

**MINUTES**  
**Morris County Board of Transportation Meeting**  
**Tuesday, January 17, 2017**

**Morris County Department of Planning & Public Works**  
**30 Schuyler Place, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor Conference Room**  
**Morristown, New Jersey**

**In Attendance:**

Board Members	Additional Attendees	Staff
Melverne E. Cooke, Chairperson	Amy Magnuson, NJTPA	Deena Leary
Ilene Dorf Manahan		Christopher Vitz
Manuela Schuster		Gerald Rohsler
Joe Wells		John Hayes
John Wetzel		Joseph Russo

**I. Call to Order:** Chairperson Melverne E. Cooke called the meeting to order at 2:03 pm.

**II. Open Public Meeting Statement:** Chairperson Cooke read the Open Public Meetings Act compliance statement.

**III. Roll Call:** Gerald Rohsler read the roll call. Five voting members were present during roll call.

**IV. Welcome and Introductions:** Chairperson Cooke welcomed all attendees and staff introduced themselves.

**V. Approval of Minutes from July 17, 2016 Meeting:** Ilene Dorf Manahan identified some edits to the minutes, and the minutes were unanimously approved.

**VI. Report from Election Committee Chairperson & Election of Officers:** Election Committee Chairperson Manahan presented the following nominees for Officers of the Board of Transportation:

- Chairperson: Melverne E. Cooke
- Vice Chairperson: Frank Reilly
- Secretary: Manuela Schuster

Election of the three Officers was moved by Ms. Manahan and seconded by Mr. Wells, and the Officers were unanimously elected.

## VII. Staff Reports:

- A. Circulation Element Update:** The consultant effort to develop the Circulation Element was funded by NJTPA's Subregional Studies Program. John Hayes reported that the consultant team addressed NJTPA's comments on the report, and the County submitted the final report to the NJTPA. The County closed out the contracts with the consultant and NJTPA. The Division of Engineering & Transportation is working with the Division of Planning & Preservation to advance the Element and will submit it the Morris County Planning Board for adoption.

Chairperson Cooke asked when the Circulation Element will be adopted and if there will be additional joint meetings of the Board of Transportation and Planning Board. Mr. Hayes responded that the Division does not yet have an anticipated date for adoption, and there will be the required number of public hearings prior to adoption. Additional engagement with the Boards will be discussed as the Element is advanced. Ms. Manahan asked if Morristown had contacted staff regarding the development of their new transportation plan. Mr. Hayes said that the town had not contacted transportation planning staff.

- B. Freight Activities:** Joseph Russo reported on several completed railroad crossing improvement projects along the Morris County-owned railroads. Four crossings were rehabilitated in the second half of 2016: Ogden Avenue, Stickle Avenue, and Hibernia Avenue in Rockaway Borough (\$723k); and NJ 10 in Roxbury Township (\$416k). The Ogden Avenue project permanently closed the crossing to vehicular traffic. The Stickle and Hibernia Avenue projects included new concrete surface and signals.

The NJ 10 crossing project included new concrete surface and signals. An extensive public notification campaign, a comprehensive detour plan, and the support of various police departments enabled the work to be substantially completed over one weekend.

John Wetzel agreed that the NJ 10 project went well and added that businesses are looking for stability in railroad service that regular maintenance provides. Mr. Wetzel announced that Roxbury launched a website with its Economic Development Corporation to share real estate information with local brokers, which will help market rail accessible properties.

Mr. Russo announced that the Lower Richboynton Road, North Salem Street, and Sammis Avenue crossings on the Dover & Rockaway Railroad in Dover will be improved in the first half of 2017. He reported that the County submitted two grant applications to the State's Rail Freight Assistance Program for repairs along the High Bridge Branch and the Dover & Rockaway Railroad.

- C. NYS&W Update:** Mr. Rohsler updated the Board on the status of the NYS&W Bicycle and Pedestrian Path project. He explained that the County is working to secure easements for the path to cross the North Jersey District Water Supply property, Wayne Township property, and property owned by a homeowners

association. It is anticipated that the path's design will be completed in the spring of 2017 and construction to start in 2018.

Mr. Wetzel asked about the location of the path and material to be used. Mr. Rohsler explained that the path will be a 4.8 mile shared-use facility starting at River Drive in Pequannock and ending at the Mountain View Train Station in Wayne. An asphalt path will be constructed on top of the existing abandoned railroad bed of the New York, Susquehanna, and Western (NYS&W) Railway. Mr. Wells provided background that the Town of Pequannock originally received a grant for \$700k 22 years ago to start advancing the path and eventually turned the money over to the County. Once constructed, the Morris County Park Commission will own and maintain the multi-use path.

**D. Transportation Trust Fund Update:** Mr. Rohsler provided an overview of New Jersey's Transportation Trust Fund (TTF) and a review of recent developments. In the summer of 2016, the TTF only had enough money to pay debt service. The State Legislature and the Governor did not reach an agreement on how to increase funding, so the Governor issued an order shutting down most State-funded projects. Federally funded projects continued to advance, except for projects funded with TTF swapped dollars.

An agreement was reached in the fall to fund the TTF through the increase of the State's gas tax. As part of the legislation, a four-person committee was created to approve the State's Transportation Capital Program before it goes before the legislature for annual adoption. Subsequently, a bill has been introduced to eliminate the committee.

Mr. Rohsler explained the TTF swap. The NJTPA receives Federal Highway Administration funding through the NJDOT, however the NJTPA was finding it difficult to timely allocate/disperse the funds within each fiscal year. NJTPA, with various approvals, found it beneficial to exchange Federal funding for TTF dollars with the State, who could spend it quickly. The NJTPA Board of Trustees approved the TTF funding exchange for 2017, but Trustees may not approve it for 2018 because of the adverse impact that the TTF shutdown had on counties' projects.

Chairperson Cooke asked what projects were affected. Christopher Vitz answered that paving projects funded through the TTF were halted for 2016. Three bridge projects were impacted: Landing Rd, Waterloo, and Openaki Bridges. The Ridgedale Ave Bridge project was almost done at the time of the shutdown, so the County decided to complete the work with its own funding.

Manuela Schuster ask if Sussex Turnpike was one of the paving projects. Mr. Vitz explained that it was not funded through the TTF and not affected. Mr. Rohsler stated that the State Rail Assistance funding is through the TTF. However, the County's crossing projects are federal funded so they were not delayed.

Mr. Wells asked if the four-person committee has been removed. Ms. Magnuson replied that the bill has not yet advanced. She explained that there are concerns regarding the Transportation Capital Program Approval Committee that is required to approve the capital program before the legislature.

Ms. Leary stated that Morris County was not as affected by the TTF shutdown as other counties because of the status of the impacted projects. The New Jersey Association of Counties is advocating for reimbursement for costs incurred by the Counties during the shutdown. Mr. Vitz explained that Morris County was able to switch funding from TTF to County funds to complete certain projects. County funding through the TTF may be doubled next year. Ms. Magnuson confirmed that additional County aid in FY 2018 is being discussed and the shutdown cost counties an estimated \$20 million.

Mr. Vitz asked Ms. Magnuson for more information regarding the new freight initiatives line item in the County Local Aid. Ms. Magnuson stated that she would provide more information on the \$28 million program.

- E. Capital Projects Update:** Mr. Vitz reported that the County's Capital Budget for 2017 is \$16 million. The Capital Budget includes funding for road, bridge, environmental, and other projects. It is anticipated that counties will receive additional funding through the TTF, and the County may use the money to replace drainage pipes under roads that are starting to rot.

Chairperson Cooke said that drainage degradation is an issue many agencies are dealing with and asked about the overall condition of the County's roads. Ms. Manahan asked if Engineering maintains dams. Mr. Vitz responded that most bridges and roads are in good shape and the County is keeping up with maintenance. The Park Commission maintains 12 dams and engineering maintains four dams.

**VIII. New Business:** Mr. Rohsler reported that Morris County is serving the technical advisory committee (TAC) for the Town of Boonton's Emerging Centers Program. The pilot program is funded and administered by the NJTPA and being conducted by a consultant firm. Chairperson Cooke asked for more details on the concept of an emerging center. An emerging center is a community that wishes to create a more sustainable, transit-supportive and walkable environment. Mr. Rohsler explained that the effort will examine the municipality's downtown to develop a plan to better unify zoning with transportation. The first of three TAC meetings will be held on January 24. Ms. Magnuson added that in April 2016, NJTPA, NJIT, Freeholder DeFillippo, and Mr. Rohsler met with Boonton to start discussing the emerging centers grant program.

Ms. Leary reported that staff from the Departments of Planning & Public Works and Human Services met with NJ Transit Bus Planning on January 10 to discuss the potential options for increasing local bus service in Morris County. She provided some background on NJ Transit's local bus system and the status of service. The County is deciding whether to enhance the existing bus routes with more frequency or hours of operation, or turn over the operation of the Morris On the Move (M.O.M.) shuttle to NJ

Transit. Manuela Schuster, who manages the M.O.M shuttle, is working with TransOptions to attain current ridership statistics. This data will help the County determine a course of action. Ms. Schuster added that NJ Transit Bus ridership, like the M.O.M shuttle, has gone down in New Jersey. Mr. Wells asked if any economic analysis of the bus system is performed. Deena replied that NJ Transit conducts regular surveys to get feedback and to identify demographics and trip purposes of its riders.

**IX. Old Business:** None.

**X. Schedule for 2017 Meetings:** Mr. Rohsler recommended that the board continue to meet on the second Tuesday of the month, quarterly. The Board selected April 11, July 11, and October 10, 2017 (*Please note that the date for the October meeting was later changed to October 17*). Meetings will be held at 2:00 pm in the 4<sup>th</sup> floor conference room of the Morris County Department of Planning & Public Works at 30 Schuyler Place, Morristown, NJ.

**XI. Adjournment:** Adjournment of the meeting was moved by Ms. Manahan and seconded by Ms. Schuster, and the meeting was adjourned at 3:02 p.m.

*Minutes prepared by John Hayes, Division of Engineering & Transportation*