

BINGHAMTON METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION STUDY
POLICY COMMITTEE
MARCH 3, 2008

MINUTES

The meeting was called to order by the Chair at 1:30PM.

John Bertoni, newly elected Mayor of the Village of Endicott, was welcomed to the committee.

Roll call:

Members present:

Supervisor Carol Sweeney, Chair, Town of Owego
Mayor Harry Lewis, Vice Chair, Village of Johnson City
Mayor Matthew Ryan, City of Binghamton
County Executive Barbara Fiala, represented by Deputy Executive Patrick Brennan
Supervisor Margaret Turna, Town of Chenango
Supervisor John Bernardo, Town of Union, represented by Lou Caforio
Supervisor Peter Andreasen, Town of Vestal
Elaine Jardine, STERPDB
Commissioner Astrid Glynn, NYSDOT, represented by Jack Williams

Others present:

Steven Gayle, BMTS staff
John Sterbentz, BMTS staff
Scott Reigle, BMTS staff
Jennifer Yonkoski, BMTS staff

- Approval of minutes of May 30, 2007. Moved Brennan, second Turna. Approved by consensus.
- Approval of minutes of November 28, 2007. Moved Brennan, second Jardine. Approved by consensus.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

The offices of Chair and Vice Chair of the Policy Committee are to be filled for a two year term. Jack Williams had been appointed to chair the Nominating Committee. On behalf of the committee, he placed the following names in nomination: Chair – Carol Sweeney, Vice Chair – Harry Lewis.

- Motion to accept the recommendation of the Nominating Committee and elect Carol Sweeney Chair and Harry Lewis Vice-Chair for a two year term ending December 31, 2009. Moved Brennan, second Andreasen. Approved by consensus.

OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

No comments were offered.

ACTION ITEM: 2008-2009 UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM

Steven Gayle reviewed the Draft 2008-2009 Unified Planning Work Program, noting that it had been recommended for approval by the BMTS Planning Committee at its January 31 meeting. He noted that most of the major studies were directly related to the 2005 long range plan, including the Main Street Corridor, transit consolidation, and pedestrian safety inventory. He stated that the UPWP budget is \$512,300 in Federal funds, noting that the FHWA PL program provides for unexpended and unprogrammed funds to roll over, while each of the FTA grants is maintained until fully expended. It is unusual to have 3 old FTA grants; it is a consequence of unexpected savings on the contract for the household attitudinal survey, among other factors, requiring reprogramming of those funds. The old grants will be closed before the end of the year. While roll over FHWA funds have been used to support consultant work, like the household travel behavior survey in the last UPWP, no consultant work is programmed for 2008-2009.

Steven Gayle reviewed the staffing plan. He reminded the Committee that a personnel change had been accomplished during 2007 with the assistance of Broome County, deleting a traffic engineer title that he had been unable to keep filled, and creating a transportation analyst title. We have been at full staff since June, and expect that to continue.

- Resolution 2008-01, Approving the 2008-2009 Unified Planning Work Program and associated grant budgets. Moved Andreasen, second Turna, approved by consensus.
- Resolution 2008-02, Approving the 2008-2009 Unified Planning Work Program Staffing Plan. Moved Lewis, second Caforio. Approved by consensus.

Steven Gayle explained that the contract between NYSDOT and Broome County regarding the hosting of BMTS staff has a term through 2011-12, but a new supplemental agreement must be executed each year to reflect the actual UPWP budget.

- Resolution 2008-03 Approving Supplemental Agreement #3 to the New York State DOT – Broome County Master Agreement. Moved Turna, second Caforio. Approved by consensus.

ACTION ITEM: 2008-2012 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

Steven Gayle distributed updated tables detailing 2 proposed amendments to the 2008-2012 TIP.

Pam Eshbaugh explained the basis for the need to program final design money for I-81/NY 17 Prospect Mountain, Phases 1 and 2. Phase 1 was programmed in the previous TIP, but could not be obligated until design approval was granted. This was scheduled for July 2007, but did not occur until February 2008. Money for Phase 2 design was not programmed. The amendment will roll forward the money programmed for Phase 1, and add \$1.8 million in NHS. Phase 2 design will be paid from the Interstate Maintenance program; the construction of Phase 2 is split between NHS and IM. Carol Sweeney asked for clarification on Phase 2 construction.

Steven Gayle explained the second action. Broome County had requested an additional \$1 million for the Intermodal Transit Terminal, due to higher than expected property acquisition and environmental assessment costs. The TIP Subcommittee had reviewed the request, which required an offset from the same fund source, STP-Flex. The City of Binghamton had

reviewed the cost estimate for the Front Street Gateway project, and determined that the offset could be taken from there. Mayor Ryan stated both projects were important to the City. The Committee agreed that they would not entertain any further requests for additional Federal funds for that project from the County. Elaine Jardine inquired about match. Steven Gayle responded that the funding was 80% Federal (\$800,000), 10% State, 10% County. Pam Eshbaugh stated that even though the 2 projects are scheduled to be obligated in different fiscal years, NYSDOT would do their best to accommodate the amendment.

Jack Williams asked about the scheduled letting of the Front Street Gateway project in terms of avoiding conflicts with the I-86 Prospect Mountain Phase 1 work and its impact on the traveling public and diversion routes they may choose to use. NYSDOT is looking at the schedule for NY 201 of NY 434 and Vestal Road for the same purpose. Mayor Ryan said the City would look into the matter.

- Resolution 2008-04, Amending the 2008-2012 Transportation Improvement Program. Moved Brennan, second Lewis. Approved by consensus.

ACTION ITEM: BINGHAMTON REGIONAL FREIGHT STUDY

Steven Gayle reported that the freight study continued to face delays, most recently in terms of a major data issue that involved both Global Insight and NYSDOT. This seems to have been resolved, and we expect a final product perhaps by May. Despite the delays, the product should be useful. The study will help local economic development officials identify opportunities and business sectors they should pursue, based on the operation and capacity of the highway and rail system with respect to freight. It will also assist NYSDOT and BMTS in identifying potential capital projects that will benefit freight movement in a way that can support the regional economy.

Jack Williams noted that at the DOT Commissioner's Roundtable on February 21, the issue of getting more freight on rail was promoted, based on energy efficiency. Steven Gayle noted that rail was most appropriate from long distance moves.

Steven Gayle explained the resolution before the Committee. Some of the rail freight data that the consultant needs is provided by the US Surface Transportation Board only to states, and includes some proprietary information. NYSDOT requires that BMTS and our consultant sign an agreement granting access only for the purposes of this study.

- Resolution 2008-05, Authorizing the Chair to sign on behalf of BMTS an agreement with New York State DOT granting access to certain proprietary freight rail data. Moved Andreasen, second Jardine. Approved by consensus.

DISCUSSION ITEM: FUTURE OF THE FEDERAL TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM

Steven Gayle briefed the Committee on the report of the National Surface Transportation Policy and Revenue Study Commission, which was released January 15. The Commission was established by Congress to advise it on the policy and vision that should drive the Federal transportation program, and the revenue implications. Looking as much as 50 years into the future, their findings include the need for a strong Federal program that reflected a national purpose in limited areas including managing the infrastructure, safety, global competitiveness and freight movement, metropolitan mobility and congestion. They propose that Federal support must be performance based. One concern of note to BMTS is a focus

on metropolitan areas greater than 1 million population. While that is where the major problems are, we have to look out for the needs and resources for smaller metro areas like Binghamton.

DISCUSSION ITEM: NYSDOT UPDATE

Jack Williams briefed the Committee on a number of items.

He thanked Supervisor Sweeney, Mayor Ryan, and County Executive Fiala for participating in the Commissioner's Roundtable on February 21, and thanked Steven Gayle for his presentation on regional needs. The Commissioner found the event helpful.

He noted that Region 9 was continuing to work on fully integrating Tioga County, and that they had finally received program allocations for projects in the county. Turner's Bridge was moving forward, managed by Region 6. Elaine Jardine inquired about the NY 434 paving project. Jack responded that they were working on the project schedule. He confirmed that the full integration of the capital program will happen only with the 2009 program update.

He reported that the Transportation Enhancements Program was entering a new round of grant applications, with an informational workshop today. He encouraged members to look at that fund source as a way to enhance projects in which NYSDOT may only be addressing pavements. Steven Gayle reminded the Committee that if they were considering a TEP application, Scott Reigle of BMTS staff as available to help answer questions.

BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR

None was offered.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:50 PM.