

NIRPC Executive Board Meeting  
NIRPC/Forum Building, Portage, IN  
September 19, 2013  
Minutes

**Call to Order:** Chairman Dave Uran called the Executive Board meeting to order at 9:15 a.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Commissioners present included Nancy Adams, Geof Benson, Kevin Breitzke, Robert Carnahan, Dave Decker, Don Ensign, Tom McDermott, Blair Milo, Diane Noll, Shawn Pettit, Bob Schaefer, Ed Soliday, James Ton and Dave Uran.

Others present included Justin Mount, Greg Kucinski, Eric Vance, LuAnn Franklin, Jim Pinkerton, Angie Fegaras, Clay Cates, Shannan Lefever, Joseph Crnkovich, Christopher Murphy, Michael Jabo, David Wright, Francisco Rosado, Jr. Carole Carlson, Kelli Dudley, Jim Bartos, Amanda Bates, Christopher Meyers, Roy Dominguez, Rudy Velasco, Renae Jackson, Jim Nowacki, Teresa Torres.

Staff present included Ty Warner, David Hollenbeck, Angie Hayes, Jody Melton, Eman Ibrahim, Mitch Barloga, Jody Melton, Stephen Sostaric, Belinda Petroskey, Allen Hammond, and Mary Thorne.

**Report of the Chair:** Chairman Uran stated that each Chairman operates the Commission meetings at his or her discretion. This year, the Finance and Personnel Committee will draft a standardized policy to that effect which may be adopted by the Full Commission. Chairman Uran stated has worked with Dave Hollenbeck and Ty Warner to establish certain rules in the interim. This body is charged with moving transportation projects forward for the benefit of the region. Time is valuable and we wish to insure everyone's time spent here is maximized quickly and efficiently. Robert's Rules of Order are employed by this body and a speaker must be recognized by the floor before a discussion takes place. The meeting shall remain on point and on agenda. Public comments will pertain to the agenda items only. Chairman Uran added that a chain of command should be followed. He urged everyone to go through city council members, town council members, mayors, commissioners, and county officials. Under the Chair's report, Chairman Uran will ask if Commission members have something of importance to the NIRPC Commission to add to the agenda. If so, it shall be added under the "Other Business" portion of the agenda. Chairman Uran asked Attorney Hollenbeck if he is correct in his action; Mr. Hollenbeck replied "correct". Also, Everybody Counts has contacted NIRPC several times. They are represented by legal counsel and Chairman Uran asked that they conduct their business with NIRPC attorney to attorney. Any correspondence received from Everybody Counts will be turned over to NIRPC's attorney for legal opinion. Chairman Uran asked Attorney Hollenbeck if he is correct in his action; Mr. Hollenbeck replied "correct".

**Approval of Minutes:** On a motion by Bob Schaefer and a second by Dave Decker, the minutes of the August 29 Full Commission meeting were approved.

**Finance & Personnel Committee:**

Committee Chair Blair Milo described a budget amendment to transfer \$5,000 in funds from the Salaries to Communication Planning line items to cover the cost of verification of the conformity analysis done by INDOT through Parsons Brinkerhoff on the Illiana. The verification process was previously to have been performed by Bill Brown, who retired. The Chicago Metropolitan Area for Planning in Chicago is also performing its own verification of the analysis. On a motion by Blair Milo, second by Bob Schaefer,

the Executive Board approved the transfer of \$5,000 in funds from the Salaries to Communication Planning line items to cover the cost of a consultant to verify the conformity analysis.

Commissioner Milo described a second budget amendment for \$45,000 from FTA 5307 Transit ARRA grant funds to be used to purchase computers for NIRPC staff. These funds must be allocated by September 25 in order to be spent by the end of 2014. On a motion by Blair Milo, second by Don Ensign, the Executive Board approved the additional \$45,000 funds.

Commissioner Milo described two procurement recommendations for the replacement of NIRPC computers and Routematch Technical Support for two years for South Lake County Community Services, North Township and Porter County Aging & Community Services paid with FTA ARRA funds grant X017 at \$52,365. On a motion by Blair Milo, second by Nancy Adams, the Executive Board approved the two procurement recommendations.

Commissioner Milo reported that the Committee is working on the 2014 budget which would include the lease pricing and health care costs for next year and they will bring the budget to the Commission for adoption at the December meeting.

**Environmental Management Policy Committee:** Kevin Breitzke referred to the minutes in the meeting materials and added that a presentation was provided on the new JD Marshall Preserve based around the shipwreck of the same name which will be dedicated on September 30.

**Transportation Policy Committee:** Shawn Pettit reported on the meeting of September 10, during which a presentation was heard from Indiana Toll Road Concession Company on the reconstruction of the interchange at I-90 and I-80/94, beginning late this fall. The Committee also heard an update on the Illiana process which is slated for action on an amendment to the 2040 Comprehensive Regional Plan. A public comment period will be held during October and November, dates and times to be announced.

On a motion by Jim Ton, seconded by Dave Decker, the Executive Board adopted Resolution 13-14 in support of continuance and maintenance of the Amtrak Hoosier State Service by INDOT.

Belinda Petroskey described Amendment #1 to the FY 2014-2017 Transportation Improvement Program for transit projects. On a motion by Don Ensign and a second by Bob Schaefer, the Executive Board adopted Resolution 13-18, Amendment #1 to the FY 2014-2017 Transportation Improvement Program.

Gary Evers described Amendment #2 to the FY 2014-2017 Transportation Improvement Program for INDOT projects. Tom McDermott asked that in the future a larger font be used for the spreadsheets. On a motion by Bob Schaefer and a second by Dave Decker, the Executive Board adopted Resolution 13-19, Amendment #2 to the FY 2014-2017 Transportation Improvement Program.

The next Transportation Policy Committee will be held on October 8 at 9:00 a.m.

**Legislative Committee:** Tom McDermott reported that the Committee met in late August. The National Association of Regional Councils Conference items set the federal portion of the agenda. For state issues, the Committee is drafting policy for key issues to be recommended to the Full Commission for adoption. The goal is to be ready for the Legislative Session in January 2014. A resolution for public transportation as to the South Shore expansion will be brought to the Commission. NIRPC is a three-county board and the Committee felt busing for Lake County currently should be debated within Lake

County. Other resolutions that will be brought to the Commission include changes to the NICTD board, and the future of the RDA. No position will be taken on the Illiana as it has already cleared the Statehouse. Nancy Adams is now a committee member.

**Northwest Indiana Economic Development District:** Ty Warner reported that a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy plan was created. A meeting was held with the Economic Development Administration to discuss district designation. The Northwest Indiana Forum staff is working with them to complete that designation. Funding will then be sought for continuing operations.

**INDOT:** Jim Pinkerton reported that INDOT continues to work with NIRPC staff on the Illiana information that they need to review the congestion management analysis done by Parsons Brinkerhoff.

**Other Business:** None.

**Public Comment on the Agenda Items:**

- Teresa Torres commented that it would have been courteous to inform the public of any change in NIRPC policy and she recommended that a category for Old Business should be added to the agenda as no update was given on items discussed at last month's Commission meeting. Ms. Torres also inquired as to when they would receive documents and recommendations they were promised. She added that the Commission has made it clear that it does not want to work with the public.
- Rudy Velasco referred to an article on the transit system that appeared 17 years ago and said that nothing has changed. The Commission should have a red tag of what is happening with the transportation plan. He said you can change policy of public comment, but you can't change policy to insure things don't happen again.
- Kelli Dudley commented that the Transportation Improvement Program was adopted contingent upon NIRPC counsel's review of the consent decree. No feedback was received as to whether the actions were ratified by review of counsel. Also, no responses to written letters were received.
- Roy Dominguez said he is frustrated that his letters to the Chair have gone unanswered. He also asked that although not required by law, email notifications of meetings continue to be sent out. Mr. Dominguez stated that Everybody Counts requested but has not received the report that was submitted by the subcommittee on the Public Participation Plan. Chairman Uran responded that he did receive correspondence from Mr. Dominguez and added that all correspondence between Everybody Counts and NIRPC will be turned over Attorney Hollenbeck. The subcommittee report is a work product which is still being vetted with NIRPC's attorney, and Chairman Uran asked for at least 60 days to review and disseminate the report. Once the report is reviewed, it will go before the Commission and then the public.
- Jim Bartos thanked the Commission for their public service, the bike trails and the work on the expressway. He said he is a proponent of the Gary Airport and does not support the Illiana. He urged the Commission to take a stand on the Illiana which he believes will benefit our competitors. Mr. Bartos added that with regard to the West Lake Corridor Plan, the region needs a system that loops our area which would take care of all northwest Indiana residents. Commissioner McDermott complimented Mr. Bartos on his professionalism and responded that the Legislative Committee will not take a stand on the Illiana as there is no longer any pending legislation on it.
- Renae Jackson commented that it seems like this process is going backward. She said the Chair's declaration was nothing more than a form of censorship. We make comments and write letters, but get no responses. You have ignored the consent decree for six years, go ahead and take another 60 days. She expressed her frustration with the process.

- Jim Nowacki commented on NIRPC voting to take a position on the RDA. He said two counties and three cities in Lake County supported it for 10 years and now we are looking at the State supporting it with an additional \$10 million a year for another 10 years. Mr. Nowacki said he did not feel we got more than we put in and said it also ties in with RBA. The Legislative Committee does not believe NIRPC should weigh in on issues relating to Lake County only. It was not considered a Lake County issue when the RDA invested money in the RBA. Now that those monies have been lost and the transportation system has been degraded, looking at bus service as only a Lake County issue is a big mistake. The importance of regional transportation in the region has been discussed repeatedly. Mr. Nowacki urged the Commission to look carefully and critically on the future of the RDA. That money could have been used for other public projects. He added that a regional bus system of some kind is important.

Commissioner McDermott responded that Gary did get more out of it than it put into the RDA. Gary, Hammond, East Chicago, Lake County and Porter County will have put \$35 million after 10 years. Money was spent on Marquette Park improvements and the Gary Airport. If the State does not maintain their \$10 million yearly commitment it will leave the region that much more in need and that is why we must make this decision. Without that commitment by the State, it will be harder to sell the idea to Schererville and other communities that the RDA is needed. With regard to regional busing, the RBA could have been funded by the RDA, but there was not a lot of support. That is the reason why it is a Lake County issue not a NIRPC issue. Two-thirds of the Commission is not affected by this. Chairman Uran added that is why we want more local government involved in the decision-making by opening up the Other Business portion. If it is brought to the NIRPC Board then it becomes a NIRPC issue. He advised looking to local interest first to get more support. It would then be easier to bring it to the NIRPC Board. Our 20% local match is important. We must do more with less. We want more local involvement and people need to get the support of their local elected officials.

- Jim Bartos added that he testified at a Senate Subcommittee hearing about 10 years ago. Citizens can and should go to the Statehouse and give testimony.
- Commissioner Robert Carnahan stated that the Cedar Lake Town Council supports the Illiana and the West Lake Corridor expansion.

Mayor Uran closed the public comment session.

**Report of the Executive Director:** Ty Warner stated that there are budget issues such as employee health care, the building lease, the Illiana and other issues which will necessitate making the December 12 NIRPC meeting a Full Commission meeting. The October meeting is also slated as a Full Commission meeting. There are no meetings in November.

**Adjournment:** On a motion by Brian Snedecor and a second by James Ton, Chairman Uran adjourned the meeting at 10:30 a.m.