

BATTLE CREEK AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY

Policy Committee

Minutes of January 24, 2024 Meeting

MEMBERS PRESENT: Voting: Richard Bayus, Deb Belles, Harry Burdett, Kevin Leiter, Derek King, Dennis McKinley, Kristine Parsons, Steve Skalski, and Cale Williams (proxy for Mallory Avis)

Non-voting: None

MEMBERS ABSENT: Voting: Laveta Hardish, Annjanette Kremer

Non-voting: Jenny Staroska and Southcentral Michigan Planning Council (SMPC)

OTHERS PRESENT: Jeff Franklin, Andrew Tilma, and Terry Youmans

Chair Burdett called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m. in the Council Room of the Susan L. Anderson Municipal Building (Springfield City Hall), 601 Avenue A, Springfield MI 49037.

ROLL CALL

Burdett asked all members and staff in attendance to introduce themselves. It was determined that a quorum of the voting members was present.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Franklin asked that Item 7.C. be made an Information item instead of an Action item. The proposed Action of Item 7.C. would be Unfinished Business for the next meeting.

It was moved by King, supported by Leiter, to approve the agenda, with the noted change. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

**Res.
24-01**

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

It was moved by Skalski, supported by Belles, to approve the minutes of the December 13, 2023 meeting. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

**Res.
24-02**

COMMUNICATIONS

Franklin shared the following communications:

- Franklin attended the Beckley Road Corridor Redevelopment Steering Committee meeting on January 9th. The consultant led the group in an exercise on “stroads”, and the Committee started to develop focus groups for the Corridor for future meetings.
- The BCATS’ Policy Committee actions on Safety and Transit performance measures were transmitted to MDOT, and marked received and compliant.
- BCATS has received an expected update of the planning related Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) from the Michigan Department of Transportation. This is a three-way agreement, based in Federal and State planning regulations, that contracts how the BCATS MPO, the urban transit operator, Battle Creek Transit (BCT), and MDOT, shall behave with each other in regards to Federal and State planning requirements. This latest contract replaces the prior 2018 Memorandum of Understanding. Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) / Federal Transit Administration (FTA) had asked that MOUs be updated given new requirements of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law with regards to Performance Based Planning, and Air Quality Planning. The Chair of BCATS Policy Committee, BCATS Executive Director, and an authorized individual for Battle Creek Transit have been asked to endorse this contract electronically by MDOT.
- The Michigan Infrastructure Office, Technical Assistance Center (MIO TAC), has launched a new Technical Assistance opportunity (dated December 15th, 2023) which replaces the similar pilot program from February 2023. The MIO TAC is offering grant identification, grant writing, benefit cost analysis, and grant process management assistance, as various related federal notice of funding opportunities (NOFOs) are released. MPOs are asked to advertise these MIO TAC Technical Assistance opportunities as they align with NOFOs.
- Greenhouse Gas Performance Measures final rules have been posted to the Federal Register. The State of Michigan is on track to submit their metric calculation method and targets to FHWA/FTA by February 1st. MPOs will be required to individually establish their own targets for this Performance Measure by July 30th, 2024. Meetings are being scheduled to find out how to effectively copy the State’s methodology and targets, in lieu of the more typical “MPO support of State targets” process commonly used for other Performance Measures.
- On January 4th, Transportation Asset Management Council announced a one-time FY24 program to make available extra Asset Management funding specific for PASER rating of non-federal aid roads. There was discussion from at BCATS Technical Committee from member agencies Calhoun County Road Department and City of Battle Creek about taking advantage of

this one-time funding, which must be over and above the typical BCATS regular appropriation of FY24 Asset Management funds.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was no unfinished business.

NEW BUSINESS

A. October-December 2023 (FY 2024, Q1) Quarterly Financial Report

Franklin indicated that the October-December 2023 Quarterly Financial Report was provided in the advanced materials. The expenditures for the year for the BCATS staff office are at 32.4% of the budget for this first quarter of the fiscal year, mainly due to having three staff persons employed by BCATS between October and December, whereas the typical situation would be two staff persons. With the retirement of long-time Executive Director, Pat Karr, at the end of December 2023, Franklin anticipates revenue to catch up and surpass expenditures over the remainder of the fiscal year.

It was moved by Belles, supported by Skalski, to receive and file the Oct. – Dec. 2023 Quarterly Financial Report, as presented. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Res.
24-03

B. FY 2023-2026 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendment #8

Tilma reviewed the list of items proposed for Amendment #8 to the current TIP. Tilma stated the list of items proposed for this amendment were advertised in the Battle Creek Enquirer on January 8th for public comment.

It was moved by King, supported by Skalski, to approve the FY 2023-2026 TIP Amendment #8, as presented. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Res.
24-04

C. FY 2023 Audit

Franklin informed the Committee that there is a minor delay in the receipt of the finalized FY 2023 Audit, due to the auditor's own vacation/holiday timing. The finalized audit is expected yet this week, and will be provided to BCATS Policy Committee members promptly upon receipt. The expectation is an Action of acceptance of the audit at the February meeting. This was an information item.

COMMENTS

A. Next Meeting

Chair Burdett announced that the next meeting of the BCATS Policy Committee is scheduled for February 28, 2024 at 1:30 p.m.

B. Committee Member Comments

Parsons reported that tree removals are almost completed in Bedford Township along Uldriks Road. Tree removals will commence on S Wattles Road thereafter.

McKinley reported that the election for the Bedford Charter Township supervisor will be February 27th. McKinley clarified the roles of the Bedford Charter Township supervisor and superintendent. McKinley stated that as superintendent, he will be the BCATS Policy Committee member going forward.

Belles reported on the progress of the Verona Road water main project, which includes significant tree removal work along Verona and Michigan Ave commencing soon.

Williams reported on the continued shortage of bus drivers at Battle Creek Transit. Due to this shortage, there had been a reduction of services in place. Per Federal Transit Administration, Battle Creek Transit recently hosted a public forum to receive feedback on the overall reduction of services. Until the industrywide shortage of drivers has an effective resolution, the reduction of services is expected to continue. Battle Creek Transit remains committed to restoring services to former levels as soon as it is feasible. In combat of this problem, training and hiring practices for bus drivers has undergone improvements, and additional transit funding is being sought from State and Federal programs.

Bayus introduced himself as the new MDOT Statewide Planning supervisor assigned to BCATS Policy Committee. Bayus, alongside MDOT Program Manager, Max Gierman, assigned to BCATS Technical Committee, look forward to providing assistance to BCATS staff and BCATS member agencies.

Franklin expressed gratitude to MDOT Statewide Planning for the experienced team assigned to BCATS, with Program Manager, Max Gierman, and supervisor, Richard Bayus.

C. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Burdett adjourned the meeting at 1:59 p.m.