

MEETING MINUTES
Morris County Board of Transportation Meeting
 Tuesday, October 22, 2019
 30 Schuyler Place, 2nd Floor Conference Room
 Morristown, New Jersey

In Attendance:

Board Members	Additional Attendees	Staff
Melverne E. Cooke	Scott Harris VP, DRRV	Christopher Vitz
Freeholder Kathryn A. DeFillippo	Christine Hellyer, Morris County Human Services	Gerald Rohsler
Ilene Dorf Manahan	Jakub Rowinski, NJTPA	John Hayes
Manuela Schuster, Secretary		Dede Murray
Joe Wells, Chairperson		Benjamin Peacock

I. Call to Order: Chairperson Joe Wells called the meeting to order at 2:00 pm.

II. Roll Call: John Hayes read the roll call. Five voting members were present during roll call.

III. Welcome and Introductions: Chairperson Wells welcomed all in attendance.

IV. Approval of Minutes from April 23, 2019 Meeting: Approval of the minutes was moved by Melverne E. Cooke, seconded by Ilene Dorf Manahan, and unanimously approved.

V. Reports:

A. Road & Bridge Projects: Christopher Vitz, County Engineer, reported on the County's 2019 paving and bridge program. He said that 28.7 miles of paving have been completed this year, a few more will be completed this year, and about six miles were put into next spring's paving schedule. Upcoming bridge work will occur on Blackwell Street in Dover and on Chestnut Terrace in Rockaway Township. He reported that the County has hired a contractor to re-drive the County routes using LIDAR to assess the pavement condition, estimate pavement lifecycle, and help schedule future paving projects. Freeholder DeFillippo asked when the previous drive occurred and Ms. Manahan asked if the goal is to annually pave 10% of County roads. Mr. Vitz replied that the last drive to scan the roads was 2015, and he confirmed that the goal is to pave about 10% of roads annually.

B. NYS&W Updates: Mr. Rohsler reported that County continues to coordinate with the New York, Susquehanna, and Western Railway (NYS&W) to have the railroad provide easements to the encroaching properties prior to the County's purchase. Ms. Cooke asked how long will construction last, and Chairperson Wells asked if contractors have been selected and noted that he looks forward to seeing construction start. Mr. Rohsler stated that construction is anticipated to start in the spring of 2020, and contractors are not yet selected. Mr. Vitz said that construction should last 18 months. The NYS&W Bicycle and Pedestrian Path will be a 4.8-mile shared-use facility starting at River Drive in Pequannock and ending at Mountain View Boulevard, a short distance from the Mountain View Train Station in Wayne.

C. Freight Activities: Benjamin Peacock reported on the following County railroad projects.

1. The High Bridge Branch Resurfacing Project continues to advance. Approximately 4,500 ties, 80 39-foot sections of rail between N. Hillside Avenue and US 46, 9 39-foot sections of rail at the Kenvil runaround track were replaced. Additionally, half of the track has been gauged, and brush cutting and tree removal along whole line are complete. The remaining work includes completing the gauging work and track replacement, resurfacing, and bridge and switch repairs.
2. The Pre-construction meeting for the Chester Runaround Track Construction Project was held on October 9. The sub-contractor has removed tree stumps within the rail right-of-way. Excavation and sub-ballast spreading should begin the week of October 21.
3. The Kenvil Team Track Project continues. The contractor requested a grading plan for the site. The County hired a design contractor and the plan was completed in August.
4. The Main Street and North Road Crossing Project along the High Bridge Branch in Mount Olive Township will start after the winter in 2020. The County submitted final comments on the design to the contractor in early October, and the plans should be completed in the next few weeks.
5. Price quotes for repairs to the NJ 10 Chester Branch crossing are due the week of October 21. A vehicle had ripped out one of the rubber rail seals.
6. Repairs to Bridge 14D2608 in Wharton over Rockaway River are complete and the final payment has been issued.
7. The County submitted final comments on the railroad bridge inspection reports to the contractor, who is currently making final edits to the reports.

VI. Old Business:

NJTPA Freight Concept Development Pilot Program and Phillipsburg Bridge Updates – Mr. Rohsler reported that the NJTPA's Pilot Freight Concept Development Program was studying the Phillipsburg Bridge in Warren County; height restrictions prevented industry-standard Plate F (17' high) railcars from passing under the bridge on the Washington Secondary. Currently only Plate C (15' 6" high) railcars can pass beneath the bridge; however, the supply of Plate C railcars is reducing as the freight industry has shifted to Plate F which provide better economies of scale for shipping costs. The County's railroad operator assumed operations of the Norfolk Southern Washington Secondary line earlier this year, and determined a solution to lower the rail and allow sufficient clearance for Plate F railcars to pass under the bridge. The operator has completed this improvement.

Mr. Rohsler introduced Scott Harris, Vice President of the Dover and Delaware River Railroad (DRRV). The DRRV, a subsidiary of the Chesapeake and Delaware, LLC, was formed to serve customers along the three Morris County-owned rail lines. The DRRV began serving Morris County in July 2017. Mr. Harris gave a presentation showing pictures of the project's advancement. Pictures captured the various stages of work, starting on August 13 and ending on August 17, 2019. Steel cross ties, that have half the elevation of wood ties, were installed to allow the rail to be lowered under the Phillipsburg Bridge. A test train ran on September 10 to verify that Plate F rail cars can travel under the bridge.

Ms. Cooke asked how much was the rail lowered and when the railroad was installed. Mr. Harris reported that the rail was lowered by 7 inches and estimated that it was originally installed in the 1900's and the panel rail sections by the bridge were probably installed in the 1980's. Chairperson Wells asked if there are any drainage issues and how many ties were replaced. Mr. Harris said there is no drainage issue. Mr. Vitz estimated that 100 to 200 feet of ties were replaced. Chairperson Wells asked if this is the last height restriction that needs to be addressed. Mr. Rohsler replied that speed restrictions should be able to allow Plate F rail cars to get under the Millbrook and Franklin Road bridges.

Manuela Schuster asked who funded the project, how many customers are asking for Plate F rail cars, and about the status of NJ Transit permission to bring the rail cars on their lines. Mr. Harris replied that the DRRV paid for the work, and they are waiting for approval from NJ Transit to move Plate F rail cars east of Hackettstown. Plate F rail cars cannot get into Morris County. Norfolk Southern and customers in Morris County, such as Holland Manufacturing, three lumber companies along County-owned lines, and one on the Totawa Industrial Branch, are interested in Plate F service. Freeholder DeFillippo said that Holland Manufacturing brings this issue up as well as other companies, and she asked staff to make some calls.

Mr. Rohsler reported that now that the clearance issue is fixed, the Pilot Freight Concept Development Program has shifted analysis to addressing a drainage bridge's weight limitation located west of the Hackettstown train station on the Morristown Line.

Jakub Rowinski reported the project team and NJ Transit have determined that the drainage bridge is the last structure with a weight restriction between Phillipsburg and Morris County-owned rail lines. The current weight standard in the U.S. is 286k lbs. per loaded railcar. Once addressed, 286k lbs. rail cars will be able to travel over the bridge. The project team is now finalizing a list of alternative improvements.

Mr. Rowinski also provided an update on the concept development for the Dover & Rockaway Railroad Realignment. The concept development continues to advance and the project team is evaluating alternative realignments that balance the impacts to business and the environment. The Pilot Freight Concept Development Program Project should be completed in June 2020.

VII. New Business:

Board consolidation – Mr. Rohsler announced the potential of merging Board of Transportation and the Freight Rail Advisory Committee (FRAC). The two bodies have held joint meetings for the past several years and have the same agendas. FRAC member attendance has been low and it has been rare for an official FRAC meeting to be held due to lack of quorums. Freeholder DeFillippo said that the FRAC has formed after the Chester Branch was acquired and agreed that it makes sense to merge. Chairperson Wells asked for the general opinion of Board members, and the issue was briefly discussed. Freeholder DeFillippo said the Freeholder Board will discuss the potential merger at their next meeting; the Freeholder Board would have to make the changes to the appointed boards. Chairperson Wells called for a vote, all Board of Transportation members voted in favor of the consolidation.

RR crossing – Freeholder DeFillippo reported that she saw a freight train crossing NJ 10 going towards Kuiken Brothers, but she did not see a flagman and cars were crossing too soon. Mr. Harris responded that the flagman only needs to be blocking traffic at the front of the train as the locomotive advances and has to stay at the front of the train to be able to get off and block traffic.

Transit and Human Services – Ms. Schuster recommended a standing topic on transit and human services be added to the regular agenda, and asked for NJ Transit bus ridership numbers be shared with the Board at the next meeting. Ms. Schuster introduced Christine Hellyer, Division Director, Office on Aging, Disability & Community Programming, Department of Human Services.

Ms. Hellyer introduced herself and said she is in charge of the Morris Area Paratransit System (MAPS). Ms. Hellyer summarized MAPS ridership statistics for September 2019. MAPS served 435 clients providing 1,566 one-way trips during the month. They provided 216 trips for veterans; MAPS brings clients to the Veterans Administration in Lyons and East Orange five days a week, primarily to Lyons. Ms. Hellyer reported that Human Services is required to update the Human Services Transportation Coordination Plan as a condition of receiving 5310 and 5311 funding from NJ Transit. Human Services is currently updating the plan and anticipates completing it in 2020, and completing a larger update in 2025 with the new census data. They will send out a survey to transportation providers in the County to update information in the Plan. Ms. Hellyer also reported that

the Department is procuring new transportation routing software, Ecolane, to replace Route Match for MAPS and better serve clients. The new software and driver tablets will go live in December.

Freeholder DeFillippo asked how MAPS handles trips outside of Morris County. Ms. Hellyer stated that MAPS traditionally does not go more than five miles outside of the County. MAPS would like to extend service more into other counties, but requests for rides to destinations outside of the Morris County tend to be denied. Ms. Schuster asked about rides for veterans, and Ms. Hellyer replies that veterans are transported to the Veterans Administration.

VIII. Public Comments:

IX. The Next Regular Meeting: Tuesday, January 21, 2020 at 2:00 pm at 30 Schuyler Place, 2nd floor conference room, Morristown, NJ.

X. Adjournment: Adjournment of the meeting was moved by Ms. Schuster, seconded by Ms. Cooke, and unanimously approved. The meeting was adjourned at 2:57 p.m.

Minutes prepared by John Hayes, Division of Engineering & Transportation