

Bangor Area Comprehensive Transportation System

Policy Committee Meeting Minutes

February 24, 2020
Machias Savings Bank

Members

Name	Representing
Rob Yerxa	Town of Orono
John Theriault	City of Bangor
Linda Johns	City of Brewer
Jeremy Caron	City of Brewer
David Pardilla	Penobscot Nation
Eric Willett	City of Bangor
Sean Currier	Town of Hampden
Kyle Drexler	Town of Orono
Joe Hayes	Town of Orrington
Laurie Linscott	City of Bangor

MaineDOT/FHWA

Name	Representing
Darryl Belz	MaineDOT
John Devin	MaineDOT
Carlos Pena	Federal Highway

Guests

Name	Representing
Bruce Van Note	Commissioner, MaineDOT
Jennifer Brickett	Planning Director, MaineDOT

Staff

Name	Representing
Rob Kenerson	BACTS
Sara Devlin	BACTS
Cindy Meservey	BACTS
Dianne Rice-Hansen	BACTS
Connie Reed	BACTS

Approval of Meeting Minutes

Topic	Discussion	Action
Minutes	Rob Yerxa called the February 24, 2020 meeting of the Bangor Area Comprehensive Transportation System Policy Committee to order at 9:35 a.m. at the Machias Savings Bank.	<i>Eric Willett made the motion to accept the minutes of the January 21, 2020 Policy Committee. Laurie Linscott seconded the motion. Unanimously approved.</i>

Welcome Commissioner Van Note

Topic	Discussion	Action
	<p>Rob Kenerson introduced Commissioner Bruce Van Note.</p> <p>The Commissioner told the Committee that he wanted to discuss three topics: State funding, changes in MPI program, and the I-395 project.</p> <p>The State workplan introduction speaks to sources of funds, uses of those funds and unmet need. It is broken down into three sections (A-C). State Highway funds come from the per-gallon fuel and motor vehicle fees. Federal funding comes from core formula programs, multimodal funds and federal competitive grants. Bonding is another substantial funding source.</p> <p>A Blue Ribbon Commission was organized to study and recommend funding solutions for transportation. Members consisted of appointments by the President of the Senate, Governor, and Speaker of the House, other Maine Legislators, the Commissioner of MaineDOT and Director of the Maine Turnpike Authority. The Commission voted to support five findings and made a recommendation for moving forward.</p> <p>The Municipal Partner Initiative (MPI) has changed to try to make it possible for smaller communities to participate by creating a sliding scale of cost share. The scale is based on municipal valuation. There is also funds available in the MPI program for municipalities to hire an engineer to do design and oversight of the project. There is also a State infrastructure loan with a very low interest rate.</p> <p>Finally, the Commissioner told the Committee that the State is moving forward with the I-395 expansion project. The total cost when finished will be approximately \$100 million. There is a federal grant</p>	

that requires the State to use it or lose it. Maine is known to always deliver, which increases the chance of getting another grant in the future. Maine cannot afford to jeopardize this type of funding.

The Commissioner introduced Jennifer Brickett, the new Planning Director at MaineDOT. The Planning Department is working to reinvigorate relationships and support planning with a purpose.

Carlos Pena asked if there is full support of the legislature for transportation funding proposals. The Commissioner indicated they have bipartisan agreement as to the need, but no agreement on how to fund. The Governor has not signed off on the how.

Linda Johns asked for an update on bicycle and pedestrian program funding. Commissioner VanNote stated that this program is hugely oversubscribed by a factor of three to four times. With the funding crisis, there will be no dramatic increases in active transportation funding in the near future.

Rob Kenerson told the Commissioner that BACTS is looking at an AID grant for a signal project on the Penobscot Corridor that runs from State Street in Bangor to North Main Street in Brewer. Some of the scope supports the Every Day Counts initiative. The project is in the TIP, but Rob would like to apply for the grant. The Commissioner said he is not ready to say that MaineDOT would support the grant application until he has a chance to further review the project scope, but advised innovation would be key. Rob asked who he should talk to at MaineDOT. The Commissioner suggested Andy Bickmore or Jennifer Brickett.

Sara Devlin asked if it is possible for two or more municipalities to partner on a project using MPI funds. John Devin said it would be a case of one municipality taking the lead with an agreement between the two towns. Sara asked if there were any changes to what is eligible. John indicated there were no changes, it is still a curb to curb program.

Rob Kenerson asked about the status of dredging in Searsport. The Commissioner believes it will happen next year.

Sara told the Commissioner it was great to have him at the meeting. BACTS is looking forward to any chance to be a partner.

2023 Work Plan Schedule and Process

Topic	Discussion	Action
	<p>Dianne distributed a schedule to the Committee. She reminded them that due to the lack of funding, no projects have been funded for 2022. This process is looking toward 2023, which is the last year for paying back funding for the Hampden project.</p> <p>Her list to date has seven OSI projects and 13 preservation. She will be collecting exiting data on all the projects in order to score them. She will then provide a list of all the projects with scores and preliminary estimates at the March meeting. The Committee will be tasked to create a short list based on preliminary scores and estimates.</p> <p>Dianne is planning a project ride in May. Once the committee has developed a short list, she will begin collecting current data for each project on the short list. BACTS will hire a consultant to do independent estimates. The final list of projects needs to be sent to Maine DOT by August.</p> <p>Sean Currier said there will be a scope change to the Western Avenue project they submitted for consideration. Western Avenue is going to be paved curb to curb by MDOT in 2022. Sean would like to have the curb fixed as part of that project but MDOT won't fund the curbing so he would like to ask for that piece of the project be funded through the 2023 work plan. If the project makes the cut and is funded there would need to be some conversation with MDOT to see if they would front the funding for the curbing and allow BACTS to pay back the amount from the 2023 allocation. Sean also told the Committee that Hampden would like to partner with other municipalities on a signal project using MPI funds.</p>	

Transit Report

Topic	Discussion	Action
	<p>BACTS is coordinating a transit retreat visioning session for the municipalities contributing to the operation of the Community Connector system. There will be a facilitator there to help get discussions going. The session is scheduled for April 7 from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.</p>	

Technical Issues

Topic	Discussion	Action
	<p>Bangor</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Bids for Trail 5 were opened. Thibodeau was awarded the project.The tank project for the waterfront has been awarded to McMillan. <p>Hampden</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Contractor is looking to start a sewer project on Route 1A now.	

MaineDOT Report

Topic	Discussion	Action
	<p>John Devin indicated the MPI regional engineers are involved in the approval process. All but the \$1 million set aside for the lower valuation towns has been awarded for 2021. He is not sure if the money will roll to the next year or be available for other municipalities in 2021 if it is not used by the lower valuation towns. Bangor, Brewer and Hermon all had projects funded.</p>	

Other Business

Topic	Discussion	Action
	<p>BACTS TIP has been posted for public comment. The period ends on Friday, March 13 at 4:00 p.m. The Committee will need to approve the TIP at the March meeting.</p>	

Topic	Discussion	Action
Adjournment		<i>The meeting was adjourned at 11:18 a.m.</i>