



FRONTIER METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
MEETING OF THE POLICY BOARD COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Date: December 14, 2023
Location: Crawford County Public Library, Main Branch • Van Buren, AR
Time: Called to order at 11:55 a.m.

Policy Board Members Present:

Mr. Sunny Farnaham	ArDOT
Mr. Jason Hughey	ArDOT
Judge Chris Keith	Crawford County
Judge Steve Hotz	Sebastian County
Mayor Greg Murray	City of Barling
Mayor Bill Collins	City of Bonanza
Mayor George McGill <i>*Proxy Jeff Dingman</i>	City of Fort Smith
Mayor Doug Kinslow	City of Greenwood
Mayor Hugh Hardgrave <i>*Proxy Lorie Robertson</i>	City of Lavaca
Mayor Joe Hurst	City of Van Buren
Mrs. Ashley Garris	WAIA
Mr. Ken Savage	Fort Smith Transit
Mayor Roy Walker	Town of Pocola
Ms. Dawn Sullivan, P.E. <i>*Proxy Sarah McElroy</i>	ODOT
Mr. Robert Endicott	Cherokee Nation

Members Not Present:

Mr. Jim Carter	Sebastian County
Mayor Chuck Wallace	Town of Central City
Mayor Jimmy Fincher	City of Alma
Mayor Andrew Crow	Mayor of Kibler
Mr. Daniel Mann	Fort Chaffee Redevelopment Authority
Mr. Michael Griffin	Fort Smith Regional Airport Commission
Commissioner Vallard Campbell	Leflore County
Commissioner Ray Watts	Sequoyah County
Mayor Joshua Johnson	Town of Arkoma

Non-Voting Members Not Present

Ms. Laura Chaney	ODOT
Ms. Amy Heflin	FHWA – AR
Mr. Isaac Akem	FHWA – OK
Ronisha Hodges	FHWA-FTA

Others Present: Reese M. Brewer, Frontier MPO, Emily Johson, WAPDD; Sasha Grist and Ashley Garris, WAPDD; Danielle Smith, City of Greenwood, Mark Allen, Sebastian County, and Phillip Patterson, AMC.

I. Administrative

A. Approval of the Policy Board Meeting Agenda

With no corrections nor additions, Mayor Joe Hurst motioned to approve the agenda. Mr. Ken Savage seconded the motion. A unanimous vote was reached.

B. Approval of the August 31, 2023 Policy Board Meeting Minutes

Jason Hughey motioned to approve the minutes and was seconded by Judge Steve Hotz; a unanimous vote was reached.

C. MPO Director's Report

D. MPO Director's Report

Reese M. Brewer reviewed the MPO activities which occurred since the August, 2023 meeting. Activities related to the following topics were covered:

- **Frontier MPO writes winning WAIA & Five Rivers Distribution MARAD Grant Award:** Reese wrote the winning MARAD PDIP grant on behalf of WAIA and Five Rivers Distribution for \$15.096 million. The total slackwater harbor project will be about \$20 million. The team effort included: WAPDD, Mickle and Griffin provided the cost/benefit analysis, Marty Shell, and WAIA. We are honored to be a part of this team.
- **Utah State University Pilot Program:** Utah State University, Frontier MPO, and Fort Smith Transit signed an agreement to work together to create a transit assessment using Google learning and local residents. The project will inform a transit assessment plan that analyzes proximity of social agencies, food banks, jobs, medical centers, shelters, benches, etc. near transit stops.
- **Rural Safety Equity Grant:** The University of Arkansas, Fayetteville (Dr. Sarah Hernandez), and Dr. Seri Park from the University of Nevada, Reno sought Frontier MPO as a partner for a National Science Foundation grant opportunity to work on Rural Safety and Equity.
- **Safe System Implementation Guidance, NCHRP 17-101:** Reese was selected to serve on the technical group reviewing the draft NCHRP 17-101 document. Safe System approach as differing from conventional safety practice by “being human-centered, i.e., seeking safety through a more aggressive use of vehicle or roadway design and operational changes rather than relying primarily on behavioral changes – and by fully integrating the needs of all users (pedestrians, bicyclists, older, younger, disabled, etc.) of the transportation system” (<https://www.ite.org/technical-resources/topics/safe-systems/>).
- **FHWA's Manual of Safety Studies:** Reese was invited to serve on the stakeholder team for the FHWA development of their Manual of Safety Studies.
- **GRANTS:** Frontier MPO provided a letter of interest for the USDOT Thriving Communities program to study transit incentives and vouchers, along with a rural transit network and system on behalf of the Fort Smith Health Council Transportation Subcommittee. Frontier also assisted the City of Fort Smith with their letter of interest for this program.
- **Freight Roundtable 2025:** Reese is arranging the speakers and panelists for the next Freight Roundtable on behalf of WAIA. Artificial intelligence, innovative technologies along with infrastructure resiliency is the focus of the event. The University of Arkansas Freight Data Lab along with ArcBest Data Science and Ms. Desiree Wood of Real Women in Trucking has already committed to presenting.
- **Frontier MPO will hold an Electric Vehicle Preparedness Workshop in late January 2024:** Electric vehicles (EVs) are here. You see them in almost every community. Their use has grown rapidly over the past decade, and it's only speeding up.

That's why Frontier wants to help prepare our region for the electrification innovation. This workshop will seek to gather a diverse selection of local community leaders in the interests of developing a plan to anticipate EV demands and needs.

- **Van Buren TAP Tour:** Reese reminded members to join the tour following the Technical committee meeting.
- **The next meeting will be held on February 15, 2023.**

E. Open Discussion/Public Comment Period

Mayor Doug Kinslow welcomed all to provide details on any concerns, upcoming community events and notices. Mayor Roy Walker discussed new residential construction and growth in Pocola. Mayor Roy Walker asked for clarification on the benefits and impacts of roundabouts. Mr. Jason Hughey noted that roundabouts reduce injury as the accidents are often swiping versus t-bone. Lorie Robertson thanked the WAPDD for the new TAP sidewalk grant for Hwy. 96. Mayor Joe Hurst thanked everyone for participating in the tour of their completed TAP sidewalk project.

II. New Business

A. Arkansas Department of Transportation Update

Jason Hughey of ArDOT gave an update of various ArDOT Projects throughout the FMPO planning area. No action was taken.

B. Oklahoma Department of Transportation Update

Sarah McElroy provided a brief update on projects within the FMPO planning area. Ms. McElroy introduced Devon Westbrook. Devon will serve as the new FMPO ODOT Transportation Planner.

III. Adjournment

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 12:23 p.m. The next Policy Board Meeting will be held on Thursday, at noon February 15, 2023, at the Fort Smith Main Library.