

**Transportation Full Committee**  
**Minutes**  
**September 19<sup>th</sup>, 2007**

**Present:** David Auger, Joseph Elgosin, Glenn English, Bill Ernst, Richard Hamilton, Fred King, Greg Placy, Beverly Raymond, Jack Rose, Bob Stevenson, and Steve Young.

**Staff:** Mary Deppe, Michael King, and Bill Rose.

**Call To Order:**

Glenn English called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

**Approval of Minutes:**

Joe Elgosin made a motion to approve the minutes from the June 20<sup>th</sup>, 2007 meeting and it was seconded by Steve Young. A vote was taken, all were in favor, none opposed, and the minutes were approved as written. Beverly Raymond asked that at future meetings there be an item on the agenda for Transit. The committee agreed.

**Ten Year Plan / GACIT HEARINGS:**

Mary Deppe explained that the GACIT hearings in the North Country Council Region went well, except that there was a poor showing of attendance even though there was extensive advertisement. It was disappointing that only three Transportation Committee members attended any of the 12 meetings in the region. Michael King explained that there was some disappointment shown by the City of Berlin in regards to the scaling back of the Conway Bypass Project. Berlin explained their frustration in the Route 110 congestion and truck traffic problem.

**Gas Tax**

Fred King explained that the Highway Trust Fund is broken and needs to be fixed. He went on to say that the Highway Trust Fund is being depleted and construction costs are continuing to rise, so the problem is going to continue. He explained that in order to address the problem, the State of New Hampshire needs more revenue and an increased gas tax is one way to do that. He also expressed his opinion that since the Ten Year Plan has engineering done out for the next 35 years, then NH DOT does not need as many engineers as it has employed in the past. Fred King explained that introduced a new gas tax bill yesterday and that the committee should look for that in the near future. The bill calls for a 6 cent increase in the State's gas tax.

There was also some discussion about how the NHDOT's funding is being divided among a number of other agencies and how that is going to need to be reviewed by the State.

Joe Elgosin reminded the committee that if New Hampshire would create and enforce a seat belt law, the State would receive more federal funding. He was not sure of the amount.

Michael King asked Fred King what he would like the NCC Transportation Committee to do to help, and Fred explained that the first step was taken by polling the towns on their opinions of the gas tax.

Many committee members felt that this bill will not get far since Governor Lynch has vowed not to impose an increase on the State gas tax. Members questioned if Lynch will continue to say no to a gas tax if he runs for Governor again.

Michael King explained that the North Country is getting a fair share of the Ten Year Plan funding. He also explained that the major issue is that we need funds for Maintenance and Preservation projects rather than new construction. Greg Placy explained that the damage that is caused to roads in southern NH is comparable to what frost does to roads in northern NH.

Mary Deppe explained that NCC received 21 responses to the Gas Tax Letter that was sent to North Country towns. 18 responded that they were not in favor and 3 responded that they were. Many towns were skeptical of whether or not the North Country would receive a fair portion of the funding for their roads. Others felt that it is not the Towns' responsibility to solve this funding problem and that NHDOT should be responsible for that.

Michael King discussed how all of the RPCs were asked to prioritize projects in their regions on the Ten Year Plan and that everyone did their best to aid DOT with this issue. He also explained that not all RPC's support a gas tax, but all agree that there is a funding problem.

Greg Placy suggested that NCC invite the head of Pavement Management to the next TAC meeting to explain how re-pavement and reconstruction needs are decided. Greg went on to explain that sometimes it makes more sense to repave the parts of the road that are in better condition in order to keep them good, while other parts are beyond repair and need reconstruction.

Placy went on to explain that he will be getting funding back from FEMA and his crew will be able to work on 2 miles of road in Cambridge next year.

Bob Stevenson said that New Hampshire has the lowest State gas tax at 16 cents per gallon.

Michael King stated that if the State was to raise the gas tax then it probably would not come out of the consumers pocket and would most likely be taken out of gas companies pockets.

Dave Auger explained that the Town of Northumberland said no because they didn't think that the funding would be coming back into the North Country. He asked if the info coming into towns could be improved.

Fred King explained that Groveton just had a piece of road paved and that the gas tax funding would be spent on these kinds of projects all over the State.

It was mentioned that maybe a presentation could be created and NCC Transportation Representatives could go to their town Select Boards and explain the information about the condition of the highway fund and federal funding issues. Someone mentioned that if we tell NHDOT what we want, they could put together an information packet for us.

Mary Deppe explained that she would be mailing all of the GACIT handouts to the TAC members next week. Michael mentioned that the information on those handouts is not final and won't be until it is approved by the government.

### **STIP Amendment Process:**

Michael King explained that for MPO's, it is a federal requirement that NHDOT approve amendments for STIP projects (projects in the first three years of the TYP). However, RPC's and other groups are asked to give input and approve the amendments. Michael suggested that the NCC Transportation Committee endorse the NHDOT STIP Amendment Process. Dick Hamilton made a motion to endorse this process, Joe Elgosin seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion was approved.

### **Corridor Studies:**

Mary Deppe explained that it is getting close to the time where NCC will be submitting an application for SPR (Special Projects and Research) funding for a Corridor Study. Mary handed out some information about Corridor Studies and showed the committee a map that DOT created, highlighting areas that they see as priorities for Corridor Studies. Michael King explained that he thinks that in the future, projects that have had Corridor Studies done will be given priority in the Ten Year Plan.

Bob Stevenson recommended considering including fiber optics in future Corridor Studies. The committee decided that Route 302 and Route 3 North would be the very good candidates for future studies.

Mary Deppe introduced William Rose, the new planner at the North Country Council and explained that he would be helping out with the SPR application and Corridor Studies in the future. William explained that there will be a community planning session on October 3<sup>rd</sup> at the NCC offices from 3:30-5:30 and that one of the topics will be Corridor Studies. This is a really good opportunity to tie Transportation Planning and Land Use Planning together.

Someone suggested have Jeff Brillhart of NHDOT explain the connection between Transportation and Land Use Planning.

### **Bruce Sloat's Rail Car Letters**

Mary Deppe explained the response from NH DES to Bruce Sloat's letters and that DES does not think that the level of lead paint is high enough to take action. In response to Bruce Sloat's letter, the Transportation Committee did not want to ask Towns to take a position on this matter. The committee felt that they have already taken action and that this issue should be put to rest unless there are new developments.

### **Safe Routes to School Grant Road (SRTS)**

Mary Deppe explained that NHDOT just closed the first round of SRTS funding. RPC's are required to send their rankings to NHDOT by October 15<sup>th</sup>. Mary explained that only one application was submitted in the North Country Council region and that it was from Edward Fenn Elementary School in Gorham. Mary asked for volunteers to form a subcommittee to review this application. Joe Elgosin and Dave Auger volunteered.

### **Transit**

Beverly Raymond discussed Transit issues that are happening in the North Country. She also explained that she will be meeting with Mary Deppe before each quarterly meeting in order to continuously update the Regional Coordinated Transit Plan. Bev explained that the 3<sup>rd</sup> Technical Memorandum and the Draft Report of the Carroll County Feasibility Study can be viewed on the consultants website at:

<http://www.lscs.com/projects/carroll/index.htm> The next round of public meetings are scheduled for Oct. 10, 1:30 pm at the Moultonboro Meal Site, Oct 10, 4:00 p.m. Wolfeboro Public Library, October 11, 12:30 p.m. The Gibson Center in North Conway, and October 11, Ossipee Concerned Citizens 4:00 p.m. The Advisory Committee meeting is scheduled for October 12, 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. at the Community Action Building in Tamworth. Anyone is welcomed to attend any of these meetings.

Beverly also explained that a few weeks ago North Country Transportation sent out an RFP to hire a consultant to work with the FTA-PTP project. Two consultants responded and Beverly will be working a group of people to review the RFP's and make a decision by September 24<sup>th</sup>.

Beverly mentioned that NCT just created their first newsletter and it is available at [www.tccap.org](http://www.tccap.org). She also mentioned that CPTNC (Committee for Public Transportation in the North Country) will be meeting at the Littleton Regional Hospital on September 26<sup>th</sup> from 12-2.

### **Adjourn**

Steve Young made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Joe Elgosin seconded. All were in favor and the meeting was adjourned at 5:05 pm.

*Minutes Approved: December 19<sup>th</sup>, 2007*