

Minutes
of the joint
RPO Technical Coordinating Committee
And
Transportation Advisory Committee
February 6, 2013

TCC: Betty Moore, Dempsey Bond, Gray Hodges, Joe Albright, Charlotte Griffin, Mark Nottingham

TAC:

State: Jeff Cabaniss, Saeed Mohamed

Staff: Bryant Buck, Justin Oakes, Linda Roberts

Guest: Jo Laurie Penrose

Chair Bright called the meeting to order and asked each one present to introduce themselves.

There was not a quorum for the TAC to approve any business requests. Ms. Moore asked if the manual being prepared by DOT had been completed. Mr. Buck stated it was published last year but did not address attendance.

Mr. Buck introduced Jeff Cabaniss who has been hired as a Division Engineer for Division 2 and will be attending the meetings.

There were no public comments.

Rural Transportation Planning Organization/Rural Transit Providers Update

Mr. Buck stated he has attended several workshops on transit transportation and they were well attended by the Mid-East RPO, Peanut Belt RPO, members of the Area Agency on Aging, Upper Coastal Plains and other stakeholders. It is a good forum to sit down and see what best serves residents in the community.

The transit providers and Area Agency on Aging share knowledge of mapping strategic locations inclusion in the locally coordinated plans. He stated that local coordinated plans have to be in place to secure grant funds. Three RPO's are working with transit providers on creating a regionalized coordinated plan with directive from the state. The state wants some of the smaller systems to consolidate. He stated he received directives last year with no direction.

Beaufort Area Transit (BAT) Update

Gray Hodges, Director of the Beaufort County Area Transit, stated BAT currently runs 12 buses daily with 100 people a day and around 22,000 miles a week. Some clients riding the bus are high school students going to the community college, medical patients, Beaufort County Rehabilitation and Voice.

He stated he recently created a budget and submitted to DOT. He has been employed with Beaufort County for four months and he is learning a lot.

He noted that anyone can use the public transit system and is willing to help anyone. For example, the Waterfowl Guild that is held in Beaufort County in February

each year, buses are used to transport riders from one exhibit to another. He will be marketing the system and is currently working with the chamber with events.

Mr. Buck noted there is a misconception about transit system.

Mr. Hodges reported that the cost for county residents to ride a bus is \$13.50 round trip and city residents \$5.25. BAT has seven fixed routes daily with call ins, 10-15 calls a day, DSS has 20 clients a day, one 12 passenger bus, one 18 and one 24 bus. Half are wheel chair accessible and some of the buses can handle one or two wheel chairs.

Resolution Opposing Brokerage System for Medicaid Transportation

Mr. Buck reported the State of North Carolina has asked private companies to bid on providing Medicaid trips to doctors as a way to better monitor the system. These Medicaid trips however cannot be combined with non Medicaid trips therefore there is concern over higher overall cost and the level of service available to those who depend on public transportation. This resolution would oppose the move to a Broker system.

Mr. Buck stated at the January transit provider meeting, this issue was discussed and it was recommended that the RPO submit a resolution in option.

Mr. Hodges reported the Beaufort Transit System works and has a good working relationship with the Department of Social Services.

Chair Albright emphasized no legislation has been introduced of this subject.

There was a lengthy discussion on this issue and a quorum was not present to vote on the resolution. Chair Albright asked Mr. Buck to get a clear understanding of the directive, would like details about origin, and determine if a call meeting is necessary.

Eastern NC RPO/MPO Coalition Update

Mr. Buck reported the coalition is composed of 14 RPO's/MPO's involved in the task of looking at projects in eastern North Carolina with regional significant. At the January meeting discussion was held on the new legislation being introduced, which the most important is the Equity Formula. The others were gas tax, ferry tolls, and ethics compliance. He read the following segment from the House Bill 635:

“The Secretary of Transportation shall, on or before October 1 of each year, calculate the estimated amount of funds subject to this section that will be available for the next seven program years beginning that October 1. The Secretary shall then calculate a tentative percentage share for each distribution region by multiplying the total estimated amount by a factor that is based:

- (1) Sixty-six percent (66%) on the estimated population of the distribution region compared to the total estimated population of the State; and
- (2) Thirty-four percent (34%) on the fraction one-seventh, which provides an equal share based on the number of distribution regions.”

He encouraged the committee to educate the elected officials on the Equity Formula.

There is a study on tolling that should be completed by March and receive the results in April.

Southern Albemarle Association Update

At the Southern Albemarle Association meeting, Mr. Buck made a presentation regarding the ferry tolling. He reported there was an article in the News and Observer which gave the fee structure, which he read.

The RPO's/MPO's are opposing the ferry tolls. The Peanut Belt and Albemarle RPO have endorsed resolutions opposing the ferry toll increase.

Mr. Buck stated that he would keep everybody updated on the issue.

Beaufort County is in the process of writing a Comprehensive Transportation Plan which includes a bridge from Bayview to Aurora, which has been advocated for several years.

NC Association of Rural Planning Organizations Conference Updates

Mr. Buck reported that the association met on January 24 and 25 and the big item for discussion was the Ethics Law for the TAC's and TCC's.

He stated that at the Greenville Brody School of Medicine a webinar will be held on February 11, March 8, and April 8, and he will email the schedule to the committees. He commented that the Mid-East Commission has a van and he would be willing to drive. Some of the RPO's have sent resolutions opposing the Ethic Training, but we are not going to send a resolution opposing the Ethic Training. The TAC's and TCC's have to complete its SEI form by April 15th.

NC League of Municipalities Transportation Summit Report

Mr. Buck stated that the summit was held on November 14th in Raleigh and General Trogden, COO of DOT was the guest speaker.

NC DOT Updates

Jeff Cabaniss presented the NC DOT Division 2 project updates.

Transportation Planning Branch Updates

Saeed Mohamed reported Mid-East RPO received one of the best evaluations.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

The next meeting will be held tentatively on May 1, 2013.