



POLICY BOARD

Meeting Minutes

December 20, 2023 • 12:00 – 2:00 P.M.

FAST Planning Office, KeyBank Building, 100 Cushman Street, Suite 215, Fairbanks, AK

Web Conference at: <https://fastplanning.us/keepup/zoom/>

Zoom Meeting Telephone Number: 1 (253) 215-8782 Meeting ID: 889-9138-2569

1. Call to Order

Mayor Bryce Ward, Chair, called the meeting to order at 12:01 p.m.

2. Introduction of Members and Attendees

Attendee	Representative Organization
* Bryce Ward, Chair	Mayor, Fairbanks North Star Borough
* Jerry Cleworth, Vice Chair	Fairbanks City Council
* Joe Kemp	Director, DOT&PF Northern Region
* Jason Olds	Director, DEC Air Quality
* David Pruhs	Mayor, City of Fairbanks
* Scott Crass	FNSB Assembly
* Michael Welch (absent)	Mayor, City of North Pole
** Jackson Fox	FAST Planning
** Olivia Lunsford	FAST Planning
** Corey DiRutigliano	FAST Planning
** Deborah Todd	FAST Planning
** Randi Bailey	DOT&PF Planning
** Don Galligan	FNSB Community Planning
Danny Wallace	City of North Pole
Kellen Spillman	FNSB Planning
Dan Bross	KUAC
Julie Jenkins	FHWA

**FAST Planning Policy Board Members, ** FAST Planning Staff Members, + FAST Planning Technical Committee Members, • Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) Members*

3. Approval of the December 20, 2023 Agenda

Motion: To approve the December 20, 2023 Agenda. (Kemp/Cleworth).

Discussion: Mr. Kemp asked an Executive Session be added to the agenda to discuss issues with the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) and FAST Planning's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Mr. Fox stated an Executive Session would have to have been advertised prior to the meeting. Mr. Cleworth affirmed that was correct. Mr. Fox stated he would add this to the January 17th agenda.

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

4. Approval of the November 15, 2023 Meeting Minutes

Motion: To approve the November 15, 2023 Meeting Minutes. (Cleworth/Kemp).

Discussion: Mr. Cleworth commented that the detail of the meeting minutes was incredible, but he personally does not feel that we need to go to that extent and could just summarize.

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

5. Committee/Working Group Reports (including the Chair's Report)

- Mr. Fox attended the Tetlin to Fort Knox Transportation Advisory Committee final meeting.
- Mr. Fox participated in the U.S. EPA Region 10 Quarterly Transportation Conformity Call.
- Proposals were evaluated with DOT for the West Valley/Hutchison Highway Schools Access & Circulation Study. Contract negotiations will be initiated with Kinney Engineering.
- The letter of support from Eielson Air Force Base was received the new Metropolitan Area Transportation Planning Boundary Update.
- The annual FAST Planning CPA Audit is still underway and a report will be presented to the Policy Board at the January 2024 meeting.
- Mr. Fox flew to Anchorage to interview candidates for the new MatSu MPO Director position.
- Mr. Fox did a guest appearance on the Explore Fairbanks Radio Show.
- Mr. Fox gave a presentation to the Chamber of Commerce Transportation & Infrastructure Committee on hot topics at FAST Planning including the pending Air Quality Conformity Freeze.
- A public survey was initiated for the MACS Transit Plan Update.
- The public comment period is closed for the Public Participation Plan (PPP) and Title VI Plan Updates. No recent comments have been received.
- The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service reached out to FAST Planning regarding a new grant opportunity for upgrading the culverts on Peede, Repp, and Mission Roads in North Pole. A letter of interest has been submitted.
- At the November 30, 2023 meeting, the Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee:
 - Recommended the Policy Board approve the revisions to the Committee Membership and Term Limits.
- At the December 6, 2023 meeting, the Technical Committee:
 - Recommended approval of the PPP and Title VI Plan Updates pending any other comments that come in.
 - Recommended that the Policy Board advance the funding request to DOT for development of a Long-Range Transportation Plan for the sixteen rural communities outside of FAST Planning's Metropolitan Area boundary.
 - Recommended the Policy Board approve the revisions to the Roles and Responsibilities document for the Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee.

6. Public Comment Period (Non-Action Items)

- No public comment.

7. Old Business

a. FAST Public Participation (PPP) & Title VI Plan Updates (Action Item)

Review of Public Comments Received and Corresponding Plan Revisions and Consideration of Approval

Mr. Fox provided a summary of the public comments received and explained the revisions that were made to the PPP and Title VI Plan Updates.

Public Comment: No public comment.

Motion: To approve the Public Participation Plan and Title VI Plan Updates. (Crass/Cleworth).

Discussion: Mayor Ward commented that he appreciated how documenting revisions made to the Transportation Plan were included.

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

8. New Business

a. Fairbanks PM2.5 Area Air Plan Partial Approval & Disapproval by U.S. EPA

 *Review of November 20, 2023 Federal Register Notice EPA-R10-OAR-2022-0115 and Ramifications to Transportation Conformity*

Mr. Fox explained the two pages from the Federal Register Notice published by EPA on December 5, 2023. The EPA final ruling will take effect on January 4, 2024.

Concurrently on January 4, the Air Quality Conformity Freeze will begin. The Conformity Freeze will affect FAST Planning's Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). During a Conformity Freeze no new air quality determinations are allowed for the MTP or TIP, no amendments are allowed to the MTP or TIP, and only projects in the first four years of the MTP and TIP, 2023-2026, may move forward. Mr. Fox also explained what FAST Planning can and cannot do to the MTP and TIP during the Conformity Freeze.

b. Regional Long Range Transportation Plan Scope of Work (Action Item)

 *Consideration of Approving Scope of Work and Funding Request to Alaska DOT&PF for Development of a Long-Range Transportation Plan for 16 Rural Communities Outside FAST Planning's Metropolitan Planning Area Boundary*

Mr. Fox explained the Regional Long Range Transportation Plan funding request letter to DOT for the development of a scope of work for the Long-Range Transportation Plan for the sixteen rural communities that are outside FAST Planning's Metropolitan Planning Area Boundary. Mr. Fox has also drafted a detailed scope of work for hiring a consultant to develop the Long-Range Plan.

Public Comment: No public comment.

Motion: To adopt the Regional Long Range Transportation Plan scope of work and funding request (Cleworth/Crass).

Discussion: Mr. Cleworth asked for clarification from Mr. Fox if the roads that were not state-maintained roads or service area roads were considered orphan roads, and whether they were the majority of the roads that we were talking about.

Mr. Fox explained that he would consider that to be the majority of the roads.

Mr. Cleworth asked if a project moves along for a service area, then that service area must go through an election to accept that change/modification because ultimately, they would be responsible for maintaining those roads.

Mayor Ward commented that the service area is tasking themselves to provide for that match but if they are at their cap, and unable to generate any additional revenue in order to go over the cap, they will have to have an election. Some of the service areas have healthy fund balances and can take care of their own smaller capital needs. Mr. Ward commented that they do have a healthy list of projects that are currently on the Borough grant list seeking support for some of those projects.

Mr. Cleworth commented that if a project were picked for a service area and they go back for increased funding, they may not get it. Mr. Cleworth thought the one good part of this was that this would offset some of the funds that were used to fund the FAST Planning office but this was between DOT and the Borough.

Mr. Kemp commented that we should wait because he did not want this to get stale and sit. Mr. Kemp commented that he thought we should keep this and submit it at a more appropriate time as an amendment to the STIP as a line item. Mr. Kemp thought it was a more appropriate time and it would be fresher in their minds.

Mr. Crass commented that he was interested in the interplay with the Borough's Road Plan and how that would work.

Mr. Fox explained that the idea would be to produce a comprehensive list of all the project needs, then score them, prioritize them, and work with DOT to see how they could get those funded.

Mr. Crass asked Mr. Fox if we delayed this process for six months, if there was concern that we might miss out on getting this funding.

Mr. Fox explained that he did not think so but did not know if there was any harm in submitting the letter to them Mr. Fox explained that he wanted to get something formally on paper, so they had this request from Fairbanks so they were ready if this moved forward since there is no funding available right now.

Mr. Kemp explained that he thought they should wait. Mr. Kemp commented that every time an amendment came up it needed to be on it. Mr. Kemp commented that he thought we should wait and be more strategic with the roll out and request for a line item to be placed in the STIP.

Mayor Ward commented that he disagreed with the idea of waiting. Mayor Ward commented that it was his vision to be the first MPO to come forward with a Regional Planning Organization (RPO) model. Mayor Ward commented that they advocated for this. He thought it showed that we had our act together and were prepared to submit a planning document. Mayor Ward commented that it could set the stage for other RPO's and how they could move forward with a planning effort. Mayor Ward thought it served our interest to get this out the door now.

Mr. Kemp asked if on this RPO other than FAST Planning if the Policy Board was going to make calls on this moving forward.

Mr. Fox explained that the idea was that we would identify the community leaders in those areas that would serve on the Rural Policy Committee that would be set up to focus on moving project initiatives forward.

Mr. Kemp commented that this seems like something that Mr. Fox would move forward with and not the Policy Board. Mr. Kemp commented that he wondered if this was even appropriate for them to be voting on.

Mayor Pruhs commented that his thought would be to delay it, but no one here was disputing the document.

Mayor Ward commented that he would be happy to submit a letter on behalf of the Borough. He thought the reason behind it was for those communities that did not have a governing structure and FAST Planning already had that agreement signed by the State. Mayor Ward commented that he would suggest an amendment to the motion if the desire were to delay this action to a later date.

Mr. Crass commented that he was inclined to trust Mayor Ward's comments.

Amendment to the Motion: To delay the delivery of the document until discussion on June 1, 2024, or six months. (Pruhs/Kemp).

Vote on Amendment to the Motion: Four in favor. Two opposed. (Ward, Crass).
Approved.

Discussion: No further discussion.

Amended Motion: To adopt the Regional Long-Range Transportation Plan scope of work and funding request and delay the delivery of the document until discussion on June 1, 2024, or six months.

Vote on Amended Motion: None opposed. Approved.

c. **Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee Roles & Responsibilities (Action Item)**

Mr. Fox explained revisions made to the Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee Roles & Responsibilities document regarding removal of term limits for committee members and nominations by FAST Planning to temporarily fill the seat vacancies until they are appointed.

Public Comment: No public comment.

Motion: To adopt the proposed revisions to the Roles & Responsibilities for the Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee. (Crass/Pruhs).

Discussion: Mr. Cleworth expressed concern with FAST Planning appointing members for the Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee and commented that he was not comfortable doing that. Mr. Cleworth commented that he thought it was more important for them to put the pressure on those entities to fill the spots. Mr. Cleworth commented that if they choose not to fill them, that is their decision. Mr. Cleworth does not want to mess with the formula. Mr. Cleworth commented that with the Complete Streets Program, a part of that is that you had to look at all modes of transportation that we have so engineering must go through that list. Mr. Cleworth commented that we already do this through the Technical Committee. Mr. Cleworth commented that when we have a difficult project, we put together an ad-hoc committee to deal with those projects. Mr. Cleworth commented that he thought we should try and work on filling those seats.

Mr. Crass commented that he agreed with Mr. Cleworth that we did not want to be rude to people that are doing their community service. On that notion, he liked the idea of eliminating the term limits. Mr. Crass commented that he would also want to hear from Mayor Welch regarding the vacancy and why that has been held vacant and they should weigh his opinion before filling those seats. Mr. Crass commented that he would be in favor of tabling this to a future meeting to discuss that.

Amendment to the Motion: To eliminate the changes on Page 61 at the bottom and retain the changes on Page 62 (Cleworth/Pruhs).

Discussion: Mr. Crass commented that he thought it was important that people who wanted to continue to serve and do the work, should be allowed to do so.

Mayor Ward commented that vacant seats tended to be a bit of an issue. Mayor Ward thought that as a Policy Board member there is an obligation to fulfill your responsibilities toward the Board they are on. Think this revision allows the committee to fill that vacancy and then if the agency has someone to fill the seat. Mayor Ward commented that he does think that this is something that should be brought up in the future if we continue to have problems with members not being able to fulfill their responsibilities. Mayor Ward commented that he thought the changes put in here were good changes and would hate to lose those.

Vote on Amendment to the Motion: Five in favor. One opposed (Ward). Approved.

Discussion: Mayor Ward asked Mr. Fox if the committee members served at the pleasure of the elected seat sponsor.

Mr. Fox commented that it has never happened to date when a new Mayor came in and appointed a new member. If a new request were made to appoint someone else to a seat, they would comply with that request.

Amendment to the Motion: To add language that Committee members shall serve at the pleasure of the seat sponsor and can be removed with a 30-day notice from the seat sponsor agency. (Pruhs/Cleworth)

Vote on Amendment to the Motion: None opposed. Approved.

Discussion: No further discussion.

Amended Motion: To adopt the proposed revisions to the Roles & Responsibilities for the Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee, eliminate the changes on Page 61 at the bottom and retain the changes on Page 62, and add language that Committee members shall serve at the pleasure of the seat sponsor and can be removed with a 30-day notice from the sponsor agency.

Vote on Motion as Amended: None opposed. Approved.

d. Election of Chair and Vice Chair (Action Item)

Mr. Fox explained that the Chair and Vice Chair are elected annually.

Public Comment: No public comments.

Motion: To nominate Bryce Ward as Chair (Cleworth).

Motion: To nominate Jerry Cleworth as Vice Chair (Pruhs).

Vote on Motions: None opposed. Approved.

e. FAST Planning Office – Annual Dues Starting January 1, 2024

Mr. Fox explained that annual dues from each member agency are paid to FAST Planning each year. Mr. Fox explained that he will be sending out invoices for those annual dues beginning January 1, 2024.

f. FAST Planning Bylaws Article IX, Conflict of Interest Annual Statements

Mr. Fox explained that according to the FAST Planning Bylaws, each active member of the Policy Board must read and affirm that they have read the Conflict of Interest Policy and understand that FAST Planning is a charitable organization and must engage in one or more of the activities listed to maintain this non-profit status.

9. Other Issues

No other issues.

10. Informational Items

a. Obligations and Offsets

Mr. Fox explained the obligations and offsets included in the meeting packet.

11. Policy Board Member Comments

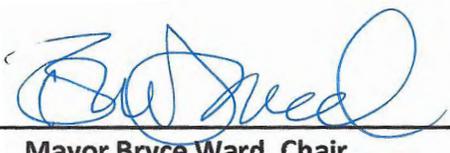
Mr. Cleworth commented that he is not up to date on the construction of the Johansen at the Steese and would like to have a presentation at a future meeting to gain a better understanding of that. Mr. Cleworth wished everyone a pleasant Christmas.

Mr. Kemp wished everyone a Merry Christmas. Mr. Kemp commented that he will have someone come in and provide a presentation for the Steese/Johansen project.

- Mr. Crass commented that he was looking forward to working with everyone and wished everyone a Merry Christmas.
- Mr. Olds wished everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays.
- Mayor Ward wished everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

12. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 2:01 p.m. The next Policy Board Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, January 17, 2024.

Approved: 

Mayor Bryce Ward, Chair
FAST Planning Policy Board

Date: 1-17-24