

NIRPC Executive Board Meeting  
6100 Southport Road, Portage, IN  
August 15, 2024 Minutes

**Call to Order**

Chair Tom Dermody called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance. The meeting was streamed live on YouTube.

**New Appointments to the Commission**

Dave Hollenbeck announced there were no new appointments to the Commission.

**Roll call** - Taken by Candice Eklund.

**Present**

The 8 Executive Board members present at the meeting included Kevin Breitzke (Porter County Surveyor), Tom Dermody (La Porte), Denise Ebert (Wanatah), Bill Emerson (Lake County Surveyor), Justin Kiel (La Porte County Council), Lisa Rosenkranz (LaCrosse), Tom Schmitt (Schererville), and Jim Ton (Chesterton).

The 10 other Commissioners present at the meeting included Austin Bonta (Portage), James Burge (Porter), Robert Carnahan (Cedar Lake), Daina Dumbrys (Michiana Shores), Eddie Melton (Gary), David Phelps (Beverly Shores), Sharon Szwedo (New Chicago), Mary Tanis (Dyer), George Topoll (Union Township), and Andy Vasquez (Porter County Council). Adam Parkhouse, representing INDOT, was also present.

**Absent**

The 2 Executive Board members absent from the meeting included Wendy Mis (Munster), and Jim Pressel (Governor Appointee).

Hebron, Kingsbury, and The Pines have appointed no representatives to NIRPC.

The staff members present included Ty Warner, Tom Vander Woude, Stephen Hughes, Lisa Todd, Flor Baum, and Candice Eklund.

**Public Comment** – There were no public comments.

**Approval of Minutes**

The minutes of the June 20, 2024, Executive Board meeting were approved on motion by Kevin Breitzke and seconded by Jim Ton.

**Report of the Chair** – Tom Dermody

Tom Dermody reported he attended a conference call with the State Board of Accounts (SBOA) to discuss how much local governments must spend on audits and requested additional details on their invoices. Members from the SBOA will be invited to attend the Full Commission meeting on September 19 and to hold a meeting afterward with some of the Clerk-Treasurers. Ty asked if an elected body has adopted a similar resolution or if it is in the process of doing so to please forward a copy to NIRPC.

**Report of the Executive Director** - Ty Warner

Ty Warner welcomed Erica Tate from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and said she would provide a report later in the meeting.

Warner discussed the Commission committee interest survey that will be sent out soon. This survey will also include questions regarding demographics because NIRPC needs these assessments for their Title VI and economic development district requirements. There will be a transition time when NIRPC's old committee structure will be converted to the new one, which will be comprised of four committees. The new structure is expected to be underway by October and will include the F&P committee (under the Leadership committee structure), which will have a new meeting date and time.

NIRPC's Chief Financial Officer, Talaya Jones, sent the information on the increased local appropriations to the financial departments at Lake, La Porte, and Porter Counties. The information included an invoice for the current

year as well as for the next five years so budgets could be planned accordingly. Ty concluded his report by sharing that in addition to the Triennial audit review having no findings last month, NIRPC also had no findings on its financial audit.

#### **Environment Committee** – Bill Emerson

Bill Emerson reported the Environment Committee met on August 1 and heard a presentation on the Coastal Hazard Resiliency Assessment report from Jen Birchfield, NIRPC, and Joe Exl, DNR. The report's findings represented over 60% of the communities in NIRPC's area. Also, Kathy Luther provided the Environmental Committee with an update on the Chicago Metropolitan Planning Area's comprehensive climate action plan process. The next meeting is November 7.

#### **Finance & Personnel Committee (F & P)** – Tom Dermody

Tom Dermody reported the F&P Committee met this morning to review financial reports, bank reconciliations, and claim registers for June 2024. One action item for consideration was purchasing a vehicle for North Township Dial-A-Ride for an amount not exceeding \$64,176 in federal funding. On motion by Jim Ton and seconded by Kevin Breitzke, the Executive Board approved the procurement.

#### **Technical Planning Committee (TPC)** - Kevin Breitzke

Kevin Breitzke reported the TPC met on August 6, 2024. The TPC favorably recommended the four action items below. The next TPC meeting is scheduled for September 10, 2024

1. Cooperative Agreement for Coordination of Land Use: Transportation Planning in the Chicago Gary/Lake County, IL-IN Urbanized Area. Tom Vander Woude presented this agreement, stating that when an urban area crosses state lines for a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), federal regulations require those two MPOs to have an agreement that outlines the shared responsibility for the urban area. On motion by Jim Ton and seconded by Tom Schmitt, the Executive Board adopted this agreement. The agreement will now be sent to INDOT for final signature.
2. Resolution #24-08: Transit Area Management (TAM) Group Plan for Small Providers. Stephen Hughes stated that the FTA requires all public transit operators or MPOs that serve as the direct recipient of FTA funds for subrecipient public transit operators to provide a comprehensive update to the TAM Plan every four years. On motion by Bill Emerson and seconded by Justin Kiel, the Executive Board adopted Resolution #24-08.
3. Resolution #24-09: Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendment #24-02 & #24-02.5. Tom Vander Woude reported one comment was received during the 21-day public comment period from a resident in Schererville who requested a list of projects for the town, which was emailed. No further comments were received. Amendment 24.02 includes highway and trail projects, and amendment 24.02.5 includes transit projects. This TIP amendment consists of 72 projects, with 52 initiated by INDOT and 20 initiated by the municipalities. On motion by Tom Schmitt and seconded by Jim Ton, Resolution #24-09 was approved by the Executive Board.
4. Resolution #24-10: Endorsing the Use of Group 1 Chicago IL-IN Urban Area Funding and Group 2 Valparaiso-Shorewood Forrest Urban Area Funding for Projects in Either Urban Area. Tom Vander Woude stated that after the 2020 census, the formula for how urban areas were designated changed. As a result, a portion of the Chicago urban area including the City of Valparaiso and extending west to the unincorporated Shorewood Forrest community was removed from the Chicago IL-IN urban Area (Chicago UZA) and designated as a separate urban area called the Valparaiso-Shorewood Forrest urban area (Valpo UZA). In May, the Transportation Resource Oversight Committee (TROC) voted to recommend to the NIRPC Commission that NIRPC allow the highway funding from the Chicago UZA and the Valpo UZA to be programmed interchangeably for projects in either of the UZAs so the funding streams will be combined for the NIRPC project selection process. On motion by Justin Kiel and seconded by Jim Ton, Resolution #24-10 was approved by the Executive Board.

#### **INDOT** – Adam Parkhouse

Adam Parkhouse reported that public meetings for the I-80/94 FlexRoad project are currently being held. It was also noted that the list of communities being awarded a Community Crossings matching grant should be announced in two weeks.

**Other Business**

Erica Tate discussed FHWA's focus and initiatives regarding safety on our roadways. Erica reported there were 781 traffic fatalities in 2012, and that number increased by 20% in 2021 to 932. The share of urban fatalities in Indiana has now exceeded the number of rural fatalities and now represents more than 15% of the total fatal crashes in Indiana. There are more fatalities per vehicle miles traveled than at any other time in previous years, which is why this has become a bigger focus and commitment for the FHWA. The FHWA and LTAP are currently working on a grant-making workshop that may occur at the Purdue Road School Transportation & Expo next March.

**Announcements**

Kevin Breitzke announced that the 2024 annual Indiana Association for Floodplain and Stormwater Management (INAFSM) conference will be in Michigan City from September 11 to 13.

**Adjournment**

Hearing no other business, Tom Dermody adjourned the meeting at 10:07 a.m. The next meeting on September 19 will be a Full Commission meeting.