

BINGHAMTON METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION STUDY
POLICY COMMITTEE
AUGUST 19, 2009
MINUTES

The meeting was called to order by the Chair, Carol Sweeney, at 2:30 pm

Roll call and quorum determination:

Members present

- ♦ Supervisor Carol Sweeney, Chair, Town of Owego
- ♦ County Executive Barbara Fiala, Broome County, represented by Deputy Executive Patrick Brennan
- ♦ Dale Weston, Tioga County Chair, represented by Legislator Mike Roberts
- ♦ Mayor Dennis Hannon Village of Johnson City, represented by Robert Bennett
- ♦ Mayor Matthew Ryan, City of Binghamton
- ♦ Supervisor Margaret Turna, Town of Chenango, represented by Councilman Harold Snopek
- ♦ Supervisor Michael Marinaccio, Town of Dickinson
- ♦ Supervisor Peter Andreasen, Town of Vestal
- ♦ Acting Commissioner Stanley Gee, NYSDOT, represented by Regional Director Jack Williams
- ♦ Elaine Jardine, Southern Tier East Regional Planning Development Board
- ♦ Kevin McLaughlin, NYS ESD

Others present:

- ♦ Assemblyman Clifford Crouch
- ♦ Debbie Howard, office of Assemblyman Gary Fink
- ♦ Dan Lamb, office of Congressman Maurice Hinchey

- Approval of minutes of May 11, 2009. Moved Andreasen, second Marinaccio. Approved by consensus.
- Appointment of Vice Chair for remainder of term. Carol Sweeney noted that the Vice Chair position has become vacant with the resignation of Harry Lewis from the position of Mayor of the Village of Johnson City. With no objection, she appointed Supervisor Margaret Turna as Vice Chair.

OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

The Chair opened the floor for comment. None was offered.

SPECIAL RECOGNITION

Mayor Harry G. Lewis was recognized for his years of service to the BMTS Policy Committee and citizens of the Greater Binghamton Region. A Special Resolution was approved by unanimous consent, and a certificate was presented.

ACTION ITEM: 2008-2012 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

Steven Gayle presented a TIP amendment request received from Broome County. As a result of the county's federal signal audit, some unclaimed FTA §5307 funds were identified. In order to file a grant application for the funds, an amendment is required. \$500,000 is added to bus preventive maintenance, and \$671,000 to transit operating assistance.

- ☑ Resolution 2009-12, Amending the 2008-2012 Transportation Improvement Program. Moved Brennan, second McLaughlin. Approved by consensus.

SPECIAL PRESENTATION: NEW YORK STATE DOT 5 YEAR CAPITAL PROGRAM

Steven Gayle began the presentation [slide presentation attached], explaining that the New York State 5 year transportation capital program expires on March 31, 2010; and the federal program, SAFETEA-LU, expires on September 30, 2009. He reviewed the challenges to both programs, in terms of inadequate revenue, and for the State Dedicated Highway and Bridge Trust Fund, the rapid growth of disbursements for debt service. He reviewed local needs in terms of bridge and pavement sufficiency.

Jack Williams presented the needs from the NYSDOT perspective. He noted the challenges include aging infrastructure and the fact that a large number of bridges were built in the 1960s and 1970s and are reaching the end of their design life; inflation undermining buying power; emerging needs in the areas of climate change, rail transportation and other modes; and funding shortfalls. He reviewed NYSDOT's guiding principles: asset preservation, support for economic vitality, enhanced mobility for people and goods, environmental stewardship, and safety. The capital program is focused on core preservation, with bridge safety the highest priority.

Steven Gayle then enumerated what could not get done at current funding levels: inadequate improvements in the NY 201/NY 434/Vestal Road bridge replacement project; inability to meet the goal of *Placemaking for Prosperity* of rebuilding Main Street; inability to meet BC Transit bus replacement schedule; deferral of work on Upper Court Street, NY 17C, and NY 7; inability to add any candidate local federal aid projects to the last 2 TIP updates. While ARRA was doing good work, we are able to fund only 8 projects from a lengthy list submitted for consideration.

Jack and Steve asked for input from the Committee, particularly elected officials who have their own infrastructure to manage.

Mayor Matt Ryan expressed the concern that the City of Binghamton is hard pressed to keep up with infrastructure needs; that the ability to fund only one project under ARRA meant others, like painting the South Washington Street bridge, were left unaddressed.

Supervisor Andreasen expressed concern about the future viability of the CHIPS program, noting that the Town of Vestal has used CHIPS capital to replace a low volume bridge that would not qualify for federal aid.

Assemblyman Crouch stated that he supported the NYSDOT approach to make bridges and safety the top priority.

Supervisor Sweeney noted that the reconstruction of NY 434 in the Town of Owego, funded under ARRA, is critically important; that poor quality infrastructure makes it harder to attract businesses of any size.

Kevin McLaughlin of Empire State Development agreed that his job of bringing new businesses to New York and the Southern Tier relies in part on the transportation system. The potential of having to close or load-post bridges would be very damaging.

Mike Roberts stated that Tioga County was experiencing similar challenges to others, and had closed a couple of bridges. They had gained some ground by using tobacco settlement money to replace or rehabilitate a number of county bridges.

Pat Brennan speaking on behalf of Broome County, concurred. They have had to reduce their paving program, and are using county funds for the Nanticoke Drive bridge, which has been red flagged.

Steven Gayle concluded the discussion by suggesting that no one advocates for roads and bridges; and part of the problem is that the average person has no idea how transportation projects are paid for. He suggested that the elected officials work to educate their constituents about these matters, and offered BMTS resources to assist in such outreach.

There being no other business before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 3:45 PM