

Transportation Resource & Oversight Committee

Lake & Porter Counties

6100 Southport Road, Portage

March 26, 2019

Meeting Minutes

In attendance were Chairman/Commissioner Jim Biggs, Dean Button (Hammond), Jeff Huet (Schererville), Adam McAlpine (Valparaiso), Commissioner George Topoll (Union Township), Jill Murr (Cedar Lake), Commissioner Kevin Breitzke (Porter County), Dennis Cobb, Shawn Strange, Zac Topoll, Don Oliphant, Jake Dammarell and Christopher Murphy.

NIRPC staff included Charles Bradsky and Candice Eklund.

Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

Jim Biggs called the meeting to order at 9:04 a.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance and self-introductions.

Approval of Minutes

On motion by Dean Button and second by Jill Murr, the February 26, 2019 TROC Lake and Porter meeting minutes were approved as presented.

Introduction of New Chairs

The Committee welcomed Commissioner Jim Biggs as the new Chairman of the TROC Lake and Porter committee. Vice Chair, Kyle Allen, was unable to attend.

FY 19-22 Spending Plan Update

Charles Bradsky presented the revised spending plan, which included the changes from the previous TROC meeting as well as the Technical Planning Committee (TPC) meeting held on March 12, 2019. Charles noted NIRPC received additional funding from INDOT. With the additional funding, the project for the Town of Highland and the City of Hobart will be fully funded, as well as several additional projects were able to be awarded.

Dennis Cobb expressed concern that projects were added to the spending plan without being discussed at a TROC meeting or the TPC meeting on March 12. Dennis noted that a complex selection process was completed for project scoring and felt the adjustments were not transparent and needed to be discussed in an open forum prior to adjusting the spending plan. The Committee asked if a confirmation of the added projects would be discussed at the TPC meeting on April 9, 2019. Charles Bradsky stated projects can be discussed at the meeting on April 9 and during the 30 day public comment period beginning April 1, 2019. Jim Biggs questioned the protocol for projects not voted on at a TROC or TPC meeting, being added to the spending plan by NIRPC leadership. Charles Bradsky pointed out that with the short timeline between the release of additional funds from INDOT and the start of the public comment period, staff added the additional projects.

Dennis Cobb inquired if there was a spending cap on what a community can spend on one project since the cap was removed by NIRPC for this NOFA. The group felt the topical committees should individually decide the spending cap per project. Adam McAlpine inquired if NIRPC distributed funding appropriately and fairly across the communities, regardless of population, to obtain federal aid.

Dean Button questioned the top scoring projects not be being awarded according to the scoring process, but appears lower scoring projects were awarded due to certain funding categories having limited funding. Charles

commented that it is important for the region to show a fully funded, fully constrained TIP or it may become harder for the region to get additional funding in future years.

The City of Lake Station requested additional funding for right-of-way on their intersection improvement project. Charles will add the project to the Complete Streets section of the spending plan and will move the project to the 2025-2030 TIP due to the re-scope of the project.

The projects not chosen in this NOFA will be placed on a 'B' list and should be resubmitted in the next NOFA. Jim Biggs inquired if a policy exists that states how funding is reallocated when a project is removed from the spending plan. If one does not exist, TROC needs to address a written protocol of the process that takes place before a decision to add projects on an individual's decision. Charles did not have an answer but stated that this is a newer process.

Project Requests

- a) The Town of Cedar Lake requested additional funding in FY 19, DES #1601149, for \$40,000 in E85 fuel. The additional funding was requested to provide alternative fuel for police, emergency services and public works vehicles. They have a fuel tank on-site and expended their funding. On motion by Dean Button and second by George Topoll, the committee approved the request for FY 19 CN funding, DES #1601149, of \$40,000 for E85 fuel for the Town of Cedar Lake.

Letting Results Update

The Town of Schererville was awarded \$1,900,695.27 for DES #'s 1173595 and 1382661. NIRPC paid \$1,520,556.22 for CN and \$284,280 for CE.

Other New Business

NIRPC Leadership has requested staff leads reduce the monthly meetings to quarterly meetings for budgetary purposes. Charles suggested bi-monthly meetings in 2019 and move to quarterly meetings in 2020. Additional meetings can be scheduled when necessary. Jim Biggs had concern with NIRPC leadership making the decision on the meeting schedule and not allowing the members to have a voice on the meeting frequency, causing a disconnect between member's and the agency. Jim requested a member of the Full Commission recommend NIRPC take into consideration the issues with no longer holding monthly meetings. George Topoll offered to take the recommendation to the Executive Board meeting on April 18, 2019. Jim recommended the TROC committee hold monthly meetings until Mr. Topoll reports back to the Committee on NIRPC's decision.

The Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP) was presented by Charles Bradsky. The LPA's will be requested to submit their local quarterly reports (for the third quarter) thru the RTIP system, with the exception of Portage, Schererville and Valparaiso. These three communities will submit their reports through the RTIP system in the fourth quarter. Charles will send each of the communities an email stating the system they will use to submit their reports.

Public Comments

The Committee was thankful for Charles Bradsky's efforts in maintaining the spending plan. The Committee also stated appreciation to Jim Biggs for his many contributions to the meeting.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 10:54 a.m.
The next meeting is scheduled for April 23, 2019 at 9:00 a.m.