



MPO Board Meeting Minutes
6th Floor Training Conference Room, 320 Chestnut Street, Wilmington, N.C.
Wednesday, March 30, 2022

Members Present (in-person)

Brenda Bozeman, Town of Leland
John Ellen, Town of Kure Beach
Deb Hays, Cape Fear Public Transportation Authority
Hank Miller, Town of Wrightsville Beach
Frank Williams, Brunswick County
Eulis Willis, Town of Navassa

Others Present (in-person)

Stephanie Ayers, NC Ports Authority
Adrienne Cox, NCDOT
Mike Forte, Brunswick County
Travis Henley, Pender County
Regina Hopkins, WMPO
Scott A. James, WMPO
Jamar Johnson, WMPO
Chad Kimes, NCDOT
Andy Koeppel
Mike Kozlosky, WMPO
Vanessa Lacer, Pender County
Abby Lorenzo, WMPO
Matt Nichols, WMPO General Counsel
Bruce Wortelman

Members Present (remotely)

Mike Allen, Town of Belville
Jonathan Barfield, Jr., New Hanover County
Deb LeCompte, Town of Carolina Beach
Charlie Rivenbark, City of Wilmington

Others Present (remotely)

Veronica Carter, Town of Leland
Joanne Donaghue
Becky Drozd, Catapult
C Hannah
Jennifer Harris
LB Haviland
Bill Kincannon, NCDOT
Marty Little, New Hanover County
Rachel McIntyre, WMPO
Marie Parker, Wave Transit
Amy Passaretti
David R
Nazia Sarder, NCDOT
Athina Williams, Town of Belville

1) Call to Order

Vice Chairman Hank Miller called the meeting to order at 3:05 p.m. MPO Executive Director Mike Kozlosky called the roll, and a quorum was present as follows:

Present: Mike Allen, Jonathan Barfield, Brenda Bozeman, John Ellen, Deb Hays, Deb LeCompte, Hank Miller, Charlie Rivenbark, Frank Williams and Eulis Willis. **Absent:** Neil Anderson, David Piepmeyer and Landon Zimmer.

2) Conflict of Interest Statement

Vice Chairman Miller read the conflict-of-interest statement. He asked if any member has a conflict of interest with any of the items on the meeting agenda. No members reported having a conflict.

3) Approval of Board Members' Excused Absences

Mr. Kozlosky said that Mr. Piepmeyer has requested to be excused from this meeting.

Ms. Hays made a motion to excuse Mr. Piepmeyer from the meeting, seconded by Mr. Ellen, and the motion carried unanimously by roll call as follows:

Ayes: Mike Allen, Jonathan Barfield, Brenda Bozeman, John Ellen, Deb Hays, Deb LeCompte, Hank Miller, Charlie Rivenbark, Frank Williams and Eulis Willis. **Nays:** None. **Absent:** Neil Anderson and Landon Zimmer. **Excused:** David Piepmeyer.

4) Approval of the Agenda

Ms. Bozeman made a motion to approve the agenda as presented, seconded by Mr. Rivenbark.

Mr. Willis made a substitute motion to amend the agenda to add an item. He requested that the Board consider a Resolution supporting the Town of Navassa's application for the North Carolina Emergency Management Transportation Infrastructure Resiliency Fund Grant. Mr. Williams seconded the motion and the substitute motion carried unanimously by roll call as follows:

Ayes: Mike Allen, Jonathan Barfield, Brenda Bozeman, John Ellen, Deb Hays, Deb LeCompte, Hank Miller, Charlie Rivenbark, Frank Williams and Eulis Willis. **Nays:** None. **Absent:** Neil Anderson and Landon Zimmer. **Excused:** David Piepmeyer.

The MPO Board voted to adopt the agenda as amended unanimously by roll call as follows:

Ayes: Mike Allen, Jonathan Barfield, Brenda Bozeman, John Ellen, Deb Hays, Deb LeCompte, Hank Miller, Charlie Rivenbark, Frank Williams and Eulis Willis. **Nays:** None. **Absent:** Neil Anderson and Landon Zimmer. **Excused:** David Piepmeyer.

5) Public Comment Period

Mr. Andy Koeppel, resident of Wilmington, spoke to the MPO Board about bridges and the MPO legislative agenda, which he sent an e-mail about over the weekend. He expressed concerns regarding the Southern Bridge being omitted from the legislative agenda, and only the Cape Fear Memorial Bridge replacement being included as a priority for the region. He asked the Board to amend the legislative agenda to include both bridges.

Ms. Stephanie Ayers, NC State Ports Authority, spoke to the MPO Board about transportation priorities. She pointed out that the state and the Ports have made significant investments in the Wilmington terminal, the channel, removing height restrictions, and developing intermodal rail capabilities. She requested that the Board consider adding to its legislative agenda as transportation infrastructure priorities the last mile between the Port of Wilmington and the Cape Fear Memorial Bridge, which includes South Front Street (U-5729) and Carolina Beach Road (U-5734).

Mr. Bruce Wortelman, resident of Gorman Plantation in New Hanover County, spoke to the MPO Board and gave an update regarding his request for traffic calming devices at the Board's last meeting. He said that the homeowners have followed the Division 3 guidelines and received a petition to collect the signatures required to move forward. He noted that as required, 90% of signatures have been collected and 100% approved the traffic calming devices. He specified that homeowners are asking for funding for a licensed professional engineering firm that he has already identified to perform a traffic study, the installation of calming devices on Hawk Road, and a 25-mph speed limit. He noted that NCDOT will review and approve the scope of the study. He pointed out the differences between Hawk Road and Covil Farm Road:

- Residents of Covil Farm Estates do not enter Covil Farm Road, while those on Hawk Road enter Hawk Road
- Covil Farm Road has bike lanes, while Hawk Road, which is narrower, does not and cannot accommodate them

Mr. Wortelman noted that although the MPO Board has no authority over law enforcement, homeowners have made many calls to them regarding the speed hazard and have requested speed monitoring devices and surveillance to no avail.

6) Presentation

a. 2022 Wilmington Urban Area MPO Compensation Study Results- Becky Drozdz, Catapult

Mr. Kozlosky said that when the MPO was developing its 2022-2026 Strategic Plan, the Board identified a desire and an action step for the MPO to complete a compensation study comparing the WMPO to other organizations as well as the private sector. He noted that the strategic plan was adopted by the Board in January and based on its adoption, the MPO hired Catapult through a member services contract with the City of Wilmington to conduct the compensation study, which is included in the agenda packet.

HR Advisor Becky Drozdz, Catapult, gave a presentation on the analysis and recommendations of the compensation study. She noted that Capital Associated Industries (CAI), Raleigh, and The Employers Association (TEA), Charlotte, merged last year to become Catapult, a member-based organization.

Ms. Drozdz gave an overview of the methodology for the study. She explained that job descriptions were matched rather than job titles. She noted that duties and tasks matching 70% or better were merged for a market average for each of the 10 positions. She added that these market averages were compared to four surveys: a WMPO-sponsored a survey of 11 organizations with similar positions, Catapult's North Carolina Wage and Salary Survey, as well as the Economic Research Institute's and CompAnalyst's employer-reported data sources. She noted that some of the surveys were lacking a comparison for some of the positions, and some of the positions included a scope of multiple industries and organizations. She added that the market average is a high-level view of the "going-rate" for a fully competent employee, not one who started yesterday or a subject matter expert.

Ms. Drozdz said that the next step was to compare the market average with the current midpoint to determine grade recommendations. She noted that given the comparison ratio, eight of the 10 positions are recommended for an upgrade (two of which by more than a single grade jump). The next step was a comparison with annualized salaries to give recommendations for an employee to the proposed mid comparative ratio.

Mr. Barfield pointed out that the Board has had several similar presentations, however the city sets the salaries for the MPO Director and his team. He inquired about encouraging the city to increase pay. He commented that although some may question an increase, staff turnover is expensive as far as training is concerned. Ms. Drozdz responded that it might be beneficial to conduct exit interviews to learn the reasons for the turnover. She pointed out that the summary data from respected sources can be used to communicate the challenge of competing in the market for talent and justifying reclassification of positions, especially those with high turnover.

Discussion was held regarding communicating the data to the city. Vice Chairman Miller commented that the MPO Board Chair should communicate with the city. Mayor Willis inquired if the city has received this presentation. Ms. Hays acknowledged the presence of Mr. Rivenbark, who represents the city.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Rivenbark, Mr. Kozlosky said that the MPO has shared information from this study with the city's HR Department. He commented that the city council took some bold action at its Friday work session, directing the city manager to bring an item back to council regarding

pay raises for city employees. He added that the impact to MPO staff has yet to be determined. Mr. Rivenbark responded that he has every reason to believe that Friday's discussion will carry the day.

Ms. Hays pointed out that Mr. Rivenbark and Mr. Anderson should be included in that discussion.

Ms. Drozd expressed appreciation to the MPO Board.

7) Consent Agenda

- a. Approval of Board Meeting Minutes from February 23, 0222
- b. Resolution approving 2020-2029 STIP/MPO Amendments #22-1 and #22-2
- c. Resolution approving 2020-2029 STIP/MPO Administrative Modification #22-2
- d. Resolution approving the FY 23 Unified Planning Work Program for the Wilmington Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization
- e. Resolution certifying the Wilmington Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization's Transportation Planning Process
- f. Resolution supporting the City of Wilmington's application for the North Carolina Emergency Management's Transportation Infrastructure Resiliency Fund Grant
- g. Resolution supporting Pender County's application for the North Carolina Emergency Management's Transportation Infrastructure Resiliency Fund Grant

Mr. Ellen made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda, Items 7a through 7g. Mr. Williams seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously by roll call as follows:

Ayes: Mike Allen, Jonathan Barfield, Brenda Bozeman, John Ellen, Deb Hays, Deb LeCompte, Hank Miller, Charlie Rivenbark, Frank Williams and Eulis Willis. **Nays:** None. **Absent:** Neil Anderson and Landon Zimmer. **Excused:** David Piepmeyer.

8) Regular Agenda

- a. Resolution approving Amendment #3 to the FY 22 Unified Planning Work Program
MPO Deputy Director Abby Lorenzo explained that Amendment #3 to the FY22 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) is an administrative housekeeping item to redistribute funds where they are most needed for the remainder of the fiscal year to allow staff to make better use of the funds. She noted that this amendment includes 5304 funds, a new funding source of \$100,000 being added to the current work plan through the request of the Federal Transit Authority (FTA), NCDOT Integrated Mobility Division and Wave Transit, for a zero-emissions vehicles transition study for Wave Transit. The Integrated Mobility Division will provide the required 20% local match. She added that the Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) has reviewed and recommends this item for approval.

Mr. Williams made a motion to approve Amendment #3 to the MPO's FY22 UPWP. Ms. Hays seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously by roll call as follows:

Ayes: Mike Allen, Jonathan Barfield, Brenda Bozeman, John Ellen, Deb Hays, Deb LeCompte, Hank Miller, Charlie Rivenbark, Frank Williams and Eulis Willis. **Nays:** None. **Absent:** Neil Anderson and Landon Zimmer. **Excused:** David Piepmeyer.

9) Discussion

- a. 2020-2029 STIP/MPO Transportation Improvement Program Administrative Modifications #22-3
Mr. Kozlosky stated that this administrative modification is for informational purposes only and will be brought back at the Board's next meeting for consideration.

b. Wilmington Multi-modal Transportation Center Phase 1B

Mr. Kozlosky said that this is an ongoing discussion from the Board's last meeting, which revolved around overages associated with the Multi-modal Transportation Center. Following that meeting, MPO staff presented a request to the City of Wilmington for some additional funds and the City Council authorized the city to request additional Surface Transportation Block Grant-Direct Attributable funds. Additionally, the New Hanover County Board of Commissioners have agreed to contribute to the local match for the project as well.

Mr. Kozlosky summarized that as a follow-up from the last meeting, the city and the county have contributed the required local match. He said that staff therefore requests that the MPO Board approve an allocation of Direct Attributable (DA) funding in the amount of \$1,873,469 to allow the MPO to move forward with the renovation and reuse of the building at 525 North 4th Street.

Mr. Barfield made a motion to approve the additional DA funding, seconded by Ms. Hays, and the motion carried unanimously by roll call as follows:

Ayes: Mike Allen, Jonathan Barfield, Brenda Bozeman, John Ellen, Deb Hays, Deb LeCompte, Hank Miller, Charlie Rivenbark, Frank Williams and Eulis Willis. **Nays:** None. **Absent:** Neil Anderson and Landon Zimmer. **Excused:** David Piepmeyer.

c. 2022 Legislative Agenda

Mr. Kozlosky acknowledged that staff was able to remove one of the items from the 2021 Legislative Agenda related to corridor preservation and the Map Act. He noted that language about protections has been included in the adopted state budget. He said that the draft 2022 Legislative Agenda includes transportation funding, project priorities, opposition to the transfer of state road maintenance, limitations on cities' requirements for assuming costs of street improvements related to schools, as well as some language regarding mopeds and electric scooters.

Mr. Kozlosky said that the Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) at its March meeting identified recommendations for modifying the draft agenda as follows:

- i. Transportation Funding: Break out safety as a standalone component reflecting funding for safety and Vision Zero safety improvements on area roadways, etc.
- ii. Transportation Project Priorities: Add South Front Street (today's public comment section also suggested Carolina Beach Road and the Cape Fear Crossing)
- iii. In general, add information to the agenda regarding growth of the area and how it affects new roads, road improvements, and road maintenance

Mr. Kozlosky requested some discussion and feedback on the recommendations and reminded Board Members that no action is required today. He noted that a final draft would be brought back to the Board for consideration at its next meeting.

Mr. Williams expressed support for the safety focus, and things that would support the Ports. He inquired about the duration of the protections adopted as part of the state's budget. Mr. Kozlosky responded that to his knowledge the protections are in perpetuity. Mr. Williams pointed out that legislative action and intentions don't always align.

Mr. Barfield requested to add specific language regarding the Cape Fear Memorial Bridge as a priority for the region under transportation funding. Mr. Kozlosky pointed out that it is listed under transportation priority projects, but it could be added under transportation funding as well.

Mr. Williams pointed out that he nearly missed it because it was not bulleted. Board members concurred and requested that the priority be bulleted.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Willis, Mr. Kozlosky said that the South Front Street project has been in prioritization, and the Transportation Improvements Program a few times. Initially, the project was to be funded in 2021, but its start date was delayed to 2029 with future uncertainty due to the programming challenges of the Department. However, the Ports anticipate that something must be done sooner rather than later. He added that these priorities were determined from an exercise of several months' duration and were confirmed by the strategic plan that the Board adopted in January.

Ms. LeCompte concurred that this needs to be a priority.

In response to an inquiry by Ms. Bozeman, Mr. Kozlosky said that the Ports gets an allocation from the state budget. Ms. Ayers explained that the State Ports Authority is an enterprise agency that generates revenue by moving cargo over its berths. She noted that the Ports use the funding to fund operations. She noted that the Ports is eligible for appropriations from the General Assembly and competes with other state agencies and universities for appropriations from the state. She added that the Ports has been successful in obtaining appropriations for capital expenditures. However, it is not eligible to compete in the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) and does not get funds from NCDOT. She stated that the Ports rely on its planning partners such as the MPO and NCDOT to make investments on inland infrastructure.

Ms. Ayers said that the two routes that she mentioned earlier are the Port's designated truck routes. She noted that 99% of trucks that serve the Port of Wilmington will take the Cape Fear Memorial Bridge to South Front Street and on to Carolina Beach Road to the container terminal.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Forte, Ms. Ayers said that the Ports have no dedicated funding for capital expenditures and salaries are paid by moving cargo revenues. Mr. Williams pointed out that the Port is a major contributor to the local economy and an essential investment to grow the economy and create jobs in this part of the state. He added that improving freight truck infrastructure is a safety concern as well.

In response to an inquiry by Ms. Hays, Mr. Kozlosky said that South Front Street and Carolina Beach have funding and would be added to the list of funded transportation project priorities. He added that Chairman Piepmeyer suggested that the model for funding transportation infrastructure needs to be a top legislative priority and that the MPO Board should hold a breakfast or other event for the local delegation to discuss the Board's priorities. He noted that the funding model could be included in the legislative agenda, and the breakfast would be incumbent on staff.

Mr. Williams pointed out that the funding model would work if there was more money going into it. Mr. Kozlosky said that it could be added to the transportation funding priority.

Ms. Hays inquired about the Southern Bridge. Mr. Kozlosky responded that there was no direction from the Board. Mr. Williams agreed that the Southern Bridge needs to be a long-term priority and would detract focus from the Cape Fear Memorial Bridge, which is the short-term priority, especially considering the reactive transportation funding model with too little money in it.

Ms. LeCompte inquired about the Southern Bridge. Vice Chair Miller said it's south of the Cape Fear Memorial Bridge.

Mr. Barfield said that he is on the NC Clean Transportation Advisory Committee and expressed concerns regarding the impact of clean transportation on gas taxes, which would further diminish transportation funds.

d. 2022 NCAMPO Conference Moderators

Mr. Kozlosky reminded Board members that the 2022 NCAMPO Conference will be held April 20th-22nd at the Wilmington Convention Center. He noted that the program will feature some great speakers from around the state and nation, including a futurist keynote speaker. He encouraged members to attend and inquired about any interest in moderating sessions.

Ms. Lorenzo said that there are five technical breakout sessions, one on Wednesday, April 20th, from 3:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. with the remaining 90-minute sessions on Thursday, April 21st. She noted that moderators would be responsible for introducing presenters during the session and keeping track of time to make sure that the presentations do not go over time.

Mr. Kozlosky said that anyone interested in moderating should e-mail him. He encouraged the Board to attend the conference. He commented that there is a lot of good information and it's here in Wilmington.

e. Resolution Supporting the Town of Navassa's Application for the North Carolina Emergency Management's Transportation Infrastructure Resiliency Fund Grant

Mr. Kozlosky said that a resolution was distributed yesterday afternoon in response to Mayor Willis' request to add an item to the agenda. He requested that the Board consider the item.

Ms. Bozeman made a motion to approve the Resolution supporting the Town of Navassa's grant application, Mr. Williams seconded the motion and it carried unanimously by roll call as follows:

Ayes: Mike Allen, Jonathan Barfield, Brenda Bozeman, John Ellen, Deb Hays, Deb LeCompte, Hank Miller, Charlie Rivenbark, Frank Williams and Eulis Willis. **Nays:** None. **Absent:** Neil Anderson and Landon Zimmer. **Excused:** David Piepmeyer.

Mr. Willis expressed appreciation to the Board.

10) Updates

- a. Wilmington Urban Area MPO**
- b. Cape Fear Public Transportation Authority**
- c. NCDOT Division**
- d. NCDOT Transportation Planning Division**

Mr. Kozlosky said that the updates are included in the agenda packet. He noted that NCDOT would like to give an update on the Board's action at its last meeting regarding exploring all options for the funding of the Cape Fear Memorial Bridge replacement.

Mr. Kimes said that when the Board passed the resolution to consider all options including tolls and previous proposals, NCDOT started meeting and continue to meet weekly, including himself and Mr. Kozlosky. He distributed a list of possible options that NCDOT will explore. He summarized the plan of attack from three approaches:

- 1) Traditional delivery – Review feasibility study and the costs to determine how it would score using today's prioritization based on revenues and costs and evaluating funding through the Infrastructure Bill
- 2) Alternative delivery – Request for Information on innovative solutions
- 3) Conventional toll delivery

Mr. Kimes said that findings would be available for presentation in late summer, in July or August. He then acknowledged the presence of new division planning engineer Adrienne Cox. He noted that Ms. Marks was promoted.

11) Announcements

- a. Wilmington MPO Bike/Pedestrian Committee- April 12th
- b. NC State Ethics Forms Due- April 15th
- c. NC Association of MPOs 2022 Conference- April 20th -22nd

Mr. Kozlosky said the state ethics forms are due on April 18th due to the holiday weekend. He noted that he reached out to those who submitted their state ethics forms already. He reiterated that the NCAMPO Conference will be held at the Wilmington Convention Center downtown, encouraged Board members to attend, and for those interested in moderating to contact him. He added that there will be five mobile tours and an event at Ironclad on Wednesday evening.

Mr. Kozlosky acknowledged the presence of two new MPO staff members: Jamar Johnson, Engineering Associate, and Emma Stogner, Associate Transportation Planner. Mr. Johnson and Ms. Stogner gave some details about their prior professional experience and expressed appreciation to the Board. Mr. Kozlosky noted that the GIS Analyst position has been filled but would continue to vacant until May 9th. He noted that the other vacancy is the TDM Program Coordinator and phone interviews are currently underway.

12) Adjournment

Next MPO Board meeting – April 27th, 2022

Vice Chair Miller said that the next Board meeting will be held on April 27th at the Wilmington International Airport Board Room. He noted that Mr. Kozlosky would send instructions about parking.

Mr. Kozlosky added that the meeting will start at 2:00 p.m. with a tour of the new terminal and improved facilities. He noted that the business meeting would start at 3:00 p.m. or immediately following the tour.

Mr. Williams said that the airport looks very different. Vice Chair Miller said he would be absent on April 27th. He requested that his absence be excused.

Mr. Kozlosky added that the City of Wilmington will be hosting the League of Municipalities Conference in Wilmington that same week.

Ms. Hays made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Vice Chair Miller, and the motion to adjourn carried unanimously by roll call as follows:

Ayes: Mike Allen, Jonathan Barfield, Brenda Bozeman, John Ellen, Deb Hays, Deb LeCompte, Hank Miller, Charlie Rivenbark, Frank Williams and Eulis Willis. **Nays:** None. **Absent:** Neil Anderson and Landon Zimmer. **Excused:** David Piepmeyer.

The meeting adjourned at 4:10 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 DIGITALLY AS PART OF THIS RECORD.