

NIRPC Full Commission Meeting  
6100 Southport Road, Portage, IN  
December 14, 2017  
Minutes

**Call to Order**

Chairman Michael Griffin called the meeting to order at 9:10 a.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance and self-introductions.

Commissioners present included Jeannette Bapst, Geof Benson, Jim Biggs, Kevin Breitzke, Robert Carnahan, Christine Cid, Bill Emerson, Jr., Don Ensign, Will Farrellbegg, Tom Fath, Michael Griffin, Richard Hardaway, Jack Jeralds, Justin Kiel, Cary Kirkham, Andrew Kyres, Jeff Larson, Tom McDermott, Jr., Diane Noll, Rick Ryfa, Tom Schmitt, Dave Shafer, Brian Snedecor, Ed Soliday, Joe Stahura, Greg Stinson, Mary Tanis, Jim Ton and George Topoll.

Guests present included Rick Powers, Lyndsay Quist, Matt Deitchley, David Wright, Dennis Metheny, Dean Button, Randy Strasser, Jonathan Kruger, AJ Monroe, Ismail Attallah, Tom Silich, Jim Nowacki, Andrew Steele and Tim Zorn.

Staff present included Ty Warner, Kathy Luther, Daria Sztaba, Allen Hammond, Eman Ibrahim, Mitch Barloga, Meredith Stilwell, Scott Weber, James Winters, Stephen Sostaric, Jody Melton and Mary Thorne.

**Public Comment**

Jim Nowacki, resident of Gary, commented on his concerns about sidewalk and roadway conditions and future projects in Gary.

David Wright overviewed current and new transit operations in Gary.

**New Appointments**

David Hollenbeck announced the appointments of Matt Murphy from the City of Valparaiso and Mary Brown from the City of Gary.

**Presentation**

Mitch Barloga presented on the Marquette Greenway TIGER grant application. The program is offered yearly by the USDOT. Our application is for the 30-mile balance of the 58-mile Marquette Greenway route in an ask amount of \$24.2 million along with 74 letters of support from Michigan, Indiana and Illinois. The total project amount is \$33 million. The recipients should be announced early next year. If we do not get an award, we will resubmit under the second round in the Spring. More information can be found at <http://www.nirpc.org/2040-plan/transportation/tiger/>

**Minutes**

On a motion by Kevin Breitzke and a second by Mary Tanis, the minutes of the October 19, 2017 Full Commission meeting were approved by the Full Commission.

Under general consent, Michael Griffin moved to the report of the Finance & Personnel Committee to allow for a vote on the 2018 budget by the Full Commission.

#### **Finance & Personnel Committee**

Kathy Luther described the transfer within categories under Amendment #7 transferring \$15,000 to the E-Tip from E-Tip and Household Travel Survey. On a motion by Geof Benson and a second by Jim Ton, the Commission voted to approved amendment #7 to the FY 2017 budget. Kathy Luther described the transfer within categories under Amendment #8, transferring \$8,000 to MPO conference and audit and accounting contractual. On a motion by Geof Benson and a second by Greg Stinson, the Commission voted to approved amendment #8 to the FY 2017 budget.

Kathy Luther described the agreement between NIRPC and Westat for the Regional Household Travel Survey, which is performed every 10 years. On a motion by Jim Ton and a second by Geof Benson, the Commission voted to adopt the agreement as presented.

Kathy Luther explained the revenue and Daria Sztaba explained the expenses as outlined in the proposed 2018 budget, which match our grants. Dave Shafer said the Finance & personnel recommends the 2018 budget for adoption. On a motion by Dave Shafer and a second by Greg Stinson, the Commission voted to adopt the contract for legal services as presented.

#### **Report of the Chair**

Michael Griffin reported that the by-laws committee consisting of Dave Shafer, George Topoll, Justin Kiel, Will Farrellbegg and Michael Griffin submitted a draft to the attorney. The task force will meet once more and then they will present the draft by-laws to the Commission in 2018. Mary Tanis will serve as the Chair of the Legislative Committee. NIRPC received a certificate of excellence in financial reporting, the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) for the period ending 2016.

#### **Report of the Executive Director**

Ty Warner commented that the by-laws are more than just procedures which is why they are being reviewed by our attorney. Mr. Warner announced new staff members: Daria Sztaba, Chief Financial Officer; Charles Bradsky, Transportation Projects Manager; Trey Wadsworth, Director of Transportation and Talaya Jones, Chief Accountant. Mr. Warner commented that bringing millennial demographics in our 2050 update in 2019 will be taking place and NIRPC has partnered with One Region. He welcomed Leah Konrady, Director of One Region, who commented that it was an exciting partnership with good synergy to identify issues in the region. Mr. Warner said that he contacted the regional head of the EDA in Chicago and the rules and composition changed. We will rework the Economic Development District application to make it more explicit so that the EDD is again a NIRPC function.

#### **Environmental Management Policy Committee**

Geof Benson said the minutes from the last meeting were in the packet. The next EMPC meeting will take place on January 4 at 9 a.m. at NIRPC. Kay Nelson said she has been appointed by Governor Holcomb to the VW Trust Fund Board. IDEM will be scoring the applications for the Board's final decisions. For more information on the mitigation trust program go to <http://www.in.gov/idem/airquality/2712.htm>. Kay Nelson said IDEM Commissioner Bruno Pigott will attend the joint Forum-EMPC meeting on January 4.

### **Technical Planning Committee**

- Kevin Breitzke reported that the Technical Planning Committee met on December 5 and heard an update from staff on TIGER grant application for the Marquette Greenway and a short video on year-round use of walkways to crease activity.
- Stephen Sostaric reported that there were no comments received on the FY 2018-2021 Transportation Improvement Program Amendments.
- Charles Bradsky explained Resolution 17-23, Amendment #5 to the FY 2018-2021 Transportation Improvement Program for local projects as recommended by the TPC. On a motion by Jim Ton and a second by Don Ensign, the Commission voted to adopt Resolution 17-23, FY 2018-2021 TIP Amendment #5.
- Charles Bradsky explained Resolution 17-24, Amendment #6 to the FY 2018-2021 Transportation Improvement Program for INDOT projects as recommended by the TPC. On a motion by George Topoll and a second by Brian Snedecor, the Commission voted to adopt Resolution 17-24, FY 2018-2021 TIP Amendment #6.
- James Winters explained Resolution 17-25, Amendment #7 to the FY 2018-2021 Transportation Improvement Program adding a regular line item for NICTD's West Lake and double tracking projects which was omitted from the FY 2018-2021 TIP as recommended by the TPC. On a motion by Jim Ton and a second by George Topoll, the Commission voted to adopt Resolution 17-23, FY 2018-2021 TIP Amendment #5.

The next meeting of the Technical Planning Committee is scheduled for January 9, 2018 at 9 a.m. at NIRPC.

### **Indiana Department of Transportation**

Rick Powers reported that wire theft is occurring again. INDOT is replacing the copper with aluminum, as much as possible.

### **Other Business**

- Kevin Breitzke commented that the engineers were sent a letter from INDOT asking for feedback on the LPA program. They are rewriting recertification for your employees in responsible charge (ERCs). The continuing education will start early next year.
- Ed Soliday commented that there is concern about all the rapid growth in south Lake County and how to plan ahead for this, especially on US 41. He asked for a presentation on NIRPC and INDOT's future plans for the area.

### **Announcements**

- Bob Carnahan announced that Cedar Lake has hired a new police chief, Dave Coulson.
- Cary Kirkham said the LaPorte County Coroner's budget has been blown out due to the cost of autopsies and seeks a centralized regional site for autopsies to reduce costs.
- Jan Bapst said a group called Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) serves children removed from their homes because of neglect and opioid abuse. Volunteers are welcome.
- In response to a question by Tom McDermott, Michael Griffin said public comment is limited to 3 minutes and it is noted on the request for public comment form. NIRPC has a principle called "Chairman's Rules". The new by-laws will define these principles.
- Tom Schmitt commented on the recent big box store ruling on the tax structure. A Target store in St. John wants the same tax rate as an empty Kmart store. Bob Carahan announced a 16 Plus meeting tomorrow at 9 a.m. in Schererville.
- Jeff Larson said Porter passed \$50 million in bonds for infrastructure improvements.
- Bill Emerson said Lake County Commission is in the middle of their comprehensive plan 5 year update and thanked NIRPC staff for their assistance.
- Ty Warner said the next meeting is January 18 at 9 a.m. and it must be a meeting of the Full Commission in order to elect the 2018 officers.

### **Adjournment**

Hearing no other business, Michael Griffin adjourned the meeting at 10:45 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.*

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