

**NILES/BUCHANAN/CASS AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY**  
Policy Committee

**MINUTES**

December 21, 2010  
Niles City Council Chambers  
3:00 P.M.

Policy Members Present:	Jason Auvil, Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians Paul Boggs, Milton Township Chuck Collins, Berrien County Road Commission Irving Frost, Howard Township LeRoy Kremper, Cass County Road Commission Joseph Kring, Bertrand Township John LaMore, Berrien County Commissioner Ray Lenze, MDOT Planning Bill Marx, City of Buchanan Jane Mitchell, Buchanan Township Jan Personette, Four Flags Area Chamber of Commerce John Pleveich, Niles Dial-A-Ride Johnie Rodebush, Cass County Commissioner Don Ryman, Berrien County Commissioner Paul South, MDOT – Coloma TSC
Policy Members Absent:	Betty Arndt, City of Niles Pat Bellaire, Village of Edwardsburg Georgia Boggs, City of Niles John Egelhaaf, SWMPC (ex-officio) Darrell Harden, MDOT, Southwest Region Debbie Johnson, Cass County Commissioner Stewart McKenzie, FTA (ex-officio) Jessica Mitchell, MACOG (ex-officio) Rachael Tupica, Federal Highway Administration (ex-officio) Tracy Vines, Berrien County Planning Commission Representative, Buchanan Dial-a-Ride Representative, Niles Charter Township Representative, Ontwa Township
SWMPC Staff Present:	Anna Rahtz
Others Present:	None

**1. Call to Order & Introductions**

- Chairman Rodebush called the meeting to order at 3:03 P.M. and led the group in saying the Pledge of Allegiance.

**2. Minutes**

- *Motion by Personette, seconded by Auvil, to approve the minutes of the October 26, 2010 Policy Committee meeting. Discussion: Collins asked if the mention of the 2010 ARRA project on Niles-Buchanan Rd was erroneous, since he did not remember the project being approved and had not seen the construction of the project. It was clarified that it had been approved at the end of the fiscal year 2010 to use remaining ARRA money but would be constructed in spring of 2011. Motion approved unanimously with no corrections.*

- Chairman Rodebush led the group in introductions, announcing that LeRoy Kremper was filling in for Cliff Poehlman representing the Cass County Road Commission. It was noted that Kremper would take Poehlman's vote.

### 3. Staff Report

- **CMAQ Meeting**

- Rahtz passed out minutes from the November 10, 2010 Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program fund meeting for Berrien County.
- Ryman noted that he had read the minutes, and almost all of the county's CMAQ funding had gone to the northern part of the county. Rahtz noted that no projects had been proposed from the southern part of the county except for the Niles Dial-A-Ride Free Fare Days on Ozone Action Days project, which had been approved.

- **TIP Approval and Annual Report**

- Rahtz stated that the fiscal years 2011-2014 Transportation Improvement Program had been approved by MDOT, FHWA, and FTA, and the most current version is available on the Transportation Documents page of [www.swmpc.org](http://www.swmpc.org). She passed out copies of the current TIP table and the fiscal year 2010 Annual Report.

- **Transportation Funding 101 workshop update**

- Rahtz passed out a summary of the workshop that had been held on November 22, 2010. She added that the workshop had been extremely popular, and that a sequel workshop is tentatively being scheduled for Monday March 28, 2011. The sequel workshop will follow up on advanced topics that were briefly mentioned at the first workshop, as well as allow the legislators to provide an update on their progress with transportation.

- **New board member training?**

- Rahtz explained that she had received feedback from several new committee members that they did not have a clear picture of what a NATS member's responsibilities are or the exact mission or work tasks of the committees. She passed out the committee bylaws and asked if anyone had any other suggestions of what staff should be doing to orient the new committee members.

- **Transit projects update**

- Rahtz announced that the SWMPC office had begun work on three new transit projects:
  - Pokagon Transit Study – a tribal transit feasibility study for the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians, which will include an assessment of: the transportation needs of tribal citizens and non-tribal citizens in Berrien, Cass, Van Buren, and St. Joseph (IN) counties; the possibility for coordination between the Tribe and existing transportation providers; the unmet needs; the possibility of tribal transit benefiting non-tribal citizens; and a vision of what tribal transportation could look like. This is expected to be approximately a nine-month planning process.
  - Berrien Transit Consolidation Feasibility Study – a detailed study that will be conducted by a consultant, which will involve: an alternatives analysis of various levels of coordination that are possible between the four transit agencies in Berrien County, with detailed assessment of each transit agency's finances, operations, current level of service, and projected future levels of service. This will be a three-year planning process.
  - Assisting Cass County Human Services Coordinating Council with planning a Transit Forum that is being tentatively scheduled for February 9, 2011. The forum could potentially be a precursor to a Cass County Transit Study.

### 4. Old Business

- None

## 5. New Business

- **MDOT 5-year Program of Projects**
  - Rahtz noted that MDOT's 5-year program of projects is up for public comment through February, and distributed copies.
- **Proposed 2011 Meeting Dates**
  - Rahtz passed out copies of the proposed 2011 meeting dates, based on the same schedule that had been used in past years. She noted a correction on the sheet -- November 22, 2011 is already the fourth Tuesday of the month and so that meeting is not being moved because of Thanksgiving.
  - *Motion by Mitchell, seconded by Pleveich, to approve the list of calendar dates for the calendar year 2011 NATS Policy Committee meetings. Motion approved unanimously.*
- **Appointment of officer nominating subcommittee**
  - Rodebush announced that he had appointed Frost and Collins to sit on the officer nominating subcommittee. He added that the subcommittee is usually made up of one Berrien County representative and one Cass County representative, and that the chair is alternately from one county or the other. The Vice-chair normally moves up to become the Chair, and so he asked that the nominating subcommittee nominate someone at the next meeting for the office of Vice-chair who represents Cass County.
- **TIP Amendments**
  - Berrien County Road Commission
    - Delete in FY 2011, the project named Bertrand Rd for resurfacing from Weaver Rd to Mayflower Rd. Federal cost was \$351,577 (STU) and county cost was \$87,644.
    - *Motion by Frost, seconded by South, to approve the above deletion in the FY 2011-2014 Transportation Improvement Program. Discussion: LaMore asked why Bertrand Rd was not being seal coated instead, and Rahtz responded that she had asked Brian Berndt and he had said there were no plans to do so. Collins explained that it had been voted down. Motion approved unanimously.*
    - *Rahtz explained that BCRC would like to add a project to replace a culvert on Red Bud Trail at Moccasin Bluff Creek in 2011, using \$150,000 of the federal funds remaining from the above deletion, but that they do not yet know whether they will receive the matching \$150,000 from the fish passage grant. The Technical Advisory Committee had recommended leaving the \$150,000 remaining available in case the grant is awarded.*
    - *Collins added that there has been no word on the grant application, and that the amount applied for is much larger than the typical fish passage grant award.*
  - Cass County Road Commission
    - *Rahtz explained that the following projects are being proposed, and had been approved by the TAC, to use the remaining funds from the deleted Bertrand Rd project. She noted that the federal amounts of \$68,000 each were slightly over the available amount of funding, and so the Pine Lake St amount was reduced from \$68,000 to \$65,577 and the county cost adjusted to make up the difference.*
    - Add in FY 2011, the project named Redfield St for hot mix asphalt resurfacing on Redfield St from Kline Rd to Conrad Rd for 1 mile. Construction phase. Federal cost is \$68,000 (STU), county cost is \$17,000, total phase cost is \$85,000, and total project cost is \$87,000. MDOT job number 110361.
    - Add in FY 2011, the project named Pine Lake St for hot mix asphalt resurfacing on Pine Lake St from M-60 to Anderson Rd for 1.55 miles. Construction phase. Federal cost is \$65,577, county cost is \$19,423, total phase cost is \$85,000, and total project cost is \$87,000.
    - Add in FY 2011, the project named Beebe Rd for hot mix asphalt resurfacing on Beebe Rd from Runkle St to Leet Rd for 0.96 miles. Construction phase. Federal cost is \$68,000 (STU), county cost is \$17,000, total phase cost is \$85,000, and total project cost is \$87,000.

- *Motion by Boggs, seconded by Frost, to approve the above three additions to the FY 2011-2014 Transportation Improvement Program. Discussion: It was asked why the project costs were the same for different lengths of resurfacing, and South suggested that the difference has to do with the depth of pavement and whether it is considered a "structural" or "nonstructural" resurface. Motion approved unanimously.*
- *Rahz noted that the following two projects were proposed by CCRC to use the remaining unallocated funds in the TIP for fiscal years 2012 and 2014.*
- *It was clarified that STU stands for Surface Transportation Urban.*
- Add in FY 2012, the project named Bertrand Rd for hot mix asphalt resurfacing on Bertrand Rd from Ironwood Rd to Batchelor Rd for 0.75 miles. Construction phase. Federal cost is \$62,000 (STU), county cost is \$14,000, total phase cost is \$76,000, and total project cost is \$78,000.
- Add in FY 2014, the project named Redfield St for hot mix asphalt resurfacing on Redfield St from Fir Rd to Brush Rd for 0.75 miles. Construction phase. Federal cost is \$72,500 (STU), county cost is \$18,125, total phase cost is \$90,625, and total project cost is \$92,625.
- Amend in FY 2014, the project named Bertrand Rd for resurfacing from Batchelor Rd to 0.75 miles East of Batchelor Rd. Amend project limits to "Batchelor Rd to Gumwood Rd" and amend length from 0.75 miles to 1.04 miles.
- *Motion by Collins, seconded by Personette, to approve the above three amendments to the FY 2011-2014 Transportation Improvement Program. Discussion: It was asked why Bertrand Rd is being done in two separate segments rather than saving costs by combining it into one project, and it was noted that there are limitations of funding available in each fiscal year, as well as regulations on the length of force account work that is eligible for STU funds. Motion approved unanimously.*

## 6. Public Comment

- None

## 7. Privilege of the Floor

- Personette announced that the Hunter Ice Festival will be held the weekend of January 14th through 16th, 2011. It will feature an interactive ice carousel and staged ice fights, and will be filmed by the Food Channel, to air in May.
- LaMore commented that several traffic lights that had been installed by MDOT using Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program funds a couple of years ago actually seem to be negatively impacting traffic flow rather than improving it. South responded that MDOT would investigate the problem.
- LaMore thanked the Berrien County Road Commission for leveling the sunken manholes that he had pointed out at a previous meeting.
- Pleveich announced that Niles Dial-A-Ride had successfully completed its Stuff a Bus program the previous two weekends, which had been a volunteer effort to collect clothing and toys to donate to the Salvation Army. NDART will continue the effort in future years.
- Collins noted a location in Bertrand Township in front of JD's truck stop at which the turnaround areas in the median had been turned to rubble by the truck traffic.
- Collins added that the Southeast Berrien County Landfill Authority had originally committed to resurfacing the road bordering the landfill property but had since decided not to commit the funds to the road resurfacing. He suggested looking at changing the National Functional Classification of Rynearson Rd from Chamberlain Rd to the City limits of Buchanan because it serves as a connector to and from the City. This change would make the road federal aid eligible.
- It was asked why the change would have to occur along that entire segment of the road and Lenze clarified that there are specific criteria for changing the NFC of a segment of road, such as whether the road is serving as a connector. He added that MDOT will be conducting a review of all road

classifications now that the 2010 Census data has been released, within the next year, and so it is best to wait for that review.

- There was discussion on whether the commitment from the Landfill Authority to resurface the road was in writing, and Mitchell added that it was mentioned in the agreement.

## **8. Adjournment**

- *Meeting adjourned by Chairman Rodebush at 3:48 P.M.*
- The next meeting is **January 25, 2011 at 3:00 P.M.**

Minutes compiled by: Anna Rahtz, Transportation Planner, 12/21/10