



FAST POLICY BOARD

Meeting Minutes

January 17, 2024 • 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: 828-1653-5873

1. Call to Order

Mayor Bryce Ward, Chair, called the meeting to order at 12:02 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
Chandra Clucas	City of North Pole Mayor-Pro-Tem
+ Kellen Spillman	FNSB Planning
+ Robert Pristash	City of Fairbanks Engineering
David Arvey	DOT&PF Construction
Ivet Hall	DOT&PF Preconstruction
James Marks	DOT&PF Statewide
Adam Moser	DOT&PF Statewide
Jennifer Wright	DOT&PF Preconstruction
Trisha Levasseur	FNSB Parks & Recreation
Jennifer Campbell	Participant
Mary Farrell	Participant
Luke Hopkins	Participant
Patrick Gilchrist	KTVF

Robyne Harrington	KUAC
Natalie Lyon	RESPEC
Barbara Schuhmann	Participant
Michelle G.	Participant

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

3. Approval of the January 17, 2024 Agenda

Motion: To approve the January 17, 2024 Agenda. (Cleworth/Kemp).

Discussion: Mr. Crass expressed concerns with Agenda Item #11 regarding the Executive Session. Mr. Crass commented that it looked like the STIP [Statewide Transportation Improvement Program] and TIP [Transportation Improvement Program] were public documents so it was not clear to him why that would be going into an Executive Session.

Mayor Ward commented that it was an Agenda item, so it was appropriate to bring it up at this time and asked Mr. Crass if he had anything else he wanted to say about that.

Mr. Crass commented that, in a nutshell, was his concern. Any discussion of the STIP or the TIP, unless there was anything regarding litigation or other issues that might warrant an Executive Session. Mr. Crass commented that he knew there were a lot of folks in the public that were interested in these issues so, in his opinion, it would be better to have those discussions in public.

Mayor Ward asked Mr. Kemp if there was anything else he wanted to add.

Mr. Kemp commented that he asked for it to be on the agenda and thought it was something they needed to talk about with the Policy Board only. It should be brief. But he thought there were some things that they needed to talk about with the coordination of the STIP and the TIP.

Mayor Ward explained that they needed to parse out, if they were going to go into Executive Session, what those reasons were. If it was just general statements on STIP and TIP issues, those were not eligible. It had to be personnel related or litigation related.

Mr. Kemp commented that it was personnel-related if Mayor Ward wanted to add that on there.

Mayor Ward commented that at this point they were approving the agenda so if it were going to stay on as an agenda item, they could clarify that. As long as they could clarify the reasons that they were moving into Executive Session as a reason they needed privacy then they could discuss that later.

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

4. Approval of the December 20, 2023 Meeting Minutes

Motion: To approve the December 20, 2023 Meeting Minutes. (Cleworth/Crass).

Discussion: Mr. Cleworth noted a correction to the meeting minutes on Page 5 where “Green Streets Program” should be changed to “Complete Streets Program.”

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

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

- 🗳 FAST Planning held a Joint Technical Committee/Policy Board Meeting with the Alaska DOT&PF Commissioner’s Office regarding the Draft FFY24-27 STIP.
- 🗳 Mr. Fox met with the Alaska DOT&PF Commissioner’s Office and MatSu Valley Planning for Transportation (MVP) on the STIP allocations for FAST Planning and MVP.
- 🗳 FAST Planning drafted the Letter of Support for the Fairbanks North Star Borough Roads Plan Update.
- 🗳 Biweekly coordination meetings were continued with the consultant team working on the Transit Plan Updates.
- 🗳 Mr. Fox submitted the Change of Officials form to the Alaska Division of Corporations removing Brent Rotermond from the Policy Board and replacing him with Scott Crass.
- 🗳 Mr. Fox renewed the State of Alaska and City of Fairbanks Business Licenses.
- 🗳 The CPA Audit continues for FFY23 with Alliance CPAs.
- 🗳 The 2024 MPO annual dues invoices were sent out to each member agency.
- 🗳 The FAST Planning website was updated to include the adopted updates to the Public Participation Plan, Title VI Plan, and the Metropolitan Planning Area Boundary Plan.
- 🗳 FAST Planning created a presentation of the “2023 Year in Review” annual report for the Technical Committee and Policy Board with an overview of the work accomplished in 2023 and future endeavors planned by FAST staff and Committees.
- 🗳 The approved Metropolitan Planning Area Boundary Plan Update and Methodology Report were submitted to the Alaska DOT&PF for signature by the Governor.
- 🗳 Work was continued on the funding proposal to the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service for culvert replacements on Peede, Repp, and Mission Roads in North Pole under the National Fish Passage Program

6. Public Comment Period (Non-Action Items)

- 🗳 **Luke Hopkins, Goldstream Valley**, Mr. Hopkins stated he wanted to comment on the issue that was included in comments at the end of the last public meeting they had, specifically Agenda Item #11. Mr. Hopkins commented that there are four elected officials sitting at the table and there is no action item and no vote described in the agenda for which they are going to go into an Executive Session. Mr. Hopkins commented that he believes that they need to be taking a vote to go into an Executive Session, especially to

discuss personnel issues that were described recently by the representative from DOT. Mr. Hopkins commented that he finds this just incredible that four of them were going to go ahead and it was not even noticed. Mr. Hopkins commented that they talked about putting it on the agenda at the last meeting as an item and it was said that it would be added to the agenda. It was supposed to be about the STIP and TIP Program issues and not personnel issues, and it should be available to the public since they are both public documents. Mr. Hopkins commented that the agenda does not talk about personnel issues. DOT says it is about a personnel issue. Mr. Hopkins commented that he would hope that they do not take action on this, vote it down, and put it into a public document. Mr. Hopkins commented that he was surprised that four elected officials were going forward with it the way it is put forward.

☞ Mayor Ward asked if Mr. Hopkins was aware that they had to take an action to go into an Executive Session.

☞ Mr. Hopkins commented that it was an action item. Mr. Hopkins stated that he thought it would be included in the agenda as an action item. Mr. Hopkins stated that it is not clear, and you are talking about a public document, whether it was an action item or not on the agenda. Mr. Hopkins commented that he found it very loose and thought that the four officials should raise the issue when they got to it and vote against it.

7. Old Business

No old business.

8. New Business

a. Steese/Johansen Interchange Project Update

☞ *Guest Presentation by Alaska DOT&PF*

Mr. Fox introduced Jennifer Wright of DOT&PF to provide an update for the Steese/Johansen Interchange project to the Policy Board and answer any questions.

b. Fairbanks North Star Borough (FNSB) Comprehensive Roads Plan (Action Item)

☞ *Consideration of Approval of a Letter of Support to FNSB Assembly for Plan Adoption.*

Mr. Fox explained that he drafted a Letter of Support to the FNSB Assembly for adoption of the FNSB Comprehensive Roads Plan. Mr. Fox introduced Kellen Spillman of the Borough to present the Plan to the Policy Board.

Public Comment: No public comment.

Motion: To approve the January 17, 2024 Letter of Support [for the Fairbanks North Star Borough Comprehensive Roads Plan] written by Jackson Fox, our Executive Director. (Pruhs/Cleworth).

Discussion: Mayor Pruhs commented that he was very impressed with Mr. Spillman's public policy on bringing everyone through this process and knew that it was not easy.

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

c. 5th Avenue Reconstruction – Construction Increase (Action Item)

Mr. Fox explained that the reason for the increase was that the construction season closed, and the DOT and City of Fairbanks were tallying up the final costs to close out the project. The amount of the increase request is \$155,676. Mr. Fox explained that this increase required Policy Board approval because the cumulative amount of funding increases incurred for this project were above his and the Technical Committee's authority to approve.

Public Comment: No public comment.

Motion: To approve the increase of \$155,676 for the 5th Avenue Reconstruction Project. (Cleworth/Pruhs).

Discussion: Mayor Pruhs commented that he would second the motion as long as it was not a conflict of interest.

Mayor Ward clarified that that it was not a conflict of interest since it was a project that benefited everyone here.

Mr. Crass asked what happened to the project if the Policy Board did not approve the increase.

Mr. Fox explained that this was a situation where the money had already been spent and they could go to the City Council to fund it, but the City might not have the funds to do it. Mr. Fox explained that in this case, they were approving an increase for work that had already happened, and FAST Planning had the funds to pay for it. Mr. Fox explained that there have been rare cases where FAST Planning did not have enough funds to pay for an increase like McGrath Road, and alternative funding had to be found.

Mr. Cleworth explained that it is frustrating because there is not much they can do, as the City, when this happens. The problem with this project is that they estimated project costs in 2019 prior to Covid and there was an increase in construction costs.

Mr. Crass commented that he appreciated the explanation, and thought it was good to have that clarification as to what happened between now and then.

Mr. Kemp commented that they really try to keep things as tight as they can with change orders and a six percent increase is really quite good. It was a 2019 estimate and those dollars do not hold anymore so it has gone up since then.

Mayor Pruhs commented that the design and engineering changes that were done were on there too, like the work with property owners.

Mayor Ward commented that any time they dig up downtown there is always a question of what they were going to find. Mayor Ward commented that the School District Building was one of the buildings that benefitted from these improvements. Mayor Ward commented that originally the project was just going to be a mill and pave. Like putting lipstick on a pig as they say, so it was fortunate that they were able to find the funding to do the whole project. We have special policies in place on what can be approved by Mr. Fox, the Technical Committee, and the Policy Board in order to keep these projects moving. We empower and equip the DOT to keep those projects working with the Executive Director to make the funds available. It is really a great partnership but does require actions like this. The Executive Director keeps close tabs on monies that come in through close-outs of projects and those types of things, so that is certainly a good way to pay for this.

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved by consent.

d. FAST Planning – 2023 Year in Review

Mr. Fox provided a presentation of what was accomplished by FAST Planning in 2023 and what they hoped to accomplish in the coming year.

e. Technical Committee Representation Discussion

Mr. Fox introduced Mr. Cleworth to present the information contained in the meeting packet regarding Technical Committee representation. Mr. Cleworth explained that he brought this forward because he thought there should be a discussion about the membership of the Technical Committee.

After discussion by the Policy Board, it was determined that this should go through the Technical Committee for input and then brought back to the Policy Board.

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. Executive Session-Alaska DOT&PF Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) and FAST Planning Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Issues

Mayor Ward explained that they did have a public comment period on this, and they did have it listed on the agenda, so they were going to have to vote whether or not to go into an Executive Session and list the reasons why. Mayor Ward explained that they did find themselves in a bit of a predicament if it is for personnel-related issues because that is not what the agenda item states. Mayor Ward commented that at this point, he thought it was appropriate for the Policy Board to have a conversation to discuss whether they needed to go into an Executive Session.

Mr. Kemp commented that he thought there were some things that the Policy Board needs to talk about with the coordination between the STIP and the TIP and the role of FAST Planning personnel. Mr. Kemp commented that he thought the six of them needed to talk about how FAST planning interacts with other agencies and how they report back to DOT. Mr. Kemp commented that he left it vague because it is a broad subject.

Mayor Ward commented that there were standards, guidelines, and policies the Policy Board was required to follow for Executive Sessions. And if there were specific personnel-related issues, that was another item. Mayor Ward commented that he thought Mr. Kemp needed to articulate who it was regarding and whether it was a disciplinary action. If it was something that was general, then it was on public record. Mayor Ward asked if Mr. Kemp could provide more clarity about what DOT was thinking.

Mr. Kemp commented that there is an issue with the way that the Executive Director has been talking with the Federal agencies is the problem that DOT has and he thought they needed to go into an Executive Session, and they needed to figure out what they wanted to do as a group. That was the intent here.

Mr. Cleworth commented that the rules for Executive Sessions were mitigation or negotiation strategies for personnel reasons. He thought if it was a personnel matter, the individual or individuals needed to be notified and he believed they had the right to attend.

Mayor Ward commented that Borough attorneys did not represent this organization so if they were going to talk about specific issues that required an attorney that would have to go through the Borough Assembly for that.

Mr. Cleworth commented that he was unclear about if they went into an Executive what their responsibility was to notify the individual or individuals. His thought was that the individual or individuals had the right to either attend or not attend.

Mr. Cleworth commented that he thought any member had the right to have an Executive Session or to ask for one, but they really needed to do it. He would

request that they take the time to confer with both the City and Borough attorneys on this.

Mayor Pruhs asked if they had any rules regarding Executive Sessions in the FAST Planning policy manual.

Mayor Ward commented that, as the Chair, he thought that it was not appropriate to have an Executive Session. They needed to have that spelled out and that individual given the right to defend that. That is not what is currently published in the agenda.

Mr. Cleworth asked if they needed a special meeting for this because they really needed to have their attorneys present for this.

Mr. Kemp commented that he did not think they needed to have a special meeting for it.

Mayor Ward commented that he thought that if they were going to have an action item coming forward, they needed to make sure it was appropriate for them to take that action. Mayor Ward commented that it was his understanding that the comments of the Executive Director and the Policy Board may not have been appreciated by any or all agencies. In his experience, that was not unusual. Mayor Ward commented that they had had some tersely worded letters about actions that they thought were not appropriate. Mayor Ward commented that if it was regarding those types of issues and how we address the Executive Director, that is really a public issue. If that issue is changed then we really need to have a discussion and the public has a right to hear that. If it is specific to the actions of a personnel member from FAST Planning, that is a different situation. Mayor Ward commented that he could work with Mr. Kemp afterwards to make sure what the issue was.

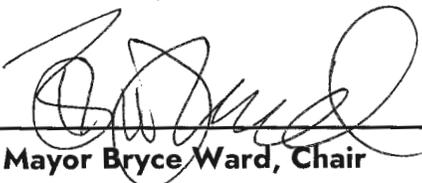
Motion: No motion was made.

12. Policy Board Member Comments

- Mr. Olds commented that it was a pleasure to be there in person.
- Mayor Ward thanked the Policy Board for their Letter of Support for the Comprehensive Roads Plan.

13. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 1:55 p.m. The next Policy Board Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, February 21, 2024.

Approved:  Date: 2/28/24
Mayor Bryce Ward, Chair
FAST Planning Policy Board