

WHATCOM TRANSPORTATION
POLICY BOARD
MINUTES
October 14, 2009

ATTENDANCE

BOARD MEMBERS: Jack Louws, Bob Bromley,
Todd Carlson, Bonnie Onyon,
Andy Rowlson, Sam Crawford,
Gary Jensen, Pete Kremen,
Louise Bjornson, Scott
Walker, Tom Jones, Barbara
Ryan

GUESTS: Kathy Berg

STAFF: Jim Miller, Gordon Rogers, Ron
Cubellis, Leslye O'Shaughnessy, Andy
Gomez

A. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 3:30
pm.

B. PUBLIC COMMENT

None received.

C. MINUTES

MOTION: Kremen moved, Jensen seconded,
to approve the minutes from July 8, 2009.

MOTION PASSED

D. PUBLIC HEARINGS

D.1 2009 TIP Amendment

Cubellis reported that the City of
Bellingham has asked that the Ohio/King

Street intersection safety improvements project be added to the 2009 TIP. The project has received \$315,000 of federal safety funds and \$1,000,000 of state safety funds from the 2009 9½ cent gas tax increase.

Hearing Opened at 3:32 pm

Public Comments:

None received.

MOTION: Kremen moved, Rowlson seconded, to close the Public Hearing.

MOTION PASSED

Public Hearing closed at 3:33 pm

MOTION: Kremen moved, Rowlson seconded, to approve amendment #10 to the 2009 TIP.

MOTION PASSED

D.2 2010 Transportation Improvement Program

Cubellis stated that this is the regional Transportation Improvement Program and is a compilation of the jurisdiction's TIPs.

Hearing Opened at 3:34 pm

Public Comments:

None received.

MOTION: Ryan moved, Jones seconded, to close the Public Hearing.

MOTION PASSED

Public Hearing closed at 3:35 pm

MOTION: Onyon moved, Jensen seconded, to approve the 2010 Transportation Improvement Program.

MOTION PASSED

D.3 Public Participation Plan

Gomez stated that the plan was created to meet federal requirements and provide guidelines for establishing and maintaining optimum public involvement along with assessment tools to evaluate the effectiveness of the program.

Public Hearing Opened at 3:39 pm

Public Comments:

None received.

MOTION: Jones moved, Kremen seconded, to close the Public Hearing.

MOTION PASSED

Public Hearing closed at 3:40 pm

MOTION: Ryan moved, Bjornson seconded, to approve the Public Participation Plan.

Comments:

Ryan asked what is new in the plan. Gomez responded that we are going to try to communicate with the public during the process on a weekly basis, trying more outreach to get under-represented people involved.

Onyon asked if staff makes presentations at council meetings. Miller stated that staff is available.

Ryan asked if there has been any discussion of filming TTAC meetings for public airing. Crawford stated it would cost approximately \$6,000 per year to film. Other members stated that the TTAC is not the decision-making body.

MOTION PASSED

E. OLD BUSINESS

E.1 Renewal of CTAG Membership Agreements & Discussion

Rogers stated that the first part of this is to receive approval to renew membership agreements. The second part

is to hear from the Chair of the Community Transportation Advisory Group.

MOTION: Kremen moved, Jensen seconded, to approve the chairman signing the CTAG membership agreements.

MOTION PASSED

Rogers introduced Kathy Berg, Chair of CTAG. Berg reported that the CTAG is ready to serve the WTPB and its jurisdictions. She stated that they cover different areas from freight to the foothills and serve as part of the WTA advisory group.

E.2 ARRA Projects Updates

Louws stated Grover Street has been torn up and is on schedule.

Kremen stated that Whatcom County didn't receive anything really appreciable from ARRA.

Onyon stated that the Boblett Street extension through the former airport is generating a lot of talk in a good way.

Rowlson stated that the chip seal project Everson had up for ARRA funds dropped off the list but it has been completed with assistance from the County.

Bromley stated that Bob Mitchell Way was completed on September 19. The project has spurred a new industrial business to come into Sumas and part of their industrial area has opened up with an extension of privately built heavy-haul road.

Ryan and Bjornson stated that they had there were five small projects that are underway.

Walker stated that the Port received funding to build hard-stands for the larger airplanes that are there overnight. They are planning to tear up the whole runway in 2010.

Jones stated they did not have projects in the transportation program but did have a project for booster

pumps for their water system entered for funding under two different programs and did not receive funding under either one.

Jensen stated that the Second Avenue project is moving along. They have closed one of the railroad crossings. The railroad will be rebuilding the crossing on Washington Street. The project will be completed next year.

Carlson stated that a potential bright spot is if there is an 18-month continuing resolution there is a possibility of getting more border funds. It could be between \$8 - 15 million and last time most of the funds were spent in Whatcom County.

Onyon stated that Blaine is getting 2 roundabouts from the federal government.

E.3 Transportation Plans

E.3.1 Washington Transportation Plan

E.3.2 Whatcom Transportation Plan

Rogers stated that both the State and WCOG are updating their transportation plans. The State's will be finished earlier. WCOG's plan has to be adopted by the end of June 2012. WCOG staff has started working on the WCOG plan.

The WCOG travel demand model will be ready to use in January 2010. The State will be the first to use it. The State is developing a multi-modal plan and a highway system plan.

There's another strategic policy-based part of the State Plan that is being managed by the Transportation Commission. They have a little different perspective of the Plan than WSDOT and are looking at alternatives and potential funding alternatives. This Plan is due to be completed by the end of next year and is going to be presented to the Legislature for adoption. Rogers is on the advisory committee for this.

F. NEW BUSINESS

F.1 City of Bellingham/Port of Bellingham Federal
Functional Classification

Rogers reported the TIGER funding is part of the stimulus bill and the City of Bellingham and Port of Bellingham partnered to submit a \$37 million application for a program of projects in the waterfront area. There are two road segments in the area that are not federally classified and need to be in order to be eligible to receive federal funds. The documentation has been submitted but needs concurrence by the Policy Board.

MOTION: Crawford moved, Jensen seconded, to concur with the classification requests.

MOTION PASSED

G. REPORTS

G.1 Retreat

Miller suggested that the Board may want to look at holding a retreat next year.

Jensen asked if there is any funding source that all the jurisdictions could go in together to fund transportation projects in each community. Miller stated that under 695 there are some funding possibilities in conjunction with car tabs that require a vote of the people.

Rowland stated that Everson is looking at doing this and the amounts are \$20 without a vote and \$100 with a vote of the people. The county as a whole could do this and Whatcom County would receive \$10 per car tab and the local jurisdictions would receive \$10 per car tab. The County had until July of 2007 or 2008 to enact this and if they didn't the local jurisdictions could enact it. Whatcom County did not do it and now local jurisdictions can. Rowland said the rules state that the funds generated have to go towards identified transportation projects. Louws directed staff to research this and make a presentation at the next meeting.

G.2 Reauthorization of the Federal Highways Act

The Federal Transportation Bill ended October 1, 2009. The Senate is saying it will be another 18 months before the next Bill will be ready and the House has introduced their Bill. There is a continuing resolution that is in place and will expire in 17 days.

If the next extension goes into several months then we can look at the border and formula money generated through the Whatcom County border crossings and on an annual basis that could be 12-15 million dollars. If we get one year we should get that much coming into Whatcom County. Whatcom County generates 70 percent of the border formula money that comes into Washington State primarily because of I-5.

Rogers stated that along with the border funds there could be STP funds. The annual amount for Whatcom County through this program historically has been approximately \$2 million. The CTAG has been re-evaluating the selection process in order to be ready if the funds become available.

G.3 Beyond Oil Conference

The Beyond Oil Conference is scheduled for October 21-22 at the Microsoft facility in Redmond. All tickets for elected officials will be free of charge.

H. ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 4:40 pm.

Robert Bromley
Chair

Jim Miller
Executive Director