

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE
EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD OF THE
GRAND FORKS/EAST GRAND FORKS
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION**

**Friday, March 12, 2004 – 12:00 Noon
East Grand Forks City Hall Council Chambers**

Dick Grassel, Chairman, called the meeting to order with the following members present: Arvin Kvasager (Proxy for Gary Malm), Gary Sanders, Dorette Kerian, Warren Strandell, Steve Gander, and Doug Christensen. Staff present were: Earl Haugen, GF/EGF MPO Executive Director; Ryan Brooks, GF/EGF MPO Planner, Senior; Lane Magnuson, GF/EGF MPO Planner, Senior; Dan Jonasson, GF City Traffic Engineer; Al Grasser, GF City Engineer; and Peggy McNelis, GF/EGF MPO Administrative Specialist, Senior.

A quorum was present.

INTRODUCTIONS

Grassel introduced, and welcomed Dorette Kerian to the MPO Executive Policy Board. He explained that Ms. Kerian is assuming the remainder of Curt Kreun's term on the MPO.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Moved by Kvasager, seconded by Strandell, to approve the January 16, 2004, minutes of the MPO Executive Policy Board as read. Motion carried unanimously.

NOMINATION OF FINANCE COMMITTEE MEMBER

Grassel gave a quick overview on the makeup of the Finance Committee, explaining that the current makeup should include two members from Grand Forks and one from East Grand Forks, therefore he would request that a member from Grand Forks be considered to replace Mr. Kreun for the remainder of his term on the committee, which expires at the end of this calendar year.

Moved by Kvasager, seconded by Kerian, to nominate Gary Malm to the Finance Committee, and to close nominations. Motion carried unanimously.

MATTER OF MPO AUDIT

Grassel reported that Joe Martin and Janelle Mulroy, from Brady-Martz, were here for a brief overview on the MPO Audit findings.

Mulroy referred to the Financial Statements document and went over it briefly. She explained that page one is the Independent Auditor's Report, which does state that, in accordance with the

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Government Auditing Standards, it is their opinion that the Grand Forks/East Grand Forks MPO did receive a clean audit.

Discussion on financial findings ensued.

Mulroy referred to the Management Report document and went over it briefly. She explained that there are two sections to this report; the first being the Audit Committee letter, and the second being the Management letter. She referred to the Audit Committee letter and commented that it basically explains what Brady-Martz's responsibilities are in regard to this audit. She then referred to the Management letter and pointed out that they only had one comment/recommendation, and that is that the MPO will be required, next year, to adopt GASB 34, which is a new reporting model for State and Local Government entities. She explained that there will be no change in the way that the accounting is handled, but that it only involves a change in reporting of the financial statements. She added that there are two big changes that will affect the MPO; one is the inclusion of a Management Discussion Analysis, which is management's overview of the financial statements and any significant happenings that may occur during that year, and the second change is that fixed assets will have to be capitalized and depreciated, so a Capitalization Policy will need to be in place to determine what would be considered a fixed asset for capitalization, and what would be considered an expense.

Moved by Sanders, seconded by Gander, to accept the 2003 MPO Audit as submitted. Motion carried unanimously.

MATTER OF BIKEWAY SCOPE OF WORK

Magnuson referred to the staff report and explained that the Bike and Pedestrian Plan is an element of the Grand Forks/East Grand Forks' Transportation Plan. He added that all elements of that plan are updated every five years, and the current Bike and Pedestrian Program's five year cycle will be up by the end of this year, thus the need for this update.

Magnuson reported that this update is part of the 2004 MPO Work Plan, and that the purpose of the update is to include pertinent bike and pedestrian projects, programs, or studies that have been implemented since the last update. He added that it will also incorporate any changes in the community that would affect planned network facilities or other future needs as well.

Magnuson referred to the Scope-of-Work, and went over the proposed timeline (a copy of the Scope-of-Work is included in the packet and available upon request).

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Moved by Gander, seconded by Sanders, to approve the Scope-of-Work for the 2030 Bike and Pedestrian Element of the Grand Forks-East Grand Forks Transportation Plan. Motion carried unanimously.

MATTER OF AMENDMENT TO THE 2004-2006 T.I.P.

a. Vehicle For Polk County Dial-A-Ride

Haugen reported that this is a program that takes place outside of the MPO's process for T.I.P. development, it is a Federal Transit Program to help fund elderly, handicapped, and rural transportation, and Polk County Development Achievement Center sent out a request for a vehicle replacement, and MNDOT determined that that application should be approved, and because this vehicle is primarily housed in East Grand Forks, which is in the MPO's jurisdiction, our T.I.P. needs to be amended to include this purchase and federal cost. He commented that the Technical Advisory Committee held a public hearing on this in January, and it has been reviewed and determined that it does fit our comprehensive plan, therefore, both the Technical Advisory Committee and staff are recommending approving amending the 2004-2006 T.I.P. to include this vehicle purchase.

Moved by Sanders, seconded by Gander, to approve the FY 2004-2006 T.I.P. Amendment to include the an additional \$36,800 in federal funds to purchase a replacement vehicle for Polk County Development Achievement Center. Motion carried unanimously.

MATTER OF AMENDING THE FY 2004 WORK PROGRAM

Haugen reported that both the Washington Street Underpass Study and the Merrifield Bridge Study were discussed considerably at the last MPO Executive Policy Board meeting.

Haugen explained that NDDOT has reprogrammed the work on the Washington Street Underpass beyond the 2005-2007 T.I.P. cycle, therefore, the need to conduct the study is no longer necessary, thus NDDOT, along with the Technical Advisory Committee and staff, are recommending that this project be deleted from the MPO's Annual Work Program for 2004.

Haugen went on to explain that, assuming that the Washington Street Underpass Study is deleted from the 2004 Work Program, thus freeing up additional funds, the MPO has prepared a proposal to hire a consultant to look at the Merrifield Bridge issue, particularly the Cole Creek Bridge and drainage issues, utilizing those funds. He referred to a copy of the revised Scope-of-Work, included in the packets, and explained that the difference involves the hiring of a consultant to look at this project, rather than doing it in-house, as was originally planned.

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a. Deletion of Washington Street Underpass Study

Moved by Christensen, seconded by Sanders, to approve removal of the Washington Street Underpass Study from the 2004 Work Program.

Kerian asked how much was budgeted for the Washington Street Underpass Study. Haugen responded that they had budgeted \$100,000 for that study, with \$80,000 being earmarked for consultant work.

Christensen referred to the Washington Street Underpass Study staff report, and pointed out that it states that NDDOT prefers to go straight to the Project Concept Report. He asked, if and when the Washington Street Underpass project should come back onto the radar screen, what does this comment mean. Haugen responded that, typically, with an improvement, you do a corridor study to help identify issues, solutions, and cost estimates on what the project will entail, and that is what we were planning on doing with this project, however, NDDOT feels that the estimate we currently have is sufficient and a study is not needed prior to going straight to the project development. Christensen stated that what he is curious about, that when this was discussed at the last meeting he suggested maybe reconsidering this project in it's entirety and using the funds for the 42nd Street project, so he wants to know if this project is off the radar screen so we can do the 42nd Street Underpass. Haugen responded that the project is now being programmed by NDDOT beyond the Year 2010, and one of the principal reasons for this is because they are in a budget crunch.

Motion carried unanimously.

b. Addition Of Amended Merrifield Bridge Study

Haugen referred to the last page of the RFP and pointed out that they did not identify information that we had here, in-house, for any consultants to review, however, this has since been done and a copy of this list was distributed earlier this afternoon. He added that they also received a letter from American Crystal regarding this issue and how it would benefit their operation, which was included in the packets as well.

Grassel commented that when we held that informational meeting in Grand Forks a week or so ago concerning this item, and discussion was held on Cole Creek and the bridge, and what to do with them, one of the things that Mr. Sanders suggested after the meeting was that the existing bridge over Cole Creek could be moved over to the new diversion, and he would like to know if this is possible or not. Haugen responded that this is an alternative that will be suggested to the consultant for consideration, however, he would not be able to answer that question at this time.

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Sanders stated that he felt the presentation given at the informational meeting was really well done, and answered his questions very well. He said that the reason he suggested the possibility of moving the existing bridge off of Cole Creek to the diversion is because we currently have a problem with overflowing, and something needs to be done and this seemed like a solution that should be looked at.

Christensen said that he, too, would like to commend staff for putting on a very informational meeting, that this was a great effort in cooperation and he hopes it can continue with future issues. He asked if MPO funds could be used to do the study that Jerry Pribula talked about. Haugen responded that it would be part of this study. Christensen said that this is very good news. Haugen added, however, that he would like to state that this study will probably not be done to the same detail that Mr. Pribula would be able to do it as he would be able to provide more detailed engineering information, however, we will be able to come quite close.

Kerian asked if copies of the presentation given at the meeting were available. Haugen responded that he would be able to give a power point presentation, or provide a hard copy of the presentation.

Grassel stated that he would also like to commend Mr. Haugen, and his staff. He said that he felt it was a very good meeting, that it was nice to be able to bring so many different people and organizations to the same table to discuss this issue and get some really good information out there for everyone. He added, however, that he was disappointed to hear that the interchange isn't going to be funded for several years, but maybe we can work on getting it done sooner if possible.

Sanders commented that if we can get the interchange constructed at I-29 it would provide us with a high and dry river crossing between Fargo and Winnipeg, which was not the case during the flood, and has been an area of concern for a lot of people.

Moved by Christensen, seconded by Sanders, to approve the amended RFP and Scope-of-Work for the Merrifield Bridge Feasibility Report. Motion carried unanimously.

OTHER BUSINESS

Haugen asked if the next MPO Executive Policy Board meeting could be scheduled. After some discussion it was determined that the next meeting would be held on Friday, April 16th at 12:00 noon.

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ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Sanders, seconded by Strandell, to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted by,

Peggy McNelis
Administrative Specialist, Senior