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## Meeting Minutes

### RPA-1 Transportation Enhancement Committee

Wednesday, July 12<sup>th</sup>, 2023, at 10:00 a.m.

UERPC, 325 Washington St., Decorah

**Members in attendance:** Rod Marlatt, Fayette County Conservation Board (Chair); Joshua Johnson, City of Oelwein; Sheryl Struthers, Fayette County; Ross Geerdes, Allamakee County Conservation Board; Darla Kelchen, Clayton County Development Group (virtual); Val Reinke, Allamakee County Economic Development (virtual).

**Members Absent:** Jenna Pollock, Clayton County Conservation Board (Vice Chair); Craig Fencil, Howard County Conservation Board; Jeff Korsmo, Howard County Conservation Board; Stephanie Fromm, Winneshiek County Development, Inc.; Andy Kelleher, Lansing Main Street; Brian Fuhrmann, City of Decorah; Norma Thiese, Clayton County; Barbara Schroeder, Winneshiek County Conservation Board; Elaine Govern, Howard County.

**Others in attendance:** Aaron Detter, UERPC Transportation Planning Administrator; Mallory Hanson, Northeast Iowa RC&D.

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 10:02 a.m. by Marlatt.

2. Approval of the agenda

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

3. Approval of the April 12<sup>th</sup>, 2023, meeting minutes

A motion to approve the April 12th, 2023, meeting minutes was made by Geerdes, seconded by Johnson, and passed unanimously.

4. 2024-2028 Passenger Transportation Plan (PTP)

Detter discussed the PTP planning process. He provided an overview of the planning process and background about the document, noting that the plan is updated every five years and the current plan was last updated in 2018. He described the collaboration with the RPA-1 Transportation Advisory Committee Group (TAG) beginning in late 2022 to review the current plan, and noted that the process included a community survey as well as a targeted survey for transportation service providers. He explained that the draft PTP would be considered for approval at the Policy Board meeting to follow.

He noted that, in addition to updating data and demographics, one of the biggest issues to come up since the last plan update is the ongoing driver shortage and supply chain issues that were exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic.

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### RPA-1 Policy Board

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

Marlatt noted the Seven Rivers Alliance of several years ago that looked at some of these issues, such as establishing ride shares, scenic byway overlooks, etc.

Geerdes asked about the reason behind the driver shortage, and members discussed the issues with workforce, drivers retiring, scheduling challenges, etc.

A motion to recommend approval of the 2024-2028 Passenger Transportation Plan to the Policy Board was made by Struthers, seconded by Geerdes, and passed unanimously.

#### 5. FFY 2024-2027 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

Detter discussed and provided an overview of the TIP development process, noting that the TIP covers the transportation projects in the region that have state and/or federal funding during the upcoming four fiscal years and that it is updated every year. He described the process of coordinating with project sponsors and the Iowa DOT to ensure that project information is accurate, as well as the public review process that the TIP goes through prior to approval.

With regards to TAP projects in the TIP, Detter explained that Iowa DOT has a policy where they can put funds on hold if a region is carrying a large unspent balance of funds from year to year. He noted that Winneshiek County has rolled forward many projects over the years, including both of its projects from the current year. He said that this has not become a problem yet because he's been able to justify the unspent balance to Iowa DOT based on some of the issues like flooding that have affected project development. He noted that he just wanted this to be on the Enhancement Committee's radar, that this could become a problem for our region, where future funds are withheld, if we can't get some of the Winneshiek County projects let and moving.

He explained that the draft TIP would be considered for approval at the Policy Board meeting to follow. He noted that the Technical Committee had met on Monday, July 10<sup>th</sup> and had voted to recommend approval of the TIP to the Policy Board.

A motion to recommend approval of the FFY 2024-2027 Transportation Improvement Program to the Policy Board was made by Struthers, seconded by Kelchen, and passed unanimously.

#### 6. RPA-1 staff updates

Detter provided RPA staff updates including:

- Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)
  - Public involvement process will begin in later this summer and fall, including community meetings in all five counties, an online community survey, and targeted stakeholder surveys.
  - Final adopted document is due to Iowa DOT by September 19<sup>th</sup>, 2024
- US DOT's Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) discretionary grant program
  - The Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for FFY 2023 is available and the application deadline is July 10<sup>th</sup>, 2023.
  - RPA-1 submitted a joint application in partnership with Region 6 Resource Partners and ECICOG for safety action planning funds; if awarded, there will be one procurement, but each region would get its own stand-alone safety action plan. This would be very significant

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#### [RPA-1 Policy Board](#)

for our region as it would allow participating communities in our region to apply for implementation grants to construct projects. If awarded, there would be no cost to individual communities because Iowa DOT has contributed pledged state funding to go toward the 20% non-federal match.

7. Iowa DOT updates

Detter noted that he had checked with Iowa DOT to confirm, and there was no update on the status of the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP).

Members and Detter discussed implications of the TAP pause for programming future projects within the next four years, unspent funding balances, etc.

Detter said he'd be told by our Iowa DOT District 2 Transportation Planner that the Iowa DOT's five-year program was adopted and the Transportation Commission will hold its input meeting August 8<sup>th</sup> in Clear Lake. He was also informed that the IA-9/Blackhawk Bridge in Lansing is set to be let on August 1<sup>st</sup> in a special letting, with site work possible by October.

8. Floor Items

Hanson inquired about the status of the DataNet subscription for the various TrafX infrared trail counters in our region, and whether UERPC would continue to hold the account. Detter noted that it was a 5-year license and that he believed it was initiated in 2019. He said he would check on the cost and the timeline. Members acknowledged how valuable the trail counting program and data are.

Detter shared that Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA) had requested to link to our regional trails economic impact analysis on the IEDA website and to include it in an upcoming newsletter.

9. Set next meeting date

Detter noted that the next meetings would be in September or October, and that he will coordinate as usual with the Board and committees to schedule.

10. Adjournment

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

Meeting adjourned at 10:43 a.m.