

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

**Friday, January 16, 2004 – 12:00 Noon  
East Grand Forks City Hall Council Chambers**

Dick Grassel, Chairman, called the meeting to order with the following members present: Rob Kweit, Gary Sanders, Gary Malm, Warren Strandell, Doug Christensen, and Steve Gander. 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; and Peggy McNelis, GF/EGF MPO Administrative Specialist, Senior.

A quorum was present.

**APPRECIATION AND PRESENTATION OF PLAQUE TO PUNKY BEAUCHAMP**

Grassel explained that Punky Beauchamp served on the Grand Forks/East Grand Forks Metropolitan Planning Organization's Executive Policy Board for a number of years, however, since he chose not to run for re-election on the East Grand Forks City Council, he is now relinquishing his position on the Executive Policy Board as well.

Grassel stated he would like to take the opportunity to present to Mr. Beauchamp, in appreciation for his service and dedication to the Grand Forks/East Grand Forks Metropolitan Planning Organization, a plaque. He stated that he, along with everyone else that has served with Mr. Beauchamp, would like to extend their appreciation and well wishes.

Beauchamp thanked everyone for the plaque. He stated that at the last Executive Policy Board meeting he talked about serving with the other members of the board, however, he would now like to thank the staff, who always showed the highest degree of professionalism, for all they did during his tenure on the board.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

*Moved by Strandell, seconded by Malm, to approve the December 12, 2003, minutes, as read. Motion carried unanimously.*

Gander reported present.

Grassel welcomed Steve Gander, the newest member of the MPO Executive Policy Board, who will be representing the City of East Grand Forks. Introductions were made.

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**MATTER OF AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD CHAIRMAN AND  
THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO SIGN THE C.Y. 2004 MINNESOTA STATE MPO  
PLANNING CONTRACT**

Haugen referred to a copy of the staff report, included in the packets, and explained that this is an annual contract between MNDOT and the MPO, and that MNDOT requires that the MPO Executive Policy Board takes action to authorize the Executive Policy Board Chairman and the Executive Director to sign the contract.

Haugen reported that, attached to the staff report is additional information concerning the State of Minnesota giving the MPO more State monies. He explained that one of the outcomes of these additional funds was a requirement, by Minnesota, that the MPO look at it's work program for FY 2004 and amend it to reflect the additional funds. He commented that on Wednesday he received word from MNDOT that they actually want us to prepare a document, or a resolution, which Mr. Grassel can sign showing that the MPO Executive Policy Board approves the amended FY 2004 Work Program. He pointed out that the only changes that have occurred concern the funding amounts, but that the work activities have not changed from what was already approved by this body.

Grassel asked if Mr. Haugen could give a brief explanation on the amount of increase awarded the MPO. Haugen responded that it is essentially a thousand dollar increase in State funding. He explained that the reason this increase occurred was because Minnesota had been anticipating that Mankato would become an MPO, and therefore, for the last couple of years had been budgeting for the event, which, unfortunately did not occur, thereby allowing for those funds to be redistributed to the existing MPOs, and our share is \$1,000.

Kweit asked what this \$1,000 windfall will be used for. Haugen responded that our Minnesota monies are used to match federal monies, and so these extra funds will be used as local match.

***Moved by Christensen, seconded by Kweit, to approve authorizing the MPO Executive Policy Board Chairman, and the Executive Director execute a contract with MNDOT for FY 2004. Motion carried unanimously.***

**MATTER OF 2005-2007 T.I.P. PROJECTS**

Haugen reported that this is the last section of projects needing approval for consideration in the 2005-2007 T.I.P. He explained that over the last several months we have moved through the T.E. programs, as well as various other programs, and that in December the Street and Highway section was approved, so now we are asking you to consider transit projects for both sides of the

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river. He added that there is also one remaining Minnesota program, a 100% Minnesota State funded program, which needs approval as well.

Haugen referred to the staff report and pointed out that the Minnesota State Program requiring approval is a MNDOT request to repaint the bridge on US #2 (Gateway Drive) over River Road in East Grand Forks within this T.I.P. cycle. He stated that this project is 100% State funded, but we do need to identify it, and say that it is consistent with the Long Range Transportation Plan.

Haugen explained that in regard to transit projects, we do have funding totals for three years. He added that there is a difference between North Dakota and Minnesota, that North Dakota has two funding programs, one being the 5307, which is the operating program, and which allocates funds directly to Grand Forks; and the other is the 5309 program, which is the capital improvements program that is used for the purchase of buses, etc.. He stated that this is Grand Forks' participation in the North Dakota statewide request for earmarking out of the 5309 program for North Dakota's Transit Capital needs. He referred to the packets and pointed out that it includes operating estimates for FY 2005 through 2007, as well as the capital needs for those years as well.

Haugen commented that on the Minnesota side, there is essentially only the 5307 Program available for funding, however, because of how the State of Minnesota helps with state funding, there are remaining 5307 monies available which can be used for capital projects, and this is why the Minnesota Capital Program shows 5307 funds.

Haugen reported that an updated table was distributed earlier. He explained that the need for an updated table arose because the MNDOT District 2 Transit Manager asked that our operating table show the federal amount remaining consistent at \$50,000, rather than the increased federal amount shown on the previous table.

Haugen stated that the Technical Advisory Committee recommended this body approve the 2005-2007 Project Application as being consistent with the Long Range Transportation Plan, and that they give it a high priority ranking.

***Moved by Malm, seconded by Sanders, to approve the FY 2005-2007 Project Application (Transit & MN Programs) as being consistent with the Long Range Transportation Plan and to give it a High Priority Ranking. Motion carried unanimously.***

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**MATTER OF MERRIFIELD BRIDGE FEASIBILITY REPORT SCOPE OF WORK**

Haugen commented that about a year ago the MPO Executive Policy Board authorized the production of this report, however, it was delayed until now in order that we were assured that this bridge project would still be identified in the Long Range Transportation Plan when it was completed in June, and also to make sure the flood protection design on the North Dakota side was in a more finalized state. He stated that these two issues have been resolved, and therefore the MPO is now able to forward this report on to the board for review.

Haugen reported that the intention of this report is to try to take all, already assembled information pertaining to the Merrifield Bridge project, and put it all in it's own stand-alone document that can be used by supporters of this project to try to obtain support for financial assistance for the project.

Haugen commented that there is one additional task they included in the Scope of Work, and that is perform a high-level environmental review of the corridor in order to identify any possible environmental impacts that could occur. He explained that the Scope of Work is required in order for us to show that what we are doing is an eligible PL activity, and will be done in-house by MPO staff.

Grassel asked when the study would be completed. Haugen responded that it is anticipated that it will be completed by the end of June. Grassel commented that Mr. Christensen had asked, at the last MPO Executive Policy Board meeting, what the timetable might be for the construction of this bridge. Haugen responded that right now everything is basically programmed, that we are just finishing the 2007 programming, so 2008 would probably be the earliest that it could be constructed. Grassel asked if this would include the Interchange at I-29 and Merrifield. Haugen responded that he would actually see the funding sources being packaged together, as a pair of projects, and that you would be looking at more specialized funding for the bridge itself, and regular funding for the interchange.

Grassel asked Mr. Christensen if he knew if the Merrifield road, from Highway 81 to the river, was going to be the southerly dike. Christensen stated that that question might be best answered by Mr. Sanders. Malm commented that the road itself is the dike. Christensen said that the north/south road, or Belmont Road, is the dike, and the road that runs east/west, or the Merrifield Road, will need to be built up and made into a four-lane, does it not. Haugen responded that it does not need to be made into a four-lane, but it will most likely become a three lane from the proposed interchange to Washington Street, and from Washington east. Christensen asked who would be paying for this, would the County be responsible. Haugen responded that what is currently paved will remain paved, and what is graveled now will be re-graveled for the flood protection project. He added that current discussions with the County involve discussion that

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soon after the project is done, we would be seeking funding from the County to pave the graveled portion. Christensen asked what the cost might be. Malm responded that it is estimated to cost \$150,000 to \$200,000. He added that the County asked the City to use betterment monies, but were told that they did not want to do that, so the final compromise was to leave it graveled until the Interchange is put in; and then to be paved jointly between the Townships, the County, and whoever else gets involved.

Sanders commented that when the paving is done, if he remembers correctly, the ditch on the south side of the road is rather wide, and if we are actually going to build a bridge at that location, it seems to him that Minnesota is going to have to raise Highway 2. He added that the area between the Country Club and the ditch is very restricted, and it will be difficult to build an appropriate roadway through that section. Haugen stated that the ditch section ends prior to Kohl Creek, and then Kohl Creek to the Country Club becomes the ditch, that this is the design that has been suggested. Christensen said that they may need to rethink that design, otherwise we will be needing to buy the Country Club. Sanders stated that this is the part that bothers him, because, really if you look at Kohl Creek, and take it to the river, where the road is, but if your talking Highway 2 on this side, and a County Road on the other side, that will never work. Haugen said that you would be looking at County Road 58 on the Minnesota side. Strandell added that County 58 is built, it is the north/south road, but there is a mile or a little more than a mile from County 58, west of the river that is a Township Road, that would have to be completely redone. Sanders said you would be looking at a cost of about \$12,000,000 for a bridge, so a little more thought needs to go into this. Christensen agreed, adding that you just can't bring anymore water through the Country Club, it just isn't going to happen, so let's rethink this deal and get a plan wherein we have a bridge, where we have the ditch that Mr. Sanders has been discussing, and we have a nice road on both sides of that bridge.

Strandell commented that on the Minnesota side of the river, it would be his contention that we would need to extend the road to Highway 220. Sanders agreed, adding that you would actually go right across County Road 58 all the way to the Junction of Highway 220 to the County Bridge, and then by-pass south to County Road 62 or 64. He added that, somehow it seems to him that we will end up taking back Business Highway #2 sometime, and the current #2 will become Business 2, which would mean a \$20,000,000 project out there. Christensen stated that during discussions with Curt Kreun yesterday, Curt pointed out that as the dirt is removed, we will be able to start building up the area by the Kohl Creek Bridge.

Haugen reported that the way they identified this in the plan was to take County Road 58 to Highway 220, which goes to Bygland Road. He added, however, that County Road 58, with it's new alignment because of the Coulee Diversion, will come very close to the Mallory Bridge cut-off, and that is how we would route this in order to utilize the new Merrifield Bridge, over to County Road 72. He added that his understanding on the extension of the ditch on the North

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Dakota side, was done last year, and the decision was to stick with the Corps design to extend it just slightly past Belmont Road to the east. Christensen asked for a visual presentation on this in order for everyone to get a better idea of what is being planned.

Discussion ensued.

Haugen stated that he would put together a presentation on this, showing the transportation side of things, and have Flood Protection staff show the dike project along the corridor as well.

*Moved by Kweit, seconded by Strandell, to table this item until the next MPO Executive Policy Board meeting meeting. Motion carried unanimously.*

**MATTER OF 2004 WORK PROGRAM**

Haugen reported that this is just an informational item to remind the Executive Policy Board of what the MPO has scheduled to do this year. He pointed out that the Transit Plan Update will be carried over into 2004, that an update to the Bike/Pedestrian section of the Long Range Transportation Plan is scheduled for 2004, and that we recently engaged ATAC from NDSU to do the ITS Regional Architecture Plan in 2005. He added that later on the agenda we will be discussing our hope to finish up our Pavement Quality Management System, and that the last two projects in the work program would be to study the Washington Street Underpass and to study certain unsignalized intersection within Grand Forks.

Christensen asked what is envisioned as far as improvements to the Washington Street Underpass. Haugen responded that because of the right-of-way limitations we have with this project, it will most likely consist of reconstructing and improving the underpass structure. He added that it is hoped that we will have the opportunity to widen some of the driving lanes. He said that another idea of goal would be to try to widen the sidewalks, underneath, on both sides.

Christensen commented that he isn't here to stifle initiative, but he is hearing that this project could cost \$7,000,000. Haugen responded that this is correct. Christensen asked if there were any other projects, which might be further down the list, that we might want to look at using this \$7,000,000 for instead of this project. Haugen responded that the programming of this project is part of the State Highway, with the City being the second on it, and that NDDOT has indicated a strong desire to do this project, and has identified it as something that needs to be done. Haugen added that this study was actually programmed back in August of 2002, in our work program, so it is something that has been in the works for some time. Christensen stated that he realizes that, but he isn't sure, after hearing what improvements might be made, it is worth \$7,000,000, and he will be talking to people on the Grand Forks side of the river about why this is an item of such high priority, and whether or not there is a better use of these funds. Haugen stated that you

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would have to convince the DOT that there is a better use of those funds than this project. Christensen said that he would talk to Al Grasser, City Engineer, about this and get his opinion. He added that he just doesn't feel that there must be a better use of \$7,000,000 than widening sidewalks that are never used, or graduating the slope from 8-feet to 6-feet, so he doesn't see much utility here. Haugen commented that in the December MPO Executive Policy Board packets everyone received a project justification report which identified why we have programmed \$7,000,000, and what deficiencies NDDOT sees with the structure, that there are other things than just geometry, that the actual structure itself is quite old and it was determined that a study was needed to determine what the ultimate improvement should be, as well as the cost estimate for those improvements. Christensen said that he is sure that this will be studied for a while, but that doesn't mean that it will be done.

Information only.

**MATTER OF AWARDING PAVEMENT DATA EXTRACTION CONTRACT FOR  
PAVEMENT QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM**

Magnuson explained that the Pavement Quality Management System is an item in the 2003-2004 MPO Annual Work Program. He stated that the final component of the Pavement Management System is the extraction of pavement condition data from the street level aerial photos and enter into the pavement management software.

Magnuson reported that at the December 12, 2003, MPO Executive Policy Board meeting this body approved the Request for Proposals (RFP) document be sent out. He stated that they received two proposals, and that the Selection Committee met yesterday to go over those proposals and are recommending that the MPO enter into contract with GoodPointe Technology, who also provided the services for the digital photos, street photos, and the actual software itself. He added that their proposal stated that they could do the entire right-of-way digital imaging at a cost of \$39,000, which is well under the \$50,000 budgeted for this project.

***Moved by Malm, seconded by Kweit, to approve awarding the Pavement Condition Data Extraction Contract to GoodPointe Technology to provide the 2004 Data Extraction Services at a cost of no more than \$39,000. Motion carried unanimously.***

**OTHER BUSINESS**

1. **POINT BRIDGE**

Grassel asked about the information the MPO Executive Policy Board received concerning the Point Bridge project, specifically the funding for that project, and what it means. Haugen

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responded that what Mr. Grassel is referring to is information from the Northwest Area Transportation Partnership. He explained that a week ago the NWATP Sub-committee's met and made recommendations that they forwarded to the full NWATP, who met yesterday to receive those recommendations and to act on them. He stated that they tabled everything for another month, so not much was accomplished. He added, for those that aren't too familiar with the NWATP process, on the Minnesota side federal funds are distributed to the Districts, which are called Partnerships, and there are ten or eleven Partners in our District. He said that they then decide which projects get federal funding, and how much.

2. SCHEDULE NEXT MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD MEETING

Grassel asked when the board would like to meet again, in February, or would it be more appropriate to wait until March so all information can be obtained. Haugen responded that he would be able to have the information the board requested anytime after the President's Holiday in February. It was suggested it be held during the first week of March.

Haugen suggested that the board may want to wait to hold their meeting until after the March Technical Advisory Committee meeting on March 10<sup>th</sup>, because some additional Scope of Works may be available for consideration. Malm agreed that holding the meeting later in March would be best because, in listening to Mr. Christensen's concerns about the Merrifield project, when they came to the County about that road, somebody had already made up their mind and there was no listening to any other suggestions, so he would think it might be a good idea for some of those involved to get together and discuss this issue further. Christensen asked who "they" were. Malm responded that it was one of Grand Forks City's Engineers, that they disagreed with the Corps of Engineers, and insisted it should be done their way, so the City made changes to the plans, and although the County made some requests for changes to the revised plans, they were not accepted, and the City wasn't very happy that the County delayed them a month. He added that this is why, because there are so many entities involved, he feels they need to get everyone together to discuss this issue. Christensen agreed, stating that what we should do is to reconvene with Al Grasser, and all others involved, to meet and work all of this out, that we need to get a unified plan together for this bridge project.

Christensen asked that Mr. Haugen schedule a meeting to include all interested parties. Haugen stated that what he is hearing is that he should ask the Flood Protection staff to present, to this body, what is going on with the Merrifield corridor. Christensen agreed. Haugen said he would try to set this up sometime in February. Strandell asked that MNDOT representatives be asked to attend this meeting as well.

Discussion on the various bridges in the community, as well as the amount of traffic volumes on each, ensued.

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Information only.

**ADJOURNMENT**

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

Respectfully submitted by,

Peggy McNelis  
Administrative Specialist, Senior