



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

Members Present (in-person)

Mike Allen, Town of Belville
Lynn Barbee, Town of Carolina Beach
Brenda Bozeman, Town of Leland
John Ellen, Town of Kure Beach
Deb Hays, Cape Fear Public Transportation Authority
Hank Miller, Vice Chair, Town of Wrightsville Beach
David Piepmeyer, Pender County
Luke Waddell, City of Wilmington
Frank Williams, Brunswick County
Eulis Willis, Town of Navassa

Members Present (remotely)

Jonathan Barfield, Jr., New Hanover County

Others Present (in-person)

Stephanie Ayers, NC State Ports Authority
Carolyn Caggia, WMPO
Adrienne Cox, NCDOT
Mike Forte, Brunswick County
Katie Hite, NCDOT
Scott A. James, WMPO
Chad Kimes, NCDOT
Mike Kozlosky, WMPO

Abby Lorenzo, WMPO
Tracy Manning, WMPO
Chad McEwen, City of Wilmington
Aubrey Parsley, City of Wilmington
Rodger Rochelle, Hardesty & Hanover
Greer Shivers, WMPO
Emma Stogner, WMPO

Others Present (remotely)

Veronica Carter, Town of Leland
Daniella Hankey
Cheryl Hannah, HDR
Jacob Heinz
Regina Hopkins, WMPO
Jamar Johnson, WMPO
William Kincannon, HDR
Marie Parker, Wave Transit
Rachel LaCoe, New Hanover County
Rachel McIntyre, WMPO
Marie Parker, Wave Transit
Amy Passaretti, Port City Daily
Rebekah Roth, New Hanover County
Nazia Sarder, NCDOT
Megan Young

1. Call to Order

Chairman David Piepmeyer called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

Based on the MPO Board's adopted Remote Participation Policy, Mr. Kozlosky called the roll, and a quorum was present as follows:

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

Mr. Kozlosky said that Mr. Barfield has met the limit for remote participation and has requested an exemption to participate remotely.

Ms. Hays made a motion to make an exemption to the policy so that Mr. Barfield could participate remotely. Mr. Williams seconded the motion and it carried unanimously by roll call as follows:

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

2. Conflict of Interest Statement

Chairman Piepmeyer read the conflict-of-interest statement. He asked if any member had 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 asked that Neil Anderson be excused.

Mr. Allen made a motion to excuse Mr. Anderson. Vice Chairman Miller seconded the motion and it carried unanimously by roll call as follows:

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

4. Approval of the Agenda

Vice Chairman Miller made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Mr. Waddell seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously by roll call as follows:

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

5. Public Comment Period

Chairman Piepmeyer said that no one from the public has signed up to speak during the public comment section of the meeting.

Mr. Kozlosky read a statement sent by Granseur Dick, Wilmington International Airport (ILM), as follows:

Good afternoon, Chairman Piepmeyer, and members of the Board.

On behalf of Wilmington International Airport, and as a vital part of our MPO's transportation system, I would like to begin by thanking you for your service and dedication to supporting the transportation needs of our growing community.

While ILM receives the majority of its capital grants from Federal and State Airport Improvement Programs it also counts on the NC STIP program, with your support, for smaller 'matching funds.' These funds are extremely important to assist in meeting the typical 10% 'local match' required for federal grants. However, I would like to clarify a misconception that may have resulted from recent local media stories published earlier this month.

As written, four Airport projects totaling \$23.4 million were under consideration to 'lose funding.' The reality is that NC commercial airports typically receive only \$500,000 per project from the STIP program. ILM's four projects were scheduled to receive a maximum of \$2 million total in STIP funds.

Also, three of these projects have either fallen off the Airport's priority list or have been funded through other opportunities. The fourth is on your agenda as a resolution today.

The Airport publicly expresses its appreciation to this Board for its support, as well as other funding agencies including the FAA and NC Division of Aviation, so that all of our essential remain fully funded.

As you consider today's resolution supporting an aviation project swap, we hope you will do so knowing that the MPO, ILM and DOT staff have worked together to ensure that the related \$500,000 in STIP funds are being applied to the highest priority and best use project supporting aviation in our region.

Thank you, Granseur Dick, Deputy Airport Director, Operations & Facilities, ILM

6. Presentations

a. North Carolina State Ports Authority Update- Stephanie Ayers, NCSPA

Stephanie Ayers, Director of Planning & Development, gave an update on the North Carolina State Ports Authority. She reported that Fiscal Years 2021 and 2022 were record breaking years for the Ports, despite challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic and supply chain issues. She added that *The Journal of Commerce* ranked the NC Ports #1 in North America for overall productivity last year based on the number of boxes a crane operator can turn over in one hour, often limited by union contracts in other states.

Ms. Ayers summarized the Ports' transportation priorities as follows:

- i. Wilmington Harbor Navigation Improvement Project for the Army Corps of Engineers to deepen the navigation channel five feet to make it compatible with other ports
- ii. Capital improvements on the Ports' properties (\$250 million)
- iii. Intermodal Rail – Queen City Express to Charlotte, Wilmington Midwest Express
- iv. Roadway projects – North Gate, South Front Street Carolina Beach Road/Shipyard Boulevard, Cape Fear Memorial Bridge, US-74

Ms. Ayers stated that the proposed South Front Street swap later in today's agenda is one of the Ports' most critical, top priority project swap.

Mr. Ellen asked for a timeline on deepening the channel. Ms. Ayers said that most of the environmental work has already been done and the project has been conditionally authorized. She noted that the project is waiting for the federal government to appropriate funds for it. She added that the state funds for the dredging project have been set aside. Mr. Ellen expressed concerns regarding potential impacts to the drinking water on Pleasure Island. Ms. Ayers responded that is a consideration.

Vice Chairman Miller expressed interest in a tour of the Port of Wilmington. Mr. Kozlosky said he would work with Ms. Ayers to arrange one and would forward a copy of her presentation to the Board members.

b. Wilmington Rail Re-alignment Project Update- Aubrey Parsley, City of Wilmington

Aubrey Parsley, Economic Development Director, City of Wilmington, gave an update on the Wilmington Rail Re-alignment Project. He commented that the Port does a great job of growing the local economy. He pointed out that the cold storage facilities at the Port are expensive and the improvements are taxed, which benefits the tax base. Therefore, projects such as South Front Street and the Cape Fear Memorial Bridge Replacement are of great interest to the region. He noted that the City of Wilmington is always looking for opportunities to partner with the state and

other agencies with interests that align to bring about a better overall product for the aggregate tax revenue.

Mr. Kozlosky said that due to the technical difficulties of not being able to share the presentation with remote participants, it will be forwarded after the meeting.

Mr. Parsley displayed Option #4 of the express design summary for the Cape Fear Memorial Bridge Replacement with the railroad component. He noted that although the conversation has progressed since 2020, there is agreement on a concept of a shared-use bridge replacement, which will require further engineering studies to identify the most practical option and its benefits. He noted that this is a collaborative effort between NCDOT, WMPO and the City of Wilmington.

Rodger Rochelle, Hardesty & Hanover, consultant for the study, gave his professional background and that of Hardesty & Hanover, and displayed some visual examples of past projects of shared-use bridges. He gave an overview of the study, which will include information gathering, workshops, developing cost estimates as well as a draft report and a final report.

c. Recognition of outgoing Chairman David Piepmeyer- Vice Chairman Hank Miller

Vice Chairman Miller acknowledged that Chairman Piepmeyer will be retiring from the MPO Board. He noted that Mr. Piepmeyer began his service to the Board in 2015, has served as Vice Chairman, and as Chairman (since 2018). He presented Chairman Piepmeyer with a plaque of appreciation for his service to the Board.

Chairman Piepmeyer expressed appreciation to the Board. He commented that after serving two terms on the Pender County Board of Commissioners, he did not file for re-election out of respect for term limits and his family. He added that he is also preparing to retire from GE in April after 38 years. He commented that one of his daughters has relocated next door to his farm, his first grandchild was born recently, and his wife is planning on retiring in August. Although serving on the Board is not as easy as it first appeared, he commented that it has been an honor and a privilege to serve, and thanked members for their support on projects such as the Hampstead Bypass, which is a strategic improvement for a rapidly growing region.

7. Consent Agenda

- a. **Approval of Board Meeting Minutes from October 26, 2022**
- b. **Opening of the 30-day public comment period for 2020-2029 STIP/MPO Amendment #22-7**
- c. **Resolution approving 2020-2029 STIP/MPO Administrative Modification #22-10**
- d. **Resolution adopting the 2023 Meeting Calendar**
- e. **Resolution supporting the endorsement of Safety Target Performance Measures for 2023**
- f. **Resolution supporting Roadway Project Swaps for the 2024-2033 State Transportation Improvement Program**
- g. **Resolution supporting an Aviation Project Swap for the 2024-2033 State Transportation Improvement Program**

Vice Chairman Miller made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda, Items 7a through 7g. Ms. Bozeman seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously by roll call as follows:

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

8. Regular Agenda

- a. Resolution supporting an amendment to the Wilmington Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization's Transportation Improvement Program and requesting the North Carolina Department of Transportation remove the Clarendon Avenue Multi-use Path (EB-6029) from the State/MPO Transportation Improvement Programs**

Mr. Kozlosky said that the MPO provided Direct Attributable (DA) funding to the Town of Carolina Beach for the Clarendon Avenue Multi-use Path. He noted that the town has since decided to not move forward with the project and has requested that it be removed from the State/MPO Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). He added that this will return \$545,000 to the DA program and that staff recommends approval.

Mr. Williams made a motion to support the amendment to remove the Clarendon Avenue multi-use path project from the STIP. Mr. Waddell seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously by roll call as follows:

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

9. Discussion

- a. 2020-2029 STIP/MPO Transportation Improvement Program Administrative Modifications #22-11**

Mr. Kozlosky stated that this item is for informational purposes only and will be brought back at the Board's next meeting for consideration.

- b. Military Cutoff Road/Eastwood Road Interchange**

Mr. Kozlosky said that the Board requested staff to bring back options related to the Military Cutoff Road and Eastwood Road Interchange. He noted that NCDOT performed an analysis, which is included in the agenda packet, that identifies when the interchange would reach unacceptable levels of service. As part of that analysis, NCDOT also anticipated an updated traffic forecast in December. Staff recommended delaying discussion on this item until the new traffic forecast is received. He noted that staff will provide the information to the Board for its January meeting.

- c. 2022-2026 MPO Strategic Plan 2022 Accomplishments**

Mr. Kozlosky said that included in the agenda packet is a matrix that outlines the 2022 focus areas, action steps and accomplishments for the 2022-2026 Strategic Plan. He summarized that the MPO has accomplished what it has set out to accomplish over the course of the year. Thus, the matrix outlines and highlights how the staff has accomplished what the Board has directed. He added that in January staff will bring forward a workplan for 2023 based on the 2020-2026 Strategic Plan.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Waddell, Mr. Kozlosky said that staff is at work on the 2023 Legislative Agenda and will provide recommendations for consideration the Board's January meeting.

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 staff sent a condolence card from members to former member Skip Watkins, who lost his wife earlier this year. He noted that Mr. Watkins expressed his appreciation yesterday.

Mr. Kozlosky added that as discussed at the last meeting, the Census data is anticipated to be released in December. Based on state law, the MPO is required to evaluate its governance structure, planning area boundary and composition. He noted that staff has begun work on this and will continue to do so. He added that the Board may anticipate further discussion on the topic.

Mr. Kozlosky noted that staff is also currently working on the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), which is the MPO's budget for Fiscal Year 2024. Therefore, staff will present a draft budget to the Board in January. He noted that the UPWP is required to be adopted in March. He added that since the UPWP requires a 30-day public comment period, it will be opened in January.

There were no additions to the updates included in the agenda packet from the Cape Fear Public Transportation Authority or NCDOT Division.

Nazia Sarder, NCDOT Transportation Planning Division, commented that the Brunswick County CTP is continuing and is on track, as is the Wilmington 2050 model. She noted that updates regarding the 2020 Census and a link have been included in the agenda packet.

11. Announcements

- a. **Direct Attributable (DA) Training- December 6th (more than 30 participants)**
- b. **Wilmington Urban Area MPO Federal Certification Review- December 8th (the last Certification Review was April 2020)**
- c. **Wilmington MPO Bike/Pedestrian Committee- December 13th**
- d. **Next MPO Board Meeting – January 25th, 2023**

Chairman Piepmeyer expressed appreciation for the DA training scheduled for December 6th. He added that Pender County has three new Board members and his replacement on the MPO Board is unknown.

12. Adjournment

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

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

The meeting adjourned at 3:58 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.