

Meeting Minutes

**Salisbury/Wicomico Metropolitan Planning Organization (“S/WMPO”)
Technical Advisory Committee (“TAC”)
June 2, 2020**

WebEx Conference Call at 10:30 A.M.

Attendees:

S/WMPO TAC members:

Eric Berkheimer, Chairman, Salisbury University (“SU”)
Tracey Gordy, Vice Chair, Maryland Department of Planning (“MDP”)
Ian Beam, Maryland Department of Transportation (“MDOT”)
Brad Bellacicco, Shore Transit
Julie Bellamy, Town of Hebron
Tremica Cherry-Walls, Delaware Transit Corporation (“DTC”)
Jenn Cinelli-Miller, Delaware Department of Transportation (“DelDOT”)
Bob Forrester, Delmarva Water Transport Committee
William Hardin, Town of Delmar
Berley Mears, City of Seaford Public Works
Dorothy Morris, Delaware Office of State Planning Coordination (“DOSPC”)
Jim Thomas, Salisbury-Wicomico County Planning and Zoning Commission (“SWCPZC”)
Will White, City of Salisbury Public Works
Jamie Whitehouse, Sussex County Planning Department

Staff:

Keith Hall, S/WMPO Executive Director
Jesse Drewer, S/WMPO Planner
Brian Soper, S/WMPO Administrator
Melissa Cassimore, Executive Assistant

Introduction

Chairman Berkheimer opened the meeting at approximately 10:30 A.M. and welcomed attendees during these unprecedented times. Chairman Berkheimer requested staff to conduct roll call of members and staff.

Mr. Hall introduced new staff members Melissa Cassimore and Brian Soper. Melissa Cassimore, an Administrative Office Associate II with the Wicomico County Department of Planning, Zoning, and Community Development, earned an Associate Degree in Marketing & Management from Delaware Technical & Community College and a Bachelor Degree in Organizational Management - Training & Staff Development from Wilmington University. Ms. Cassimore has over 10 years experience as a business owner. Ms.

Cassimore will be providing administrative support to the Committee. Brian Soper, a Planning Services Manager with the Wicomico County will be serving as the MPO Administrator. Mr. Soper graduated from the University of Maryland with a Bachelor Degree in Art as well as a Bachelor Degree in Science. Mr. Soper has previous experience working for state and local government where he was involved in numerous planning activities and programs.

Chairman Berkheimer provided a brief overview about procedures and tips for teleconference meeting participants.

Minutes

The second item of business was approval of the minutes from the January 28, 2020 meeting. Ms. Cinelli-Miller made a motion to approve the minutes as submitted; the motion seconded by Mr. Thomas with all TAC members voting in favor, the motion passed unanimously.

Amendments to the Prospectus and Bylaws and Pubic Participation Plan for remote meetings

Brian Soper (S/WMPO)

Mr. Soper discussed the proposed amendment will allow members to have the option to participate in meetings remotely when not able to attend in person. This option would not be limited to State of Emergency or pandemic times, but would be available to be used anytime. Mr. Soper informed the Committee the last amendment to the Prospectus and Bylaws was on June 1, 2017 and the Public Participation Plan on November 30, 2011. All amendments are Open Meetings Act compliant.

Chairman Berkheimer agrees the changes are a sign of the times and allows members flexibility with meeting attendance.

Ms. Cinelli-Miller is concerned with the limitation of once per calendar year and suggested that due to the unique situation, further clarification to allow the possibility of more than once per year should be added.

Mr. Soper clarified the language was for a member to exercise the option when the meeting was not being held remotely and does not apply when meetings are held remotely and all members call in.

Ms. Gordy suggested rewording the order of the first sentence.

Ms. Cinelli-Miller suggested to add the words "in person" after meeting.

Mr. Soper stated the amendment would now read “In the event a member of the S/WMPO Council is unable to attend a meeting in person; the member may participate in the meeting remotely provided all participants can concurrently hear all of the conversation.”

Chairman Berkheimer discussed another option is the use of an alternate is clarified later in the paragraph.

Mr. Soper added this amendment would provide more flexibility.

Chairman Berkheimer asked for further questions or comments. Hearing none, he called for a motion for a favorable recommendation to the MPO Council.

A motion was made by Mr. Hardin for a favorable recommendation to the MPO Council for review and action; seconded by Ms. Cinelli-Miller with all members voting in favor, the motion passed unanimously. A roll call vote was not necessary since all members were in favor.

MPO Administration Update: RFQ, Website, and Partner Projects

Brian Soper (S/WMPO) and Jesse Drewer (S/WMPO)

Mr. Soper discussed the preparing a request for qualifications (“RFQ”) list of vendors for various projects, a new website, along with a social media presence to encourage public participation. The improvements to the website will be managed in-house through the use of the Wix.com platform. Mr. Soper stated the first-three years subscription of the Wix platform is \$125/year; a substantial savings from the current contractual services. The website is being designed similar to the Hagerstown-Eastern Panhandle MPO.

Mr. Drewer discussed the formation of a Project Review Committee to evaluate and rank projects submitted based on feasibility, once ranked the Committee would forward recommendation back to the TAC.

Mr. Thomas asked who was on the Project Review Committee.

Mr. Soper stated the Project Review Committee would consist of four committee members and one staff. Based on the projects submitted for funding, the members were selected since they did not have a project for review. The Project Review Committee is Ian Beam, Tracey Gordy, Jim Thomas, William Hardin and Brian Soper.

Ms. Cinelli-Miller requested to speak to Mr. Soper regarding the website when possible.

Chairman Berkheimer asked if there is an anticipated completion date for the website.

Mr. Soper anticipates July 1st completion; the Wix account has been obtained and the work with the current vendor to transfer the domain name and hosting has begun. Having the other site active allows the new one to be built, tested and issues worked out before activating it.

Member Updates / Other Business

Chairman Berkheimer informed the Committee of a Salisbury University Campus Town Hall virtual meeting later today. The virtual meeting will communicate information pertaining to the fall semester; the hope is to bring faculty and students back to the campus in a hybrid setting with in person and on-line instruction. Modifications on campus are being made to allow for face-to-face instruction, which is believed how students learn best, and to accommodate the courses that don't lend to online learning.

Ms. Bellamy stated the Highway User Revenue letter shows Hebron decreased from \$66,000 to \$52,000.

Ms. Gordy has been in communication with MDOT, Marty Baker, and Francine Waters regarding plans for a Walk Summit in October. October is walking month and Walk Maryland Day is typically held in October. The invite to participate on the panel and to present the activities of Walk Wicomico and the partnership with the MPO, which the event will be held at the end of October.

Ms. Morris stated on Monday the 2020 Strategies for State Policies and Spending was approved and has been sent to the Governor to be implemented by Executive Order.

Mr. Bellacicco informed Committee members Shore Transit operated throughout the crisis with only minor exceptions on the fixed routes, including all the Salisbury University routes. Ridership initially dropped to 30%, but has increased to 50% currently, significant drops were to medical origins. Mr. Bellacicco discussed the challenges associated with COVID-19 including restricting positive diagnosed riders from riding. Shore Transit is a public transport system, not a medical transport system, resulting in a lack of PPE equipment and training for staff.

Ms. Cinelli-Miller informed Committee members the Long-Range Transportation Planning Study at Five Points in Lewes, Delaware is in progress. Virtual open houses are being held to provide the annual report along with an update to the public via WebEx. Two open houses have been held, with a lot of feedback including great questions from the public about the process, three more will be held this week including one Saturday morning to accommodate people's schedules.

Mr. Whitehead stated the Henlopen Transportation Improvement District is moving forward along with several transportation related initiatives.

Public Comments

There were no public comments.

Next Meeting Date/Adjourn

Mr. Hall will send out notification about the next meeting date.

There being no other business before the Council, upon a motion by Mr. Thomas, seconded by Mr. Hardin, with all attending Council members voting in favor, and none opposed, the meeting was adjourned.