



MPO Board Meeting Minutes
Wilmington International Airport, 1740 Airport Boulevard, Wilmington, North Carolina
Wednesday, April 27, 2022

Members Present (in-person)

Mike Allen, Town of Belville
Lynn Barbee, Town of Carolina Beach
Jonathan Barfield, Jr., New Hanover County
Brenda Bozeman, Town of Leland
John Ellen, Town of Kure Beach
Deb Hays, Cape Fear Public Transportation Authority
David Piepmeyer, Pender County
Charlie Rivenbark, City of Wilmington
Frank Williams, Brunswick County

Members Present (remotely)

Neil Anderson, City of Wilmington

Others Present (remotely)

Brianna D'Itri, Wave Transit
Regina Hopkins, WMPO
Rachel LaCoe, New Hanover County
Behshad Norowzi, NCDOT
Marie Parker, Wave Transit
Amy Passaretti
Tony Sumpter, NCDOT

Others Present (in-person)

Jeffrey Bourk, Wilmington International Airport
Veronica Carter, Town of Leland
Adrienne Cox, NCDOT
Granseur Dick, Wilmington International Airport
Mike Forte, Brunswick County
Donna Girardot, New Hanover County Airport Authority
Scott A James, WMPO
Jamar Johnson, WMPO
Chad Kimes, NCDOT
Mike Kozlosky, WMPO
Deb LeCompte, Carolina Beach
Abby Lorenzo, WMPO
Caitlin Marks, NCDOT
Bill McDow, WMPO
Carol Stein, WMPO Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee
Emma Stogner, WMPO
Lisa Wurtzbacher, New Hanover County
Steve Zinder, WMPO Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee

1) Call to Order

Chairman David Piepmeyer called the meeting to order at 2:07 p.m. A quorum was not yet present.

7a) Presentation: Proclamation of May as "Bike Month"

MPO Executive Director Mike Kozlosky acknowledged the presence of WMPO Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee Chair Carol Stein and Vice Chair Steve Zinder. Mr. Kozlosky read the proclamation. Ms. Stein and Mr. Zinder expressed appreciation. Ms. Stein pointed out the increased need for bicycle and pedestrian facilities. Mr. Zinder commented that he comes from a bicycle safe community, and although there is work to be done here, and its moving in the right direction.

Mr. Ellen announced that the Tour de Blueberry bike ride will be held on Saturday, June 17th. He noted that participants can sign up online to ride any distance up to 100 kilometers or 62 miles. Mr. Zinder added that the River to Sea bike ride would be held this Saturday.

Mr. Kozlosky called the roll, and a quorum was present as follows:

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

Mr. Ellen made a motion to accept the proclamation, seconded by Mr. Rivenbark and the motion carried unanimously by roll call as follows:

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

2) Tour of the Wilmington International Airport (ILM)

New Hanover County Airport Authority Chair Donna Girardot welcomed the MPO Board to the airport. She noted that the airport facilities have been expanded by 75%. She pointed out that Wilmington International Airport (ILM) is one of the first airports in the country, number two nationally, to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. She noted that much work has been done since June on the airport's business park as well, with the addition of two pharma companies, a hotel, a restaurant, office space, and a convenience store, which facilitates the refueling of rental cars.

ILM Facilities Director Granseur Dick said that Airport Director Jeffrey Bourk would introduce himself after the tour. Mr. Kozlosky expressed appreciation to Ms. Girardot.

The members were provided a tour of the ILM facilities.

Mr. Bourk introduced himself and expressed appreciation to the MPO Board.

3) Conflict of Interest Statement

Chairman Piepmeyer 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.

4) Approval of Board Members' Excused Absences

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

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

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

5) Approval of the Agenda

Mr. Rivenbark made a motion to approve the agenda as presented, seconded by Mr. Williams, and the motion carried unanimously by roll call as follows:

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

6) Public Comment Period

No one from the public signed up to speak or submitted comments via email or voicemail.

7) Presentation

a. Proclamation of May as "Bike Month"

(Presented earlier in the agenda.)

b. Potential New Hanover County ¼-cent Sales Tax for Public Transportation –Lisa Wurtzbacher, New Hanover County

New Hanover County Chief Financial Officer Lisa Wurtzbacher said that staff will bring a proposal to the New Hanover County Board of Commissioners on May 2nd to consider adding a ¼-cent sales tax on the ballot, specifically for public transportation purposes. She explained that the sales tax would cause residents and visitors to pay an additional quarter on every \$100 spent. Exceptions include groceries, prescriptions, and gas. She estimated that over the course of 10 years and depending on the economy, the sales tax will raise \$144 million, which would be distributed to the city and the county participating in public transportation (Wave Transit).

A brief discussion session followed. Mr. Barbee asked if Carolina Beach would benefit from the revenue since it has bus routes. He commented that there is a movement against funding bus service there. Ms. Wurtzbacher responded that the county and the city established Wave Transit and are part of an Interlocal agreement. She added that she would need to research if any other jurisdiction would benefit from the revenue, although she thought not.

Ms. Wurtzbacher said that the tax would be a sustainable source of revenue for Wave Transit, greater connectivity with trails and sidewalks, and increased safety for bicycles and pedestrians. She noted that the funds could be leveraged further to obtain additional state and federal fundings. She added that Article 43 of the Statute says that the funds can be used for financing, constructing, operating, and maintaining public transportation systems including vehicle parking and passenger transfer facilities, railroads, railroad right-of-way, bus services, high occupancy vehicle facilities, carpool, and vanpool programs, interconnected bike-ped paths, bus lanes, and bus ways.

Ms. Wurtzbacher said that the unincorporated county needs trails off main arteries. She noted that in the city, an opportunity exists to create and improve multi-use paths, sidewalks, bike lanes, crosswalks, and safety improvements for pedestrians. She added that all improvements must connect to bus routes and micro transit stops. Additionally, such improvements would reduce the dependence on motor vehicles and contribute to improved health.

Ms. Wurtzbacher commented that there are many ways that this opportunity can help improve Wave Transit, particularly headway times, the micro-transit model, high-speed transit opportunities such as lanes for buses and traffic signal priorities and reducing carbon emissions. Also, there has been some discussion about utilizing funds for projects surrounding the rail realignment – replacing and improving existing rail and repurposing it for a public transportation use.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Anderson, Ms. Wurtzbacher said that its mainly for repurposing rail.

Ms. Wurtzbacher said that the process for the referendum includes a public hearing at the Board of Commissioners meeting on May 2nd at 4:00 p.m. If the Board of Commissioners vote to approve the proposal, the sales tax item will be placed on the November ballot. Additionally, if voters approve the referendum, the Board of Commissioners will consider a resolution to levy the tax.

In response to an inquiry by Ms. Hays, Mr. Kozlosky said that an opportunity for which the funds could be used is to partner with NCDOT when it widens South Front Street, which would include the rail realignment component. Mr. Rivenbark pointed out that the project would feed into the design of the bridge replacement.

Chairman Piepmeyer expressed appreciation to Ms. Wurtzbacher.

8) Consent Agenda

- a. Approval of Board Meeting Minutes from March 30, 2022
- b. Opening of the 30-day public comment period for 2020-2029 STIP/MPO Amendment #22-3
- c. Resolution approving 2020-2029 STIP/MPO Administrative Modification #22-3
- d. Resolution adopting the 2022 Legislative Agenda
- e. Resolution supporting the allocation of Section 5310 funding for FY 23
- f. Resolution supporting the Town of Wrightsville Beach's application to the North Carolina Department of Transportation's Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Grant for a standalone Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan
- g. Resolution accepting the 2022 Wilmington Urban Area MPO's Compensation Study and Recommendations
- h. Resolution requesting an Administrative Modification to the 2020-2029 State/MPO Transportation Improvement Programs for Public Transportation Projects

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

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

9) Discussion

- a. 2020-2029 STIP/MPO Transportation Improvement Program Administrative Modifications #22-4

Mr. Kozlosky stated that this administrative modification is for information purposes only.

- b. Direct Attributable Scoring Criteria

Mr. Kozlosky noted that this is a continuation of discussion regarding Direct Attributable (DA) scoring criteria.

Transportation Planning Engineer Scott A. James said that the revised methodology and ranking will be brought back to the Board for consideration at its May meeting in time for a June call for projects to award the allocated funds for the next fiscal year. He reminded Board members that the current practice has an 83-point ranking system and six of seven projects of the previous call were non-automotive submissions, which left 44% of available points on the table. Also, the prior call left 60% of points on the table.

Mr. James said that in response comments by the MPO Board, staff increased the total point score to 100 points, with more points for safety improvements as well as congestion management and metrics for non-automotive modes. Staff proposes a breakdown of points in the following broad categories:

- Safety: 25 points
- Congestion Reduction: 25 points
- Multi-modal: 20 points
- Accessibility: 15 points
- Project Status: 10 points
- Accessibility: 5 points

Mr. James noted that there is some overlap of categories and gave examples of proposals for each of the point categories. In addition, staff proposes to reinstate annual training to be required of the

project manager, which will be available prior to and following the award. Additionally, high-level and data collection training will be available to member jurisdictions, as well as a best practices library.

c. **2022 Strategic Plan Implementation**

Mr. Kozlosky said that in January, the MPO Board adopted the MPO's 2022-2026 Strategic Business Plan. As part of the discussion, staff was tasked with bringing back focus areas and action items anticipated for completion during the calendar year, which is abbreviated this year. He noted that the strategic plan sets the foundation for the organization over a five-year period, which staff proposes to break into incremental action steps to be considered annually. The strategic plan along with the Unified Planning Work Plan (UPWP), will establish the work plan for the MPO over a fiscal year. He gave an overview of the 2022 strategic plan focus areas and action steps as follows:

1. Focus Area: Safety

- Adopt performance measures and create a dashboard on the WMPO website
- Implement the Traffic Separation Study (NCDOT Rail Division): Provide design review to assure compliance with adopted plans
- Support members' applications for the Vision Zero and the Safe Streets for All programs

2. Focus Area: Multi-modal

- Support completion of the Wilmington Multi-modal Center Phase 1B and provide the MPO Board with frequent updates regarding construction of the facility that will become dedicated office space for the MPO.
- Encourage and provide funding for walking, biking, public transportation, and ferry systems through the MPO's Direct Attributable program.

3. Focus Area: Regional

- Educate the MPO Board and member jurisdictions regarding the services that the MPO provides: Implement a comprehensive Direct Attributable funding and project management training program as well as the annual Board training and updates on services that the MPO provides to its members.
- Work collaboratively with members to complete the ongoing plans: Complete the Navassa Collector Street Plan and Kure Beach Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, and initiate development of the Pender County Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, and the MPO's 2050 Plan.

4. Focus Area: Economic Development

- Support the State Ports' efforts to expand and enhance operations by supporting its grant applications, providing funding for design of the north gate improvements, and advocating priorities including South Front Street widening, the rail realignment, US 74 upgrades, and the Cape Fear Memorial Bridge replacement.

5. Focus Area: Organized and Cohesive Voice

- Develop and adopt the legislative agenda for 2022, which the MPO Board considered today.

6. Focus Area: Organizational and Operational Effectiveness

- Enhance the use of technology to improve operations: Implement a work from home flexible work policy, which suits the Transportation Demand Management (TDM) program and Cape Fear 2020 change in Motion Plan
- Complete a compensation study to assure that the MPO is competitive with members and other MPOs around the state
- Continue regular updates from transportation leaders in the region

Mr. Williams and Chairman Piepmeyer expressed appreciation for the update.

d. Lead Planning Agency Agreement

Mr. Kozlosky reminded Board members that at its last meeting, a presentation was given on the MPO's compensation study. He noted that the City of Wilmington implemented a separate compensation study. He added that the City Manager tasked the City Attorney with examining the roles, responsibilities and reporting structure of the MPO. He said that the City Attorney provided a recommendation to the City Manager based on the nature of the MPO, the funding that pays for the MPO's dedicated positions, the representation the city has on the MPO Board, and, most importantly, the appointee-like duties of the executive director position.

Mr. Kozlosky stated that the City Attorney recommended that the executive director position be removed from the city's pay classification and that the evaluation and pay compensation be set by the MPO Board. As part of the city's compensation study, the city removed the City Attorney, City Manager, and City Clerk positions from the pay classification. He noted that the City Manager expressed support for the City Attorney's recommendation and said he would forward the recommendation to the City Council at its May 17th meeting.

Mr. Kozlosky said that the City Attorney also recommended that other MPO staff continue to be subject to the city's pay classification and to remain with them, with evaluation and supervision to be conducted by the executive director.

Mr. Kozlosky pointed out that the Capitol Area MPO is developing a Lead Planning Agency agreement that outlines the roles, responsibilities and reporting relationship between the City of Raleigh and the Capitol Area MPO. Additionally, Durham is having similar conversations for a more independent organization due to the recent retirement of its executive director.

Mr. Kozlosky said that although this change would create greater independence for the WMPO, the relationship between the WMPO and the city will remain. He noted that in 1978 when the organization was created, it had one position and, since then, the organization has grown to a staff of 12. If supported by the Board, this transition would be a result of that growth. And, if supported by the MPO Board, he recommended forming an executive work group to begin the process of reviewing the executive director, which will provide an opportunity for feedback from the Board.

Mr. Williams pointed out that reviewing someone who reports to a board is entirely different from reviewing someone who reports to a manager. He expressed support for the change but commented that it will require a transition and more work from the Board. Ms. Bozeman concurred.

Mr. Rivenbark requested to be on any board that drafts the review. He pointed out that it will require working closely with the executive director to be aware of the executive director's function.

Ms. Hays and Mr. Rivenbark volunteered to serve on the evaluation committee. In response to an inquiry by Mr. Barfield, Mr. Kozlosky said that 80% of MPO salaries are paid through the federal government, with the remainder paid proportionally based on the population of each jurisdiction.

Mr. Barfield questioned whether the executive director's salary is fair and pointed out that much transition has occurred with MPO staff. Mr. Kozlosky responded that the question is more about the organization being set up appropriately for growth. He expressed appreciation to the Board.

Discussion continued briefly. There was a consensus of the Board to support this structure and no opposition to the recommendation.

Mr. Rivenbark made a motion to form a four-person evaluation and compensation committee composed of Ms. Hays, Mr. Rivenbark, Mr. Williams, and Mr. Barfield. Ms. Hays seconded the motion, which carried unanimously by roll call as follows:

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

Mr. Williams inquired about a timeline and requested a job description. Mr. Kozlosky said that the timeline is short since an item is scheduled to go before Council for consideration on May 17th. Mr. Rivenbark proposed that Mr. Nichols attend the committee as well. In response to an inquiry by Ms. Hays, Mr. Kozlosky said he is currently reviewed by the Deputy City Manager.

10) Updates

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

Mr. Kozlosky reported that staff issued an RFP and received three potential vendors for a bike share program. Ms. Lorenzo gave a brief update on the bike share process.

Mr. Kozlosky said that staff submitted to NCDOT the Old Fayetteville Road Multi-Use Path and Resurfacing Project, which was selected as one of 12 as a finalist for a MOBI Award. He noted that the luncheon is on May 4th in Raleigh. He added that he and Ms. Lorenzo will attend and report the results.

Mr. Kozlosky said that on Monday, the Department issued the initial draft of the 2024-2033 State and MPO Transportation Improvements Program (STIP/MTIP). He noted that a presentation will be given on this item at the Board's May meeting. He added that the new Excel spreadsheet format allows sorting. Additionally, staff will be working with the Board over the next several months on project swaps, which are due on September 30th.

Wave Transit Executive Director Marie Parker announced that Wave Transit was awarded the Transit System of the Year Award at the North Carolina Public Transportation Association Annual Conference. Chairman Piepmeyer and Ms. Hays expressed congratulations.

Division Planning Engineer Chad Kimes requested that Board members review and prepare questions, concerns, and feedback regarding the 2024-2033 STIP/MTIP prior to his presentation next month. He noted that it is based on cost increases.

Mr. Kimes added that he will give an update to the Board in July regarding the Cape Fear Memorial Bridge replacement and the Department's three-pronged approach to identifying options for it.

Mr. Kozlosky said that MPO staff has begun working collaboratively with NCDOT on the development of the Travel Demand Model (TDM) for the MPO's 2050 Plan. He noted that staff will be working closely with local land use planners to assist in the land use portion of the TDM.

11) Announcements

a. Wilmington MPO GoCoast Committee- May 19th

12) Adjournment

Next MPO Board meeting – May 25th, 2022

Mr. Barfield made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. Williams, and the motion to adjourn carried unanimously by roll call as follows:

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

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.**