

**ST. CLOUD AREA PLANNING ORGANIZATION
EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES
April 13, 2017**

The St. Cloud Area Planning Organization's Executive Board was held on Thursday, April 13, 2017, at 5:00 p.m. in the Conference at the Metro Bus Mobility Training Center. Chair Jeff Goerger presided with the following Members present:

Councilmember Jeff Goerger	City of St. Cloud
Mayor Dave Kleis	City of St. Cloud
Councilmember John Libert	City of St. Cloud
Councilmember Nick Sauer	City of Sauk Rapids
Mayor Bob Kroll	City of St. Augusta
Mayor Rick Miller	City of Waite Park
Commissioner Joe Perske	Stearns County
Commissioner Ewald Petersen	Sherburne County
Township Supervisor Jeff Westerlund	LeSauk Township

Also Present:

Brian Gibson	Exec Director, St. Cloud APO
Joseph Mueller	St. Cloud APO
Dorothy Sweet	St. Cloud APO

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Mr. Sauer motioned to approve the Agenda, and Mayor Kleis seconded the motion. Motion carried.

CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES OF MARCH 9, 2017 MEETING:

Mr. Libert motioned to approve the March 9 Minutes, and Mayor Kroll seconded the motion. Motion carried.

CONSIDERATION OF THE BILLS:

Mayor Kroll motioned to approve the bills and Mr. Libert seconded the motion. Motion carried.

CONSIDERATION OF TRANSPORTATION PLANNER POSITION:

Mr. Gibson reported that 12 resumes were received and evaluated for the Transportation Planner position, which has been vacant since 2011. Six applications were chosen for interviews by the APO staff. While the interviews were taking place, Dave Then, Planning Technician, announced his retirement, and the applicants were also considered for the Planning Technician position. The APO staff has recommended hiring Vicki Ikeogu for the Transportation Planner position with a starting salary of \$40,950. Alex McKenzie, former APO intern, was recommended for the Planning Technician position at a starting salary of \$48,100. Mayor Kroll asked why the Personnel Committee was not involved in the hiring process for these positions. Mr. Gibson responded that there is no written policy requiring the Personnel Committee's involvement for these two positions, but that the Executive Board needs to approve the hiring. Mayor Kleis felt that the Director was hired to make these decisions, and didn't feel that he and the other board members had the knowledge and expertise to know what qualifications are required for the transportation planner and planning technician positions. It was acknowledged that the Personnel Committee would need to be involved in the hiring of an Executive Director.

Mayor Kleis motioned to approve the hiring of Vicki Ikeogu for the Transportation Planner Position and Alex McKenzie for Planning Technician position at the salaries recommended. Mr. Libert seconded the motion. Motion carried.

CONSIDERATION OF 2017 UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM ADMINISTRATIVE MODIFICATION:

Mr. Gibson summarized the need for the 2017 UPWP administrative modification. The UPWP is the APO’s annual operating budget and identifies upcoming planning studies and tasks in support of the Long Range Transportation Plan and the APO’s overall mission. Studies are typically completed within the calendar year but because of staff shortages in 2016, the consultant contract studies were started late in 2016 and carried over into 2017. Staff had to guess how much of the consultant’s budget would be expended in 2016 and how much would be needed in 2017 to complete the studies. The amendment does not increase or decrease the overall UPWP funding amounts, but only shifts funding between the studies. The charts below explain the shifts.

Study	CPG Funds Committed to Contract	CPG Funds Expended in 2016	CPG Funds Needed for 2017	CPG Funds Budgeted for 2017	Difference Between Need and Budgeted Amounts for 2017
Stearns County ADA Transition Plan	\$38,059.34	\$16,274.93	\$21,784.41	\$18,480.00	-\$3,304.41
Sartell 15 th St N Corridor Study	\$50,466.10	\$10,635.19	\$39,830.91	\$44,000.00	+\$4,169.09
Totals	\$88,525.44	\$26,910.12	\$61,615.32	\$62,480.00	+\$864.68

**CPG = Consolidated Planning Grant, the APO’s source of Federal Planning Funds*

Study	Original 2017 Funding Level		Amended 2017 Funding Level		Funding Change	
	CPG	Total	CPG	Total	CPG	Total
Stearns County ADA Transition Plan	\$18,480	\$33,000	\$21,980	\$39,250	+3,500	+\$6,250
Sartell 15 th St North Corridor Study	\$44,000	\$55,000	\$40,500	\$50,625	-\$3,500	-\$4,375
Totals	\$62,480	\$88,000	\$62,480	\$89,875	\$0	+\$1,875

Mr. Sauer motioned to approve the CY 2017 UPWP Administrative modification, and Mr. Libert seconded the motion. Motion carried.

CONSIDERATION OF LOBBYING CONTRACT:

Mr. Gibson noted that our recent financial audit revealed the fact that we had not updated our Lobbyist contract (David Turch and Associates) with new terms for 2017 to show the increase from \$42,000 to \$48,000.

Mayor Kroll motioned to approve the 2017 Lobbying Contract, and Mr. Libert seconded the motion. Motion carried.

PRESENTATION OF DRAFT PERSONNEL POLICY PROPOSED CHANGES:

Mr. Gibson presented draft Personnel Policy changes for discussion only. He requested the board members discuss the proposed changes before it goes to the Policy Board for final review and approval. Mr. Gibson stated that when he was hired, the Personnel Committee said they expected the next Executive Director to address “staff stability” as their #1 expectation. Several changes to the Personnel Policy address the staff stability issue. The current Personnel Policy states that the Executive Director is authorized to administer the personnel program, but many of the policies demand that the Executive Board make the decisions. Mr. Gibson said that many of these suggested changes rectify this apparent inconsistency, and allows the board members to focus their attention on important transportation issues such as funding, fixing/repairing and deciding alternatives and not on personnel issues, which he felt should be handled by the Executive Director.

Mr. Gibson reviewed the various changes which generally fall into one of four categories:

- Better compliance with laws and statutes (absence for voting, termination, insurance, smoking, Hatch Act, guns)
- Increase staff stability (pay ranges, step increases, merit raises, deleting COLA, flexible schedules, compensation time, floating holidays to accommodate diversity, changing vacation accrual rate, compensating employees for membership dues)

- Better delegate personnel responsibilities to the Executive Director
- Miscellaneous proposals (decrease cost of family insurance, dress codes, conflict of interest, oral warnings, attendance requirements, military leave, severe weather, public transportation use during travel, social media)

Mr. Gibson asked the Board to consider if employees should be permitted to lawfully carry handguns in the workplace. Mr. Gibson said current state laws states persons can lawfully carry firearms in public—either concealed or in the open—with a properly obtained permit. The APO can restrict employees. The APO’s current policy states no weapons allowed. Opinions and comments were offered on both sides of the issue, as well as board members commenting on what was allowed in their jurisdictions. State vs federal laws on this subject were considered.

Mr. Perske motioned to keep the APO policy as it currently stands regarding firearms, “Firearms, weapons, and other dangerous or hazardous devices or substances are prohibited from the premises of St. Cloud Area Planning Organization.” Mr. Sauer seconded the motion. Motion carried.

The board members had a lengthy discussion of the proposed changes, particularly surrounding issues pertaining to staff stability, i.e. employee salary/incentives. Mr. Gibson stated that the changes being proposed do not impact the assessment fees for the jurisdictions. Approximately two-thirds of our budget is spent on staff, photocopier, telephone, utilities, and the other one-third is spent on hiring consultants. The proposed changes would allow more money being directed to staff instead of consultants. Mr. Gibson said his goal is to increase the skill level of staff to make them more capable, but there would be times when consultants are required. He felt it was important that the APO staff feel challenged and that they feel valued. Mayor Kleis said that he felt many things in the Personnel Policy did not need to be addressed by the board members, agreed and understood about staff being challenged and needing to feel valued, agreed that the Executive Director should perform many duties, but felt that financial issues were something the board should address. Mr. Gibson said a line item for employee incentives will be included in each year’s budget, which is where the board would address that issue. Mr. Gibson said he was proposing that an employee move ahead through the salary steps based on their yearly evaluations, and if they exceeded expectations, a merit bonus would be given. This would help to develop a professional staff, and for them to experience and see advancement possibilities within the organization as well as to entice them to stay with the organization for a longer period of time than past employees have done. Within the last 18 months, a 100% turnover in professional staff has taken place at the APO. Mr. Perske expressed his concern about merit pay and said from his past experience, he was not sure merit pay would keep someone in an organization. Members were concerned that employees would expect a merit increases each year. Mr. Goerger felt, and Mr. Gibson agreed, that a merit increase is a reward for good work.

Mayor Kleis asked if some of the Personnel Policy issues were restricting Mr. Gibson in carrying out his duties. Mr. Gibson responded that he wanted the policy written down so that all staff members would understand what was expected of them.

The board members did not endorse or recommend approval of the draft Personnel Policy as written and asked that draft policy go to the Policy Board for further discussion. It was also recommended to remove the firearms portion of the draft policy since there are no changes to the firearms policy.

POLICY BOARD:

The purpose of and need for the Policy Board was raised for discussion. Mayor Kleis felt fiduciary issues belonged to the Policy Board. Mr. Perske said he valued the Policy Board, and felt it validated the board members and their opinions. Mr. Westerlund said he valued the information he received from guest speakers. Mr. Libert recommended an annual transportation summit if the Policy Board was abolished. Mr. Gibson noted that Federal rules allowed a lot flexibility in how a governing body of an MPO was structured and functioned.

Mayor Kleis motioned and Mr. Libert seconded to have Mr. Gibson look into several options pertaining to how the APO Boards were structured and functioned. Mr. Gibson was asked to present the information at the next Executive Board meeting. Motion carried. When a consensus is reached at the next Executive Board regarding the Policy Board, it will be taken to the Policy Board.

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING LOCATION:

With the approval of the ADA Self-Evaluation at the February Policy Board meeting, the Executive Board meetings were moved to locations that were more transit accessible than the APO office. However, some Executive Board members were not happy with the change. **Mayor Miller motioned to have the Executive Board meetings returned at the APO office. Mr. Libert seconded the motion. Motion carried. Mr. Gibson said he would do as the Board wishes and the meetings would be returned to the APO office.**

PRESENTATION ON THE POSSIBLE IMPACTS OF AUTONOMOUS VEHICLES:

Mr. Gibson highlighted some of the future changes in transportation based upon what we know today. Autonomous vehicles are likely to be electric and shared by other passengers. Mobility will be contracted out, similar to Uber/Lyft, where you would order a car to take you to work and then it would be available for other riders. Driverless vehicles will be less expensive to make and more efficient. There will be less need for roads and parking, which will result in more land becoming developable. From this point forward, sloped floor parking garages should not be built as they will likely need to be repurposed in the near future. Parking garages could be located out in the country. Changing the direction of traffic lanes based on busy commuter times is a possibility. Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) will likely increase. Gas tax as a method of funding may become impractical. Taxing VMT may be the new method for funding transportation. Brick and mortar stores may disappear and trucks may become mobile stores, which will increase unemployment. Changes will be huge and are coming sooner than we think.

PRESENTATION ON THE RESULTS OF THE WASHINGTON DC TRIP:

Mr. Goerger highlighted the events of the recent Washington DC Trip that he, Mr. Gibson and Mr. Perske participated in. They met with Senator Klobuchar's staff, Representative Emmer, Senator Franken's staff, and Jason Lewis and felt that all the meetings went well. They experienced some difficulty on the return flight due to their return flight being cancelled because of inclement weather.

OTHER BUSINESS & ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Mr. Gibson asked the board members if they wanted a May meeting, since the Executive Board meeting would be scheduled for May 11 and the Policy Board is scheduled for one week later on May 18. The May Policy Board is the Annual Meeting where the election of officers takes place. **The board members did not feel a May meeting was necessary and Mayor Kleis motioned to cancel the Executive Board meeting for May. Mr. Libert seconded the motion. Motion carried.**

Mr. Perske raised the possibility of going paperless (electronic) for the Executive Board and Policy Board agendas. An e-mail will be sent around to the members regarding this.

Mr. Goerger read a letter from St. Augusta which stated that St. Augusta was withdrawing from the APO effective June 30, 2017.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 6:24 p.m.