

STRAFFORD

Metropolitan Planning Organization

Policy Committee

Meeting Minutes

Friday, January 21, 2022

9:00 – 11:00 AM

Strafford Regional Planning Commission

Hybrid Meeting

Rochester, NH

1. Introductions

Chair David Landry called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m.. He stated that since the number of members participating in person and remote combined constitute a quorum, as allowed by the Commission By-Laws, he as chair of the committee can declare a quorum for the meeting to commence.

D. Landry asked for introductions.

Committee members present: Chair David Landry, Dover; Donald Hamann Rochester; Mike Bobinsky, Somersworth; Michael Williams, COAST; Glen Davison, NHDOT; Rick Michaud, Somersworth

Committee Members participating remotely: Bill Fisher, Farmington; Barbara Holstein, Rochester, Joe Boudreau, Rochester, Victoria, Northwood, Katrin Kasper, Lee, Tim White, DES, Steve Diamond, Barrington.

Staff members present: Jen Czysz; Executive Director SRPC, Colin Lentz

Staff attending remotely: Megan Taylor-Fetter, Rachel Dewey and Nancy OConnor

Lee Staff member Caren Rossi participating remotely.

2. Items Requiring a Vote

a. Approve draft minutes from December 15, 2021

.D. Hamman **MOVED** to approve the December 17, 2021 Policy Meeting Minutes, minutes as written. R. Michaud **SECONDED** the motion. A roll call vote was taken: D. Hamann, M. Bobinsky, D. Landry, R. Michaud, Michael Williams, Glen Davison, B. Fisher, B. Holstein, K. Kasper, V. Parmele, S. Diamond, Tim White voted in the **AFFIRMATIVE**, **NONE** Opposed The motion **CARRIED**

3. Items for Discussion

a. 2022 Legislation Hearings

- **Ten Year Plan (HB2022) updates**

C. Lentz updated the committee on the Ten-year Plan process. He stated that all four MPO's submitted written testimony and the Ten-year Plan was positively received by the House Public Works and Highways Committee. NHDOT staff will be attending workshops with the committee in the coming weeks to continue discussion and development. C. Lentz asked for communities to communicate any issues they would like added to the testimony for the senate phase.

M. Bobinsky stated that the funding for some projects increased, specifically the 108 complete streets project doubled. He emphasized the need to keep that project in the Ten Year Plan. C. Lentz said he would continue to advocate for the project and noted that the Exit 10 study was expanded as well.

C. Lentz stated the exit ten study received a bump in funding and an expansion of the scope. There is emphasis on the transit side but that depends on matching dollars.

- **Draft Bills for the 2022 legislative session**

C. Lentz reviewed a list of legislation relevant to Strafford MPO/RPC. He stated that Legislation "cross-over" day normally isn't till late March, so there is time to discuss bills and request SRPC staff to submit testimony on behalf of the MPO.

There are three bills that specifically add flexibility to current rules for in-person quorums at a physical location under RSA 91-A. There is widespread support for more flexibility given the continuing challenges of achieving in-person quorums for public entities.

All three would make it easier for public entities to conduct business. C. Lentz asked communities to provide input on these bills and if they would like staff to submit testimony.

A bill has been proposed to increase the "local option fee" to a max of \$15 (currently \$5). If passed, this could be an important source of match for federal public transportation funds. Additional match will be required to sustain transit service and fully exploit additional funds from the federal infrastructure bill.

HB1665 which proposes a municipal infrastructure disaster relief fund. The original bill wording would require participating municipalities to allocate 0.005% of the local annual budget to the fund. Members noted that that figure seemed low. During the recent hearing it was determined that the original figure was an error. The proposed amount is 0.5%.

M. Bobinsky suggested that SRPC staff investigate the position of the NH Municipal Association on each of the bills in question. This would help TAC members make any determination for requesting SRPC staff to take a position or advocate on behalf of specific bills. C. Lentz said he would look at NHMA for additional analysis and the committee had time to review bills further because none of them has crossed over between the House/Senate.

4. Other Business & Updates from Staff

a. Coordinated Transportation Plan update

C. Lentz stated SRPC has been working with Scott Bogle and members of the Alliance for Community Transportation on a regional plan coordinating the diverse transportation services in the region. The goal is to coordinate services for overall improvement.

5. Commissioner Roundtable

M. Williams reported that COAST had to suspend a portion of its service last week due to 20 percent of the drivers being out for Covid related absences. Most are back and service has resumed to the level it was previous to last week.

C. Lentz noted that Leigh Levine from FHWA reached out about presenting information on the Federal Infrastructure Bill to RPC board meetings.

M. Bobinsky reported the City of Somersworth put their road paving bids out early this year. Three bids were received, and the results came in yesterday. The estimate of the city engineers for the project was 725,000. The low bid came in at 510,000 and the highest bid was 630,000.

D. Hamann asked how the new federal guidelines for CDL's will affect COAST. M. Williams replied there are more requirements in the new guidelines meaning more hoops to jump through. It could potentially deter people from pursuing their CDL's and increase training and costs.

D. Hamann gave an update on Rochester's new Public Works building stating administration staff have moved in. Operations will continue at the old building for the rest of the winter. There will be an open house in May. There is no definitive plan for the old building but most likely it will go on the market.

J. Czys stated SRPC provided the environmental assessment for the old building as part of the Brownfields programs. A reminder that this service is a good resource for communities.

S. Diamond stated that the new town administrator in Barrington is on board. Now the Board of Selectmen are finally addressing class VI and private road policy.

D Landry Dover stated that numerous applications are coming before the Dover Planning Board. These are sizable projects mostly in the core of downtown for housing.

6. Citizen's Forum

7. Adjournment

M Bobinsky **MOVED** to adjourn **SECONDED** by D. Hamann. A roll call vote was taken: D. Hamann, M. Bobinsky, D. Landry, R. Michaud, Michael Williams, Glen Davison, B. Fisher, B. Holstein, K. Kasper, V. Parmele, S. Diamond, Tim White voted in the **AFFIRMATIVE**., NONE Opposed The motion **CARRIED, meeting adjourned.**