

Rural Task Force #3 Meeting
January 26, 2022
Kalamazoo County Road Commission
and
Online via Microsoft Teams

Members in Attendance:

Jay Miller	Branch County Road Commission
Ryan Minkus	Road Commission of Kalamazoo County
Garrett Myland	St. Joseph County Road Commission
Kristine Parsons	Calhoun County Road Department
Jake Welch	Chair - Barry County Road Commission, Chair
Brian Sanada	MDOT SW Region Planning

Others in Attendance:

Rebekkah Ausbury	Road Commission of Kalamazoo County
Allen Balog	St. Joseph County Transportation Authority
Josh Grab*	MDOT – Rural Task Force Program Manager
Larry Hummell*	Fleis and VandenBrink
Brian Kernstock	Calhoun County Road Department
John Lindsey	St. Joseph County Road Commission
Sean McBride*	Kalamazoo Metro
Fred Nagler	Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study/SMPC
Steve Stepek*	Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study/SMPC
Ali Townshend*	Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study/SMPC

*Attended via Microsoft Teams

Call to Order

Chair Welch called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m. The meeting was held at the offices of the Road Commission of Kalamazoo County with virtual access via Microsoft Teams. Voting members Miller, Minkus, Myland, Parsons, Welch and Sanada were in attendance at the Road Commission offices.

Approval of the January 26, 2022 Meeting Agenda

MOTION by Parsons, SUPPORT by Myland, “to approve the agenda as presented.” Motion approved unanimously.

Approval of December 8, 2021 Rural Task Force #3 Meeting Minutes

MOTION by Minkus, SUPPORT by Parsons **“to approve the minutes of the December 8, 2021 RTF #3 meeting.”** Motion approved unanimously.

Review of 2022 Projects

Welch noted that the main reason for scheduling the meeting was to approve changes to allow the programming of additional federal funding targets released by the Michigan Department of Transportation as a result of the recently approved federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. The increased funding is for fiscal year 2022 only and cannot be carried forward so must be obligated this year. Welch called on each county representative to present their requested changes or additions

St. Joseph County:

Myland explained the St. Joseph County Road Commission’s current projects were too far along in the process to add funding and the Transportation Authority would be unable to use it either. The only way to use the additional funding is to add a project.

MOTION by Myland, SUPPORT by Minkus, **“to add a project for a 2” overlay on Arthur L. Jones Road from M60 to Broadway using \$167,495 in STL funding and \$41,823.75 Local match.”** Motion approved unanimously.

Kalamazoo County:

Minkus said that all of the Road Commission’s project are out for bid and funding cannot be added to them so the request will be to add funding to the existing Metro project to be used for additional vehicles.

MOTION by Minkus, SUPPORT by Parsons, **“to add \$157,442 in STL funding to Metro’s Job Number 205412 for the purchase of up to 8 vans.”** Motion approved unanimously.

Branch County:

MOTION by Miller, SUPPORT by Parsons, **“to add a project to crack and road sealing project on Snow Prairie Road from US 12 to the Indiana State Line using \$167,673 in STL funding.”** Motion approved unanimously. During discussion between support and voting concerns were expressed that the project scope may not be substantial enough to use all the available funding. Miller assured the Task Force that it should.

Calhoun County:

Parsons noted that the Road Department received funding for a safety project in 2023 on North Marshall Road and will be requesting to addition of STL funding from the Task Force once the budget is finalized. For 2022 the Road Department will be requesting a new project as their current project is already obligated. As part of the project, Calhoun County will be borrowing STL and EDD funding from Barry County to be returned in its entirety in STL funding in 2024.

MOTION by Parsons, SUPPORT by Welch, **“to approve the transfer of \$194,886 in 2022 STL and \$52,792 in 2022 EDD from Branch County to Calhoun County to be returned as \$247,678 of STL funding in 2024.”** Motion approved unanimously.

MOTION by Parsons, SUPPORT by Minkus **“to approve the addition of a project for a milling and single course overlay on Michigan Avenue from 20 Mile to 22 ½ Mile and 22 ½ Mile from Michigan Avenue to I-94 using \$411,332 in STL, \$59,992 in EDD and \$42,841 in local match.”** Motion approved unanimously.

Barry County:

Barry County did not request any change to 2022 as its funding transfer to Calhoun County was approved previously.

Review of 2023 – 2026 Projects

Minkus noted several errors in the fiscal constraint spreadsheet from what had been approved at the December 8 meeting. Nagler said he would fix them and redistribute.

Welch requested the addition of funding to Barry County Road Commission’s 2024 project to reflect the repayment of the 2022 funding trade with Calhoun County.

MOTION by Welch, SUPPORT by Parsons, **“to add \$247,678 in STL to the previously approved Countywide Preventive Maintenance project in 2024 for a total of \$1,044,678.”** Motion approved unanimously.

Minkus asked if any other agency would be interested in selling MTF funding to the Road Commission of Kalamazoo County for its \$422,638 of STL in 2023. None were at this time.

Minkus said that local match amounts were inadvertently left off of the previously approved requests in the 2023 – 2026 Call for Projects.

MOTION by Minkus, SUPPORT by Myland and unanimous approval to add the following local match amounts to the Road Commission of Kalamazoo’s 2023-2026 projects:

2023: Add \$165,110 to the W. Avenue Project

2024: Add \$203,381 to the Q Avenue Project

2025: Add \$163,130 to the W Avenue Project

2026: Add \$166,380 to the Q Avenue Project

Public Comment

No public comment was offered

Other Business

Minkus asked Nagler to reach out to the Village of Tekonsha for an update to the status of their 2023 project as there were some issues noted at a previous meeting that need to be addressed, including the ineligibility of one of the streets for federal funding.

Grab said that it will be possible to program EDD funding at the start of a fiscal year if the amount is 90% or less of the target. If an agency wants to obligate its full amount it will need to wait for a later letting.

He noted that the obligation authority for federal funding has still not increased from the previous amount so there could be delays in obligating funds. Finally, he said that MDOT Economic Development is looking at the possibility of giving a grant for State D funds, which would allow projects not using federal funds to not have to go through the full Local Agency Program process. This would streamline the obligation and letting of those projects.

Myland said he was estimating that there will be upwards of 60 additional projects statewide for 2022 because of the recent increase in targets and the need to obligate this fiscal year. He expressed concern with the ability for MDOT Local Agency Programs to process the additional projects for obligation, as it is currently taking 60 to 90 days just for NEPA approval. Grab responded that he doesn't believe that there will be 60 additional projects as most of the Rural Task Forces he has been in contact with will be adding funding to existing project. He stated that he is confident MDOT staff will work diligently to process requests as quickly as possible.

Welch asked about at least being able to carry forward the additional funding to 2023. Grab said shared the agencies' concerns about adding the funding to 2022 rather than moving it to 2023 but noted that MDOT is constrained by legislative rules.

Welch asked if other agencies have been having their project file reviews conducted by consultants. He said his experience has been extremely poor, with little to no response to his email and calls. As a result of their inaction he has been getting threatening letters from MDOT regarding unfinalized projects. Other agencies discussed their experiences.

Stepak said that MDOT may be looking to distribute additional funding to the RTF in other categories such as carbon reduction. There has been no final decision but wanted the Task Force to know if may be coming.

Adjourn

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 10:53 a.m.

Minutes approved: November 7, 2022

Questions or comments on these minutes can be directed to:

*Fred Nagler
Associate Planner
Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study
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