

NIRPC Executive Board Meeting

6100 Southport Road, Portage, IN

July 20, 2023 Minutes

Call to Order

Chairman Richard Hardaway called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance. The meeting was streamed live on YouTube.

New Appointments to the Commission

Dave Hollenbeck announced there were no new appointments to the Commission.

Roll call - Taken by Candice Eklund. Though the meeting was intended as a Full Commission meeting, attendance was one Commissioner short of a quorum. A quorum of the Executive Board was present, and the meeting reverted to a meeting of the Executive Board. During roll call, Mary Tanis announced she was removed from NIRPC's Commission on July 19, 2023 by Dyer's Council. Mary left the meeting after her announcement.

Present

The 8 Executive Board members present at the meeting included Kevin Breitzke (Porter County Surveyor), Bill Emerson (Lake County Surveyor), Richard Hardaway (Merrillville), Justin Kiel (LaPorte County Council), Sue Lynch (Portage), Wendy Mis (Munster), and Jim Ton (Chesterton).

The 18 Commissioners present at the meeting included Thomas Black (Highland), Robert Carnahan (Cedar Lake), Tim Clayton (Winfield), Don Craft (Porter), Joshleen Denham (Trail Creek), Daina Dumbrys (Michiana Shores), Denise Ebert (Wanatah), Robert Forster (Kouts), Connie Gramarossa (LaPorte County Commissioner), Ellen Hundt (Beverly Shores), Jack Jeralds (Schneider), Jane Jordan (Burns Harbor), Robert LeMay (Long Beach), Edward Morales (Porter Township), Regina Ruddell (Pottawattomie Park), Tom Schmitt (Schererville), Gerald Swets (St. John), Sharon Szewo (New Chicago), and George Topoll (Union Township). Also present was Adam Parkhouse representing INDOT.

Absent

The 3 Executive Board members absent from the meeting included Kyle Allen (Lake County Commissioner), Tom Dermody (La Porte), and Jim Pressel (Governor Appointee).

The 21 Commissioners absent included Duane Arndt (Kingsford Heights), Jeanette Bapst (Dune Acres), Bill Carroll (Lake Station), Anthony Copeland (East Chicago), Tony Hendricks (LaPorte County Surveyor), Scott Kingan (Ogden Dunes), Peter Land (Crown Point), Tom McDermott (Hammond), Lori Mercer (Westville), Matt Murphy (Valparaiso), Randall Neimeyer (Lake County Council), Duane Parry (Michigan City), David Peeler (Hebron), Jerome Prince (Gary), Barb Regnitz (Porter County Commissioner), Lisa Rosenkranz (La Crosse), Rick Ryfa (Griffith), Brian Snedecor (Hobart), Steve Spebar (Whiting), Red Stone (Porter County Council), and John Yelkich (Lowell).

Dyer, Kingsbury, and The Pines have appointed no representatives to NIRPC.

Staff present included Ty Warner, Kathy Luther, Tom Vander Woude, Charles Bradsky, Denarie Kane, Kevin Polette, and Candice Eklund.

Public Comment – There were no public comments.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the May 18, 2023, Executive Board meeting were approved on motion by Kevin Breitzke and seconded by Jim Ton.

Report of the Chair – Richard Hardaway

Richard Hardaway reported he went to the National Association of Regional Councils (NARC) annual conference with Ty Warner, Justin Kiel, and George Topoll last month in Detroit, Michigan. He announced Justin Kiel was voted to the Senior Vice President of the NARC Board of Directors and Ty Warner was voted to the NARC Executive Directors Council.

Report of the Executive Director - Ty Warner

Ty Warner further expounded on Richard's report stating he appreciated Richard, Justin, and George participating in the NARC conference. Two of the discussion points at the conference included the continued housing crisis presented by the American Planning Association who focused on housing issues experienced

nationally, and the head of the charging network system for General Motors who presented on electric vehicles charging and their national rollout. Ty noted the work done on Detroit's riverfront and their downtown area, stating the Detroit downtown partnership, riverwalk consortium, and other groups collaborated on these efforts. Ty said the two required documents on today's agenda, that were produced as part of NIRPC's federal obligation, were *NWI 2050+*, NIRPC's long-range plan for the region, and the new 2024-2028 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Mr. Warner thanked NIRPC staff for all of their efforts that went into *NWI 2050+*, adding they also had great consultant work provided on the plan. The printed *NWI 2050+* that was distributed at the meeting is also posted on NIRPC's website at <https://nirpc.org/nwi-2050plus/>.

Ty recognized Candice Eklund, Executive Assistant, for her 5 years of service with NIRPC.

Environmental Management Policy Committee (EMPC) – Bill Emerson

Bill Emerson reported there were discussions on the BP Carbon Capture and Storage Investment project at the meeting held on May 4. The next meeting is scheduled for August 3, 2023. At today's meeting, Damian Bilboa, BP Vice President for U.S. Low Carbon Ventures, presented on what BP is doing globally, nationally, and in NWI on this initiative and why they believe it's a catalyst for a large-scale investment in the future. Mr. Bilboa discussed carbon capture and hydrogen providing energy that's affordable, secure, and accessible for our communities and to make sure they have a positive fuel that has environmental and economic impact for the community. He stated Indiana is advantaged in its sub-surface potential for the injection and storage of carbon dioxide (CO2). The investment growth in new sources of energy in carbon capturing and decarbonization is the fastest growing sector in the economy. Globally, hydrogen is the next growth industry and BP expects the scale and market to double by 2030 and quadruple by 2050. BP is currently working to acquire the contractual rights to inject CO2 in Northern Indiana over the next three years and will make the economic decision whether they will move forward on this initiative. For additional information, visit [Climate - NIRPC](#) on NIRPC's website.

Finance & Personnel Committee (F & P) – Wendy Mis

Wendy Mis reported the F&P Committee met this morning to review financial reports, bank reconciliations, and claim registers for May and June 2023. The F&P Committee reviewed and amended the 2023 budget to add additional revenue for the expenses to the Marquette Greenway project as a non-for-profit transportation feasibility study. The F&P Committee brought the one action item below to the Executive Board with a favorable recommendation. The next F&P meeting is scheduled for September 21 at 8:00 a.m.

- Drive Clean Indiana (DCI) 2023 (SFY 2024) Contract: Kathy Luther presented this annual contract with DCI. This contract will fund a Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) education program, Green Fleets services, as well as technical support to those who operate fleets. They will also provide a pre-inventory to identify ways to save money, invest in newer technology, and assist in preparing grants. On motion by Jim Ton and seconded by Justin Kiel, the Executive Board approved the DCI contract.

Technical Planning Committee (TPC) - Kevin Breitzke

Kevin Breitzke reported the TPC met on July 11, 2023. The TPC brought the three action items below for consideration with a favorable recommendation. The next TPC meeting is scheduled for September 12, 2023.

1. Resolution #23-11: FY 2022-2026 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendment #22-10. Charles Bradsky reported there was one question submitted during the 21-day public comment period asking if the Local TRAX project in Hammond was included in this amendment. The project is not included in this amendment and NIRPC forwarded the email to a representative in Hammond to follow up with the commenter. There were no comments received from the Interagency Governmental Agency. On motion by Wendy Mis and seconded by Justin Kiel, the Executive Board approved Resolution #23-11.
2. Resolution #23-10: *NWI 2050+* Long Range Metropolitan Transportation Plan. Tom Vander Woude provided a summary of the 30-day public comment report. The draft plan was made available on NIRPC's website, and four public meetings were held to solicit comments and feedback. NIRPC received four comments and they were addressed in the text included in the final draft being presented today. *NWI 2050+* is Northwest Indiana's Metropolitan Transportation plan that is required to be updated every four years. The plan is one of the core planning documents that is required by the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) for NIRPC as a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and is the foundational document for work at NIRPC. This plan carries forward some of the focus areas of the prior plan, *NWI 2050*, and this updated plan continues the idea of Connected, Renewed, United, and Vibrant. It also addresses the new Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) legislation for transportation legislation and includes an updated section on Resiliency, Housing, and Carbon

Reduction. Since a detailed presentation of *NWI 2050+* was given at a previous meeting, Tom provided a brief overview of the history of the project, the development of the plan, and provided a brief description of each of the seven chapters: Land Use, Active Transportation, Roadways, Climate & the Environment, Transit, and Freight. Once the plan is adopted, implementation can begin over the next few years. On motion by Jim Ton and seconded by Justin Kiel, the Executive Board approved Resolution #23-10.

3. Resolution #23-05: FY 2024-2028 TIP, *Invest NWI 2024-2028*. Charles Bradsky stated there were no public comments received during the 21-day public comment period or during the open houses that were held concurrently with *NWI 2050+*. The draft TIP was made available on NIRPCs website and other social media platforms. There were two comments received from the FHWA regarding a slight deficit reported that was corrected and a request to provide a more descriptive explanation of the money NIRPC loaned to another MPO to be paid back in a future year. The TIP is updated every four years and is federally mandated by the FHWA. INDOT and the USDOT have reviewed NIRPCs proposed TIP and are awaiting the new air quality conformity information that will be implemented by NIRPC. On motion by Jim Ton and seconded by Bill Emerson, the Executive Board approved Resolution #23-05.

NIRPC Economic Development District Report – Denarie Kane

Ms. Kane reported there has been ongoing work associated with new federal grant opportunities. An Expression of Interest was submitted in June for an Economic Recovery Corps Fellow to assist with brownfield data collection. In addition, research is being done on the EDA's new Recompete grant which helps reduce prime age unemployment in eligible communities. She stated that her outreach to communities regarding traditional EDA funds and competitive applications is continuing, as are discussions with partner organizations regarding action items in the Economic Recovery & Resilience Plan. She asked for help in the mapping of digital inclusion assets and said information will be on NIRPC's social media later today. This map is part of the state's new Digital Equity Plan being developed by Purdue's Center for Regional Development.

INDOT – Adam Parkhouse

Adam Parkhouse was unable to provide an INDOT report before he needed to leave the meeting.

Other Business

No other business was reported.

Announcements

Commissioners relayed announcements of various events in their communities.

Kathy Luther thanked the leadership from many of the communities who reported NIRPC was undertaking regional climate planning. The Climate Leadership Summit on September 8 will be held at Indiana University Northwest.

Adjournment

Hearing no other business, Richard Hardaway adjourned the meeting at 10:31 am. The next meeting on September 21, 2023, will be an Executive Board meeting.

The livestream video recording of this meeting is available on NIRPC's YouTube Channel at [Commission Meeting 7-20-23 - YouTube](#)