

Minutes of Meeting

POLICY COMMITTEE

DATE: October 20, 2021

TIME: 9:30 pm

PLACE: ZOOM Virtual Meeting

* This meeting was held via ZOOM conference call in accordance with the Open Meetings Act due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Members Present: City of Saline – Brian Marl, Chair
Eastern Michigan University - Leigh Greden, Vice Chair
WCBOC – Jason Morgan, Treasurer
Ann Arbor Township – Diane O'Connell
City of Ann Arbor – Erica Briggs
City of Ypsilanti – Jennifer Symanns
Dexter Township - Karen Sikkenga
MDOT Region - Mike Davis (for Kari Martin)
Pittsfield Township – Mandy Grewal
TheRide – Matt Carpenter
University of Michigan – Henry Baier
Washtenaw County Road Commission – Sheryl Siddall (for Doug Fuller)

Members Absent: City of Ann Arbor DDA – Vacant
City of Chelsea – Charles Wisely
City of Dexter – Shawn Keough
City of Milan - Dominic Hamden
Northfield Township - Ken Dignan
Scio Township - Jane Vogel
Superior Township – Ken Schwartz
SWWCOG – Ron Miley
Ypsilanti Township – Brenda Stumbo

Others Present: WATS - Ryan Buck, Nick Sapkiewicz, Suzann Flowers, Emily Lake
MDOT - Max Gierman

POLICY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

City of Ann Arbor • Ann Arbor DDA • Ann Arbor Township • City of Chelsea • City 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 •

SEMCOG - Stephen Brudzinski
TheRide - Caitlin Conway, Dina Reed, Bryan Smith, Scott Robinson
Public - Jim Mogensen
WAVE - Julia Roberts

1. Call to Order/Introductions

Chair Marl called the meeting to order at 9:35am. Introductions were made.

2. Approval of Agenda

Ms. Grewal made a motion to approve the meeting agenda, Mr. Greden supported the motion, motion approved.

3. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Carpenter made a motion to approve the August 18, 2021 minutes, supported by Mr. Morgan, motion approved.

4. Public Participation

Mr. Mogensen noted that the Equity analysis groups transit as a whole, and this may make it difficult to prioritize transit capital investments such as PEX electric buses or the Ypsilanti transit center. TheRide's new Gold Ride service is not sustainable for seniors with \$20 fares. Mr. Mogensen asked for a reimagining of how that service may happen at a more affordable cost.

5. Communications and Announcements

Mr. Buck provided the following updates:

- Dues letters have gone out. Contact Mr. Buck if you have any questions regarding your status.
- The 2020 Annual Report and Listing of Obligated Projects is available on the WATS website.
- Minor updates have been made to the Public Participation Plan. The draft plan will go out for a 45-day public comment period before being formally presented to the Committee in December or January.
- The 2023-2026 TIP development is underway. All project applications have been received and are scored. There will be a public meeting tomorrow, October 21 with presentations at 6pm and 6:30pm to discuss the process. WATS staff will be attending the Ypsilanti and Ann Arbor farmers market with pop-up information booths. Posters have also been placed in buses and libraries throughout the county with a map of projects being considered and comment boxes.
- The asset management collection is nearly complete, with the exception of the state trunkline system. Unfortunately MDOT was unable to participate this year, but staff from the Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study are helping WATS staff complete the data collection so that 100% of the federal aid network will be collected for 2021.
- Route Ypsilanti tactical urbanism has been fully implemented. The final public survey will close at the end of the month. Chelsea POP treatments are beginning to be installed.

Mr. Carpenter reported:

- TheRide has been engaging in a Long Range Planning process about the future of transit and will provide a presentation and full briefing of hypothetical scenarios at the next Committee meeting.

6. Bills over \$500

There were none.

7. Old Business

There were none.

8. New Business

A. First Call FY-2022 LRP Amendments - Action

Ms. Flowers informed the Committee that People's Express (PEX) has submitted a project to be added to the Long Range Transportation Plan (RLP) for FY 2030. The LRP amendment would be locally funded in the amount of \$3 million to add an indoor parking facility for PEX electric vehicles.

Ms. Briggs made a motion to approve the FY 2022 LRP amendments as presented, supported by Mr. Baier, motion approved.

B. First Call FY 2022 TIP Amendments - Action

Ms. Flowers provided a list of 10 amendments to the 2020-2023 TIP. Amendments include significant changes to cost, scope, project limits, new grant awards, etc. New investments in the 2020-2023 TIP total \$24.7 million, including several regionally significant projects.

Ms. Lake provided an overview of the Environmental Justice (EJ) and Opportunity Index review. Current investment in EJ areas is \$104M, or 17% of the total TIP value. Current investment in low and very low opportunity areas is \$52M, or 8% of the total TIP value.

Mr. Morgan noted that it would be helpful for WATS staff to include the percentage of area county-wide that is classified as low opportunity.

Ms. O'Connell made a motion to approve the first call FY 2022 TIP amendments as presented, supported by Ms. Symanns, motion approved.

C. First Call FY 2022 TIP Modifications - Information

Ms. Flowers provided a list of 13 minor modifications to the TIP for the FY 2022 first call. Modifications include minor cost changes, changes to scope and limits of projects, etc.

D. Director Review - Action

Mr. Greden provided information regarding the process for reviewing the director's performance and assessing his compensation. Surveys and questions sent to Committee members, staff, and partners reflected very favorable feedback.

Based on Mr. Buck's excellent job performance, the WATS Executive Committee recommends a 10 percent raise in base pay (2.5% per year since the previous evaluation was conducted in 2017) and a one time bonus of \$4,000. Compensation paid to directors at peer organizations were assessed and showed this amount to be on the low end of peer organizations.

The committee expressed concern with Mr. Buck's compensation being on the low end of peer organizations, and discussed the need to provide an additional compensation review within the next year.

Ms. Grewal made a motion to approve the recommendations as presented with an additional compensation review in June 2022, supported by Ms. Siddall, motion approved.

Mr. Buck thanked the Policy Committee for their action, the Executive Committee for their work during the review process, and WATS staff for their hard work.

E. Public Transit Agency Safety Plan (PTASP) - Action

Mr. Sapkiewicz provided information regarding TheRide's Public Transit Agency Safety Plan. The plan describes TheRide's safety policies, risk management, safety assurances, and safety promotion. Developed using FTA safety guidance, the plan identifies obtainable targets for fatalities and injuries.

The Technical Committee recommended adopting the plan with support of SEMCOG's regionally set targets. TheRide finds no conflicts with this since their targets are already lower than the regional numbers.

Mr. Morgan made a motion to acknowledge receipt of, accept, and adopt TheRide's Transit Safety Plan as part of the WATS 2045 Long Range Plan, with support of SEMCOG's regionally set targets, supported by Ms. Briggs, motion approved.

10. Adjournment

Chair Marl adjourned the meeting at 10:19 am.