

**Northeast Minnesota ATP
Steering Committee Meeting
Monday, June 20, 2011
Hampton Inn
310 Canal Park Drive
Duluth, MN**

Members Present

Wayne Olson
David Salo
Doug Grindall
Walter Leu
Cindy Voigt
Jim Rohweder
Jim Foldesi
Mark LeBrun
John Welle
Dennis Jensen

Others Present

Denny Johnson
Scott Johnson
John Minor
Nancy Sannes
Jon Mason
James Gittemeier

Representing

Carlton County
Cities > 5000
Koochiching County
Mn/DOT
Duluth
MIC
St. Louis County
Pine County
Aitkin County
Transit

Representing

Mn/DOT
Mn/DOT
Mn/DOT
Mn/DOT
ARDC
MIC

Call to Order

Chairman John Welle called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m. and introductions were made.

Minutes of the March 7, 2011 Meeting

Motion by Jim Foldesi, second by Wayne Olson, to approve minutes. Motion passed.

2011 Program Status

Walter Leu reviewed the FY 2011 local program (handout) and discussed each project's status. Most projects will be authorized by FHWA by the end of June. Walt said there is no need to move any projects out to FY 2012. Project 031-607-027 (Itasca CSAH 7) is waiting for DBE approval. Walt discussed the issues of meeting the DBE goals and the possibility of a state shutdown. Members were reminded that after FHWA approval was granted for their projects, they have eleven months to begin spending their money. Project 088-070-013 (District wide HSIP project) in the ATIP was corrected to be in FY 2011 not FY 2012. John Minor Will confirm this. The St Louis County Board is going to reject all bids and re-

advertise project 069-604-060 (CSAH 4) due to DBE issues. Koochiching County Project 036-755-001 (CSAH 155) is in the process of a DBE appeal. The group had a lengthy discussion on DBE issues and some of the problems the contractors are having meeting the goals. Walt said other states are including DBE goals in bid documents as part of the contract and Mn/DOT should consider this option on future contracts. Project 091-070-023 Helmet Hero is in the PIF (public interest finding) process. Walt mentioned all SRTS projects are in good shape.

Nancy Sannes then reviewed the FY 2011 Mn/DOT program (handout). She indicated that virtually the entire program had now been let. A signing project and cable median barrier project on I-35 have been deferred until other I-35 pavement projects have been completed. The Baptism Rest Area project is scheduled to be let by the Department of Administration this summer. The project has been moved into FY 2012 with a let date now of 8-15-11. The TH 71 Better Roads Project is let and waiting on award pending the potential state government shutdown.

Federal and State Funding Status

Denny Johnson discussed the federal and state funding status (handout). A new federal transportation reauthorization bill is still being developed in Congress. Due to no new federal funding bill, the MN/DOT project on TH 1 SP 3801-18 has been delayed until additional federal Forest Highway funds become available. At present, no gas tax increase at the federal level is being proposed. Federal funding levels remain at current levels until September 30, 2011. The new federal funding bill could be 6 years or 2 years and there is lots of uncertainty. There could be a more limited federal highway system if there is no increase in funding. The NE MN ATP has identified two contingency projects (DTA buses and TH 169 Pokegama Ave. in Grand Rapids) totaling approximately \$8M in FY 2012 if there is a reduction of federal funding. State revenues are likely to decline due to high gas prices and people driving fewer miles.

Denny gave an update on the MN/DOT "Better Roads" program. For FY 2012 there are three projects scheduled.

- TH 71 – Big Falls to Pelland (planned 2011 construction) M&O, 28 miles, \$9M
- TH 210 – McGregor to Carlton (planned 2011 construction) M&O, 42 miles, \$7M
- I-35 – Scanlon to Proctor (2012 construction) UBCO, 10 miles, \$32m

The Better Roads backfill program dollars are in the ATIP as funding set asides until the projects are further scoped.

Draft 2012 – 2015 ATIP

Walt discussed the 2015 enhancement projects and said there is an enhancement work shop scheduled for September 21, 2011.

Nancy Sannes talked about the STIP changes that occurred. Changes were mostly minor. Jim Foldesi said there needs to be a correction to project 069-609-038 changing CSAH 8 to CSAH 9. Nancy will send James Gittemeier the draft ATIP for MIC comments and to assure projects are the same in the MIC TIP. MN/DOT Better Roads backfill projects are in the STIP as funding set asides and there is work in progress to identify projects and put them in the STIP. There is a possibility that Better Roads money will be used to pay for claims from a state shutdown. If a shutdown occurs, the STIP will be adjusted accordingly.

Motion by Cindy Voigt, second by Walt Leu, to approve 2012-2015 ATIP. Motion passed.

Other Business

There was a lengthy discussion on state shutdown and how the counties and cities are going to handle shutdown and working on MN/DOT R/W, etc. This is a risk assessment the counties and cities are going to have to make. Walt Leu, Jim Foldesi & John Welle talked about ways to have independent assurance sampling and materials certification on federally funded state aid projects. It is hoped there will be a MN/DOT employee to process change orders and supplemental agreements. David Salo stated being a consultant and city engineer he is not going to keep any of the jobs he is responsible for up and running and is planning a shutdown for those projects. David said other consultants he talked to were planning similar action. Walt said that the Highway Users fund is constitutionally dedicated to transportation and it is unconscionable that the legislative budget impasse related to the general fund is impacting state and local road construction projects.

Walt told the group that Amr Jabr will be the D-1 District Engineer for 6- 9 months. Walter also thanked Denny Johnson for 41 plus years of service. Denny's last day is June 29th. Denny's replacement will not be on board until late September or October.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the ATP Steering Committee will be held on Thursday October 13th.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m.