were made.

Patti Jones made a motion to approve the March 17, 2009 minutes of the Transportation Policy Committee Meeting. John Wilson seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

The Committee moved to the next item.

Presentation, discussion and possible action on the FY 2009/10 budget for the Lubbock MPO

Mr. Jones presented the proposed budget to the Transportation Policy Committee. He stated that the staff had prepared a frugal budget. Mr. Jones pointed out that the available revenue to program was \$249,113 less than last year as the carryover money was programmed and spent. After the budget is approved a draft Unified Planning Work Program will be presented to the Transportation Advisory Committee in June and the UPWP will then be presented to the TPC for approval.

Mr. Jones went over the summary of changes, which included a three percent merit increase for all staff salaries and an increase in the payroll benefits. Ms. Dumbauld asked if the increased included the new TMRS amount and Mr. Jones verified that it did.

Mr. Jones explained there would be approximately \$146,000 left to program after all budget expenses. Mr. Leonard asked for any discussion regarding the budget. Ms. Jones asked if there would be any contingency funding left from that \$146,328. Mr. Jones stated that a contingency amount would be in the proposed draft UPWP to the TAC.

Mr. Martin verified that the previous carryover amount included the \$241,000 for the Outer Loop Study. Ms. Davis stated that it did. Mr. Martin asked if any of the expenses for the next budget year included part of the census. Mr. Jones stated that the census was not budgeted as the numbers we used would not be available for two to three years.

Patti Jones made motion to approve the FY 2009/10 budget as presented. John Wilson seconded and the motion passed unanimously

The Committee moved to the next item.

Discussion and possible action on Senate Bill 855.

Mr. Jones stated that Proponents of this bill continue to say it is likely to pass and a hearing has been scheduled. Mr. Jones said all of the MPOs were asked to send letters of support. It would allow Commissioners' Courts to hold an election for up to a ten cent gas tax. The money would be used to build road projects. Mr. Jones said the President of TEMPO submitted a sample letter that could be rewritten to send to Mr. Delwin Jones and Mr. Carl Isett. Mr. Jones asked for discussion on the pros and cons of sending these letters.

Mr. Leonard asked for any questions. Mr. Martin said that the fact sheet says the projects must be in the Long Term Plan and wondered who, under this bill makes the decisions regarding construction of the projects. Mr. Jones said that the TPC could decide but the ultimate decision would be with the Commissioner's Court. He said they could choose to call an election themselves or could appoint a special committee.

Ms. Jones said they would know more as it moves forward but that the money would be designated to specific projects in the long term plan. She said that if an election is held and it passes, the money would cease as soon as the project funding was complete. Mr. Martin said the bill will “sunset” in 2019 and said that most jurisdictions issue bonds for twenty years at a time and wondered if the bonded indebtedness had to be paid by 2019 or the authority to issue new debt and hold new elections expires in 2019. Mr. Jones thought the authority would expire in 2019.

Mr. Gilbreath said that it seems that in our plan most of the projects are within the City as opposed to within the County. He wondered how you reconcile that. It is not a conflict as some of the Commissioners live in the City. Ms. Jones said it would probably be an issue when you have 85% of the State’s population that live within these 25 MPOs. She said as far as Lubbock County, they are charged with holding the election and will still be involved in the process of selecting the projects and she didn’t know if they would form another committee or reply on the TPC to identify projects that would be presented to the voters. She felt that was an area that was kind of grey.

Mr. Gilbreath asked if it would affect other towns in the area. Mr. Jones said it would cover the MPO boundary area. Mr. Martin stated that he felt the MPO needed to write a letter of support for the resolution and the decision would then be in the hands of the voters. Ms. Jones agreed.

Tom Martin made motion to send a letter of support for Senate Bill 855. Jim Gilbreath seconded and the motion passed unanimously

The Committee moved to the next item.

REPORTS

- A. **TxDOT**
 - **Status of Phase IV of Marsha Sharp Freeway**
- B. **Cities and Counties**
 - **City of Lubbock – Status of the Northwest Passage projects**
- C. **Director’s**
 - **Additional public comment letters**
 - **Status of Federal Rescissions**
 - **Status of ARRA Projects**
 - **Chamber/Expo update**
 - **Census 2010**
 - **Ports-to-Plains Announcement**
 - **TxDOT Work Place Survey**
 - **Pending Legislation**

TxDOT

Mr. Eichorst stated that Phase IV of the Marsha Sharp Freeway is no longer scheduled for a July letting according to a letter that was distributed to all the MPO directors by Amadeo Saenz. He said there was concern about bonding and other issues. He said the Commission had not met this month and he believes they are going to review various options to be able to pay debt service. Mr. Eichorst said that those projects that were already let with Prop 14 are fully funded, but the ones that have not yet let will be delayed. Mr. Eichorst said as far as they are concerned, TxDOT is moving forward. Mr. Eichorst said they are in good shape with the Northwest Passage projects.

Mr. Martin asked when the letting date for the Northwest Passage is. Mr. Warren said that it is scheduled for the first week in June. He said the West Loop is scheduled to let in January. Mr. Leonard said he knew that the Mayor sent a letter to all of the representatives and the lieutenant Governor and that he sent letters on behalf of the MPO as well, referencing that this is the third time that we are basically losing funding for this project and there is a freeway to nowhere being built.

City of Lubbock

Ms. Reed said that on Northwest Passage, the Erskine and Slide project, Slide north of the Loop they are still looking at six months ahead on construction time and hopefully they will have that wrapped up by the end of this year or early next year. She said Slide south of the Loop from 4th to the Loop is under construction now. She said hopefully the project will finish in a timely fashion. She said the City of Lubbock is waiting for the agreement to come back from TxDOT. She said the Council has signed and approved the agreement for the bridges on Northwest Passage and as soon as the agreement comes back they will get a check to Mr. Warren for \$13 million dollars to get that underway for the June letting.

Ms. Reed said that the 50th Street widening started this week. She said on the Gateway projects they have the five big design projects. She said everything is going well. They have had some alignment issues on Milwaukee and have worked with the Council on that. It has delayed the project a little. She said there are some serious right-of-way issues on North Ash that they are trying to work through. She said they are still hopeful to have the Indiana widening project and the Quaker and 114th Street widening projects out for bid late this year. She said the design is still on track and should be coming in an October or November time frame.

Ms. Reed said there is another meeting tomorrow night with property owners for the 34th and University project. They expect to put it out to bid next month. She said she just wanted to let the group know that they did submit the Northwest Passage bridge interchange at Quaker/Erskine/Parkway for submittal in the reauthorization at the federal level. She said that although they requested \$29.5 million dollars, which was the entire project, Congressman Neugebauer has cut that to \$15 million but it did make the top of his list. She said if it does make it into the bill they will be around \$14 million short to complete that project.

Director's

Mr. Jones stated that we still face two additional rescissions. The first one will require Texas to give up \$272 million dollars and the second, still listed in SAFETEA-LU, for \$785 million. Mr. Saenz sent out a letter talking about TxDOT's cash flow crisis. He said this could affect lettings over the next few months.

Mr. Jones said that during the weekly conference call, John Barton said that TxDOT will meet the 50% required obligation on 785.5 million in projects within the 120 day window for stimulus projects. Bids are coming in 20% less on maintenance projects and 25 to 30% under new construction projects.

Mr. Jones said the Business Expo was a hit. Mr. Jones sent out a special thanks to Karen Peoples who gave the MPO pens, sticky notes and books to hand out to the people who visited our booth. Mr. Jones felt the experience was worthwhile. Attendance at the show was recorded at 7,500 people.

Mr. Jones said that the Census 2010 has begun in earnest. Mr. Jones said that they have already hired 74,000 temporary employees and will hire up to about 1.4 million temps to conduct the census.

Mr. Jones said that Ports to Plains had a big announcement last week and asked the Mayor to speak about it. Mr. Martin said Ports to Plains began eleven years ago as a four lane divided highway project from Laredo to Denver through West Texas. He said that as time has gone by they found a need to expand the scope of Ports-to-Plains. He said four years ago they added a rail component where they are advocating for north/south rail connections along this route. Mr. Martin said three years ago they were approached by two other highway consortiums, one being the Heartland Express that basically would carry our corridor as a four lane divided highway north from Denver to Rapid City, South Dakota and the Theodore Roosevelt expressway which carried the corridor from Rapid City north to the Canadian border. He said they have officially worked with the two groups and they have joined the Ports to Plains coalition.

Mr. Martin said the logical extension is over time they will built the four lane divided north/south highway all the way from the Canadian border to the Mexican border. He said about two years ago, with a big push for alternative energy and the development of the wind power business, they realized that if you take a map of this entire highway corridor from Mexico to Canada and overlay it with the areas of the

highest wind power potential in the United States, they are the same route. He said it makes it more imperative that we develop a four lane divided highway to move all the wind towers, turbines, blades and all of the associated things with developing wind power. Mr. Martin said the latest iteration of Ports to Plains has been the interest of provinces in Canada. The provinces are the same as our states. Mr. Martin said they already have a big trade relationship with the United States and the province of Alberta was the first to put their money up and say they want to be a part of the Ports to Plains coalition. Mr. Martin said they went up last week and on Tuesday they met with the Premiere who signed the documents and has put up the money and the province of Alberta has officially joined the Ports to Plains coalition. Mr. Martin said they expect this summer the province of Saskatchewan, which is east of Alberta, will also join. Mr. Martin said they hope to continue to get support from border to border...

Mr. Jones said that TxDOT will be starting their work place survey which is done every four to five years. This information becomes input in the Traffic Demand Model.

Mr. Jones went over pending legislation.

Hold an executive session in accordance with V.T.C.A. Government Code, Section 551.074(a)(1), to discuss personnel matters.

The Transportation Policy Committee adjourned into Executive Session at 9:22 a.m...

Reconvene to discuss and take any action concerning Professional Services Agreement with David Jones, for management and other executive services for the Lubbock Metropolitan Planning Organization

The Transportation Policy Committee reconvened at 9:31 a.m.

Tom Martin made motion to amend the Professional Services Agreement with the Executive Director to reflect an evaluation process to be held once a year in conjunction with the City of Lubbock's evaluation procedures rather than two times yearly. L. C. Childers seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Meeting Adjourned.

The meeting of the Transportation Policy Committee adjourned at 9:33 a.m.