

NIRPC Executive Board Meeting  
NIRPC/Forum Building, Portage, IN  
March 20, 2014  
Minutes

Chairman Brian Snedecor called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance and a roll call of the Executive Board members.

Executive Board members present included Nancy Adams, Roosevelt Allen, Jr., Anthony Copeland, Dave Decker, Brian Snedecor, Ed Soliday and Jim Ton.

Other Commissioners present included Kevin Breitzke, Stan Dobosz, Bill Emerson, Jr., Eugene Guernsey, Tom McDermott, Lori Reno, Joe Simonetto, and James Snyder.

Others present included Justin Mount, Robert Alderman, Jim Pinkerton, Ray Dumbrys, Bob Carnahan, Deb Backhus, Val Gomez, David Wright, Christopher Meyers, Angie Cloutier, Ray Chambers, Barb Nicoli, Jim Miller, Teresa Torres, Rudy Velasco, Carole Carlson, and Keith Benman.

Staff present included Steve Strains, Mitch Barloga, Sarah Geinosky, Kevin Garcia, Kelly Wenger, Scott Weber, Kathy Luther, Mary Thorne, and Attorney David Hollenbeck,

**Certificate of Appointment:** Attorney David Hollenbeck announced that Gary Mayor Karen Freeman Wilson has re-appointed herself to the NIRPC Commission.

**Public Comment on Agenda Items:** Teresa Torres of Everybody Counts announced that an event will be held on April 4 at the Genesis Center on current civil rights issues facing public servants today. She said that she would provide further information to Mary Thorne who will send an email to the Commissioners. She also commented that the public should be able to comment on or question any matter that relates to NIRPC, whether or not it is on the agenda.

**Presentation: "Establishment of a Resource Inventory"** – Ray Chambers, District 1 Critical Infrastructure Group, Indiana Department of Homeland Security, Purdue Computer Information Technology Professor Barb Nicoli and Jim Miller, Purdue Graduate Aide presented on their work for disaster management and demonstrated the communication system for Northwest Indiana, using the 2008 flood in Munster to illustrate the resource inventory system, which will eventually go live. Area security issues will be handled by District 1. For more information, contact Barb Nicoli at [bnicolai@purduecal.edu](mailto:bnicolai@purduecal.edu).

**Report on the Executive Session:** Dave Hollenbeck reported that with regard to the consent decree litigation, Judge Simon ordered the parties to meet in an attempt to amicably resolve the issues raised by the plaintiffs. Present at that meeting on March 13 on behalf of NIRPC were Dave Hollenbeck, Brian Snedecor, Blair Milo and Ty Warner. Input was received from Everybody Counts. A preliminary response was given with a full response verbally delivered to the attorney for Everybody Counts on March 17 and written response delivered on March 18. The court had also asked for a joint report on the status of our efforts. David said that both sides felt we were making progress to resolve our differences but that both sides needed additional time and the court granted an extension to March 28.

Steve Strains said action will be taken today on a couple of amendments to the Transportation Improvement Program. A public comment period from March 12 to April 10 for another amendment to the TIP for a NICTD Tier 2 Environmental Impact Statement for the West Lake Corridor extension and for a Triangle transit service grant and one service vehicle between Michigan City, LaPorte and Purdue North Central. The dates and locations of the upcoming public meetings in Munster and in LaPorte County were available for anyone interested.

**Minutes:** The minutes of the March 7, 2014 meeting were approved on a motion by Jim Ton and a second by Roosevelt Allen, Jr.

**Consent Agenda:** The consent agenda for the March 6 minutes of the Environmental Management Policy Committee (EMPC) and February 11 minutes of the Transportation Policy Committee (TPC) were approved on a motion by Jim Ton and a second by Roosevelt Allen, Jr.

**Finance & Personnel Committee:** Jim Ton reported that the committee met this morning. There is one action item. The EMPC approved the use of Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality program for NIRPC. The School City of Hammond has submitted an application for funding for bus heater idle and emissions reduction retrofit of diesel school buses. Their request consists of the installation of equipment on 39 school buses for \$99,338.07. Per recommendation of the Finance & Personnel Committee, Jim Ton moved to approve the agreement for bus heater idle and emission reduction retrofit of diesel school buses for the School City of Hammond; seconded by Roosevelt Allen, Jr. Motion carried.

In response to an inquiry by Tom McDermott regarding the status of the lease agreement for the office, Dave Hollenbeck responded that the attorneys have exchanged drafts and are working together to finalize the agreement.

**Transportation Policy Committee:** Stan Dobosz reported that the committee met on March 18 at the Portage Lakefront Park. The Committee heard presentations from American Structurepoint about the Cline Avenue Bridge Reconstruction project, from Gary Public Transportation Corporation on their expansion into Hammond, and from staff regarding the Transportation Alternatives Program. In addition, there was an amendment to the Transportation Improvement Program, which included the I-65 Added Lanes Expansion and Cline Avenue Bridge Congestion Management Process, which was approved by the Transportation Policy Committee. Action on the 2040 Comprehensive Regional Plan Amendment will be before the Committee in April. For more information about these topics please contact Mitch Barloga.

The first action was the adoption of Resolution 14-09, Amendment #14 to the Fiscal Year 2014-2017 Transportation Improvement Program for INDOT projects. Gary Evers described the projects in the amendment. On a motion by Roosevelt Allen, Jr and a second by Jim Ton, Resolution 14-09 was approved by the Executive Board.

The second action was the adoption of Resolution 14-10, Amendment #15 to the Fiscal Year 2014-2017 Transportation Improvement Program for local projects. Gary Evers described the projects in the amendment. Kevin Breitzke expressed his appreciation for rebuilding the bridge on the Kankakee River (at 625 W) at Marti's Place at Ramsey's Landing. On a motion by Roosevelt Allen, Jr and a second by Nancy Adams, Resolution 14-10 was approved by the Executive Board.

The next meeting of the Transportation Policy Committee is scheduled for 9:00 a.m., Tuesday, April 8th.

**Indiana Department of Transportation:** Bob Alderman reported on the wide-spread damage to the roads by the severe winter weather, adding that INDOT crews from areas south of the NIRPC region were brought in to help fill the potholes. Most of the damage was in Lake and Porter counties, with some damage in LaPorte. Bob Alderman said it will be better once the hot mix plants open.

Bob Alderman thanked Ed Soliday for helping to secure \$200 million during the just ended session of the General Assembly for road projects including the I-65 added capacity project. A public meeting on the Cline Avenue repaving will be held with the casinos, Arcelor-Mittal and other interested parties. Bob Alderman said Rep. Vernon Smith presented a resolution to him recognizing former Gary Mayor Rudy Clay and a portion of US 20 in the City of Gary will be designated as the Rudy Clay Memorial Highway. INDOT is working with Dave Decker and LaPorte County on some safety issues in the City of LaPorte involving SR 2. Jim Ton commended Bob Alderman and INDOT on the tremendous improvement that was made on SR 49 from I-94 south. Bob Alderman thanked Tom McDermott for his comments on social media. Asked by James Snyder about the many lights out on I-94 in Indiana compared to illumination of the interstate in Illinois, Bob Alderman replied that it is due to copper thievery. The access covers at the base of the light poles are too easy to access. This is a safety issue and INDOT is working with the state police to catch and prosecute those thieves.

Brian Snedecor thanked Ed Soliday for his funding efforts in the State House. Ed Soliday said the Governor and the Governor's financial agency approved the budget. While it is difficult to get people to look at data, Ed Soliday commended the MPO Council for its work in letting the legislators know what urban areas needed. The legislators will continue in summer study committee to refine the data and try to drive infrastructure money toward economic and safety contribution. At-grade crossing issues are an agenda item for summer study as well. Ed Soliday said that with the opening of the Panama Canal, there will be more, longer and taller trains, which could bring traffic in Northwest Indiana to a halt at many crossings.

Brian Snedecor stated that the NIRPC Board always wants to be inclusive of our community, our residents and those we represent. If comments are timely, sensitive and not redundant, and the public from our communities need to speak, he will always defer to the Commissioners if they ask that the public have another opportunity to speak before this Board.

On a motion by Jim Ton and a second by Anthony Copeland, Brian Snedecor adjourned the meeting at 10:15 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 [mtborne@nirpc.org](mailto:mtborne@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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