

**Strafford Metropolitan Planning Organization  
Policy Committee Meeting  
150 Wakefield Street, Suite 12, Conference Rm. 1A  
Rochester, NH 03867**

**Minutes**

**Friday December 21, 2018  
9:00 AM-11:00 AM**

**1. – Introductions**

The meeting was called to order at 9:05 AM

Members: Mark Avery (Madbury), Mike Bobinsky (Somersworth), Wayne Burton (Durham), Tom Crosby (Madbury), Steve Diamond (Barrington), Don Hamman (Rochester), Jon Hotchkiss (Middleton), John Huckins (Barrington), Fred Kane (Lee), David Landry (Dover), Victoria Parmele (Northwood), Liz Strachan (NHDES), Michael Williams (COAST)

Staff: Jennifer Czyns (Executive Director), Colin Lentz (Sr. Transportation Planner)

**2. Convene SRPC Commission Meeting**

Members briefly convened a special session of the SRPC Commission to vote on a mid-year budget adjustment.

**2.1 Approval of the FY2019 Mid-Year Budget [VOTE]**

D. Hamman made a motion to approve the FY2019 Mid-Year budget adjustment.

Seconded by J. Hotchkiss.

J. Czyns explained that the mid-year adjustment was necessary to reflect actual operating costs compared to what was anticipated when the budget was first developed at the beginning of the fiscal year. She noted that there were some grants that had been incorporated into the budget after it had been developed.

D. Landry noted that it was difficult to make a detailed determination on the health of the budget. J. Czyns acknowledged this and noted that the executive committee tracked the budget at their monthly meetings. She said she would be happy to provide similar monthly reports to Commissioners if they wished.

M. Avery asked what would happen if the Commissioners hypothetically voted against the budget adjustment. J. Czyns said that since the Commission had already voted to approve the full budget at the beginning of the fiscal year, nothing would happen.

V. Parmele asked if this would be a regular occurrence from now on.

M. Williams asked for clarification that SRPC would still be able to spend funds specified in contracts added to the budget since the beginning of the fiscal year even if the commission voted against the mid-year adjustment. J. Czyns confirmed that a “no” vote would not keep SRPC from spending funds in new contracts.

D. Landry said the mid-year adjustment was a good exercise and helpful for commissioners.  
J. Huckins asked about a change in expenses; where a staff member changed from salary to hourly. J. Czysz explained that at the beginning of the year, the budget was designed to support a specific position only through the first quarter. The budget was adjusted to keep that position on a part-time basis. J. Huckins followed up about additional out-sourced contracts that were subsequently added to the budget. J. Czysz explained that the largest out-sourced contract was due to an unexpected requirement to update SRPC's travel demand model – which was an unforeseen expense. The budget had originally included a set-aside for any model work, but those funds had to be supplemented with funds from NH Dept. of Environmental services.

Vote to approve the mid-year budget adjustment: Unanimous in favor

## **2.2 Adjourn SRPC Commission Meeting**

D. Hamman made a motion to adjourn, seconded by M. Bobinsky

## **3. Convene Strafford MPO Policy Committee**

## **4. Staff Communications**

## **5. Action Item(s)**

### **5.1 Minutes from November 2018 [VOTE]**

J. Huckins made a motion to approve the minutes from November. Seconded by M. Williams

### **5.2 2018 Annual Listing of Obligated Projects**

C. Lentz said the Annual Listing of Obligate Projects was an annual record of federal funds spent on transportation improvement projects in the Strafford MPO region. He explained that projects and funding are programmed in the three primary plans (the long-range metro plan, the state's ten year plan, and finally in the STIP). Programmed dollars do not become "real" until the year of expenditure, when FHWA approves the programmed funds (e.g. funds are spent paying sub-contracted services on an individual project).

C. Lentz recalled an important point made by a TAC member that just because funds were obligated to a project doesn't necessarily mean the project made progress toward completion. Communities should do everything possible to advance projects and avoid delay, especially with the end of the FAST Act approaching in June of 2020. C. Lentz noted that another TAC member had requested Strafford MPO staff to track obligated funds on each project on a more regular basis to assist communities advance projects.

C. Lentz review the list of projects that had funding obligated in the 2018 fiscal year.

D. Landry asked if it would be possible to track the history of individual projects to show their timelines. He remembered that certain projects had begun many years before and were now in the Annual Listing (particularly the Dover-Somersworth-Rochester complete streets project). C. Lentz said it would be good to include more detailed project histories in the Annual Listing for long-term project tracking.

D. Landry asked how unexpected changes in projects (requiring increases or decreases in funding) affect programmed (or available) funding for other projects. C. Lentz responded that changes to projects in the current year had a ripple effect to projects 5 or even 10 years out. He noted that funding changes are fluid across the state.

S. Diamond asked if any analysis had been done into why the majority of people still prefer to drive alone, rather than carpool, bike/walk, or take public transit. C. Lentz said he wasn't sure if analysis at that level of detail had been done, but he would be working with other RPC staff on the promotion of alternative modes and improvement of the multimodal network.

Members discussed the need for expanded public transit in the region and to individual communities.

D. Landry asked how the region and various entities followed up on projects to demonstrate the value of the investment. C. Lentz said it was an important question. He suggested that the answer would depend on individual projects but the performance-based planning approach currently being integrated into MPO programs and plans was one way to track the efficacy of investments.

M. Williams noted that COAST is always tracking performance data for their active routes.

M. Williams made a motion to accept the 2018 Annual Listing of Obligated Projects  
Seconded by D. Landry

## **6. Discussion Items**

### **6.1 Decision-maker engagement – resolutions and engagement opportunities**

C. Lentz mentioned that he was continuing to develop “resolutions” regarding regional planning priorities and policies. He presented the current draft resolutions and noted that he would like to form a sub-committee to focus on decision-maker outreach and engagement. C. Lentz said he envisioned the sub-committee providing specific direction to staff for developing communications on specific issues that SRPC committee members could take to state legislators and other decision-makers. He noted the importance of decision-makers hearing directly from municipal representatives rather than from SRPC staff.

C. Lentz said he would bring more specific topics and questions forward for review at the January Policy meeting and asked if there were members initially interested in participating on a sub-committee.

Several Policy members volunteered to be part of the sub-committee:

- M. Bobinsky
- V. Parmele
- W. Burton
- M. Williams
- S. Diamond

V. Parmele asked if the sub-committee would play a role in proposing new legislation. C. Lentz said that would definitely be a role for the sub-committee, but it would be a long-term goal to work with legislators to develop proposed legislation.

J. Cysz emphasized that SRPC staff were precluded from lobbying on behalf of specific issues, and any communication from staff on behalf of the MPO would have to be voted on specifically by the Policy Committee.

S. Diamond asked for an adjustment to resolution language about gas taxes; that it suggest an investigation of other user-fee based approaches such as vehicle-miles traveled. C. Lentz said he would update the language based on his input. S. Diamond asked what local policies specifically supported transit "oriented development". C. Lentz said it could be a range of things: ordinance to allow for mixed-use development near public transit or multimodal transit centers; new developments may have a reduced number of required parking spaces for each dwelling unit; ordinances that promote a walkable downtown; etc. D. Hamman noted that Rochester had recently reduced the minimum square footage for downtown living units.

E. Strachan suggested that staff research transit funding in neighboring states to show a comparison to what is invested in New Hampshire.

## 7. Project Updates

### 7.1 TIP development update – public review and approval process

C. Lentz reminded members that he was working on the draft Transportation Improvement Program for years 2019-2022 which would be available for public comment starting in early January.

## 8. Other Business

No Other business was brought before the committee.

## 9. Citizen's Forum

No citizens brought forward comments.

## 10. Adjournment

made a motion to adjourn, seconded by .

Vote: Unanimous in favor

*Meeting adjourned at 10:20 am*

Minutes prepared by Colin Lentz and Stefanie Casella

Approved by

Name Printed: Victoria Parnelle

Signed: Victoria Parnelle

Date: 1/16/19