



POLICY BOARD

Meeting Minutes

October 22, 2025 • 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: 883-7814-1635

1. Call to Order

Jerry Cleworth, Chair, called the meeting to order at 12:03 p.m.

2. Introduction of Members and Attendees

Attendee

*Jerry Cleworth, **Chair**
*Scott Crass
*Grier Hopkins, **Vice Chair**
*Lauren Little
*Nick Czarnecki
*David Pruhs (**absent**)
*Mindy O’Neill
*Larry Terch
**Corey DiRutigliano
**Jackson Fox
**Olivia Lunsford
**Deborah Todd
**Randi Bailey
**Don Galligan
+Kellen Spillman
+Brett Nelson
Ben White
Adam Moser
Kaitlin Wilson
Trisha Levasseur
Phoebe Bredlie
Van Le
Bryant Wright
Laura Achee

Representative Organization

Fairbanks City Council
FNSB Assembly
Mayor, Fairbanks North Star Borough
DOT&PF
DEC Air Quality
Mayor, City of Fairbanks
Mayor Elect, City of Fairbanks
Mayor, City of North Pole
FAST Planning
FAST Planning
FAST Planning
FAST Planning
DOT&PF Planning
FNSB Community Planning
FNSB Community Planning
DOT&PF Planning
DOT&PF Planning
DOT&PF Program Development
FNSB Mayor’s Office
FNSB Parks & Recreation
Kinney Engineering
R & M Consultants
R & M Consultants
Senator Bjorkman’s Office

Patrick Gilchrist

KUAC

Jack Barnwell

Fairbanks News-Miner

Anonymous

N/A

***FAST Planning Policy Board Members, ** FAST Planning Staff Members, +FAST Planning Technical Committee Members**

3. Approval of the October 22, 2025 Agenda

Motion: To approve the October 22, 2025 Agenda as amended.
(Little/Terch).

Discussion: Mr. Cleworth requested that the Letter of Support for the City of Fairbanks be added for consideration under Item 8.b.

Vote on Motion: None opposed.

4. Approval of the September 24, 2025 Meeting Minutes

Motion: To approve the September 24, 2025 Meeting Minutes.
(Terch/Little).

Discussion: No discussion.

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

5. Staff/Working Group/Chair Reports (including mid-year Operating Budget review)

- The quarterly Statewide Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) coordination meeting was held in Anchorage on October 7th. One of the main topics of discussion was the revenue allocation amounts for each MPO in FFY26. The amount of carryover funds allotted to each MPO from the previous fiscal year is yet to be determined.
- The Seasonal Mobility Task Force met October 6th to discuss the format of the 2025 Winter Maintenance Forum which will be held on October 28th from 5:30 to 7:30 pm at the Noel Wien Public Library Auditorium.
- With the government shutdown, Mr. Fox continued interagency consultation with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) via email addressing their additional comments on the revised Air Quality Conformity Analysis Report prepared by Trinity Consultants.
- Mr. Fox drafted three Letters of Support, one for the City of Fairbanks grant application to the T-Mobile Hometown Grant Program, and two for the Fairbanks North Star Borough applications to the Alaska Federal Lands Access Program which will be voted on by the Policy Board today.
- The first Open House was held for the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) Update on October 21st from 5:30 to 7:30 pm at the Noel Wien Library Auditorium. Over fifty people attended the Open House. The online public survey for the MTP went live on the FAST Planning website

concurrently with the Open House with an interactive map to place pins and make specific comments.

- FAST Planning staff volunteered at the 2025 KUAC Fall Fundraiser on Thursday, October 16th.
- The October 1st Technical Committee meeting was cancelled due to lack of agenda items.

6. Public Comment Period (Non-Action Items)

No public comment.

7. Old Business

a. Intergovernmental Operating Agreement & Metropolitan Planning Area Boundary Update (Action Item)

Consideration of Forming a Working Group to Review Changes to the Operating Agreement

At the September meeting, the Technical Committee recommended forming a working group to review the Operating Agreement but only after approval of the Metropolitan Planning Area Boundary Update by the Governor.

Public Comment:

No public comment.

Motion: To approve the Technical Committee recommendation to form a working group to evaluate and recommend changes to the Operating Agreement. (Little/Czarnecki).

Discussion:

Ms. Little: To clarify the discussion yesterday. The motion we tabled was DOT came and we said, "Here's the changes we want," and you all said, "Not happening." This is not that. This is not DOT saying these are the changes. This is DOT saying we have some points that are not clear how we resolve. My goal with asking Technical Committee to operate on this was to have their buy-off and their buy-in on what changes we need to make. We have all been kind of suffering through this fighting over authority. Right? At the end of the day the root cause of the conflict that led to that February motion was who has authority. Well, I don't really care who has authority, FAST or DOT. I want to know how we work through those disagreements in the future. I've said it in a lot of ways. We as the State have responsibility for performance metrics on the National Highway System. We have a responsibility to the entire state in terms of how we program money, how we prioritize things, and what we need to do to keep our infrastructure safe and operating. I don't ever want our bodies to be in the position of having to argue over authority and not be able to

move forward collaboratively and so I want to see these new resolution procedures in our Operating Agreement. We ultimately agreed to mediation as a solution to these things. Maybe it's the same as it is. At the end of the day, the authority lies with Federal Highways. They ultimately determine whether a project is going to be authorized or not, and the Federal funds used on it. And the Governor, he is ultimately responsible for approving or not approving the TIP. And further, the State is responsible and has the authority on which projects get selected from the TIP. So, the start of a project is ultimately the State's responsibility. There are some differences in the large MPO on that in the CFRs, but those are the authorities. The rest of it is for us to work out as two bodies. I think there's some other things that have come up over the last couple of STIP cycles. Railroad projects. Now things that the Railroad was doing that didn't use to show up in the TIPs, now we've gotten direction from Federal Highways that they need to show up in the TIPs. They don't have a vote at this table at all, yet their program and their ability to release federal funding on their infrastructure is now at the mercy of this Board. Some of the preceding conversations that have been going on. When information needs to be coordinated. How it needs to be coordinated. Let's get that stuff in writing so that we're not, we don't ever put ourselves in this position of fighting and standing up in front of Legislatures and trying to explain ourselves. That's silly. We can do better. Let's just get Technical (Committee) working on this and I think we know where the holes are, and let's just get it clear how we're going to work through these things in the future. This is not DOT saying, "Make these changes." This is DOT asking FAST, "Can we please clear these things up in writing?" The Operating Agreement is the document. The document is our relationship and how we're all going to interact together as bodies. So, that is my speech. I rest.

Amendment to the Motion: To table this item to the next meeting. (Crass/Hopkins).

Discussion:

Mr. Crass: I don't know that I will be on this Board at our next meeting. We're going to reorganize. We're appointed by a presiding officer, and we'll have a new mayor. We just heard that a tremendous amount of policy implications will come from this decision and the Board that is going to have to live with them is going to be new faces in a month. So, I think it would be appropriate for that group to undertake this decision.

Ms. Little: So, just to be clear. This is simply forming a working group to provide recommendations. The future Policy Board is ultimately the one that would vote to accept those recommendations. This is simply asking

for the formation and for that group to develop that. This is not binding this group of people or any future group of people to an actual modification to the document.

Mayor Hopkins: Did you view this as the Technical Committee creating a working group or the Policy Board creating a working group?

Ms. Little: This, to me, is the Policy Board requesting a working group from the Technical Committee. I think we would probably maybe pick who we want on that, but not necessarily. I don't have a strong feeling, but I do think that the initial list of recommendations should come from Technical.

Mayor Terch: Per the Technical Committee's recommendation, the bottom half of that is, "The formation of the working group shall only occur after the Metropolitan Planning Area Boundary has been approved by the Governor." These are two, in my mind, two very separate topics of discussion about where the boundary is and then from that, once we have where the boundary is located and that little red line is set for us to discuss, then we can move forward with the remainder of that. So, moving forward if I may request that when this topic comes up that we separate two totally different items that are very much related, and not try and deal with those as one action item.

Mayor Hopkins: Does that mean the motion that was recommended by the Technical Committee you would see bifurcating that or keeping it as one together so we can get the boundary off the table and then go forward with the working group like the Technical Committee suggested?

Mayor Terch: I agree with what they said in their recommendation but two very difficult items to deal with at the same time. One before the other, as stated in their recommendation.

Ms. Little: So, just to be clear on the MPA Boundary. There is no action item for FAST Planning on that. You have made your recommendation on what the boundary should be and you've approved it. It is in the State's court now as to whether or not they approve it. And just for some context, we actually were having this conversation with Law about AMATS and FAST. You all have very different boundary situations. We were just starting to have that conversation about if it is time to just send these up to the Governor and let him approve or deny them when the western Alaska situation came up. So, that is the conversation. It's not being ignored. It's just that the timing was very unfortunate when those conversations started ramping back up again. So, I don't know what ultimately will be decided on those boundaries independent of the Operating Agreements. DOT's legal perspective initially was that what happened with a series of projects ultimately was a change in decision making authority by the MPOs, and

therefore decisions were made but again, that's a new conversation that we are revisiting and circling back around on.

Mr. Crass: Point of order. I'd like to discuss my motion which was to table this to our next meeting.

Mr. Cleworth: I would say would you consider doing a postponement rather than tabling it and getting into that hoohah again?

Mr. Crass: I have to. Yes.

Mayor Hopkins: Amend the motion to postpone it to the next meeting instead of tabling it?

Mr. Cleworth: You're withdrawing the original motion?

Mr. Crass: Sure.

Mayor Hopkins: I'll make the motion to postpone it to the next meeting.

Amendment to the Motion: To postpone this item to the next meeting. (Hopkins/Crass).

Discussion:

Mayor Terch: Not to confuse the situation and maybe we should take a vote on the original postponement before we go back to discussing this. Looking at the boundary, I'm concerned about Eielson Farm Road and the Salcha area because that's the main source of transportation if the highway does get shut down, and their funding structure under this. I don't necessarily want to go way back down that road to 2023, long before I was part of this Board to reevaluate the boundary, but it certainly is a concern that we think about in emergency planning. So, if there's any way that the State would be willing to maintain that better than it has been maintained or find a suitable workaround or maybe that's an action item for a future meeting that we add to the agenda to bring up Eielson Farm Road as a needed concern for the North Pole/Fairbanks area as a main route of transportation. Thank you.

Mr. Cleworth: A few of my thoughts here. If we are going to postpone, I'd like to know what we hope to do at the next meeting. Mr. Crass is right. There could be two of us that are not here. That's going to be a lot for people to pick up. I don't have a big problem with forming a committee. My big question today was, who's supposed to be on that thing? You're getting into some very technical and legal stuff and that's why I voted against this back in the early part of the year. When we formed this organization, it was extremely difficult for all the legal entities to get into the same frame of mind that we could actually create FAST Planning. The State of Alaska took some time. The two cities were pretty easy. The Borough, at the time, was kind of the fly in the ointment and they kind of drug their feet but they got in line, and they finally got it done

but that took a lot of effort and time. Any change you make to the Operating Agreement is going to have to be bought off by each of the four entities that we have here and that's going to be tricky. So, I understand there are problems that we might have that could be ironed out in a more specific Operating Agreement. I just pose one hypothetical and maybe Mr. Fox can respond to this. Let's say the City of Fairbanks goes ahead with Minnie Street. We've got a plan, and we lay it all out and present it to the Board and the Board says, "We don't like your plan. In fact, we don't like it at all, and we question the money on it." So, the city goes its own way, and the City Council says, "No. This is the way we want to do it. This is what Engineering and Public Works want to do. This is how we're going to do it." How is that resolved amicably? What would be the protocol there? Does this power supersede the city? Or can the city go its own way?

Mr. Fox: It's the will of this Board, not an individual entity. So, if this Board approves our Long-Range Plan and our Short-Range Plan and it gets down to the specific project title, project scope, and the amount of money that is devoted to that project. So, yes, if there's a modification to a road project that the Board at all disagrees with, they can object to that. If it's already in process or if it's already in design and if an entity deviates from that scope or the price escalates beyond what we could potentially afford, that's a case by case and it's a Board decision on how to modify that as it moves forward.

Mr. Cleworth: So, other than the money thing we do control it?

Mr. Fox: Yes.

Mr. Cleworth: Would it be your opinion that the Board could say, "There's part of the plan we just really object to" and would they trump the city?

Mr. Fox: As far as the design. Yes, that could happen. When projects get nominated to us and scored, it's based on a very specific scope. This could say we're going to repave the road, underground the utilities, put in 10-foot wide sidewalks. When you nominate a project, that's what it's scored upon. So, if the scope of that project gets modified during the design process, it's no longer consistent with what was awarded funding. So, you have to lock yourself in early on these projects into what you would like. If the scope changes, then you need to come back to the Board for approval of that modification of the scope and that would be either through administrative modification or an amendment to the TIP. It's not just funding changes that are part of this. It's also scope changes.

Mr. Cleworth: I appreciate that. I always wondered what happens when an entity has an objection to the Policy Board.

Ms. Little: I'll just let you know this has played out over and over again and I'll agree with what Mr. Fox said is exactly right that projects can get removed from the TIP if the Policy Board does not agree with the direction it's going anymore. It's really fun when Policy Boards change over and you get new people. The project's been going for several years, and these projects take years to develop. New individuals join Policy and don't like the project and they'll kill it. That's where that federal payback conversation is part of what we've been pushing on with FAST so that we have a clear project killing direction, so we understand who is going to be responsible for that. If the State or the City was paying for local match, that's money that you are out, that your financial authority didn't necessarily make that decision, yet you're stuck with the financial implication.

Mr. Cleworth: Question for you Ms. Little. If this is postponed to the next meeting. You recommended possibly Technical Committee forming a committee to do this essentially. What about legal? Are you envisioning legal participation in this?

Ms. Little: I would expect that any proposed changes to the Operating Agreement would, at some point, receive a legal review from each body's legal team. But that would be at the time of the changes. So that would be a step in that final recommendation.

Mr. Cleworth: Or the members of the Board could seek legal advice if they want to. I just want to be clear for the next meeting what might be on your agenda.

Ms. Little: So, we are on the motion to postpone. Part of why I am nervous about postponing this is we're talking about multiple committee members needing to come up to speed on how we got here. That's going to be a lot of education. And, again, this is not a motion to make changes. This is a motion to form a group to recommend changes. I just see that being unproductive, postponing the decision.

Mr. Cleworth: I guess what I'd like to see in the motion itself when it comes back is a specific suggestion as to what the composition of that committee is supposed to be and put some thought into that.

Mayor Hopkins: As Ms. Little was saying, DOT, the Governor, and legal are relooking at the possibility of the boundary change; and the amendments and the approval as being two separate items like Mayor Terch definitely said, I agree with. I think a postponement to see if that decision is made would be advantageous in the next 30 days. I agree

with Mayor Terch and the Technical Committee that those should be separate things, and so we should take one off the table before we move forward and we should see what direction the State decides to go in the next 30 days on it.

Ms. Little: I'll be honest, I think the State is going to be pretty distracted in the next 30 days with the disaster declaration. That said, I'm totally fine amending my motion to include the formation not occurring until after boundary approval. I don't have strong feelings one way or the other. I do agree for FAST, in particular, that you are a bit more divorced and your boundary is more straightforward. I'd have to circle back the AG to see if there are still some questions about the boundaries with that stretch of the Richardson Highway. AMATS boundaries expanded pretty significantly outside the Census urbanized area, and it has bigger questions.

Mayor Hopkins: We've been waiting awhile for the approval of the boundary I think we can wait 30 days. I think it's important to get that approved. Even though ten years ago, it was never exactly approved. There is no evidence that it was signed off by Governor Walker at that time, but it was used in all the funding documents and everything for the last decade. I think it would be important to see what we see from this Administration. There are enough people in Juneau that can walk and chew gum at the same time that they can deal with the flooding in western Alaska and the new boundary change.

Mr. Cleworth: The motion is to postpone to the next meeting.

Ms. Little: Oh yes. I understand that.

Vote on Motion: Four in favor. (Cleworth, Crass, Hopkins, Terch). Two opposed. (Czarnecki, Little). Approved.

8. New Business

a. FAST Planning Banking & Investment Option

Review of Options for Opening Interest-Bearing Account(s)

Mr. Fox was tasked with researching the various options for investment of a portion of FAST Planning funds and drafted a memo explaining his findings. Mr. Fox agreed to bring two Resolutions back to the Policy Board at their next meeting with options for a 9-month CD and investment into AMLIP.

b. Letters of Support for FNSB Grant Applications to Alaska Federal Lands Access Program (Action Item)

Consideration of Approval of Letters of Support for Improvements at Chena Lake and Tanana Lakes Recreation Areas

Mr. Fox drafted three letters of support. Two for the Borough grant applications to Alaska Federal Lands Access Program and one for the City of Fairbanks grant application to T-Mobile.

Public Comment: No public comment.

Motion: To support the Letters of Support for the grant applications to the Alaska Federal Lands Access Program. (Terch/Crass).

Discussion:

Mr. Crass: Just the value that has been found out here to our community is incredible. I absolutely support expanding and upgrading the trail system out there. I went with my kids' class recently and they were biking around in the area. What was once just a blighted area of our community has turned into just a wonderful place for folks to recreate. I fully support this.

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

9. Informational Items

a. FFY2026 Obligations and Offsets

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

10. Other Issues

No other issues.

11. Policy Board Member Comments

Mayor Hopkins: In his absence, please thank Mayor Pruhs, if anybody talks to him, for his service on here. I enjoyed working with him here. I thoroughly enjoyed all the different ways our votes would go over the last twelve months. Never knew who was going to vote for which, what, and how and I think that was healthy democracy. Thank you to Mayor Pruhs and our other two appointed members. If you stay on, see you in a month. If not, I know you all are going to be around for plenty more years.

Ms. Little: I think I'll echo Mayor Hopkins. I'll miss Mayor Pruhs' sense of humor here today for sure. He was a fun addition for the short period we overlapped as well as Mr. Crass and Mr. Cleworth. I hope you continue with us and I appreciate Mr. Cleworth's energy and enthusiasm for doing the extra work of being Chair.

Mayor Terch: I'd like to echo the previous comments and then thank the Technical Committee. They really are a big driver of our Policy Board and all the effort they do to dive in the deep to recommend good, healthy recommendations for our community. So, thank you to them for that.

Mr. Crass: I wish he were here to hear these accolades but thanks to Mayor Pruhs for his work on here. Thanks to Mr. Cleworth and myself as

well. If I'm not to return, I'm sure I'll come visit. It's been a pleasure this last year. We've tackled some very important issues for our community. I think the work that happens here is vital and often goes overlooked. I look forward to seeing what the next iteration of this Policy Board has in store for us.

Mr. Cleworth: Question for Ms. Lunsford. Last year we were creating a cheat sheet with all the acronyms for new members coming in. To Mayor O'Neall, that's a great initiation. We put a lot of time and effort into that. The acronyms are a bit overwhelming but hopefully that can help you. We spent time this year on the Bylaws of the organization and put a lot of effort into that and made some good changes. I certainly don't mind taking a look at these things and seeing if they need any updating but that one is just a heavy thing to tackle to try to make any changes to it. Every now and then I think things need to be looked at. We have a Personnel Policy that Mr. Fox and I created, and I don't think we've ever gone through that. Sometimes we should take a look at that and see if it needs any updates. I think our Public Works Department has possibly found a vehicle for FAST Planning. They need to go take a look. Mayor Pruhs did inform me that they think they have located something. It may save us a few bucks. Maybe not. Finally, I want to go into my rant about brine. So, if you could carry the message back to DOT. As I look at all the white stains on my garage floor and the white stains on the floormats of my car, is there any way we can change what we use?

Ms. Little: I don't know what we would change it to.

Ms. Cleworth: At the City, we use pea gravel or just use it at the intersection.

Ms. Little: What happens if you spray it at the intersection and the cars carry it away with them?

Mr. Cleworth: Hope I'm here next time, but who knows? I've enjoyed working with you people.

12. Adjournment

Motion to Adjourn: No motion. The meeting was adjourned at **1:25 p.m.** The next Policy Board Meeting is scheduled for **Wednesday, November 19, 2025.**

Approved: _____


Grier Hopkins, Vice Chair
FAST Planning Policy Board

Date: _____

