

NIRPC Executive Board Meeting
NIRPC/Forum Building, Portage, IN
March 19, 2015

Minutes

Chairwoman Blair Milo called the Executive Board meeting to order at 9:10 a.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance and a brief stretch session.

Executive Board Members present included Roosevelt Allen, Jr., Dave Decker, Don Ensign, Michael Griffin, Blair Milo, Rich Murphy, Bob Schaefer, Greg Stinson and Jim Ton.

Other Commissioners present included Geof Benson, Kevin Breitzke, Bob Carnahan, Jeff Dekker, Stan Dobosz, Karen Freeman-Wilson, Stan Dobosz, Roger Miller, Lori Reno, Joe Simonetto and George Topoll.

Others present included Rick Powers, Mike Noland, John Parsons, Meredith Perks, Joe Crnkovich, Rebecca Holwerda, Rick Heimann, Ron Kurmis, George Rogge, Ray Dumbrys, Deb Backhus, David Wright, Renae Jackson, Lorelei Werner, Matt Deitchley, Christopher Murphy, Keith Benman, and Carole Carlson.

Staff present included Ty Warner, Angie Hayes, Allen Hammond, Mitch Barloga, Belinda Petroskey, Jody Melton, Jack Eskin, Sarah Geinosky, Stephen Sostaric, Scott Weber, Gabrielle Biciunas and Mary Thorne.

Appointments to the Commission: Ty Warner announced the appointments of Don Samburg by the Town of Winfield, Jeremy Rivas by the Porter County Council, Patty Arnett by the Town of Kingsford Heights, and the reappointment of Tom Schmitt by the Town of Schererville to the NIRPC Commission.

Approval of Minutes: The minutes of the January 15, 2015 meeting were approved on a motion by Greg Stinson and a second by Dave Decker.

Presentation: Ty Warner introduced Mike Noland, NICTD General Manager, who gave a report on the Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District (NICTD) and its 20 year plan. NICTD just started the Sunrise Express, which is express service from South Bend to Chicago. The South Shore commuter railroad and city of Gary are working on plans to build a modern, high-level boarding platform for the Miller stop to cut trip times. Improvements will also be done to the station at Ogden Dunes. The high-level boarding platforms will shave as much as three minutes off a train stop and provide better access for riders with disabilities. Mike Noland said some local source of funding will have to be found in order to make its 20-year strategic business plan a reality. That plan calls for \$183 million in market expansion projects and \$604 million in main line improvements. The West Lake Corridor to Dyer is in the draft EIS phase. NICTD is looking for a New Starts grant from Indiana to provide the 50% match for funding. A 2:1 return on investment is projected. The interconnectivity to Chicago is vital to economic growth.

Cutting travel times into and out of Chicago will keep our Millennials here. Federal funding is moving away from engineering and gearing toward shovel-ready projects. Brief discussion took place.

Report of the Chair:

Blair Milo reported that more work on the committee structure was accomplished. A draft graphic of the committee structure was described. Three committees provide assistance to the Commission under overall function of the Council of Governments: the Legislative Committee, the Finance & Personnel Committee and the Local Government Advisory Committee. Under the Metropolitan Planning Organization role, projects would originate in the Transportation Finance Committee and then flow to the six topical committees (Environmental Management Policy Committee; Ped, Pedal & Paddle Committee; Land Use Committee; Rail Vision/Freight; Transit Operators Roundtable and the Surface Transportation Committee) for recommendation to the Technical Planning Committee which will be reformulated from the Transportation Policy Committee and Pathway to 2040 Implementation Committee for final recommendation to the NIRPC Commission for adoption. The Outreach Committee is born of the Public Participation Plan and works alongside the process of the MPO committees to ensure accountability and transparency. It was noted that the economic development element of planning is done through the Northwest Indiana Economic Development District. More information will follow. Gary Evers added that INDOT has totally overhauled their system of delivery of projects in the last 12 months. He is hopeful that this structure will give transparency and he looks forward to the Commission helping making these funding decisions. Blair Milo asked for feedback and comments. The committee structure will be adopted at the next full Commission meeting in May.

Report of the Executive Director:

- NARC Conference: Ty Warner reported on the NARC Conference. Discussion in DC focused on the highway trust fund and how to fund it. Everyone felt that a tax is needed, 38 technically feasible solutions were identified but Congressional representatives are hesitant to be connected with raising or instituting a new tax.

Bob Shaefer added that less money from the feds and state will be forthcoming. Ray LaHood's message was to raise the gas tax, which was last increased in 1993. Jay Williams indicated they are increasing the budget by \$20 million and updating CEDS guidelines. Bob Schaefer will be attending the National Association of Workforce Boards in a couple of weeks.

Blair Milo said there was good discussion with the legislators and it is important we represent some of the other concerns about tax increases and constituent feedback on the fact that the highway trust funds have gone towards decorative pieces in the federal highway system and creating some of the museums on transportation initiatives throughout history. Some feel the money should be used for highways appropriately first before trying to raise more money. However, even without those projects it is still not enough to fund infrastructure projects throughout the U.S. Other options discussed were user fees, toll roads, vehicle mileage traveled and how it might be captured. Roosevelt Allen commented that Indiana is a donor state, contributing more money than we get back, and that needs to change.

- Ty Warner reported that there was great participation at Purdue "Road School," broadened as the Purdue Transportation Conference, with good sessions provided by Kathy Luther, Mitch Barloga,

Sarah Geinosky and Gabrielle Biciunas. Blair Milo was a keynote presenter, touting NIRPC's 2040 Plan as an example of exemplary implementation.

- NIRPC met on the build out plan and the timetable was revised and we are in a holding pattern.
- The draft update of the 2040 Plan is out for public comment. The Executive Board will meet in April and the update of the 2040 Plan will be up for adoption at a meeting of the full Commission in May.
- Watch your inboxes for information on a local food study summit on April 24.
- Ty Warner presented Allen Hammond with a certificate of appreciation for his 10 years of service to NIRPC.

Finance & Personnel Committee: Committee Chair Roosevelt Allen, Jr. reported that the committee met this morning and received various information, updates and reports. There were no adverse issues. Year-end reports were completed and submitted to the State. Two contracts are being recommended to the Executive Board for approval.

- The annual contract with the Kankakee River Basin Commission. On a motion by Jim Ton and a second by Don Ensign the contract with the Kankakee River Basin Commission was approved by the Board.
- The agreement between NIRPC and South Shore Clean Cities for professional education and training was approved by the Board on a motion by Greg Stinson and a second by Dave Decker.

Environmental Management Policy Committee: Committee Chairman Geof Benson said under consent agenda, the minutes were available in the materials.

Transportation Policy Committee:

- Vice Chairman Stan Dobosz reported that the committee met on March 17 and heard a presentation from Rick Heimann, Director of the Port of Indiana at Burns Harbor and its role as an economic engine for the region.
- The draft 2040 CRP Update Companion is now out for public review until April 10. The draft and schedule of public meetings are on the NIRPC website.
- Belinda Petroskey described Resolution 15-07, Amendment #34 to the FY 2014-2017 Transportation Improvement Program for transit projects for NICTD and East Chicago. On a motion by Dave Decker and a second by Roosevelt Allen, Jr., Resolution 15-07 was adopted by the Executive Board.
- Gary Evers described Resolution 15-08, Amendment #33 to the FY 2014-2017 Transportation Improvement Program for bridge painting and bridge maintenance INDOT projects. On a motion by Roosevelt Allen, Jr. and a second by Dave Decker, Resolution 15-08 was adopted by the Executive Board.
- Gary Evers described Resolution 15-09, Amendment #35 to the FY 2014-2017 Transportation Improvement Program for existing project divisions for Munster and Valparaiso and new projects or phases for Chesterton, Porter County and Michigan City. On a motion by Jim Ton and a second by Bob Schaefer, Resolution 15-09 was adopted by the Executive Board.
- Stan Dobosz said the next meeting of the Transportation Policy Committee will be at 9:00 a.m. on Tuesday, April 14, 2015.

Indiana Department of Transportation: Rick Powers said efforts are now going into pothole repairs. INDOT is purchasing a portable hot plant which will allow the use of hot mix in the winter. The copper wire thieves were apprehended by Indiana State Police. Mr. Powers introduced Matt Deitchley, new Director of Communications for the Northwest District. Over 146,000 feet of wire has been replaced, mostly on 80-94 and I-65. Proactive measures are being set in place and no further thefts have been found. Rick Powers said he attended a mayors' roundtable in Gary with a great presentation on Bessie Coleman, the first African-American female pilot, receiving her pilot's license in Europe in 1921.

Northwest Indiana Economic Development District (NWIEDD):

- Roosevelt Allen, Jr. reported that he and Dave Decker attended a meeting in New York last month with the Special Creditors Committee, their financial underwriters and their law firms, but had not been given an opportunity to prepare a final bid on the Indiana Toll Road. It shows, however, how cooperation by local governments is innovative and can be accomplished. He encouraged letters of support for the Lake & LaPorte County venture be sent to the Indiana Finance Authority. IFM Investors of Australia entered into a definitive purchase and sale agreement for the Toll Road with a \$5.72 billion bid on March 11. They have until September to come up with the financing.
- Roosevelt Allen, Jr. reported that there is an opening on their Board for a Porter County elected official. Contact Commissioner Allen or Jody Melton prior to March 25. The date of the next meeting will be announced.

Other Business: No other business was brought before the Executive Board.

Public Comment on Agenda Items:

- Renae Jackson, Everybody Counts, spoke of Everybody Counts' Executive Director's request following the October public transit meeting to meet with NIRPC's Executive Director in the new year.

Announcements: There were no announcements made.

Hearing no other business, on a motion by Dave Decker and a second by Don Ensign, Blair Milo adjourned the meeting at 10:45 a.m.

A Digital MP3 of this meeting is filed. Contact Mary Thorne at the phone or email below should you wish to receive a copy of it. DVD recordings will be available once they are received by NIRPC from the videographer.

For requests for alternate formats, please contact Mary Thorne at NIRPC at (219) 763-6060 extension 131 or at mthorne@nirpc.org. Individuals with hearing impairments may contact us through the Indiana Relay 711 service by calling 711 or (800) 743-3333.

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