

SAWMPO Policy Board Regular Meeting Minutes June 5, 2024, 10:00 a.m.

Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission
112 MacTanly Place, Staunton, Virginia

Voting Members		Non-Voting Members		Others	
	City of Staunton	✓	Shane McCabe (Alt)		Staff (CSPDC)
✓	Rodney Rhodes		Cody Huffman (Alt)	✓	Ann Cundy
✓	Brad Arrowood (Vice Chair)		VA DRPT	✓	Zach Beard
	John Blair (Alt)	✓*	Grace Stankus	✓	Devon Thompson
	Augusta County		VRT	✓	Paula Melester
	Tim Fitzgerald	✓*	Steve Wilson	✓	Rachel Kinzer
✓	Carolyn Bragg (Chair)		Phil Thompson (Alt)		Others
✓*	Julia Hensley		Kevin Jones		Kendall Howell, UVA
	Pam Carter (Alt)		FTA		
	City of Waynesboro		Chelsea Beytas		
✓	Jim Wood		VA DOA		
✓	Todd Wood		Rusty Harrington		
	Michael Hamp (Alt)		CTB		
	VDOT		Mark Merrill		
✓	Todd Stevens				
	Brad Reed (Alt)				
✓	Don Komara (Alt)				
✓	Cody Huffman				
	✓* Indicates Zoom Participants				

Call to Order

The SAWMPO Policy Board meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. by Ms. Carolyn Bragg, Chair. Pursuant to §2.2-3708.2 of the Code of Virginia, SAWMPO Policy Board members may participate in meetings of the SAWMPO or its committees through electronic communication means. Those who attended virtually are indicated by an asterisk; all others attended in-person.

Public Comment

Chairperson Bragg opened the meeting for public comment. There were no public comments.

Approval of Minutes

Chairperson Bragg presented the minutes from the May 1, 2024, Policy Board meeting. There were no Board comments.

Mr. Todd Wood moved to approve the minutes; seconded by Mr. Jim Wood. The Board approved the motion by unanimous vote.

Election of Officers (Board Action Form #24-05)

The Nominating Committee, appointed at the May 1, 2024 Policy Board meeting and consisting of Tim Fitzgerald, Amanda Kaufman, and Todd Wood, presented recommendations for the positions of Chair and Vice Chair. According to the SAWMPO Bylaws, elections are held every two years, prior to June 30, with new elected members beginning duties on July 1, 2024. The Chair and Vice Chair must be from different localities.

The Committee proposed that Mr. Brad Arrowood of Staunton assume the position of Chair, and that Mr. Jim Wood of Waynesboro assume the position of Vice Chair.

Mr. Todd Wood moved to approve the nominations; seconded by Mr. Rodney Rhodes. The Board approved the motion by unanimous vote.

FY24-27 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendment (Board Action Form #24-06)

Staff presented an amendment to the FY24-27 TIP which adds \$4,809,000 in federal funding for Federal FY 24 through the National Highway Performance Program (NHPP) for Preventive Maintenance for Bridges throughout the Staunton Construction District. These changes were documented in Appendix A, page 26, under "June 2024 Amendment." Staff requested the Board approve the release of the document for a 21-day public review period and to conditionally approve the document pending no public comments during the review period.

Mr. Brad Arrowood moved to conditionally approve the amendment and 21-day public comment release; seconded by Mr. Jim Wood. The Board approved the motion by unanimous vote.

SMART SCALE Round 6 Resolutions of Support (Board Action Form #24-07)

Five projects from the SAWMPO region are advancing to the final SMART SCALE Round 6 full application submission. Augusta County projects include the WWRC Long-term Access Improvements (submitted by SAWMPO for Augusta County) and the I-81 Exit 235 interchange bridge widening. Waynesboro projects include the Crozet Tunnel Trail shared-use path, Lew Dewitt pedestrian improvements, and Waynesboro Transit Access Project improvements. Staff requested the Board to approve resolutions of support for all five projects.

Mr. Todd Wood moved to approve the SMART SCALE resolutions of support; seconded by Mr. Jim Wood. The Board approved the motion by unanimous vote.

Functional Classification Update Resolution of Support (Board Action Form #24-08)

VDOT is conducting a statewide update to the Federal Functional Classification (FFC). Minimal changes are proposed in the SAWMPO region, mostly adding small segments of interchange ramps on I-81 and Route 262 in the Staunton area. VDOT Staunton District Staff, MPO staff, and locality staff reviewed the proposed changes with

no comments. Staff requested the Board approve the proposed FFC updates and submit a resolution of support to VDOT.

Mr. Brad Arrowood moved to approve the functional classification resolution; seconded by Mr. Jim Wood. The Board approved the motion by unanimous vote.

Staunton Amtrak Station Improvements Letter of Support (Board Memo #24-06)

The Virginia Passenger Rail Authority (VPRA) requested a letter of support for a grant application addressing ADA improvements at the Staunton Amtrak station. VPRA is applying for FY23 and FY24 Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) grant funds. The project will design and construct needed operational and structural improvements to the platforms. MPO staff reviewed the request and provided a letter of support to VPRA.

Presentation: The Value of the Afton Express: A UVA Perspective – Kendall Howell, Assistant Director of Parking and Transportation, University of Virginia

Mr. Kendall Howell, Assistant Director of Parking and Transportation at UVA, discussed the value of the Afton Express service for UVA. He emphasized UVA's sustainability goals of achieving carbon neutrality by 2030 and fossil fuel freedom by 2050, which shape their transit planning. As the largest employer in Central Virginia with over 28,000 employees, UVA faces significant parking challenges, further strained by housing costs near UVA being 40% higher than in Augusta County. The Afton Express helps alleviate these issues by enabling recruitment from areas with more affordable housing. Benefits include reduced parking demand, support for land use goals, and a model for regional transit partnerships.

UVA plans to launch a "Commute Club" and make the Afton Express free for employees, starting in Fall 2024, reimbursing the service for these rides. Currently, the service sees a daily ridership of between 85 and 100 passenger trips, with 80 percent being UVA-affiliated. While there are plans to increase trips, challenges remain in raising awareness and adoption among employees.

Mr. Howell highlighted the broader impact of the service, benefiting other employers and commuters between the Shenandoah Valley and Charlottesville, and underscored its role in addressing parking, supporting sustainability, and expanding recruitment.

Agency Updates

Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT)

Mr. Shane McCabe gave the following updates:

- SMART SCALE Round 6 pre-application evaluation continues, with VDOT staff screening the projects, and the final application due on August 1, 2024

Mr. Todd Stevens gave the following updates:

- The Commonwealth Transportation Board meeting in July will be held in Winchester.
- There is no update on Mark Merrill's replacement as CTB member, who will rotate off on June 30.

Mr. Don Komara gave the following updates:

- Several projects are now complete, including the Staunton Connector project, an extension of four lanes on 262, and a roadside wall project.



- Progress continues on the Barterbrook bridge project and the Waynesboro Connector.

DRPT

Ms. Grace Stankus gave the following updates:

- A new Virginia Breeze bus route, the Tidewater Current, will connect the Shenandoah Valley with the Tidewater area. This expansion is based on a needs assessment conducted earlier this year. The service will run daily, with one westbound and one eastbound trip, aiming to launch in late spring or early summer.
- Stakeholder engagement and logistics for operational bus stops are underway, with ticket pricing and schedules to follow.

BRITE Transit

Ms. Devon Thompson gave the following updates:

- BRITE attended the Staunton Crossing parking lot ribbon-cutting event.
- Ms. Thompson completed the Virginia Transit Leadership Institute program.
- Progress continues on BRITE's mobile data collection system and the construction of the Lewis Street hub. Temporary hub operations are going well, with minimal issues.

Afton Express

Ms. Paula Melester gave the following update:

- Reiterated the importance of the partnership with UVA for the Afton Express as outlined in Mr. Howell's presentation.

Localities

City of Staunton

- Mr. Rhodes mentioned the public opening of the Crossing Way extension, pending a final plat approval.
- The City is starting its comprehensive plan update and working on a bike-ped plan. The City has bids for a state of good repair repaving project on West Beverly, which includes new sidewalk, ADA ramps, and bike lanes.

City of Waynesboro

- Mr. Jim Wood announced the opening of Sunset Park, noting increased traffic due to the park's popularity. He also highlighted the excitement around the new traffic garden, which was mentioned in USA Today.

Augusta County

- Chair Bragg mentioned an upcoming ribbon-cutting for the Verona Sidewalk.



Other Business

No other business was presented.

Upcoming Meetings

Chairperson Bragg noted that the next TAC meeting is scheduled for June 19 and the next Board meeting is scheduled for July 3.

Meeting Adjournment

There being no further business, Chairperson Bragg requested a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Mr. Jim Wood motioned to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Mr. Arrowood. The Board approved the motion by unanimous vote.

Chairperson Bragg adjourned the meeting at 11:08 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Paula Melester".

Paula Melester
Director of Transportation