

NIRPC Executive Board Meeting
NIRPC/Forum Building, Portage, IN
May 15, 2014
Minutes

Chairman Brian Snedecor called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance. There was a quorum of the Executive Board members.

Executive Board members present included Nancy Adams, Roosevelt Allen, Jr., Anthony Copeland, Dave Decker, Don Ensign, Brian Snedecor, Ed Soliday and Jim Ton.

Other Commissioners present included Geof Benson, Kevin Breitzke, Jeff Dekker, Stan Dobosz, Bill Emerson, Jr., Karen Freeman-Wilson, Eugene Guernsey, Tom McDermott, Diane Noll, Lori Reno, Joe Simonetto, James Snyder and Ron Stallings.

Others present included Justin Mount, Robert Alderman, Mary Lee Vance, Keith Benman, Val F. Gomez, Betty Hunt, Keaziea Collier, Teresa Torres, Jennifer Alander, Roy Dominguez, Bruce Spires, Carole Carlson, Jim Nowacki, Barbara Blackmon, Christopher Murphy, Rudy Velasco, Rev. Mac McCraven, Renae Jackson and George T. Janiec.

Staff present included Ty Warner, Steve Strains, Angie Hayes, Jody Melton, Jack Eskin, Mitch Barloga, Gabrielle Biciunas, Gary Evers, Eman Ibrahim, Scott Weber, Stephen Sostaric, Kathy Luther, Mary Thorne, and Attorney David Hollenbeck.

Report of the Chair: Brian Snedecor acknowledged that this is National Peace Officers' Memorial Week and expressed appreciation on behalf of the Board for the service and dedication of those who serve in law enforcement and public safety.

Report of the Executive Director: Ty Warner announced that through a partnership between the EPA and the City of Gary, an informational symposium will be held on July 22-23. More details will follow. NIRPC is switching over to a new email system for general notices, Constant Contact, which will allow more manageability with NIRPC's mailing lists. Ty Warner said he and Steve Strains were at the APA conference in Atlanta and were very impressed with the way Atlanta has been dealing with sprawl and congestion. Several businesses and restaurants are relocating along the bike and pedestrian trails there. Atlanta developed a pilot program that influenced NIRPC's *Creating Livable Communities* Program.

Approval of Minutes: The minutes of the April 17, 2014 meeting were approved on a motion by Roosevelt Allen, Jr. and a second by Dave Decker.

Finance & Personnel Committee: Jim Ton reported that the committee met this morning. There are two action items related to the South Shore Bikes on Trains study. The first item is a budget amendment for additional FTA funds in the amount of \$192,000 and the local match in the amount of \$48,300 for a total amount of \$240,000. Per recommendation of the Finance & Personnel Committee, Jim Ton moved to approve the budget amendment in the amount of \$240,000; seconded by Nancy Adams. Motion carried.

The second item is for Procurement #14-04, recommendations for the South Shore Bikes on Trains Study, to allocate time and potential resources for an engineering study. Per recommendation of the Finance & Personnel Committee, Jim Ton moved to approve Procurement #14-04; seconded by Roosevelt Allen, Jr. Motion carried.

Ty Warner announced that NIRPC's Comprehensive Annual Financial Review received the official plaque for the Certificate for Excellence in Financial Reporting from the Government Finance Officers Association. This is the highest recognition awarded to a government entity for financial reporting.

Transportation Policy Committee: Stan Dobosz reported that the committee met on May 13 and heard a presentation from Mitch Barloga regarding the new US Census report on walking and biking to work. Four actions were presented for consideration. The first action was the adoption of Resolution 14-16, for the FY 2015-2016 Unified Planning Work Program. Eman Ibrahim presented some of the new planning tasks based on requirements from MAP-21 and the Federal Highway Administration for planning emphasis areas for the next phase of the ADA Transition Plan, an update of the Functional Classification System and Pavement Management System. The Federal Transit Administration planning emphasis areas are for Title VI Environmental Justice, Capital Improvement Planning and Transit and Livable and Sustainable Communities. A new program for MAP-21, Performance-based planning, will be handled by Gabrielle Biciunas. The FY 2015 budget amount is \$33,192.67 and the FY 2016 budget amount is \$29,427.67. The Transportation Policy Committee recommends action on Resolution 14-16. On a motion by Jeff Decker and a second by Jim Ton, Resolution 14-16 was approved by the Executive Board.

Stan Dobosz said the second action was the adoption of Resolution 14-17, Amendment #18 to the Fiscal Year 2014-2017 Transportation Improvement Program. Gary Evers described the projects in the amendment which included INDOT projects and phases in Portage, Burns Harbor, Michigan City, LaPorte County and Lake County and Lowell. The Transportation Policy Committee recommends action on Resolution 14-18. On a motion by Jim Ton and a second by Ed Soliday, Resolution 14-17, Amendment #18 was approved by the Executive Board.

Stan Dobosz said the third action was the adoption of Resolution 14-18, Amendment #19 to the Fiscal Year 2014-2017 Transportation Improvement Program. Gary Evers described the projects in the amendment which included Crown Point, Porter County, LaPorte County, Cedar Lake and Lake Station. The Transportation Policy Committee recommends action on Resolution 14-18. On a motion by Nancy Adams and a second by Roosevelt Allen Jr., Resolution 14-17 was approved by the Executive Board.

Stan Dobosz said the final action is adoption of NIRPC's Federal Fund Exchange Program policy and recommendations. Brian Snedecor asked for a motion to add the policy to the agenda. Ed Soliday said the program was very effective in Utah and Kansas and felt it would be good for the NIRPC communities. Ed Soliday moved to add the Federal Fund Exchange Program item to the agenda; seconded by Nancy Adams. Motion carried. Gary Evers described the program where counties and municipalities may exchange allocated Surface Transportation Program (STP) funds to INDOT for state funds at a rate of \$1 federal funds traded for \$0.75 state funds and the policy recommendations to complete the transaction. A Local Public Agency (LPA) can get their project done faster and cheaper because some federal requirements will not have to be met. Most of the savings will be in preliminary engineering and right-of-way. Three pilot projects were selected to date. The recommendations are that NIRPC must be notified in writing, the LPA must determine that the exchange is in their own best interest, the LPA must certify that the exchange amount will not exceed the amount listed in the TIP and the LPA must inform NIRPC when the transaction is completed. The Transportation Policy Committee recommends action on this policy. Jim Ton added that it is a very positive program, innovative and proactive. He cautioned that it is a different paradigm and communities should be aware of the requirements. On a motion

by Jim Ton and a second by Dave Decker, the Federal Fund Exchange Program was approved by the Executive Board.

Stan Dobosz said the next meeting of the Transportation Policy Committee is scheduled for Tuesday, June 10 at 9:00 a.m. at NIRPC.

Indiana Department of Transportation: Bob Alderman announced that Angie Fegaras is now the construction director for the LaPorte District and Jim Pinkerton has accepted a job in Chicago. Bob Alderman introduced Jim Pinkerton's replacement, Jennifer Alander, who has been with INDOT for several years. INDOT has two emergency contracts for winter road damage in the multiple millions of dollars will let in the next 60 days. The US Highway 20 from the La Porte County line to I-94 project will be let this year. INDOT is working to improve its winter operations and \$400,000 was moved into two contract accounts for replacement of the stolen copper wiring. Two people have been arrested in those thefts.

Other Business: Ed Soliday asked Ty Warner if NIRPC's payroll and budget would be impacted if the Highway Trust Fund issue is not resolved by September. Ty Warner responded that NIRPC is working closely with the National Association of Regional Councils (NARC) and others to track and assess the effects of the depletion of the Highway Trust Fund should that happen this fall. This will be a topic of importance at the NARC Conference in June. Gary Evers added that the federal funds that go into NIRPC's planning grants are obligated before a contract is issued. Any harm would occur on the construction activity – everything stops. Some INDOT staff are paid with federal funds and they would also be impacted. NIRPC should be good for another 12 months at the least.

Public Comment on Agenda Items:

Rena Jackson, Gary, noted that the public comments moved to the end of the agenda, adding that because she arrived late, she was unable to comment at the last meeting.

Betty Hunt, Gary, asked why the public comments were at the end instead of the beginning of the meeting.

Teresa Torres, Everybody Counts, said that NIRPC should apply its policies consistently and allow the public to speak.

Barbara Blackmon, Gary, said she needs public transportation, adding that the loss of Hammond bus service hurt her and others in need of public transportation.

Jim Nowacki, Gary, commented on statements made by Joe Crnkovich of NICTD at the last TPC meeting, and also said the closing of any Gary stations would go against NIRPC's 2040 plan.

Roy Dominguez, Everybody Counts, commented on the importance of an integrated bus service as a part of civil rights and suggested NIRPC form a committee to address an integrated bus system in northwest Indiana.

Rudy Velasco, Everybody Counts, commented that NIRPC needs to listen to public comment without censure.

Rev. "Mac" McCraven, Merrillville, commented that more improvement is needed in recognizing the needs of the people.

Mary Lee Vance, Hammond, commented that the needs of the Wounded Warriors who cannot drive and people with disabilities who are unable to work or shop local because of a lack of public transportation should not be forgotten and must be met.

On a motion by Jim Ton, Brian Snedecor adjourned the meeting at 10:10 a.m.

A Digital MP3 of this meeting is filed. Contact Mary Thorne at the phone or email below should you wish to receive a copy of it. DVD recordings will be available once they are received by NIRPC from the videographer.

For requests for alternate formats, please contact Mary Thorne at NIRPC at (219) 763-6060 extension 131 or at mthorne@nirpc.org. Individuals with hearing impairments may contact us through the Indiana Relay 711 service by calling 711 or (800) 743-3333.

The Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission (NIRPC) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, marital status, familial status, parental status, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program.