

KALAMAZOO AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY POLICY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the April 20, 2022 Meeting

CALL TO ORDER

The April 20, 2022 Policy Committee Meeting was called to order at 9:03 a.m. at Kalamazoo Metro, by Chairperson Randy Thompson.

INTRODUCTIONS

Introductions were made by all present.

ROLL CALL

Meeting attendance was recorded on the sign-in sheet.

MEMBERS PARTICIPATING

Curt Aardema	Central County Transportation Authority
Rob Britigan, Treasurer	City of Parchment
Marsha Drouin	Richland Township
Jeff Franklin	Michigan Department of Transportation, Planning
Jason Gatlin	Wakeshma Township
Libby Heiny-Cogswell, Vice Chair	Oshtemo Township
Robert Henderson	Van Buren Public Transit
Adam Herringa	City of Portage
Lisa Imus	Village of Lawton
Joanna Johnson	Road Commission of Kalamazoo County
Sarah Joshi	City of Galesburg
Greg Kinney	Van Buren County Road Commission
Judy Lemon	City of Galesburg
Nick Loeks	Texas Township
Sherine Miller	Kalamazoo Township
Pete Pfeiffer	Michigan Department of Transportation, TSC
Jeff Sorensen	Cooper Township
Randy Thompson, Chair	Comstock Township
Don Ulsh	Schoolcraft Township
Terry Urban	City of Portage
Craig Williams	KATS Citizens' Advisory Committee

MEMBERS ABSENT

Carol Daly	Village of Mattawan
Jeff Heppler	Village of Augusta
Tim Frisbie	Village of Vicksburg
John Gisler	Kalamazoo County
Martin Janssen	Kalamazoo County Transportation Authority
William Joseph	Village of Paw Paw
Tracy Locey	Brady Township
Chris Praedel	City of Kalamazoo

Jerry VanderRoest

Charleston Township

OTHERS PARTICIPATING

Tom Brenan
Don Martin
Elizabeth Rumick
Steve Stepek
Ali Townsend

Road Commission of Kalamazoo County Commissioner
Kalamazoo Township
Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study
Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study
Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study

CHANGES OR ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

There were no changes or additions to the agenda.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Johnson moved, and it was duly seconded by Aardema, **“to approve the agenda of the April 20, 2022 Policy Committee Meeting.”** MOTION CARRIED.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

No public comments were made.

CONSENT AGENDA

- ACCEPTANCE OF THE TREASURER’S REPORT
- ACCEPTANCE OF THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE REPORT (APRIL 14, 2022)
- ACCEPTANCE OF THE SOUTHCENTRAL MICHIGAN PLANNING COUNCIL REPORT
- APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM THE MARCH 30, 2022 MEETING

Steppek pointed out that due to this month’s meeting schedule, the Technical Committee report was unable to be prepared for the consent agenda. The Technical Committee recommended approval of everything that is on today’s Policy Committee meeting agenda. Next month, both the April and May Technical Committee reports will be included on the consent agenda. Kinney pointed out his name is misspelled on the March 30, 2022 meeting minutes.

Sorensen moved, and it was duly seconded by Britigan, **“to accept and approve the items on the Consent Agenda with the spelling correction in the minutes.”** MOTION CARRIED.

TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM AMENDMENTS

Steppek provided information regarding the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendments included in the packet. Instead of what is documented in the meeting memo, the K L Avenue project is the Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study Transportation Alternatives Program grant award portion. Most of the other amendments are budget changes. The TIP reflects spending the full amount of the fiscal 2023 awarded Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act allocation. Aardema asked what the limits were on the Portage Road project. Stepek responded it is from Milham south to East Centre.

Sorensen moved, and it was duly seconded by Heiny-Cogswell, **“to approve the Transportation Improvement Program Amendments.”** MOTION CARRIED.

FISCAL YEAR 2023 UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM

Steppek provided information on the Draft Fiscal Year 2023 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) included in the meeting packet. The UPWP has been out for public engagement since the beginning of the month. There are a couple of name updates in the Appendix 6 and 7 Membership lists. The Technical Committee recommends approval of the UPWP.

Johnson moved, and it was duly seconded by Miller, *“to approve the Fiscal Year 2023 Unified Planning Work Program with name corrections.”* MOTION CARRIED.

DRAFT FISCAL YEAR 2023-2026 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

Steppek explained that the full document of the Transportation Improvement Program is on the katsmpo.org website and not included in the packet due to its large size. KATS hosted a public open house last night on the Transportation Improvement Program draft with a handful of people in attendance. QR codes were distributed for attendees to scan to review and comment not only on KATS projects, but all projects statewide. Comments are due before May 5, 2022. KATS will present the TIP next month for approval. Miller asked what comments were made at the open house. Steppek responded comments were mainly inquiries into the KATS process versus discussion on projects.

CONTRIBUTED SERVICES FISCAL YEAR-TO-DATE THROUGH MARCH 2022

Steppek explained a summary of the fiscal year to date contributed services is included in the packet for your review. Steppek reminded attendees to continue to submit timesheets to KATS.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION UPDATES

Aardema reported the Central County Transportation Authority (CCTA)/Kalamazoo County Transportation Authority (KCTA) boards met and agreed to formally levy Villages for the 2022 KCTA millage of 0.3124. The full allowable CCTA/KCTA millage of 0.9 will be levied due to increased fuel and labor costs. Metro ridership is recovering. Sunday bus service will begin in early May. CCTA/KCTA purchased a few new fixed-route buses and smaller Metro Connect vehicles. Supply chain issues are causing delays in delivery of about a year which Metro is attempting to keep ahead of. CCTA/KCTA is in the early stages of a program with the federal government to sponsor and fully fund three electric buses. Although Metro has utilized hybrid buses, they have not used fully electric buses. Metro's Comprehensive Operational Analysis continues. Contact Aardema to submit comments or if you would like to participate. Kinney asked if the federal government would be funding three buses and Metro is considering whether to take them. Aardema clarified award of the electric buses is a competitive process with other transit systems around the state which Kalamazoo was asked to participate in. Aardema stated this is very recent news and doesn't have a lot of information on it. Aardema said there are no electric buses currently operating in our area. In response to Lemon's question, Aardema responded these buses would be fully battery powered. In response to Kinney's question, Aardema answered Metro has no natural gas buses, but utilizes both diesel and hybrid buses. Henderson added Pittsburg transit got 8 new electric buses which became very expensive and inconvenient because the batteries couldn't keep up. Aardema echoed there may be range issues and other challenges with the electric buses. Thompson summarized electric buses have many unknowns. Britigan asked if any information was available on the comparison of the cost of the electric buses versus the gas-powered buses. Aardema recalled the start up cost of the electric bus as \$1.3 million dollars whereas the typical diesel bus cost is \$500 to \$600 thousand dollars. Ulsh asked if

Metro is happy with their hybrid buses. Aardema elaborated that typically buses are in service ten to twelve years. The hybrid bus batteries only last six to seven years and are very expensive to replace. Within the last five years, only diesel buses have been purchased. Thompson added Battle Creek transit is planning its first fare hike in 20 years due to increased costs. Aardema agreed noting Metro's finance committee continues discussion about increased costs.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Steppek added any smaller local communities that would like PASER Rating assistance from Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study (KATS) Staff to please get the request in as soon as possible so KATS can schedule the ratings and budget out the rest of the year. Sorensen asked if Townships were still on the 5-year plan for the Road Commission of Kalamazoo County (RCKC) to perform ratings. Johnson responded the RCKC takes care of that on a 3-year cycle and recommended smaller municipalities take advantage of the opportunity.

NEW BUSINESS

No new business was brought forth.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Lemon confirmed and repeated information from last month's meeting that e-bikes are not allowed on unpaved trails at Ft. Custer State Park.

MEMBER COMMENTS

Aardema welcomed Craig Williams the Battle Creek/Kalamazoo Airport Director.

Britigan reported the Environmental Protection Agency is performing river cleanup in the City of Parchment which is expected to last through at least the end of this year.

Pfeiffer stated the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) is experiencing considerable cost increases resulting from supply chain issues, fuel costs, inflation, and labor costs. Bridge project bid prices are coming in 40 to 60 percent higher than two years ago. Delivery time of wrought iron water mains, cable for cable barriers, and other major materials is increasing significantly which will negatively impact project timelines. Thompson asked for a status update on the Portage Road/I-94 project. Pfeiffer answered many of those project materials were ordered and delivered well before the current delayed delivery issues were present. However, the project is about a month behind schedule with a target of getting the road completely open to traffic around Christmas. Eastbound I-94 traffic is currently shifted to the westbound roadway. Eastbound traffic is expected to be shifted to the new eastbound lanes by the end of week. Stepek added the service road is closed. Aardema asked the duration of the service road closure. Johnson later answered the service road is expected to be closed another month.

Similar to MDOT, Johnson reported the Road Commission of Kalamazoo County (RCKC) is also facing challenges of project cost increases and delayed project timelines. The RCKC received a Scrap Tire Grant and plans to again experiment utilizing scrap tire on roadways. The RCKC annual report is available on the website kalamazoocountyroads.com. Contact Johnson if you would like a hard copy. RCKC is working on maintenance and project preparations. Work has begun on the new RCKC complex on 26th Street. Installation of the salt shed and scale is in progress. The Transportation Asset Management Council annual report will be out May 2, 2022. Last year all federal aid roads were rated, the most in history. There was a slight uptick in roads in good condition and a reduction of roads in poor condition.

Thompson mentioned the Sprinkle Road from East Main to G Avenue project in Comstock Township has begun. Johnson added the project was slated to begin in June but is beginning early due to the contractor's availability.

Ulsh asked for clarification on what a mini roundabout is since one is planned in Schoolcraft Township. Johnson explained it is the same as a regular roundabout but just has a smaller footprint adding they are known for traffic calming and reductions in crashes. Although negative feedback may need to be addressed, trucks are able to navigate them since they are mountable.

Thompson added the Kalamazoo County Chapter of the Michigan Township Association annual golf outing will be on June 17, 2022 at the Crestview Golf Club in Kalamazoo. This year's banquet will be held November 10, 2022 at Four Points on Cork Street. Sorensen elaborated the new CEO of Southwest Michigan First will be a guest at the banquet.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Chairperson Thompson adjourned the meeting at 9:38 a.m.

The next meeting of the Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study Policy Committee will be held on Wednesday, May 25, 2022 at 9:00 a.m.

Approved May 25, 2022 (er)