

NIRPC Executive Board Meeting  
6100 Southport Road, Portage, IN  
March 16, 2017  
Minutes

**Call to Order**

Chairman Michael Griffin called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance. Executive Board members present included Geof Benson, Karen Freeman-Wilson, Michael Griffin, Tom McDermott, Justin Kiel, Blair Milo, Diane Noll, Greg Stinson and James Ton. Other Commissioners present included Kevin Breitzke, Robert Carnahan, Christine Cid, Will Farrellbegg, Dave Shafer and George Topoll.

Guests present included Rick Powers, Justin Mount, Mike Yacullo, Jeff Huet, Zully Alvarata, Matt Deitchley, Bill McCall, Christopher Murphy, Don Oliphant, Tom Silich, Jim Nowacki, Tim Zorn and Andrew Steele. Mary Enright participated via conference phone.

Staff present included Ty Warner, Angie Hayes, Jody Melton, Allen Hammond, Kathy Luther, Mitch Barloga, Scott Weber, James Winters, Stephen Sostaric, Gary Evers and Mary Thorne.

**Approval of Minutes**

The minutes of the January 19, 2017 meeting of the Full Commission and the February 16, 2017 Executive Board meeting were approved on a motion by Geof Benson and a second by Greg Stinson.

**Report of the Chair**

Michael Griffin said that the committee assignments have been finalized. Except for TPC, the makeup of the committees will stay the same. Assignments of new Commissioners have been made and the committee structure was distributed to Commissioners present. Contact Michael Griffin with questions.

**Report of the Executive Director**

- Ty Warner reported that conversations with NIRPC's legislators took place in Washington DC at the NARC conference last month. Bipartisan effort came out of that with two bills to rescind the MPO "Consolidation" rule made final at the end of last year. (This rule requires functionally merging NIRPC with CMAP in Chicago and SEWRPC in Southeastern Wisconsin after the next Census.) Senate Bill 496 was introduced by Illinois Senator Tammy Duckworth and co-signed by Indiana Senator Todd Young and as well as other Senators and passed swiftly in the Senate. The companion House Bill 1346 was introduced by Illinois Congressman Bill Lipinski and co-sponsored by Indiana Congresswoman Jackie Walorski with 21 co-sponsors. [Congressman Pete Visclosky has since also signed on as a co-sponsor.]
- President Trump's proposed budget was released this morning. Cuts include a 13% decrease (\$2.4 billion) for the Department of Transportation, elimination of interstate service for Amtrak, limited funding for New Starts (significant to NICTD and the South Shore), and elimination of the TIGER grant program. The Department of the Interior National Heritage Areas would be eliminated, the Environmental Protection Agency would see a 31% decrease and the Economic Development Administration would be eliminated completely.
- The Times is creating a "Government Corner" to give municipal representatives an easy opportunity showcase what is happening in their communities. A link to the simple web form for contributing information will be sent to the Commissioners.
- Artwork from Portage High School students is on display in the lobby.

**Finance & Personnel Committee**

Karen Freeman-Wilson reported that the Finance & Personnel Committee met this morning and she presented recommendations for adoption. Some of the recommendations are from the last meeting.

- A procurement recommendation for the Deep River-Burns Waterway Watershed Initiative Cost Share Program and two propane-fueled replacement vehicles for LaPorte Transporte were adopted on a motion by Jim Ton and a second by Geof Benson.
- An agreement between NIRPC and the Kankakee River Basin Commission for provision of general services was adopted on a motion by Greg Stinson and a second by Diane Noll.
- Resolution 17-06, the Title VI Program of the US Department of Transportation under Provision of FTA Circular 4702.1b was adopted on a motion by Jim Ton and a second by Greg Stinson.
- Procurement #17-04.01, the purchase of Northwest Indiana Lake Michigan Watershed native trees to mitigate the canopy loss area from the emerald ash borer damage in connection with the Northwest Indiana Regional Urban Forestry EAB Recovery Program. This procurement was adopted on a motion by Geof Benson and a second by Greg Stinson. Kathy Luther said the application is on NIRPC's Environmental web page. A workshop will be held on March 30 from 9 a.m. to noon at the Lake County Soil & Watershed Conservancy District in Crown Point. Contact Joe Exl for more information.
- An amendment to the 2017 budget to add new funds which are the balance of the original grant and contract for the City of Hobart to pursue possible transit operating options and funding was adopted on a motion by Geof Benson and a second by Justin Kiel.
- Amendment 3 for changes in the basic agreement between NIRPC and SRF Consulting Group, Inc. for the City of Hobart Transit Feasibility Study procured under RFP 15-15 was adopted on a motion by Greg Stinson and a second by Geof Benson.

Karen Freeman-Wilson said she will send the president's proposed budget to Mary Thorne to be forwarded to the Commission.

### **Environmental Management Policy Committee**

Geof Benson said the February minutes were in the packet and the Committee will meet on April 6 at 9 a.m. at NIRPC to hear a presentation by the Environmental Protection Agency on how to get lead out of your drinking water.

### **Technical Planning Committee**

Kevin Breitzke reported that the Technical Planning Committee met on March 14 and heard a presentation by Tina Rongers of Karner Blue regarding the expanded access to knowledge and educational opportunities goal from the *2040 Comprehensive Regional Plan*. The Committee also heard a presentation from South Shore Clean Cities about the Volkswagen settlement funds and how region entities can take advantage of Indiana's \$39 million share. NIRPC staff is working with Merrillville and Hobart officials on a plan to create safe pathways for pedestrians and bicyclists at the I-65 and US 30 interchange area. The public comment period is underway for the next amendment to the *2040 Comprehensive Regional Plan Update Companion* and next four-year TIP.

On a motion by Jim Ton and a second by Geof Benson, the Executive Board approved Resolution 17-07, the update to the National Highway System. Gary Evers explained Amendment 34 to the FY 2016-2019 TIP. The amendment was submitted for a 7-day comment period and reviewed by the Interagency Consultation Group. On a motion by Blair Milo and a second by Geof Benson, the Executive Board approved Resolution 7-04, Amendment #34 to the FY 2016-2019 TIP.

The next meeting of the Technical Planning Committee is scheduled for April 11 at 9 a.m. at NIRPC.

**Legislative Committee** – Blair Milo said the NARC Conference in February was productive as were the meetings with our delegation from the region. The Committee continues to track activities at the federal and state level, including long-term road funding and transportation development districts (TDD's). House Bill 1002 passed and the senate also has a bill of support. The house also passed

HB 1144 which includes language about TDD's associated with the double tracking project by NICTD. The committee will also be looking at the president's proposed budget.

### **Indiana Department of Transportation**

Rick Powers reported that the wire theft has stopped on INDOT's systems, but continues on local roads and on the Indiana Toll Road. INDOT investigated the rumble strip issue and scheduled some repainting. A new wave design will be implemented to provide greater visibility.

**Other Business** - None

### **Public Comment**

Jim Nowacki, resident of Gary, spoke on INDOT, the federal infrastructure system and the need for sidewalks around I-65 and US 30.

### **Announcements**

- Kathy Luther said there will be a Volkswagen diesel emissions settlement funds workshop at NIRPC at 1 p.m. on March 29. Applications are on the website.
- Bob Carnahan announced the Cedar Lake Chamber will host a business showcase on March 18 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

### **Adjournment**

Hearing no other business, Michael Griffin adjourned the meeting at 10:00 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](mailto:mthorne@nirpc.org). Individuals with hearing impairments may contact us through the Indiana Relay 711 service by calling 711 or (800) 743-3333.

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