

Minutes of the NIRPC May 17, 2012, Executive Board Meeting

Chairman Geof Benson called the meeting to order. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Self-introductions were made.

Commissioners present were Roosevelt Allen, John Bayler, Geof Benson, Bob Carnahan, Tom Clouser, Anthony Copeland, Stan Dobosz, Karen Freeman-Wilson, Ken Layton, Patrick Margraf, Tom McDermott, Blair Milo, Diane Noll, Bob Schaefer, Greg Stinson, and David Uran.

Staff present included John Swanson, David Hollenbeck, Steve Strains, Belinda Petroskey, Stephen Sostaric, Angie Hayes, Gary Evers, Joe Exl, Mitch Barloga, Sarah Geinosky, Wenya Hou, Bill Brown, Tom VanderWoude, Gabrielle Biciunas, and Kathy Dubie.

Chairman Benson briefly discussed his participation in meetings held throughout the region, including the May 15 Lake County Council meeting to receive public comment on county funding to avert the shutdown of the Regional Bus Authority.

A presentation by Purdue University Calumet Professor Robert Rescot and engineering student Brent Slawnikowski followed. They partnered with the Northwest Indiana Rail Vision to study rail issues in northwest Indiana. Professor Rescot said this study provided an opportunity for students to incorporate classroom learning with real instances. A presentation on one particular rail crossing with multiple roads and tracks was given. Questions and answers followed.

Bob Schaefer and Ken Layton moved and seconded that the minutes be approved. Gary citizen James Nowicki asked that the minutes be corrected regarding his comments regarding Old Hobart Road. The minutes, as amended, were approved.

Environmental Management Policy Committee: Chairman Benson asked for support of Resolution 12-13. If adopted, this resolution would ask IDEM to support the development of a total maximum daily load study (TMDL) of the Deep River-Portage Burns Waterway Watershed. On a motion by Mr. Benson, second by Tom McDermott, the resolution was adopted.

Executive Director Search Committee: Chairman Ken Layton reported that the committee received 14 RFQ's for search firms. Three applicants were interviewed and the committee unanimously agreed to enter into a contract with the Mercer Group for services. The Finance & Personnel Committee has concurred with the selection of the Mercer Group and urges the approval of the executive board. Tom McDermott asked where they are located and was told they have offices in 21 locations. After further discussion, Ken Layton moved for the approval of the contract between NIRPC and the Mercer Group. The motion was seconded by Dave Shafer and approved by a 5 – 1 vote.

Transportation Policy Committee: Chairman Stan Dobosz announced that the 2012 edition of the Greenways and Blueways map are not available. He asked Eman Ibrahim to explain Resolution 12-12 which would adopt the FY 2012-2014 Unified Planning Work Program. She described the program's contents and added that the program must be updated to include new tasks. On a motion by Geof Benson, second by Blair Milo, the resolution was adopted.

Gary Evers explained the amendments proposed to the fiscal year 2012-15 Transportation Improvement Program in Resolution 12-11. If adopted, the resolution would add 4 INDOT projects or phases, 2 local

construction projects or phases for Hobart, and one highway project each for Porter County and Lake County Convention and Visitors Bureaus. On a motion by Ken Layton, second by Roosevelt Allen, the resolution was adopted.

Belinda Petroskey addresses Resolution 12-10, which involves 5310 funding for transit. It includes re-budgeting of funds to allow for fuel allocations. On a motion by Ken Layton, second by Roosevelt Allen, the resolution was adopted.

Land Use Committee: Eman Ibrahim reported that the committee selected the final vision.

Northwest Indiana Economic Development District: Vice-Chairman Roosevelt Allen gave an update. The plans are continuing to move forward. The RFQ for legal services must be approved by the EDA before being advertised. The district currently has \$25,000 in its account.

INDOT: District Deputy Commissioner Robert Alderman congratulated Mayor Anthony Copeland for putting together the Cline Avenue Bridge plan. He stepped up and took the lead. The MLK Bridge project is moving forward. Tom McDermott asked if the money promised for the Cline Avenue Bridge would remain in the region for other projects. Mr. Alderman did not know. Mayor McDermott stated that the money should be used to offset costs of damages which resulted because of the bridge closing situation.

Other Business: John Swanson reported that the next meeting of the Local Government Assistance Advisory Committee will include presentations on the use of propane gas.

Towns & Smaller Cities Council will meet at 9:30 a.m. on May 31 at NIRPC.

Roosevelt Allen suggested the LGAAC and T&SCC look into funding for the E911 funding which must be completed by 2014. There currently is not enough revenue generated in the region.

Bob Schaefer indicated that La Porte County's cable provider is asking for sponsorship to be able to continue to provide the meeting of NIRPC on its cable channel as well as the web.

Public Comment: Bob Carnahan urged all to attend local Memorial Day Services. Jim Nowicki urged the commission to send a letter to the Lake County Council stressing the need for continuation of the transit system by including GPTC as a provider of bus service. Mayors Freeman-Wilson and Copeland offered amendments to the proposed letter.

On a motion by Tom McDermott, second by Roosevelt Allen, the letter to the Lake County Council with the language changes proposed by Mayor Freeman-Wilson and Copeland was approved. The letter, with revisions, will be sent to the Lake County Council immediately.

John Swanson introduced intern Wenya Hou and new staff Sarah Geinosky. Staff was recognized for their work on the Comprehensive Regional Plan, which recently earned NIRPC an award from the Indiana APA.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.