



# Minutes

Southwest Michigan Planning Commission  
FULL COMMISSION MEETING  
Tuesday, June 21<sup>st</sup>, 2022, 9:30 a.m.

Meeting Held in Person at Cass County Road Commission

## **MEMBERS PRESENT (in person):**

Marchetti, Roseann, Chair, Cass County Commissioner  
Akinwale, Yemi, Treasurer, Berrien County Representative  
Preston, Linda, Secretary, Cass County Representative  
Gundersen, Kristen, Alternate Secretary, Berrien County Representative  
Remus, Richard, Alternate Treasurer, Berrien County Representative  
Catherman, Rick, Van Buren County Representative  
Curran, Jim, Berrien County Commissioner  
DeLong, Don, Cass County Representative  
Dodd, James, Cass County Representative  
Freehling, Teri Sue, Berrien County Commissioner  
Hanson, Don, Van Buren County Commissioner  
Hanson, Sandra, Van Buren County Representative  
Newton, Matthew, Van Buren County Representative (arrived at 9:35 am)  
Pantaleo, Paul, Berrien County Representative  
Patterson-Gladney, Gail, Van Buren County Commissioner  
Petersen, Jan, Van Buren County Representative  
Stauffer, Dick, Berrien County Representative  
Torzynski, Robert, Pokagon Band Representative  
Tyler, Doug, Cass County Representative  
Wood, Gary, Berrien County Representative

## **MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Doroh, Kurt, Vice Chair, Van Buren County Commissioner  
Fette, Dan, Berrien County Representative  
Stover, Jim, Berrien County Representative

### **1. CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Roseann Marchetti called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. and asked Don Hanson to lead those present in the Pledge of Allegiance. Marchetti then welcomed our newest Board member, Rick Catherman. Catherman introduced himself and shared his background with the Board. Maria Vettraino completed a roll call and a quorum was present.

### **2. ACCEPTANCE AND/OR REVISION OF CONSENT AGENDA**

Chair Marchetti presented the Consent Agenda. Don Hanson moved to **“ACCEPT THE CONSENT AGENDA AS PRESENTED.”** Jim Dodd seconded, which carried unanimously.

### **3. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Director Egelhaaf invited the board members to ask for further detail on any portion of the report.

Teri Sue Freehling asked for more information on the collaboration with Southcentral Planning Council on the MEDC Application to be the Regional Broadband Navigator. Director Egelhaaf responded that in order to access funds from the Federal Government to solve Broadband gaps at the state level, the state has to submit a plan on how they will use the funds. He explained that each region is asked to have a Broadband Navigator to be the main channel of communication and help the locals understand all the moving parts and to connect with the state's broadband office. Egelhaaf said the application has come out recently and is due in a couple of weeks, in which we are applying to be the Navigator for our prosperity region. Director Egelhaaf continued to explain who is eligible to be a Navigator and that we are going to partner with the Southcentral Planning Council. Don Hanson talked about Van Buren County's Broadband coverage and questioned if the navigator development was possible bad news for the county. Director Egelhaaf responded that it is not bad news for Van Buren, that presently the county is just trying to understand who is covered and who is not. Teri Sue Freehling commented that the state is trying to get to a level to respond and talked about the level of coordination with the Commission. Egelhaaf said that he would like to see if we can take the vision of each county and mesh that together. Rich Remus asked if the Southcentral Planning Council will be in charge. Egelhaaf responded that he was not sure which of the two organizations will be the fiduciary or if they will work in tandem.

Gail Patterson-Gladney asked if Director Egelhaaf could speak on the Pokagon Band Hazard Mitigation Plan. Egelhaaf proceeded to explain what goes into the plan. He said it is first approved at the local level and then has to be approved at the state level.

Paul Pantaleo inquired about updates on the Regional Food Branding Project. Director Egelhaaf explained what the project entails and that we have a regional brand that is ready to go. Egelhaaf shared that the next step is figuring out how we take this brand and build it into the marketplace. The next step is to present a grant proposal to the Upton Foundation on July 2nd to get approval for the grant application.

Linda Preston inquired about updates on Palisades. Egelhaaf talked about the strategy, stated the analysis portion is almost finished and that we are moving into the assessment phase. He shared that an application for reversal of plant closure has been or will soon be submitted by the state to the federal government and there is a very slight chance this will go through. Gail Patterson-Gladney asked for clarification on the possibility of Palisades to start up again under Holtec. Director Egelhaaf noted that Holtec would not be the operator of the plant if it restarted. A separate owner/operator would have to be involved. Gail Patterson-Gladney also asked about the potential construction of another nuclear plant on the Palisades site. Egelhaaf responded that the possibility is more on the side of rumor. He explained that Holtec's way of attempting to be innovative, is thinking about much smaller footprint nuclear plants but that such plants have not been implemented anywhere yet.

Teri Sue Freehling moved to “**ACCEPT THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT.**” Linda Preston seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

#### **4. NATS & TWINCATS UNIFIED WORK PROGRAMS**

##### **RESOLUTION 2022-1**

Gail Patterson-Gladney moved to “**APPROVE RESOLUTION 2022-1.**” Dick Stauffer seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken and the motion was approved.

##### **RESOLUTION 2022-2**

Paul Pantaleo moved to “**APPROVE RESOLUTION 2022-2.**” Sandra Hanson seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken and the motion was approved.

#### **5. PLANNER PRESENTATION**

##### *The Transportation Improvement Program – Development & Stewardship 2023*

Associate Planner, Brandon Kovnat presented the key documents used for metropolitan transportation planning. He described the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and explained federal transportation funding and how it is allocated. He presented the Transportation Alternative Program (TAP), in which NATS will receive funds to construct non-motorized transportation. Kovnat described the Carbon Reduction Program and how it is used to reduce overall transportation emissions. He shared the process for project selection and TIP development. He then gave an overview of the TwinCATS TIP. In conclusion, Kovnat highlighted a few projects from Berrien, Cass, and Van Buren Counties.

Gary Wood asked if the allocation of funds is based on census data. Kovnat answered yes. Wood then asked if there are any adjustments made for communities along the lakeshore in which there are many properties owned by second homeowners, and the impact relative to the Census. Kovnat replied that there aren’t adjustments and that Wood’s is a legitimate concern.

Paul Pantaleo asked if a project is set in stone once it has been approved for the TIP. Pantaleo has concerns regarding the road diet for Red Arrow Highway and the almost mandated usage of electric vehicles. He has seen safety issues with the Red Arrow road diet. Pantaleo wonders if this can be revisited. Kovnat replied that amendments can be made with changes, he encourages public comment, and stated the plan came from the county itself. Gary Wood responded to Paul Pantaleo’s concerns and said he has a different perspective. Wood stated that most people are in support of the road diet and that the community has been actively engaged in the development of that approach.

Robert Torzynski inquired about the Rural Task Force. Brandon Kovnat explained the Rural Task Force and how it works.

Don Delong asked if we have input with MDOT on the Heritage Trail regarding crossings and speed limits. Kovnat replied that they consult with local road commissions and if you have input to please reach out to him.

Jan Petersen asked for the criteria on the scoring for projects. Kovnat went on to explain how and when the scoring works.

Chair Marchetti told the Board that MDOT has been very responsive and it is good to know who to talk to.

**6. 2023-2026 NATS & TWINCATS TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMS (TIPS)**

**RESOLUTION 2022-3**

Gail Patterson-Gladney moved to “**APPROVE RESOLUTION 2022-3.**” Yemi Akinwale seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken, Rick Catherman and Paul Pantaleo abstained. The motion was approved.

**RESOLUTION 2022-4**

Matthew Newton moved to “**APPROVE RESOLUTION 2022-4.**” Kristen Gundersen seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken, Rick Catherman abstained. The motion was approved.

**7. SELF-CERTIFICATION OF METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION PLANNING PROCESS**

**RESOLUTION 2022-5**

Dick Stauffer moved to “**APPROVE RESOLUTION 2022-5.**” Gail Patterson-Gladney seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken and the motion was approved.

**RESOLUTION 2022-6**

Linda Preston moved to “**APPROVE RESOLUTION 2022-6.**” Sandra Hanson seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken and the motion was approved.

**8. FORMAL ACCEPTANCE OF CASS COUNTY AIR QUALITY CONFORMITY RESULTS**

**RESOLUTION 2022-7**

Matthew Newton moved to “**APPROVE RESOLUTION 2022-7.**” Kristen Gundersen seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken and the motion was approved.

**9. FORMAL ACCEPTANCE OF BERRIEN COUNTY AIR QUALITY CONFORMITY RESULTS**

**RESOLUTION 2022-8**

Yemi Akinwale moved to “**APPROVE RESOLUTION 2022-8.**” Gail Patterson-Gladney seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken and the motion was approved.

**10. PUBLIC COMMENT**

None

**11. PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR**

Chair Marchetti opened up the floor for discussion. Kristen Gundersen shared with that she was pleased with the Infrastructure Asset Management Training and suggested that others take the training as well.

**12. ADJOURNMENT**

Matthew Newton moved to adjourn the meeting. Linda Preston supported the motion. The Chair declared the meeting adjourned at 11:02 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by:



K. John Egelhaaf, AICP

Date: June 26, 2022