

BINGHAMTON METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION STUDY  
POLICY COMMITTEE  
March 3, 2010  
MINUTES

The meeting was called to order by the Chair, Peter Andreasen, at 1:35 PM

Roll call and quorum determination:

Members present

- ♦ Supervisor Peter Andreasen, Town of Vestal, Chair
- ♦ Supervisor Michael Marinaccio, Town of Dickinson, Vice-Chair
- ♦ County Executive Barbara Fiala, Broome County, represented by Deputy Executive Patrick Brennan
- ♦ Legislative Chair Dale Weston, Tioga County, represented by Legislator Michael Roberts
- ♦ Mayor Matthew Ryan, City of Binghamton
- ♦ Mayor Dennis Hannon Village of Johnson City, represented by Robert Bennett
- ♦ Mayor Edward Arrington, Village of Owego
- ♦ Supervisor Margaret Turna, Town of Chenango
- ♦ Supervisor Donald Castellucci, Jr., Town of Owego
- ♦ Acting Commissioner Stanley Gee, NYSDOT, represented by Regional Director Jack Williams
- ♦ Kevin McLaughlin, Regional Director, Empire State Development
- ♦ Elaine Jardine, Southern Tier East Regional Planning Development Board

Chair Peter Andreasen welcomed Mr. Castellucci to the Committee as the newly elected Supervisor of the Town of Owego.

- Approval of minutes of December 14, 2009. Moved Marinaccio, second Ryan. Approved by consensus.

#### OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

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

#### ACTION ITEM: 2010-2011 UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM

Steven Gayle briefed the committee on the Draft 2010-2011 UPWP. Highlighted tasks include completion of the long range plan, *TRANSPORTATION TOMORROW 2035*; developing a new pedestrian plan to replace the 1996 Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan; examining truck routing in the Village of Owego; studying traffic operations and safety for the Town of Chenango in the vicinity of Routes 12 and 12A in light of new retail development that may be anticipated over the next 3 to 5 years; continuing road safety assessments, and investigating the potential for consolidated traffic signal maintenance across the region. A student intern may be used to put transit route information in a form that can be used by the statewide traveler information portal, ny511.com.

Gayle reviewed the draft budgets, noting that the allocations provided by NYSDOT are based on conservative assumptions agreed to by the state's MPOs. The FHWA PL budget is \$440,000, which is almost the amount allocated for the year. FTA funding is in terms of annual grants; they are spent down until fully expended. It is typical that funds are rolled over into subsequent years. BMTS had done well in spending down and closing out old grants, but was recently notified by NYSDOT of an unexpended balance in the 2005/2006 grant. This was

traced to an accounting error by BMTS. This will be spent down promptly in the coming year. The sum of all FTA budgets is \$156,820

Gayle noted that the Staffing Plan shows no anticipated changes, keeping the BMTS staff at 5 full time professionals, 1 part time clerical, and 3 summer temporaries. The current allocations are adequate to fund this level of effort. There are no consultant projects proposed for this work program. BMTS has reviewed NYSDOT accounting of FHWA-PL funds which shows a rollover amount of approximately one year's allocation. Gayle explained that unlike FTA funds, the FHWA PL program permits unprogrammed and unexpended funds to rollover for future use.

- Resolution 2010-01, Approving the 2010-2011 Unified Planning Work Program and associated grant budgets. Moved Marinaccio, second Brennan. Approved by consensus.
- Resolution 2010-02, Approving the 2010-2011 Unified Planning Work Program Staffing Plan. Moved Arrington, second Ryan. Approved by consensus.

#### ACTION ITEM: 2009-2010 UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM

Gayle explained that two actions were necessary to amend the current UPWP, both of which involve rolling previously programmed money into the program to bill against it. The first affects the FHWA-PL and SPR programs. BMTS received money in 2008-2009 for a statewide shared cost initiative project for which we held the consultant contract. The project is completed, but the final invoice was not received until June 2009. In order to be reimbursed for this work, balance of funds must be rolled into this UPWP. The second item relates to the 2005/2006 FTA grant referenced earlier. In order to charge against it for the current quarter, the unexpended balance of just over \$18,000 must be also rolled into the current UPWP.

There were no questions.

- Resolution 2010-03, Approving an amendment to the 2009-2010 Unified Planning Work Program. Moved Ryan, second Arrington. Approved by consensus.

#### ACTION ITEM: 2008-2012 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

Gayle explained that two amendments were required. The first restores design money for the Exchange Street Bridge that was previously programmed. It had been obligated in 2007, but not charged against, leading FHWA to deobligate it. The City now has their design consultant under contract and needs access to the money.

Pam Eshbaugh asked if an offset was required. Gayle responded that he did not believe so, but did not have a clear answer from NYSDOT Main Office.

The second action is for the FTA §5310 program. Gayle explained that this provides funds to non-profit human service agencies to purchase vehicles to transport elderly or handicapped clients. The grant awards are made by NYSDOT Main Office, but then must be included in the TIP for the money to be released. In the BMTS region, Sheltered Workshop for the Disabled received approval to purchase 2 small buses.

There were no further questions.

- Resolution 2010-04, Approving an amendment to the 2008-2012 Transportation Improvement Program. Moved Ryan, second Turna. Approved by consensus.

#### DISCUSSION ITEM: WASHINGTON UPDATE

Gayle briefed the Committee on two items.

(1) Status of federal transportation authorization: continues to be extended through a series of short term actions. The most recent, which resulted in an involuntary furlough of employees of FHWA and other DOT agencies, goes through March 27. The Senate "mini-jobs" bill extends the programs through the end of 2010, transfers funds to make the Highway Trust Fund whole, and undoes the FY 2009 rescission. This was recently passed by the House with some changes in other language, so it needs to go back to Senate.

(2) Sustainable Communities Planning Grant program: Gayle had been invited to a White House roundtable on March 9 to provide input on behalf of the Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations and BMTS to HUD and the White House Office of Urban Affairs on this grant program, which will be rolled out soon. HUD, DOT, and EPA had been directed by the White House to support livability by working toward the integration of transportation, housing, environmental, and other programs to support regions. This program, to be administered by HUD, is one such initiative.

Mayor Arrington asked that comments submitted by BMTS support the inclusion of regional partnerships of small municipalities like the Village of Owego.

The Chair asked for a motion to authorize Mr Gayle to submit written comments on the program on behalf of BMTS, and further asked that members who had specific ideas communicate them to Gayle. The motion was made by Ryan, second Marinaccio, approved by consensus.

#### DISCUSSION ITEM: 2011-2015 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

Gayle initiated the discussion by reviewing actions to date by the TIP Subcommittee and Planning Committee; and reminding the Committee that final action on the TIP would be around June 1.

As a consequence of uncertainty about both federal and state funding, all MPOs had agreed with NYSDOT to adopt a conservation approach to revenue projection. Achieving a fiscally constrained program results in deferring more projects, although nearly \$100 million in deferrals had been done last year across Region 9. The TIP Subcommittee had authorized a call for projects despite the fiscal issues. Members had submitted nine projects, all but one of which are bridges, reflecting their understanding of current system preservation issues and priorities. The Planning Committee had done a priority ranking exercise at their last meeting; because it was done without preparation, a more directed effort would be completed prior to the next meeting when they will approve a Draft TIP.

Jack Williams spoke to NYSDOT priorities, which focus on preserving core assets, and on safety. These overlap to a great extent, especially with regard to bridges. He noted that deficient State bridges were subjected to a triage analysis: closure, based on traffic volume and detour length; accommodation of one lane traffic with robot signals; modest repairs to extend service life; program for rehabilitation or replacement. Expenditures for paving have been sharply reduced. In this atmosphere, spending on anything beyond core assets, including gateway projects, cannot be supported by NYSDOT.

Marinaccio stated that the Front Street projects should be the highest priority, and that the gateways are very important to the region.

Williams stated that the Committee had to face hard decisions, and questioned what priorities the Planning Committee used to rank projects. Jardine responded that the BMTS goals and priorities are well established, and it appeared that the Planning Committee rankings reflected that.

Mayor Ryan spoke to the importance of the Court Street Gateway to the City, noted the amount of money that had already been invested in engineering and right-of-way, and that it was nearly ready to go to bid. The City had not been doing maintenance of the pavement because the project was imminent. Williams offered that a mill and fill project could be done instead of the gateway, in the short term. Ryan responded that would create none of the economic benefit of the gateway project.

Gayle noted that the gateway projects are given a high priority in the last two long range plans, and that TIP must reflect the Plan. He reiterated that based on their candidate project submissions, local government members clearly agreed that bridges are the highest priority.

Gayle stated that the crux of the problem was the unwillingness of Congress to address transportation by passing a new authorization with increased funding. He suggested members contact the Congressional delegation. Ryan and Marinaccio agreed to draft a letter on behalf of BMTS.

#### DISCUSSION ITEM: TRANSPORTATION TOMORROW 2035

Gayle briefed the Committee on activity to date on the long range plan update. Both public meetings and meetings of the Advisory Committee have been conducted. The focus is on understanding how to apply concepts of sustainability to the plan.

#### BUSINESS OFFERED FROM THE FLOOR.

The chair opened the floor for additional business. None was offered.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:35 PM.