
Meeting Minutes

RPA-1 Transportation Enhancement Committee

Wednesday, May 25th, 2022 at 9:00 a.m. – Electronic Meeting

This meeting took place via electronic means pursuant to the provisions of the Iowa Open Meetings Law, Section 21.8, Code of Iowa.

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, it was impractical for the Transportation Enhancement Committee to meet in person. This meeting was open to the public and those in attendance were able to hear the proceedings and provide comments and questions as appropriate. Public notice of the meeting was issued in accordance with Iowa Code Section 21.4.

Members in attendance: Rod Marlatt, Fayette County Conservation Board (Chair); Barbara Schroeder, Winneshiek County Conservation Board; Jeff Korsmo, Howard County Conservation Board; Val Reinke, Allamakee County Economic Development; Roger Thomas, Clayton County; Jenna Pollock, Clayton County Conservation Board; Sheryl Struthers, Fayette County; Joshua Johnson, City of Oelwein; Andy Kelleher, Lansing Main Street; James Janett, Allamakee County Conservation Board; Darla Kelchen, Clayton County Development Group; Elaine Govern, Howard County.

Members absent: Craig Fencl, Howard County Conservation Board; Brian Fuhrmann, City of Decorah; Stephanie Fromm, Winneshiek County Development, Inc.

Others in attendance: Aaron Detter, UERPC Transportation Planning Administrator; Lee Bjerke, Winneshiek County Engineer, Mallory Hanson, Northeast Iowa RC&D.

1. Call to Order

Meeting was called to order at 9:04 a.m. by Marlatt

2. Approval of the agenda

A motion to approve the agenda was made by Struthers, seconded by Reinke, and passed unanimously.

3. Approval of the March 16th, 2022 meeting minutes

A motion to approve the March 16th, 2022 meeting minutes was made by Pollock, seconded by Struthers, and passed unanimously.

4. RPA-1 Transportation Planning Work Program (TPWP)

Detter explained that the TPWP would be up for consideration for adoption at the Policy Board meeting to follow at 11:00 a.m. He noted that the document had been reviewed by Iowa DOT and had been out for public comment for the required 15-day review period. Pending approval by the Policy Board, he said he would be submitting the final TPWP to Iowa DOT ahead of the June 1 deadline.

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Lorraine Borowski, City of Decorah; Brett DeVore, City of Oelwein; Larry Schellhammer, Allamakee County; Ray Peterson, Clayton County; Janell Bradley, Fayette County; Dean Eastman, Howard County; Mark Vick, Winneshiek County

5. TAP applications

Marlatt explained that Fayette County's previously awarded \$171,000 TAP-funded project programmed in FFY 2023 is not able to proceed and will be cancelled, and that this means that the funding will go back into the pool of available TAP funds.

Marlatt described a project in Clayton County also on the Backbone Trail that Clayton County Conservation Board had applied for, to construct trail from Gilbert Park toward Elkader. Pollock noted that Clayton County Conservation Board would support moving ahead with their project in FFY 2024 if their project were to be awarded.

A motion to recommend awarding funding to the Clayton County Conservation Board project on the Backbone Trail between Gilbertson Park and Elkader was made by Schroeder, seconded by Kelchen, and passed unanimously.

Members discussed the scored applications and the points analysis. Due to differing understandings of the scoring process, Marlatt recommended that there be a work session later in the year to consider the scoring process and ensure consistency for scoring purposes.

A motion to recommend awarding funding to Clayton County Conservation Board's other application, citing the scoring analysis, was made by Schroeder. The motion was not seconded and Schroeder retracted the motion.

Members continued to discuss the scoring process and the need to make sure everyone is on the same page in how they are scoring applications.

Govern asked if members needed to go ahead with a recommendation now, or if it could be tabled. Schroeder agreed. Discussion of interpretation of scores continued.

Pollock noted the Backbone Trail being a top priority in the region's Long-range Transportation Plan, that she felt other members from Clayton County had exhibited bias in their scoring, that she had discussed her concerns with Clayton County Supervisor and Policy Board member Ray Peterson, and that she did not think that Clayton County's scoring should be counted for the current round of applications.

Marlatt presented the option of tabling the decision and having a work session.

Kelleher added that he felt he could speak without bias as there are no Allamakee County applications this round, noting that Guttenberg's application was really great and they have been trying for funding year after year.

Marlatt called for a motion to table or to recommend an award. A motion to table the matter was made by Schroeder. It was not seconded and failed.

A motion to recommend awarding funding to Guttenberg for the Big Spring/MRT Trail Connection project in the amount requested of \$440,000, to be programmed in FFY 2023, was made by Kelleher and seconded by Thomas. After additional discussion, members voted. Pollock and Schroeder voted nay and Govern abstained. All others voted aye. The motion passed.

6. Discuss possible NEI Backbone Trail health impact analysis

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Detter noted that this discussion item had been tabled at the last meeting and asked if Pollock wanted to elaborate. Pollock said that she thought it would be great to have a health impact analysis of the regional trails to go along with the economic impact analysis. No action was taken, but there was consensus of members to continue to consider this.

7. Iowa DOT and RPA-1 Staff Updates

Detter provided RPA-1 staff updates including:

- The timeline for TPWP adoption and submission to Iowa DOT
- He would be creating and sending out TAP and STBG award letters to grantees in the coming weeks
- He's developing the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for FFY 2023-2026 and is in contact with current project sponsors for updates. The draft is due to Iowa DOT by June 15th.
- Updates to the Passenger Transportation Plan (PTP) and Long-range Transportation Plan (LRTP) will likely begin later this year or early 2023

8. Floor Items

Govern commented that she thought it would be useful to the Enhancement Committee to learn how other RPAs in the state conduct their TAP scoring and awarding process. Detter indicated that he would look into that and see what information he could gather.

9. Set next meeting date

Marlatt noted that he'd like to have a work session on the TAP scoring process sometime after Labor Day

Detter noted the timeline of mid-July for the next meetings to accommodate the TIP submittal schedule, and that he will coordinate as usual with the Board and committees.

10. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by Struthers, seconded by Kelchen, and passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 9:50 a.m.