

**BATTLE CREEK AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY**  
**Policy Committee**  
**Minutes of April 26, 2023 Meeting**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Voting: Mallory Avis, Deb Belles, Harry Burdett, Jeff Franklin, Dennis McKinley (for Joni Jones), Dave Neubauer (for Annjanette Kremer), Kevin Leiter, John Midgley, and Steve Skalski

Non-voting: None

MEMBERS ABSENT: Voting: Derek King and Laveta Hardish

Non-voting: Andrew Sibold (FHWA) and Southcentral Michigan Planning Council (SMPC)

OTHERS PRESENT: Pat Karr and Andrew Tilma

Chair Burdett called the meeting to order at 1:34 p.m. in the Council Room of the Susan L. Anderson Municipal Building (Springfield City Hall), 601 Avenue A, Springfield, MI 49037.

**ROLL CALL**

All in attendance introduced themselves and their affiliations. It was determined that there was a quorum of voting members

**APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

**It was moved by Midgley, supported by Leiter, to approve the agenda. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Res.  
**23-14**

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

There were no public comments.

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

**It was moved by Belles, supported by Franklin, to approve the minutes of the March 22, 2023 meeting, as presented, subject to any additions, corrections or changes. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Res.  
**23-15**

## COMMUNICATIONS

Karr reported the following items of communication:

- BCATS staff submitted the March Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) amendment for processing. The amendment has now been federally approved.
- BCATS received safety project information from the Calhoun County Road Department (CCRD) for planned local safety program applications to MDOT for FY 2025 funding. This item is on the agenda for today's meeting.
- BCATS staff forwarded to MDOT the action of the BCATS Policy Committee regarding the updated Battle Creek Transit safety targets.
- BCATS staff provided a letter of support to Battle Creek Transit for a Congressionally Directed Spending (CDS) funding opportunity. Senator Peters office requested that the MPO acknowledge its support of the proposed funding which is to support capital needs associated with a transition to a countywide transit authority.
- Karr has submitted to MDOT the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) report. This is a requirement that is submitted twice each year.
- A second meeting of the local advisory group for MDOT's PEL study of I-194 is being held next Thursday, May 4, 2023 at the Emmett Charter Township office. Interested persons are invited to attend.
- In response to a request from Belles, Karr provided a brief overview about the purpose of BCATS and its role in transportation planning.

## UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was no unfinished business.

## NEW BUSINESS

### A. January-March 2023 Quarterly Financial Report

Karr reviewed the two-page January-March Quarterly Financial Report that was provided to the members in the advance meeting materials. BCATS is halfway through the current fiscal year and has spent approximately 44% of the year's budget. There have been no expenditures yet this year by the local road agencies.

**It was moved by Midgley, supported by Belles, to receive and file the January-March 2023 Quarterly Financial Report for BCATS, as presented. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**Res.  
23-16**

**B. FY 2023 Unified Work Program (UWP) Adjustment**

Karr indicated that this is the time of year when the current work program budgets are evaluated to determine if any adjustments are needed to better reflect where work activity has, and will be, taking place for the rest of the fiscal year. She reviewed the table showing how it is recommended that minor adjustments be made in the allocation of funding for this year's work items. There is no change in the overall budget and no change to the budget for the local agencies. There are also minor changes to the Short Range Transit Planning narrative that are being proposed.

**It was moved by Avis, supported by Midgley, to approve the FY 2023 Unified Work Program modifications, as presented. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**Res.  
23-17**

**C. Draft FY 2024 Unified Work Program (UWP)**

Karr indicated that this is a discussion item for this month. The provided material is a draft of the Unified Work Program document for fiscal year 2024. There are both narrative and financial sections in the document. Karr reviewed the contents of the draft document. Karr indicated that this will be an action item in May and requested that comments on the draft be provided to her. MDOT requires that completed UWPs be submitted to the Department by June 1<sup>st</sup>.

This was an discussion item not requiring action.

**D. Request for Letters of Support for Local Safety Project Applications**

A memo was provided to the members in advance detailing the three projects that the Calhoun County Road Department plans to submit to MDOT for consideration for local safety project funding, and that are within the BCATS area. Karr provided details about the proposed projects.

**It was moved by Avis, supported by Skalski, to authorize the development of letters of support by BCATS for the local safety project applications being prepared by the Calhoun County Road Department for FY 2025 funding. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**Res.  
23-18**

**E. Staff Attendance at Annual Michigan Transportation Planning Association (MTPA) Conference**

Karr reviewed the memo that was provided for this item. This year's MTPA conference is being held in Ann Arbor, Michigan at the end of July. It was requested that BCATS staff attendance at this conference be approved at a not-to-exceed cost of \$2,800 for the two staff persons.

**It was moved by Midgley, supported by Belles, to approve BCATS staff attendance at the annual MTPA conference in Ann Arbor, MI in July and to authorize expenditures in association with the conference at a not-to-exceed amount of \$2,800. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**Res.  
23-19**

#### **G. Study Management Committee Items**

##### **1. Annual Review for P. Karr, BCATS Executive Director - ACTION**

Avis reported from the Study Management Committee (SMC) that the annual review for Karr indicates that she performs all tasks with excellence and professionalism. The Study Management Committee recommends that her salary be increased to the maximum for the range (\$113,000) (this means \$84,750 for her 75% time position). The BCATS salary ranges were updated by the Policy Committee at the March 22, 2023 meeting.

**It was moved by Leiter, supported by Franklin, to approve an increase in Karr's salary to the maximum for the position, as recommended by the Study Management Committee. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**Res.  
23-20**

##### **2. Consideration of Juneteenth Holiday addition to BCATS' Official Holidays - ACTION**

Avis indicated that it is recommended that BCATS add the federal holiday Juneteenth (June 19th) to the list of BCATS' holidays. Several local units of government have already added this day as an official holiday.

**It was moved by Skalski, supported by Leiter, to approve the addition of Juneteenth as an official holiday for BCATS. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**Res.  
23-21**

##### **3. Other**

Avis reported to the full Committee that the Study Management Committee has been working on updating job descriptions and the personnel policies for BCATS. Also, the SMC has been addressing a staff transition at BCATS as Karr has indicated that she plans to retire at the end of the current calendar year. This includes reviewing specifically the Executive Director job description as well as a position posting and recruitment time line for a new Executive Director for BCATS. It is expected that many of these items will come before the full Policy Committee at the May meeting for action.

## COMMENTS

### A. Next Meeting

The next Policy Committee meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, May 24, 2023, 1:30 p.m.

### B. Committee Member Comments

Neubauer provided an update about MDOT projects underway or starting soon. This included the bridge replacements on I-94, heavy maintenance on the I-94BL/W. Columbia Avenue from Helmer Road to Skyline Drive, and general information about projects that will be associated with the Ford Blue Oval Battery Park in Marshall Township. There will be four phases involved with the work for this large project. Neubauer is the MDOT project manager for the projects impacting roadways associated with that megasite.

Midgley reported that the Calhoun County Road Department (CCRD) has switched to a summer schedule of four 10-hour workdays and no work on Fridays. He indicated that pothole patching is going on countywide, but at present it has been difficult to get the hot mix asphalt needed for that work. Local road work for the season has been selected and the CCRD is currently awaiting signed agreements for the work from the townships.

McKinley introduced himself as the Superintendent for Bedford Charter Township. This is a newly created position to oversee the day-to-day operations of the Township.

Belles stated that Emmett is finishing up a punch list with the CCRD for their local road program.

Skalski indicated that the Union Street bridge project is underway and the Skyline Drive/Hill Brady Road roundabout is about to start. The City of Battle Creek will get work on south Capital Avenue that needs to be done completed before the Capital Avenue bridge over I-94 is to torn down and replaced. This will result in a total closure of Capital Avenue at I-94. The bridge project is expected to start after the 4<sup>th</sup> of July holiday.

Avis indicated that Battle Creek Transit's CDS request, which Karr referenced under Communications, has moved to a second level of review. This does not guarantee funding but improves the chances of a successful request. The total request was identified at \$3.75 million, with \$3 million being federal funding and \$750 thousand being state funding. She indicated the items which would be funded with this project. Avis also reported that it is still the intention of Calhoun County to formally create the Transportation Authority in Calhoun County (TACC) on May 4th. The townships have 30 days to opt out of the authority if these choose. A countywide millage is expected to be requested once the service area of the authority is established. Any units of government which opt out will not receive any transit service under the authority. Opting in to the authority does not automatically result in a tax or millage on residents. The will still be a vote by the public for any millage.

Leiter commended Karr on her service to BCATS.

Franklin noted the nearby situation that occurred in Kalamazoo County when that county pursued a transit authority and some units of government opted out of the initial formation. Several of those units later reconsidered and joined the authority.

Karr thanked the Committee for their consideration related to her review. She also stated that she is appreciative of the extra work that the Study Management Committee will be doing over the next six months to make this staff transition as smooth as possible.

**C. Public Comments**

There were no public comments.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Burdett adjourned the meeting at 2:24 p.m.