



## WASHTENAW AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY (WATS)

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### Minutes

POLICY COMMITTEE

DATE: September 17, 2014

TIME: 9:30 a.m.

PLACE: Patrick Barrie Conference Room, 705 N Zeeb Rd, Ann Arbor, MI 48103

**Members Present:** Village of Dexter – Jim Carson, Chair  
Scio Township – Nancy Hedberg, Vice-Chair  
City of Ann Arbor – Chuck Warpehoski  
Dexter Township – Harley Rider  
City of Saline – Brian Marl  
MDOT Planning– Pam Boyd  
MDOT University Region – Kari Martin  
City of Chelsea – Melissa Johnson  
WCRC – Doug Fuller  
City of Ann Arbor DDA – Keith Orr  
Northfield Township – Howard Fink  
SEMCOG – Tom Bruff  
University of Michigan – Steve Dolen for Hank Baeir  
WCBOC – Yousef Rabhi  
SWWCOG – Gene DeRossett  
Pittsfield Township – Mandy Grewal  
Superior Township – Ken Schwartz  
City of Ypsilanti – Peter Murdock

**Members Absent:** TheRide – Charles Griffith  
City of Milan –Michael Armitage  
Ann Arbor Township – Mike Moran  
Ypsilanti Township – Brenda Stumbo  
FHWA – Andy Pickard  
EMU –

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#### POLICY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

• City of Ann Arbor • Ann Arbor DDA • Ann Arbor Township • City of Chelsea • Village of Dexter • Dexter Township • Eastern Michigan University • Michigan Department of Transportation • City of Milan • Northfield Township • Pittsfield Township • City of Saline • Scio Township • Southwest Washtenaw Council of Governments • Superior Township • The Ride University of Michigan • Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners • Washtenaw County Road Commission • City of Ypsilanti • Ypsilanti Township • Ex Officio: Federal Highway Administration • Southeast Michigan Council of Governments •

An Intermunicipality Committee organized under Act 200 of Public Acts of Michigan (1957)  
representing Washtenaw County

**Others Present:** WATS – Ryan Buck, Mark Ferrall, Suzann Flowers, Nick Sapkiewicz  
MDOT - Chris Gulock  
WCRC - Roy Townsend  
SEMCOG - Amy Malmer

1. Call to Order

Chair Carson called the meeting to order at 9:36 AM.

2. Approval of the Agenda

Ms. Grewal made a motion to approve the agenda. Mr. Rider supported the motion and it passed.

3. Approval of the August 20, 2014 Policy Committee Minutes

Ms. Hedberg offered one change to the minutes, requesting staff correct her agency report to say “oil exploration” rather than “mining operations”.

Ms. Hedberg made a motion to approve the August 20, 2014 minutes as amended. Mr. DeRossett supported the motion and it passed.

4. Public Participation

No members of the audience made comments.

5. Communications and Announcements

Mr. Buck stated that WATS notified additional recipients of Small Urban funds following the State’s announcement in September.

He added that the decennial National Functional Classification processes commenced. WATS will be working with SEMCOG and coordinating with local agencies to make necessary updates.

Lastly, he said that WATS scheduled three public meetings for the Public Participation Plan to provide an additional opportunity to comment on the way WATS will collaborate with the public. The first meeting was in Manchester.

6. Approval of Bills over \$500

Chair Carson said there was 1 bill over \$500 for approval.

- Washtenaw County - \$27,543.66 - (WATS CD)

Mr. Fuller made a motion approve the bills over \$500. Ms. Hedberg supported the motion and it passed.

7. Old Business

There was no old business

8. New Business

A. Draft WATS 2013 Crash Report

Mr. Buck said that WATS appreciated comments on the Draft Crash Report, which were incorporated into the new draft.

Mr. Rider made a motion to approve the 2013 Crash Report. Mr. Fuller supported the motion and it passed.

#### B. Urban Surface Transportation Program

Mr. Sapkiewicz presented the Urban Surface Transportation Program recommended by the Urban Federal Aid and Technical Committees.

Mr. Fink requested clarification of the urban area, and asked why townships were not represented in the spreadsheet.

Mr. Townsend explained to the committee that the Road Commission receives federal funds and implements projects for the County's Townships. Since the road commission is the implementing agency for projects, the road commission is identified in the spreadsheet instead of the townships.

Ms. Grewal asked if the amount of funding directed toward Preventive Maintenance was low compared to previous years. Mr. Townsend said that it was lower than normal, but added that this was only the federally funded portion of the preventive maintenance program.

Mr. Fuller made a motion to approve the Urban Surface Transportation Program. Ms. Boyd supported the motion and it passed.

#### C. WATS FY 2014 4th Quarter Financial Statements

Mr. Buck asked the committee to review the Fourth Quarter Financial Statements. He stated that insurance costs were slightly over, and that WATS had sent out its audit RFP.

Ms. Grewal made a motion to approve the Fourth Quarter Financial Statements. Mr. Schwartz supported the motion and it passed.

#### D. Full-Time Employee Personnel Policies

Mr. Buck reviewed proposed changes to the Full-Time Employee Personnel Policies. He stated the proposal includes changes that:

- Provide benefits to domestic partners
- Modernize the dress code
- Allow the Director to close the office
- Change sick and vacation time to Paid Time Off

Mr. Fuller stated that he thought that Paid Time Off time should be paid out at 100% at separation, since the employee already accrued that time as a benefit.

Mr. DeRossett made a motion to approve the new personnel policies. Mr. Rabhi supported the motion and it passed.

#### E. Part-Time Employee Personnel Policies

Mr. Buck said the packet also included a new personnel policies document for part time employees.

Mr. Fuller and Ms. Grewal expressed concern that these policies weren't being reviewed by a lawyer.

Mr. Fink made a motion to approve the Part Time Employee Personnel Policies, contingent on legal review of the changes. Ms. Hedberg supported the motion and it passed.

#### F. Washtenaw Federal Aid Committee - Urban Representative to SEMCOG TCC

Mr. Buck said that WATS was appointing a representative to SEMCOG's TCC, so that staff could serve as an advisory role rather than as representatives. He said that Mr. Townsend had volunteered as the primary representative, and Mr. Kirton would serve as the alternate.

Mr. Marl made a motion to approve the representatives to SEMCOG's TCC. Mr. Rabhi supported the motion and it passed.

#### G. WATS Space - (Action)

Mr. Buck said that the packet included a proposal to allow him to sign a new long term lease with the County at a downtown location. He stated that meeting location was separate from where the WATS offices are. Mr. Buck added that staff (Director excluded) would get a \$70 monthly stipend to cover parking or transportation expenses.

Mr. Fuller said that the Road Commission could accommodate meetings.

Mr. Carson stated that the \$70 stipend would ensure that the move wasn't punitive to staff.

Mr. Fink made a motion authorize the Director to sign a new lease. Mr. Marl supported the motion and it passed.

#### H. Annual Review

Mr. Carson stated that every year, the Policy Committee reviews the Director. He said that this year, the Executive Committee pursued feedback from WATS staff and outside agencies,

to gauge the performance of Mr. Buck and the agency. Ms. Hedberg summarized the comments, which were all positive.

Mr. Fuller said the committee should pat itself on the back for hiring Mr. Buck.

Mr. Carson thanked everyone for their help with the review.

#### I. Director Employment Letter

Mr. Carson announced that the new offer of employment for Mr. Buck was sent to the committee. He provided a context of Mr. Buck's initial hire as Director, noting that he was hired at a salary much lower than his predecessor. He said that Ryan's performance and a comparison to other similar positions around the state justified the proposed salary of \$90,000.

Mr. Fink said that he felt these types of positions should come with a contract.

Mr. Carson said this hasn't been discussed, but could be, and that the agency does have a severance package.

Mr. Marl announced he saw merit in exploring a contract.

Mr. Warpehoski asked if it would be appropriate to change the position title back to Executive Director.

Mr. Fuller said that since Mr. Buck only supervises 3 other staff, the title of Director is more appropriate. He added that though he appreciates Mr. Buck and his work as Director, he couldn't support such a substantial raise.

Mr. Orr said that the issue of the raise might be reduced to optics versus metrics, where the 12.75% raise appears large, but only brings Mr. Buck's compensation in line with similar positions around the state.

Mr. Fink made a motion to extend an offer letter to Mr. Buck, with a salary that was derived by a comparative and merit-based analysis of similar positions. Mr. Marl supported the motion and it passed. Mr. Fuller and Mr. Murdock voted against the motion.

### 9. Agency Reports

#### A) Ann Arbor DDA

Mr. Orr introduced himself to the committee, and said that the DDA was discussing transportation options downtown.

B) City of Chelsea

Ms. Johnson reported that the City received \$377,000 for Safe Route to School improvements. She added that the lawsuit with Sylvan Township was dismissed, and that the City was exploring a possible non-motorized connection to Dexter.

C) Scio Township

Ms. Hedberg said that the oil exploration in Scio Township failed to find oil, and so the exploration would cease. Ms. Hedberg added that the township was working to update ordinances to ensure the community was prepared for any future oil exploration. Lastly, Ms. Hedberg said that the township was partnering with the Road Commission for work on Liberty, Park Road, West Delhi, Stein, and Marshall roads through a recent per parcel assessment.

D) WCRC

Mr. Fuller announced that the project underway in Dexter Township is progressing. He added that the County Board of Commissioners would decide on the list of Public Act 283 projects the Road Commission put forward. He said that though they are the same contractor, the Ann Arbor Saline Project was severely behind schedule but the Carpenter project, despite early setbacks, was on schedule. Lastly, Mr. Fuller said the Road Commission was continuing its annual set of meetings with township officials.

Mr. Townsend added that the Ann Arbor Saline work could finish with then next week. He said staff are currently evaluating the next several years of the CIP, and noted that in 2015 the Road Commission would work on 5 bridges, and 5 more in 2016.

E) MDOT University Region

Ms. Martin stated that the US-23 Environmental Assessment document was nearing completion, and that she and other MDOT staff would meet with WATS later that day. She added that Jackson/Huron is behind schedule. Lastly, she said that MDOT was partnering with SEMCOG to update the Non-motorized plan for Southeast Michigan, and that there would be a meeting in Washtenaw County later that week.

F) City of Saline

Mr. Marl said that after analysis, city staff found vertical separation problems with sidewalks throughout Saline. He said that the city would use funding to grind and correct the issues. Lastly, he said that MDOT encouraged the Saline City Council to explore a contract with a private firm to evaluate potential alternatives for their US-12 project in Saline. Mr. Marl said the the city was looking to hire URS soon to determine feasibility of a 4 to 3 conversion in downtown.

G) City of Ann Arbor

Mr. Warpehoski stated that the city was considering a resolution to support the PA 283 proposal in front of the County Board of Commissioners.

H) Pittsfield Township

Ms. Grewal reported that the work started on Phase 2 of the Lohr-Textile Greenway. She said the township was hosting charrettes to plan and design the growth nodes the township identified in its most recent master plan.

I) Superior Township

Mr. Schwartz said that the township was accepting bids for snow removal.

J) Washtenaw County

Mr. Rabhi said that the county was looking to temporarily address the persistent funding shortfall for roads through a countywide PA 283 assessment that funds projects identified by the Road Commission. He said the board was exploring alternatives and long term options. The projects would be voted on at an October meeting. He added that county staff held charrettes for the Platt Road Property, and that planning for the site continues.

K) Dexter Village

Chair Carson said that work continued on the Village's fall projects.

L) City of Ypsilanti

Mr. Murdock reported that the city approved preferred and secondary designs for the I-94 crossing in Ypsilanti.

M) SEMCOG

Mr. Bruff stated that SEMCOG was in the final phases of its Regional Non-Motorized Plan, and that the adoption process would begin at the next TCC meeting. He said there was an upcoming workshop on winter maintenance. Lastly, there was an October workshop coming up exploring federal funding and the TIP.

N) SWWCOG

Mr. DeRossett said that the bridge replacement millage passed, so work would begin in March.

O) MDOT Planning

Ms. Boyd said that a final list Small Urban and Rural Programs would be complete at the end of the month, and that it would include job numbers to coincide with TIP development. She announced that the Summer TIP is complete.

Ms. Boyd added that MDOT and local agencies are becoming accustomed to the new normal of regularly depleted federal aid. She encouraged agencies to submit projects early to avoid losing funding.

10. Adjournment

Mr. Fuller made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Warpehoski supported the motion, it passed, and the meeting adjourned at 11:28 am.