

KALAMAZOO AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY POLICY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the November 29, 2023 Meeting

CALL TO ORDER

The November 29, 2023 Policy Committee Meeting was called to order at 9:02 a.m. at Metro in Kalamazoo, by Chairperson 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
Heather Bowden	Michigan Department of Transportation, Planning
Tim Frisbie	Village of Vicksburg
Todd Hackenberg	Village of Lawton
Robert Henderson	Van Buren Public Transit
Jeff Heppler	Village of Augusta
Greg Kinney	Van Buren County Road Commission
Pat McGinnis	City of Portage
Sherine Miller	Kalamazoo Township
Pete Pfeiffer	Michigan Department of Transportation, TSC
Aditya Rama	Kalamazoo County Transportation Authority
Jeff Sorensen	Cooper Township
Paul Sotherland	KATS Citizens' Advisory Committee
Randy Thompson, Chair	Comstock Township
Jerry VanderRoest	Charleston Township
Mark Worden	Road Commission of Kalamazoo County

MEMBERS ABSENT

Rob Britigan	City of Parchment
Marsha Drouin	Richland Township
John Gisler	Kalamazoo County
Judy Lemon	City of Galesburg
Chris Praedel	City of Kalamazoo
Randy Smith	Brady Township
Don Ulsh	Schoolcraft Township

OTHERS PARTICIPATING

Megan Mickelson	Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study
Elizabeth Rumick	Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study
Jon Start	Citizen
Steve Stepek	Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study
Ali Townsend	Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study

CHANGES OR ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

There were no changes or additions to the agenda.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Sorensen moved, and it was duly seconded by Heppler, **“to approve the agenda of the November 29, 2023 Policy Committee Meeting.”** MOTION CARRIED.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

CONSENT AGENDA

- ACCEPTANCE OF THE TREASURER REPORT
- ACCEPTANCE OF THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE REPORT
- ACCEPTANCE OF THE SOUTHCENTRAL MICHIGAN PLANNING COUNCIL REPORT
- APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM THE OCTOBER 25, 2023 MEETING

Heppler moved, and it was duly seconded by Sorensen, **“to accept and approve the items on the Consent Agenda.”** MOTION CARRIED.

FY 2023-2026 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM AMENDMENTS

Referring to the amendments enclosed in the meeting packet, Stepek explained there are two small safety projects. Both are Michigan Department of Transportation safety projects. One is for pedestrian improvements along West Main. The other is for pavement markings along M-43 and M-51.

Aardema moved, and it was duly seconded by Miller, **“to approve the FY 2023-2026 Transportation Improvement Program Amendments.”** MOTION CARRIED.

DRAFT PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

Referring to the draft Public Participation Plan in the meeting packet, Stepek reminded attendees the plan has been out for feedback for the past several months. A summary of changes to the document has been provided. Once Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study (KATS) receives the Certification Review report from FHWA and FTA in early 2024, additional edits may need to be incorporated into the document. KATS staff and the Technical Committee recommend adoption of the document as presented.

Sorensen moved, and it was duly seconded by Heppler, **“to approve the Public Participation Plan.”** MOTION CARRIED.

2024 MEETING SCHEDULE

The proposed 2024 meeting schedule is included in your packet. The schedule is based off our current practice of meeting on the last Wednesday of the month. A few of the dates are adjusted for the Michigan Township Association's annual conference and the holiday season.

Miller moved, and it was duly seconded by Worden, ***"to approve the 2024 Meeting Schedule."*** MOTION CARRIED.

2024 POLICY COMMITTEE OFFICER DISCUSSION

Every calendar year, the KATS Policy Committee nominates new officers. The current slate of officers is willing to continue for another year. That includes Randy Thompson as Chair, Curtis Aardema as Vice-Chair, and Rob Britigan as Treasurer. This is an opportunity for anyone else to express their interest in a position so action can be taken in December. Members discussed closing nominations and voting on current officers. Stepek thanked the officers for volunteering.

Sorensen moved, and it was duly seconded by McGinnis, ***"to approve Randy Thompson as Chair, Curtis Aardema as Vice-Chair, and Rob Britigan as Treasurer for another year term."*** MOTION CARRIED.

FISCAL YEAR 2023 CONTRIBUTED SERVICE

The finalized FY 23 contributed service totals are included in your packet. Stepek reported Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study far exceeded our required minimum for the year. Stepek reminded attendees to continue to fill out timesheets.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION UPDATES

Aardema reported Metro has received a good response from their Request for Proposals for the Microtransit program. The group agreed in the interest of having McBride do a Microtransit presentation at the December meeting. The target date for the pilot program to start is mid-to-late spring. Metro purchased a new touchless wash system for buses. It should be installed within the next few months in the main facility bus garage. The new system will replace the current 22-year-old wash rack. The current system is built for 40-foot buses. The new one will accommodate different sized buses as needed. Metro's External Relations Committee participated in the Maple Hill Holiday Parade with a decorated bus. The Central County Transportation Authority (CCTA) / Kalamazoo County Transportation Authority (KCTA) board continues jurisdictional outreach. The process is being refreshed. Within the next six months, board members will be visiting jurisdictions to answer questions and provide information. Reach out if you would like a visit. Rama added that Metro Connect ridership in October was the highest since the pandemic. Aardema echoed that Metro ridership is also increasing. Rama reported KCTA hired a consultant to lead the transit hub study. Cooper complimented the Metro Connect service. Heppler brought up the idea of expanding service beyond the VA Battle Creek Hospital. There is currently service to the VA Hospital, but jurisdictional limitations inhibit further service. Further discussion ensued.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The updates are included in the meeting packet. Stepek added there may be a Public Participation Plan corrective action write-up in the upcoming Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study (KATS) Certification Review report resulting from recent Executive Orders. Then the plan would be updated and presented for approval. The KATS fiscal year 2023 audit is complete. There were no audit findings. The auditors noted that some KATS staff have banked sizeable amounts of sick leave and vacation leave time. This creates risk of a potential large liability should payout be required. However, the payout is capped, limiting the liability. Auditors discussed this with the Committee Chair and staff. Additional earmark funding of approximately \$26.5 million dollars will allow the US-131 BR interchange project to be fully funded. The project will be on the proposed December Transportation Improvement Program Amendments. Details of this project were further discussed.

NEW BUSINESS

No new business was brought forth.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

No citizens' comments were made.

MEMBER COMMENTS

Sotherland of the KATS Citizens Advisory Committee complimented Michigan Department of Transportation for how nice the finished Portage Road and I-94 project turned out. Sotherland pointed out the much-improved non-motorized upgrades.

McGinnis reported the City of Portage hired an engineer for the Centre Road from Oakland to Shaver project. The Milham Road project from 12th Street to Oakland is planned for 2025 construction.

Heppler reported the Village of Augusta water project on the south side of the village has been completed. Plans are underway for 2024 projects including the resurfacing of M-96, and replacement of the Washington Street bridge. Heppler voiced concern about the heavy traffic and numerous accidents in Richland Township at E D Avenue and 343.

VanderRoest announced a \$13-million-dollar building is going to be built at I-94 Exit 92.

Sorensen mentioned construction is underway for the renovations at Cooper Township Hall creating a cold, noisy, and drafty environment.

Worden gave the Road Commission of Kalamazoo (RCKC) updates. Winter operations are underway. 26th Street is open to traffic. RCKC's new facility will be open ahead of schedule and under budget. Move-in is anticipated in March with an open house to follow.

Frisbie invited attendees to the Village of Vicksburg Christmas in the Burg festival December 9, 2023 from 12:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. Family friendly activities are planned all day. The Christmas Parade with lighted floats and Santa Claus kicks off at 6:00 p.m.

Bowden reported the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) 2024 allocations as well as the 2025 and 2026 estimated allocations have been sent out. The penalty for the drunk driving violation was estimated conservatively. Therefore, there will be a small increase in allocation. The Federal

Highway Administration passed new Transportation Performance Measures on greenhouse gas. MDOT is discussing internally how to provide guidance to Metropolitan Planning Organizations on the new measure. MDOT delayed the call for projects due to state match issues. MDOT is considering updating their Complete Streets Policy based on the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA).

Pfeiffer reported that the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) US-131 project between Schoolcraft and Three Rivers is ongoing. Work is expected to wrap up on December 19, 2023. In spring of 2024, work will begin on Schoolcraft to the north. The US-131 project over KL and Amtrak project that includes the bridge replacement will be in letting Friday. Use caution when driving in winter weather.

Thompson invited attendees to the open house for the new Comstock Township Hall on December 13, 2023 from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. Please email Thompson if you plan to attend so they have an estimate of the number of people to expect. A ribbon cutting ceremony will be held tomorrow for new condos on Gull and G.

Stepak mentioned the flyer by the door and reminded attendees of the invitation to the holiday breakfast preceding the next meeting on December 20, 2023.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Chairperson Thompson adjourned the meeting at 9:48 a.m.

The next meeting of the Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study Policy Committee will be held on Wednesday, December 20, 2023 at 9:00 a.m.

Approved 12/20/23 (er)