



MPO Board Regular Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, August 30, 2023

6th Floor Training Conference Room, 320 Chestnut Street, Wilmington, North Carolina

Members Present in Person

Lynn Barbee, Town of Carolina Beach
John Ellen, Town of Kure Beach
Hank Miller, Town of Wrightsville Beach
Eulis Willis, Town of Navassa

Others Present in Person

Carolyn Caggia, WMPO
Tera Cline, WMPO
Michelle Howes, NCDOT
Scott James, WMPO
Chad Kimes, NCDOT
Vanessa Lacer, WMPO
Abby Lorenzo, WMPO
Tracy Manning, WMPO
Caitlin Melvin, NCDOT
Matt Nichols, WMPO Attorney
Greer Shivers, WMPO
Emma Stogner, WMPO

Members Present Remotely

Mike Allen, Town of Belville
Neil Anderson, City of Wilmington
Jonathan Barfield, New Hanover
County
Brenda Bozeman, Town of Leland
Mike Forte, Brunswick County
Dane Scalise, Cape Fear Public
Transportation Authority
Luke Waddell, City of Wilmington
Landon Zimmer, NC Board of
Transportation

Others Present Remotely

Stephanie Ayers
Veronica Carter, Town of Leland
Regina Hopkins, WMPO
Bill Kincannon, HDR
Mark Jabaley
Jamar Johnson, WMPO
Jeff Kramer, CUTR/USF
Jody Lewis, NCDOT
Bill Marley, FHWA
Bill McDow, WMPO
Amy Passaretti, Port City Daily
Rebekah Roth, New Hanover County
Nazia Sarder, NCDOT

1) Call to Order

Chairman Hank Miller called the meeting to order at 3:00 PM. MPO Executive Director Mike Kozlosky called the roll, and a quorum was present as follows:

Present: Mike Allen, Lynn Barbee, Brenda Bozeman, John Ellen, Hank Miller, Dane Scalise, Luke Waddell, Mike Forte, Eulis Willis, and Landon Zimmer. **Late:** Neil Anderson, Jonathan Barfield, Jr. **Absent:** Wendy Fletcher-Hardee.

2) Conflict of Interest statement and recusals

Chairman Miller read the conflict-of-interest statement for the board.

3) Approval of Board Member Excused Absences

Mr. Kozlosky requested a motion to excuse Commissioner Wendy Fletcher-Hardee from the meeting.

Mr. Barbee made a motion to excuse Commissioner Wendy Fletcher-Hardee from the meeting and Mr. Ellen seconded.

Ayes: Mike Allen, Lynn Barbee, Jonathan Barfield Jr., Brenda Bozeman, John Ellen, Hank Miller, Dane Scalise, Luke Waddell, Mike Forte, Eulis Willis, and Landon Zimmer. **Absent:** Neil Anderson. **Nays:** None.

4) **Approval of the Agenda**

Vice Chairman Waddell made a motion to amend the agenda by moving item 9C Remote Participation Policy before public comment on the agenda, seconded by Mr. Williams, and the motion carried unanimously by roll call vote as follows:

Ayes: Mike Allen, Lynn Barbee, Jonathan Barfield Jr., Brenda Bozeman, John Ellen, Hank Miller, Dane Scalise, Luke Waddell, Mike Forte, Eulis Willis, and Landon Zimmer. **Absent:** Neil Anderson. **Nays:** None.

Mr. Kozlosky opened the floor for a motion on agenda item 9C. He explained that MPO staff is requesting an update to the Remote Participation Policy. The current policy states that there will be a roll call vote. Staff is requesting to modify the policy to streamline meetings to a voice vote and have only a roll call vote if it is requested by a Board member.

Mr. Ellen made a motion to accept the WMPO Board Member Remote Participation Policy as presented. Commissioner Scalise seconded.

Ayes: Mike Allen, Neil Anderson, Lynn Barbee, Jonathan Barfield Jr., Brenda Bozeman, John Ellen, Hank Miller, Dane Scalise, Luke Waddell, Mike Forte, Eulis Willis, and Landon Zimmer. **Nays:** None.

5) **Public Comment Period**

No sign ups.

6) **Presentations**

a. **North Carolina Department of Transportation Bridge Repairs Update- Chad Kimes, NCDOT**

Chad Kimes stated that everything he is presenting and discussing today is subject to change and he will remind everyone throughout the presentation of this. He showed pictures and explained the different components of the bridge deck and how it had been repaired. He stated the bridge is inspected everyday and repairs are being made. Mr. Kimes stated that he wants to make sure everyone understands that it is safe, and they are keeping it maintained. He stated that a lot of work is being put into it daily.

Mr. Kimes went on to explain the plan and the challenges being faced with repairs. He stated that the mill that makes the riding decks for bridges is shutting down and is the only company in the United States that makes them. The company has promised NC DOT that this bridge will be one of their last jobs before they shut down. He stated that he is sure there is another mill around that will pick this up but before they have a contractor, they want to order the materials and hopefully start work in January. He did express concern with getting the materials by December since the mill is shutting down. He stated that all the projects must be made in the US in case anyone was thinking about overseas. Mr. Kimes said that they already have a specialty firm, Madjeski and Masters and they are experts on movable bridges, and they are putting the plans together and ordering the materials. The stringers that he showed needing repair will be done, he stated those are a little easier to get fabricated so those will continue to be replaced and repaired.

Mr. Kimes said that permitting is going well, he explained that the work that is needed can be done within the clearance over the river, so it appears that all the work can be done without any concerns from the United States Coast Guard. There are still some regular environmental permits that need to be obtained as well.

The next item Mr. Kimes discussed was the scope of work and the impacts. Currently, random nightly closures are happening to identify and weld cracks as they are identified. The goal is for contract crews to begin working this winter. He reminded everyone that again all of this is subject to change. An analysis done resulted with 95 working days utilizing 2 crews. He explained that the stringers go across 2 lanes of traffic so the two lanes in one direction will have to be shut down. It will take about 10 weeks. Once that direction is completed the the other direction will be shut down and work completed in another 10 weeks. Mr. Kimes stated that is doing everything they can to get the repairs completed before Memorial Day.

Mr. Kimes then presented a potential timeframe that is subject to change. He said the goal is to have existing stringers and grid deck repaired and fully restored to traffic by Memorial Day.

Mike Kozlosky, verified with Mr. Kimes that one direction will not be coming in for 10 weeks and one direction will not be going out for 10 weeks. It was clarified that neither side will be bi-directional, the traffic will be diverted to the Isabel Holmes Bridge. Mr. Kimes states that on the last repair project, the stringers could not be completely replaced with having bi-directional traffic on the bridge.

Mr. Kimes concluded that if for some reason the materials are not obtained that they will not proceed with this type of work during the summer or hurricane seasons and that they will wait until fall.

Mr. Barbee confirmed with Mr. Kimes that a deck like the one on the Cape Fear Memorial Bridge has a standard life of 10 years with the amount of traffic that crosses the bridge and there are some across the state that have longer lives but less traffic.

Mr. Barfield asked Mr. Kimes if the work could be performed at night. Mr. Kimes stated that if the work was done at night, it would prolong the project time.

Mr. Forte confirmed with Mr. Kimes that we really don't have an option regarding the repairs that need to be made. Mr. Kimes stated that the design firm is one of the best in the world regarding this type of structure.

Mr. Kimes also stated the Military Cutoff Road is slated to open September 28th and will include a ribbon cutting and everyone will receive an invite.

7) Consent Agenda

- a) Approval of TCC Meeting Minutes- July 12, 2023**
- b) Resolution approving 2020-2029 STIP/MPO Amendments #23-4**
- c) Resolution approving 2020-2029 STIP/MPO Administrative Modifications #23-5**
- d) Resolution revising the award of the FY 23 Surface Transportation Block Grant- Direct Attributable Funds for the Traffic Signal at 3rd Street/Ann Street from the City of Wilmington to North Carolina Department of Transportation**

Vice-Chairman Waddell made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented, seconded by Mr. Zimmer, and the motion carried unanimously.

8) Regular Agenda

- a. Resolution adopting the 2024-2033 State/Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Programs**

Mr. Kozlosky requested the adoption of the 2024-2033 State/Metropolitan transportation programs.

The NC Board of Transportation adopted this program in June of this year, and the MPO's public participation policy requires a 30-day public comment period. A public hearing was also held as part of the public participation policy. This is a combination of over 2 years of work with NCDOT, the WMPO Board and staff is recommending approval.

Mr. Ellen made a motion to adopt the resolution adopting the 2024-2033 State/Wilmington Urban Area MPO transportation improvement program as depicted in pages 29 through 37 of the agenda packet. Mr. Barbee seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously. Mr. Kozlosky turned the meeting over to Abby Lorenzo to give an overview of items b through g.

b. Resolution approving the Wilmington Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization's Prioritization 7.0 Aviation Project Submittals

Ms. Lorenzo stated that the next 6 items are all related to our Prioritization 7.0 project list. She discussed the results of the 14-day public comment period. Ms. Lorenzo stated that during that 2-week comment period they received a total of 19 public comments and an additional 2 shortly after the comment period closed for a total of 21 comments. She stated that most of those comments are regarding the widening of Independence Boulevard which is RW-222 on the roadway project list. There were also comments in support of the draft bike and pedestrian projects, Cape Fear Memorial Bridge replacement project, and a comment expressing support of returning passenger rail service to Wilmington.

Ms. Lorenzo explained the rail project is the only one that has been updated since the list was first presented at the Board's July 26th meeting. The changes to the rail project list consist of the removal of two projects due to their being submitted through the Cape Fear Rural Planning Organization. Ms. Lorenzo noted those projects were the freight rail connection from Castle Hayne to Wallace as well as a freight rail connection from Malmo to Whiteville.

Ms. Lorenzo noted that project descriptions and limits for the two Murrayville Roadway projects were adjusted in coordination with NC DOT Division 3. Roadway project 42 which is US Highway 17 access management improvements from Carol Lynn Road to Diane Church Road, Northeast was swapped out and off our list and replaced with North 23rd Street widening (MLK Jr. Parkway to Aviation Drive). She stated that NC DOT Division 3 in collaboration with Cape Fear Rural Planning Organization will be submitting the access management improvements from Carol Lynn Road to all the way to NC Highway 87.

She concluded by stating there are no other updates to the project lists that were presented to the Board in July and staff is requesting the Board to consider approval of Prioritization 7.0 Projects lists.

Mr. Ellen made a motion to approve items B. through F. Motion was seconded by Ms. Bozeman. Motion was carried unanimously by the Board.

c. Resolution approving the Wilmington Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization's Prioritization 7.0 Bicycle and Pedestrian Project Submittals

d. Resolution approving the Wilmington Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization's Prioritization 7.0 Ferry Project Submittals

- e. **Resolution approving the Wilmington Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization's Prioritization 7.0 Public Transportation Project Submittals**
- f. **Resolution approving the Wilmington Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization's Prioritization 7.0 Rail Project Submittals**
- g. **Resolution approving the Wilmington Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization's Prioritization 7.0 Roadway Project Submittals**
- h. **Resolution adopting the Wilmington Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization's Closed Session Policy**

Mr. Kozlosky requested approval of the Wilmington Urban Metropolitan Planning Organization's closed session policy. Staff collaborated with the Attorney Matt Nichols to develop the policy on how to handle closed sessions. Mr. Kozlosky explained that this was a new policy to clarify some items regarding Closed Sessions.

Commissioner Barfield made a motion to approve the Wilmington Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization's Closed Session Policy. The motion was seconded by Vice Chairman Waddell. Motion carried unanimously.

9) **Discussion**

- a. **2020-2029 STIP/MPO Transportation Improvement Program Administrative Modifications #23-6**
Mr. Kozlosky said that this item is for information purposes only and will be brought back for consideration at the Board's next meeting.
- b. **Wilmington Urban Area MPO Boundary, Governance, and Structure Subcommittee Update**
Mr. Kozlosky stated that a subcommittee was created by this Board to consider any changes to the governance, boundary, and structure. The subcommittee met August 14, 2023, and no changes to our boundary to add new members or changes to the voting structure were recommended.

Mr. Barbee made a motion to approve the recommendations of the Wilmington Urban Area MPO Boundary, Governance, and Structure subcommittee as noted on pages 75 and 76. Commissioner Barfield seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Kozlosky thanked all the members of the subcommittee for their participation. He stated that Commissioner Barfield, Mayor Barbee, Commissioner Williams, Councilman Waddell, and Commissioner Hardee's hard work is much appreciated by staff.

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 also introduced Tera Cline as the new Clerk to the Board.

11) Announcements

a. **The Direct Attributable Projects**

Mr. Kozlosky stated that submittals were due and introduced Mr. Scott James to provide some comments. Mr. James stated that this is just a reminder we are approaching the deadline for applications for the fiscal year. He said they had received 7 applications and 6 of which were determined to be qualified. Any member jurisdiction or candidate projects that are considering submitting please prepare your packets and get them to us by September 15th, 5 P.M, hardcopies, or midlines.

b. **2050 MTP Outreach**

Mr. Kozlosky introduced Ms. Lacer to give a brief update on the outreach. Ms. Lacer stated that they had a fruitful first month, phase one public outreach period for the Metropolitan Transportation Plan. They conducted five public meetings and launched a survey which is hovering around 1,200 responses. She stated the last time this planning process was done they had a total of 2,000 responses so they are on their way for the first month of public participation. This will continue through November and the survey will be open. We will conclude our public meetings next Friday and that will be a virtual meeting on the 8th from noon to 1:00 p.m. and the link is available on our website www.wmpo.org. She concluded by stating that outreach will continue through September and November and throughout the year at festivals, and pop up events as well.

Mr. Barbee stated the group conducted an outreach meeting with the community of Carolina Beach and noted that a big group came to the event. He also thanked the group for doing the outreach and for their professionalism in dealing with residences.

Mr. Ellen announced that on September 6th between 5:30 and 7:30 PM at the Kure Beach Community Center the town will hold an open house to discuss extending the greenway from where it terminates in Carolina Beach on down through Kure Beach. The company that is under contract will be mediating the meeting.

Commissioner Barfield commended Scott James and Jamar Johnson on their presentation at the Planning Board and County Commissioner joint meeting on Tuesday. They gave an overview of the MPO, land use review, and traffic impact analysis.

Mr. Barbee made a motion to go into closed session to consult with our attorney in order to preserve the attorney client privilege pursuant to the North Carolina General Statue section 143-318.11A3. Mr. Ellen seconded. Motion to go into closed session carries unanimously at 3:35 PM.

Mr. Ellen made a motion at 4:22 PM to return to open session. The motion was seconded by Mr. Barbee. Motion carries unanimously.

Next meeting – September 27, 2023

There being no further business, Mr. Ellen made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Barbee, and the motion carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 4:23 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.