

# NIRPC Executive Board Meeting

Electronic Meeting via Zoom

July 21, 2022 Minutes

## **Call to Order**

Chairman Justin Kiel, called the meeting to order at 9:04 a.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance. The meeting was streamed live on YouTube.

## **New Appointments to the Commission**

Dave Hollenbeck announced the appointment to the Commission of Don Craft by the Town of Porter, replacing former Commissioner Greg Stinson.

**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. All actions could be taken up by the Executive Board.

## **Present**

The 7 Executive Board members present at the meeting included Tom Dermody (LaPorte), Bill Emerson (Lake County Surveyor), Richard Hardaway (Merrillville), Justin Kiel (La Crosse), Sue Lynch (Portage), Wendy Mis (Munster), and Jim Ton (Chesterton).

The 19 Commissioners present at the meeting included Jeannette Bapst (Dune Acres), Janet Beck (Pottawattomie Park), Geof Benson (Beverly Shores), Jim Biggs (Porter County Commissioner), Kevin Breitzke (Porter County Surveyor), Robert Carnahan (Cedar Lake), Joshleen Denham (Trail Creek), Daina Dumbrys (Michiana Shores), Denise Ebert (Wanatah), Robert Forster (Kouts), Jack Jeralds (Schneider), Andrew Kyres (Crown Point), Duane Parry (Michigan City), Jerome Prince (Gary), Tom Schmitt (Schererville), Gerald Swets (St. John), Sharon Szewedo (New Chicago), George Topoll (Union Township), and John Yelkich (Lowell). Also present was Matt Deitchley representing INDOT.

## **Absent**

The 3 Executive Board members absent at the meeting included Sheila Matias (LaPorte County Commissioner), Lori Mercer (Westville), and Jim Pressel (Governor Appointee). The role of Secretary on the Executive Board became vacant with the resignation of Greg Stinson.

The 21 Commissioners absent included Kyle Allen (Lake County Commissioner), Duane Arndt (Kingsford Heights), Charlie Brown (Lake County Council), Bill Carroll (Lake Station), Anthony Copeland (East Chicago), Don Craft (Porter), Jon Derwinski (Winfield), Tony Hendricks (LaPorte County), Mike Jessen (Porter County Council), Scott Kingan (Ogden Dunes), Robert Lemay (Long Beach), Tom McDermott (Hammond), Mike Mollenhauer (LaPorte County Council), Edward Morales (Porter Township), Matt Murphy (Valparaiso), David Peeler (Hebron), Rick Ryfa (Griffith), Angie Scott (Burns Harbor), Brian Snedecor (Hobart), Steve Spebar (Whiting), and Mary Tanis (Dyer).

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

Staff present included Ty Warner, Thomas Dow, Kathy Luther, Talaya Jones, Charles Bradsky, Denarie Kane, Kevin Polette, Candice Eklund, and attorney Dave Hollenbeck.

**Public Comment** – Jeff Huet commented on the Green Infrastructure design guidelines that is up for a vote later in the meeting under resolution #22-15. While Mr. Huet agrees this initiative is great for the environmental aspect of a project, he stated it would also add costs. (This comment was addressed later in the meeting by Kathy Luther of NIRPC staff.)

## **Approval of Minutes**

The minutes of the May 19, 2022, Executive Board meeting minutes were approved on motion by Jim Ton and seconded by Sue Lynch.

## **Report of the Chair – Justin Kiel**

Justin Kiel had no updates to report.

## **Report of the Executive Director - Ty Warner**

Mr. Warner spotlighted three of the many new Federal Discretionary Grant programs (see below) that are available through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA).

1. Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program: Program was intended to address infrastructure investments that were made to unite communities instead of separating them. This program is trying to reverse the negative impact and repair some of the damage. The application deadline is October 13, 2022.
2. Safe Streets and Roads for All: Program provides support in safety planning and activities to prevent serious injuries and fatalities. The application deadline is September 15, 2022.
3. Railroad Crossing Elimination Grant Program: Program provides funding for rail grade crossing improvement projects focusing on improving safety and mobility. The application deadline is October 4, 2022. Jim Ton asked if a 'quiet zone' would be included in this grant. Thomas Dow will follow-up on this question.

Ty recognized Kathy Luther, Director of Environmental Programs, for her 15 years of service with NIRPC.

## **Finance & Personnel Committee (F & P) – Thomas Dermody**

Thomas Dermody reported that the F&P Committee reviewed the claims registers and financial statements for May and June 2022, as well as the financial statements for December 2021. The F&P Committee brought the three action items below to the Executive Board for consideration and approval.

1. Procurement #21-05.04: Talaya Jones presented this procurement, requesting to purchase 26 mobile trail counters and 3 fixed trail counters for data analysis, not to exceed \$98,500. On motion by Thomas Dermody and seconded by Richard Hardaway, the Executive Board approved Procurement #21-05.04.
2. SME Contract Amendment #1: Kathy Luther presented this contract, requesting to amend the existing SME, Inc. contract to accommodate a project in Hammond that is eligible for the federal grant, with the exception of one parcel. This amendment would assess the one non-eligible parcel and have an agreement with Hammond to reimburse NIRPC for expenses up to \$60,000. On motion by Bill Emerson and seconded by Richard Hardaway, the Executive Board approved Amendment #1 to the SME, Inc. contract.
3. Drive Clean Indiana 2023 contract: Kathy Luther presented this annual contract with Drive Clean Indiana, which is not to exceed \$431,860. This contract will fund a Congestion Mitigation and air quality education program, Green Fleet services, as well as technical support in training, alternative fuel, and infrastructure. On a motion by Jim Ton seconded by Sue Lynch, the Executive Board approved the Drive Clean Indiana contract.

## **Technical Planning Committee (TPC) - Kevin Breitzke**

Kevin Breitzke reported the TPC met on July 12, 2022, where they received an update on the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), now called NIRPC's 2050+ *Plan*. NIRPC staff is attending regional events as a public outreach initiative, including the fairs in Lake, LaPorte, and Porter Counties, and a Juneteenth celebration in Merrillville. For additional information, contact Thomas Dow, NIRPC Transportation Director. Due to the Labor Day holiday, the next TPC meeting is scheduled for August 30 at 10:00 a.m. The TPC brought the two action items below to the Executive Board for consideration and approval.

1. Resolution #22-15: Kathy Luther responded to the public comment Jeff Huet brought before the Commission. Kathy stated there is a separate circuit breaker in the Living Streets policy that was adopted in 2020. The cost of the circuit breaker is 15% of the project, which is a call for all projects to consider within their scope. This resolution is to adopt the technical guidelines associated with the green infrastructure component to insure what the community is scoping in their project. On motion by Bill Emerson and seconded by Jim Ton, the Executive Board approved Resolution #22-15.

2. Resolution #22-16: FY 2020-2024 & 2022-2026 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendments #20-22.05 and #20-22.06. Charles Bradsky stated there were no public comments received during the 21-day public comment period. The Interagency Consultation Group submitted one question that was promptly answered. Charles noted the various projects included in both amendments. On motion by Thomas Dermody and seconded by Richard Hardaway, the Executive Board approved Resolution #22-16.

On June 17, 2022, INDOT's 2022-2026 STIP was approved by the USDOT, however NIRPC has not received their formal letter stating their TIP has been approved. Charles will provide an update when NIRPC's TIP has formally been approved.

#### **NIRPC Economic Development District Report – Denarie Kane**

Denarie Kane reported the Recovery and Resiliency Plan is in the final stages now that the in-person meetings have concluded. The project should be completed within the next month.

The *Recover NWI* Revolving Loan Fund program expires before the end of the month. There were two successful loans made during the program for \$50,000 each. NIRPC is continuing their third year of the Partnership Planning Grant with the EDA, which will run from July 1, 2022, to June 30, 2023.

#### **INDOT - Matt Deitchley**

Matt Deitchley, La Porte District Deputy Commissioner, reported the PEL study for the Flex Road project involving I-80/94, has been completed and published at [indianaflexroad.com](http://indianaflexroad.com). An alternative will be selected soon. When Justin Kiel requested a status update of the PEL study on the US 30 corridor and SR 49, he was informed the consultants are on board and the kickoff meeting will be scheduled soon.

The next call for projects in the Community Crossings program will run from July 1 to August 31, 2022 and will be awarded in October. Matt urged applicants to contact INDOT when completing their applications. Matt also shared that CNBC ranked Indiana's road infrastructure #1 this year, which is the 3<sup>rd</sup> time in six years.

#### **Other Business**

No other business was reported.

#### **Announcements**

Bob Carnahan announced nearly two acres in Cedar Lake will become their new police and fire station, and their Town Hall is being expanded. The estimated cost of the new police and fire station is \$12 million. It was also noted that Cedar Lake, St. John, and Winfield are three of the fastest growing communities in Indiana.

Bill Emerson announced he was appointed to the Indiana Drainage Task Force that was created by the State Legislative. This is the first time a Surveyor has been appointed.

Geof Benson announced Beverly Shores will hold their Summerfest on July 23.

#### **Adjournment**

Hearing no other business, Justin Kiel adjourned the meeting at 9:45 a.m. The next meeting on September 15 will be an Executive Board meeting.

*The livestream video recording of this meeting is available on NIRPC's YouTube Channel at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=48dQOVDBO\\_0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=48dQOVDBO_0).*