

Board Meeting Minutes
6th Floor Conference Room, 320 Chestnut Street
Wednesday, October 30, 2019

Members Present

David Piepmeyer, Pender County
Pat Batleman, Town of Leland
Neil Anderson, City of Wilmington
Charlie Rivenbark, City of Wilmington
Jonathan Barfield, Cape Fear Public
Transportation Authority
Mike Allen, Town of Belville
Steve Shuttleworth, Town of Carolina Beach

John Ellen, Town of Kure Beach
Hank Miller, Town of Wrightsville Beach
Frank Williams, Brunswick County
Eulis Willis, Town of Navassa

Others Present

Mike Kozlosky, Executive Director, WMPO
Karen Collette, NCDOT Highway Division 3

1. Call to Order

Chairman Piepmeyer called the meeting to order at 3:01 p.m.

2. Conflict of Interest Statement

Chairman Piepmeyer read the conflict of interest statement and asked if any members had a conflict with any of the items on the meeting agenda. No members reported having a conflict.

3. Approval of Board Members' Excused Absences

Mr. Kozlosky stated that Patricia Kusek has requested to be excused from the meeting and that Hank Miller has advised that he will be delayed.

Mr. Anderson made a motion to excuse the absence of Ms. Kusek. Mr. Williams seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.

4. Approval of the Agenda

Mr. Rivenbark made a motion to approve the agenda as presented, seconded by Mr. Allen, and the motion carried unanimously.

5. Public Comment Period

Andy Koeppel spoke to the MPO Board regarding the Cape Fear Crossing Project. He expressed appreciation to staff for the transcription of his comments given on the same topic at last month's MPO Board meeting. He noted that although he sent a draft of a resolution of support to members of the MPO Board, much uncertainty surrounds the potential restoration of the project. In addition, he has been advised to wait as more information will emerge over the next 12 months. He commented that the e-mail was sent with the best of intentions for the region in mind and expressed appreciation to the MPO Board.

6. Presentation

a. Go Coast Website

Nick Cannon, Transportation Demand Management (TDM)/Go Coast Coordinator, WMPO, gave a presentation on the new Go Coast website. He stated that some information regarding the Go Coast Program currently exists on a single web page of the WMPO's website. However, since the funding was available, a dedicated website was developed with more in-depth content about the program.

Mr. Cannon gave an overview of the Go Coast website, as follows:

- About
 - Go Coast and TDM
 - Go Coast Committee
 - Commuter Friendly Employer
- Biking & Walking
 - Rules of the Road
 - Bicycles
 - Pedestrians
 - Bikes on the Bus and link to Wave Transit
 - Maps/Clubs/Links
 - Cross City Trail
 - River to Sea Bikeway
 - Cape Fear Cyclists
 - Bicycle and Pedestrian Infrastructure Map
 - Island Greenway (Carolina Beach)
- Carpool & Van Pool
 - Share the Ride NC (currently under revision by NCDOT)
 - Wave Vanpool
 - Park & Ride Lots
- Public Transportation
 - Bus Routes (MPO GIS Portal Page also with all stops and time table available)
 - Trip Planner (by bus)
 - Free Downtown Trolley
 - Fares and Passes (link to Wave Transit)
- Projects (alternative transportation projects funded through the WMPO)
- News & Events
- Contact information

In response to an inquiry by Chairman Piepmeyer, Mr. Kozlosky stated that the new website will go live at the beginning of next year.

Vice Chair Batleman expressed an interest in this presentation being given to various organizations in the region such as the North Brunswick Newcomers Club in Leland.

Mr. Williams expressed an interest in analytics and the plan for driving traffic to the website.

Chairman Piepmeyer pointed out that a target date and communication plan are necessary for the success of the campaign.

Mr. Kozlosky stated that in response to past wishes of the MPO Board, staff engages regularly in social media campaigns via Facebook and Twitter, and other social media platforms. He noted that Mr. Cannon posts updates on transportation projects and initiatives three times a week. He added that a communication plan will be shared with the MPO Board prior to the rollout of the new website.

Mr. Williams requested that some of the more important campaigns be promoted via paid advertising on social media.

7. Public Hearing

a. Resolution adopting the 2020-2029 State/WMPO Transportation Improvement Programs

Mr. Kozlosky stated that according to the adopted Public Involvement Plan, the MPO is required to hold a public hearing prior the adoption of the 2020-2029 State/WMPO Transportation Improvement Programs. He reported that the required 30-day public comment period has been held and no comments were received. He requested that the public hearing be held at this time and that the MPO Board consider the resolution.

Chairman Piepmeyer opened the public hearing on the 2020-2029 State/WMPO Transportation Improvement Programs.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Ellen, Mr. Kozlosky stated that the public hearing was advertised in the agenda and that the Public Involvement Plan does not state an advertising requirement.

There being no one present to speak in favor or in opposition, the public hearing was closed.

Mr. Barfield made a motion to approve the 2020-2029 State/WMPO Transportation Improvement Programs. Mr. Rivenbark seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.

8. Consent Agenda

a. Approval of Board Meeting Minutes of September 25, 2019

b. Resolution approving 2018-2027 and 2020-2029 STIP/MPO Transportation Improvement Program Amendment #19-4

c. Resolution authorizing the Chairman to enter into an agreement with the Cape Fear Public Transportation Authority and City of Wilmington for the Wilmington Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization to provide FY 19-20 funding to the Cape Fear Public Transportation Authority for Public Transportation Planning Activities

d. Opening the 30-day Public Comment Period for 2018-2027 and 2020-2029 STIP/MPO Transportation Improvement Program Amendment #19-5

Mr. Ellen made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Vice Chair Batleman seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.

9. Regular Agenda

a. Resolution approving the Go Coast Transportation Demand Management Committee Bylaws

Mr. Kozlosky stated that the Go Coast Committee did not have bylaws previously. He noted that Mr. Cannon worked with the committee to draft the bylaws that are included in the agenda packet. He added that the bylaws were approved by the committee, and that staff requests that the MPO Board approve them as well.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Williams, Mr. Cannon stated that current membership is constructed similarly to the structure in the proposed bylaws; although, not limited to the current membership. He explained that the goal is to have 100% participation by representatives from each of the criteria in the bylaws.

Mr. Williams made a motion to approve the Go Coast Transportation Demand Management Committee Bylaws. Vice-Chair Batleman seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.

10. Discussion

a. Alternative Funding Criteria for Inclusion in Cape Fear Moving Forward 2045

Ms. Lorenzo expressed appreciation for the assistance of the MPO Board members in accommodating presentations on the alternative funding criteria to the boards of each of the member jurisdictions. She noted that only two presentations remain to be completed, plus one repeat presentation. She added that staff expects to complete the presentations and bring the alternative funding sources to the MPO Board for consideration at its November meeting.

Chairman Piepmeyer stated that he has requested feedback from fellow Pender County Commissioners in preparation for the MPO Board's November meeting. He encouraged fellow MPO Board members to do likewise in order to advance the plan.

Ms. Lorenzo stated that staff will bring forward any additional projects that can be funded by alternative sources for consideration at the MPO Board's January meeting.

Mr. Ellen expressed appreciation to Ms. Lorenzo for giving the presentation to the Kure Beach Town Council. He expressed concerns that the Town Council's next meeting is on the evening of November 20th, the same day as the MPO Board meeting.

Mr. Kozlosky stated that feedback from all jurisdictions would be necessary to make a decision on the alternative funding sources on November 20th.

Mr. Ellen responded that he will contact fellow Council members. He commented that the mayor might call a special meeting if the advertising requirements for it can be met.

Chairman Piepmeyer expressed appreciation to Mr. Kozlosky for his presentation to the Pender County Board of Commissioners.

Vice Chair Batleman expressed concerns that the Town Council of Leland will be meeting on November 20th as well. However, she noted that the Transportation Oversight Committee will meet on November 7th and she will be able to provide input from the Town Council in advance of its meeting.

Chairman Piepmeyer requested that members gather at least some informal input from their respective boards prior to the November meeting of the MPO Board.

b. Cape Fear Public Transportation Authority Reduction Strategies/Local Funding

Mr. Kozlosky stated that the Cape Fear Public Transportation Authority has prepared the information included in the agenda packet regarding service reduction strategies and local funding recommendations. He noted that Wave's Board approved a public hearing for the potential service reductions to be held on November 21st as well as additional funding requests of several partners on the MPO Board, as follows:

City of Wilmington	\$250,000
New Hanover County	\$57,000
Brunswick County	\$5,500
Town of Leland	\$9,500

Town of Navassa	\$2,350
Town of Carolina Beach	\$1,800

Albert Eby, Executive Director, Wave Transit, expressed appreciation for support from the MPO Board and member jurisdictions. He stated that about this time last year, Wave was informed of some changes in state funding allocations during the second year of the biannual budget. In addition, NCDOT was unable to minimize impacts from the loss of rural funding from the federal government, for which the region is no longer eligible. He noted that years ago, Wave was able to use the federal allocation as a steady and predictable funding source to support operations. Once the region became a TMA (Transportation Management Area), the MPO was able to flex some funds to transit, which helped support Wave for the last five or six years.

Mr. Eby expressed an interest in working with the MPO to identify a formula or percentage of Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) flexible money for use during the continued absence of a dedicated funding source. He noted that Wave requested assistance from New Hanover County in establishing a dedicated funding source based on opportunities in the North Carolina General Statutes or by voter referendum for a sales tax to fund public transportation. However, the County was not in favor of these options.

Mr. Eby stated that Wave was also impacted by NCDOT's budget challenges this year. He noted that NCDOT cut all transit programs by 8%, the amount that was lost in gas tax revenue. He added that Wave is working with the state legislature to reinstate it. Additionally, Wave is working with the local delegation to identify some programs and sources that would bring funding to the region, possibly for an allocation to the transit authority.

Mr. Eby stated that Wave developed the recommendations to reduce services rather than to eliminate them. He noted that although some routes were eligible for reduction, they were the only service available to communities with many residents who rely on the service. He added that the Federal Transit Authority (FTA) requires Wave to make service available to the entire urbanized area of the Census. The proposed rollbacks would include reducing service from 9:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., and shifting of some Saturday hours to six hours every Saturday. He expressed a desire to restore these services as soon as possible.

Mr. Eby stated that the changes would be impactful, but less so than other recommendations discussed. He noted that New Hanover County has resolved to end its relationship in the inter-local agreement with the City of Wilmington for Wave Transit, effective July 1st 2021. He added that Wave will continue to provide services to the region at least until that time, and will continue to share its plans with the MPO. He anticipated that if nothing changes, the next round of reductions will be fairly drastic and impactful to the community. He expressed an openness to any ideas.

Vice Chair Batleman inquired about other ways to support Wave. Mr. Eby suggested that the MPO Board members might share the importance of public transportation and the information provided today with other elected officials and the community.

Mr. Eby stated that Wave is working with a marketing company to tell its story. He noted that one story is how Wave has built about \$30 million worth of assets in rolling stock and facilities during the last 10 years without incurring any debt. He added that Wave has

worked diligently to obtain grants from outside sources and to keep the impact to the local community and taxpayers at a minimum. However in order for its programs to succeed, Wave needs local funds to match federal and state dollars.

Mr. Eby commented that economic development is very important to Wave. He stated that the project downtown is wrapping up thanks to the help of the MPO. He noted that it created many jobs in the region, from laborers and contractors to engineers. He added that most of Wave's projects are restricted from using regional help, and must be bid nationally. However, facility projects can have geographic preference. Other stories include the ongoing conversion of the Wave fleet to compressed natural gas vehicles, and the evacuation efforts of Wave during Hurricane Florence. He requested that MPO Board members share these stories with elected officials and constituents.

Chairman Piepmeyer requested a summary of marketing points for distribution to the MPO Board, and expressed appreciation to Mr. Eby.

11. Updates

Mr. Kozlosky stated that yesterday evening, he was informed that the MPO's indemnifications and protection language would be included in Senate Bill 419. He noted that he was present this morning in Raleigh when the technical corrections bill passed the House Rules Committee. He added that the bill is calendared to go to the floor today.

Chairman Piepmeyer expressed appreciation to Mr. Kozlosky and the local delegation for their efforts in attempting to restore the indemnifications and protections to the MPO.

Ms. Collette stated that at the conclusion of her retirement party yesterday and during a staff meeting at Division 3, Chief Little announced Chad Kimes as the new Division Engineer, effective this Saturday. She commented that Mr. Kimes is deserving and will do a fantastic job.

Mr. Kozlosky stated that the other updates have been included in the agenda packet.

12. Announcements

a. Bike/Pedestrian Committee Meeting – November 12th

b. The next WMPO Board meeting – November 20th

Mr. Kozlosky pointed out that the MPO Board meeting in November is a week earlier than usual due to the Thanksgiving holiday.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Williams, Mr. Kozlosky stated that the 2020 schedule of MPO Board meetings will be presented at the November 20th meeting. He noted that the following meeting will be held in January. However, it may be necessary to meet in December if an agreement on the alternative funding criteria cannot be reached.

Chairman Piepmeyer stated that a new Chair will be elected in January, and requested that anyone with interest in serving should come forward.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Rivenbark, Chairman Piepmeyer commented that it might be difficult to serve as chairman of the MPO Board and chairman the Pender Board of Commissioners simultaneously, should that becomes possibility.

Mr. Williams expressed appreciation to Ms. Collette for her service to the MPO Board.

Mr. Kozlosky stated that Ms. Collette will be recognized at the next MPO Board meeting since her last day at Division 3 is in December.

Mr. Barfield commented that he has a lengthy history with Ms. Collette. He noted that in junior high school, she was president and he was vice president of the student government.

Ms. Collette attributed her win due to a write-in campaign. Prior to winning, she had not been allowed to run because she did not submit an expense report since no money had been spent. However her mother, who worked at Federal Paper Company, distributed 450 flyers and demonstrated how to do a write-in campaign, which is a mechanism of candidacy in government and history.

13. Adjournment

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:46 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mike Kozlosky
Executive Director
Wilmington Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization

**THE ABOVE MINUTES ARE NOT A VERBATIM RECORD OF THE PROCEEDINGS.
THE ENTIRE PROCEEDINGS ARE RECORDED ON A COMPACT DISC AS PART OF THIS RECORD.**