

**Washington Area Highway Transportation Committee Meeting
Council Chambers of City Hall
405 Jefferson Street
Washington, Missouri 63090**

**Monday, August 28th, 2023 at 8:00 AM
Minutes**

Present: Craig Mueller, Ed Fischer, Stephen O'Connor, Ray Frankenberg, Bill Straatmann, Mayor Hagedorn, Sandy Lucy, Bill Miller, Tim Brinker, Mike Coulter, Darren Lamb

Absent: Bob Engemann, Joe Holtmeier, L.B. Eckelkamp, Jeff Niemeyer, Charles Stankovic

Chairman Bill Straatmann opened the meeting with a roll call and the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of the minutes from July 31, 2023, Motion made, seconded and passed without dissent.

- 1. Amtrak- Craig Mueller-**Well, you got some handouts hot off the presses. That was very kind of you, Gina. We did have a MORPAC, Missouri Rail Passenger Advisory Committee meeting shortly after our last meeting that I said I was going to go to and I just have some highlights to talk about from that meeting. The information that is in the packets that you just got handed out was just stuff from that meeting about ridership rates, things like that. They talked about a number of things at the meeting. The first orders, I guess were about quarter ID programs for the Federal Rail Authority. I talked about this before where the MORPAC group from Missouri has asked, they're doing a study to try to decide whether or not where they want to spend some federal money. Within existing corridors our Missouri group asked for a third train perhaps to go up and down a River Runner route and adding some access points to that route to Saint Joseph, Missouri, North to Kansas City to Springfield, Missouri. So, those are on their Corridor ID Program and they have submitted all those. And they're expecting funding decisions on those. As far as they know from the Missouri side that was the most, all of the requests that they had. And those funding decisions are supposed to be on November 1st. So, really don't know what that's going to look like. I don't think they have any inclination whether they say sure we'll give you a bunch of money for that or not. They're kind of waiting until November to find that out. At that meeting the KCATA also talked about things that they had requested from that Federal rail authority. KCATA is similar to our by state program on this side of the state where it's Missouri and Illinois and the Kansas and Missouri side on the west side. And they were talking about identifying some things they would like, which was all over the Kansas City, Kansas and Missouri area for rail, bus, metro, street car. And they're kind of putting that out there as they're hosting a World Cup coming up soon, they have need for passenger rail and other studies. So, they have their kind of hands in that in a similar pot for those federal funding dollars all to be kind of talked about and kind of handed down November 1st. So, we're looking forward to hearing those. Amtrak discussed similarly on that Federal Rail Authority. They are asking them to do a long-distance study and that's talking about regional rail around the country. There used to be more cities interconnected on that long distance rail program. Some of them have gotten like we experienced just less and less trains running those routes. So, they're submitting, Amtrak is, more long-distance studies for regional restored passenger rail, which would link cities like maybe Kansas City to Des Moines or Chicago to wherever. So, they're working on those studies as well. They talked about \$50 million in railroad safety that Mike Parson was just out a couple of weeks ago announcing that he went ahead and signed that the state appropriated \$50 million for rail safety following our derailment that we had here in Missouri for rail crossings around the state, he went ahead and signed that. So, they're releasing that money to MoDOT to do work on some of those rail crossings around the state. I don't know if it will fix all of them, but their idea is to identify the most dangerous ones and fund those. They talked about ridership. They are pretty excited because they feel like that ridership level has

reached pre pandemic levels or maybe just a couple of percentage points shy of that. But both on the revenue side and on the passenger side, they're right around that pre pandemic level, which is good news for them and they continue to see growth coming back. Let's see this hand out that just printed for you, it goes quarter by quarter. But if you look at the last one, our Washington station in the fourth quarter, which would have been April, May and June, we were almost 100% more. So, double our passenger ons and offs here at our Washington station. So 1,700 people got on, 1,700 people got off, all of last year, 1,700 people combined on and off. So, we are seeing more people getting on and off the train right here in Washington. So that's good news and we are only 4% of that total ridership pie in that quarter too. So, there are a lot of people on the trains that may or may not be getting on and off in Washington. So, also room for growth there. And then I guess final thing there is they're talking about appropriations and funding for the following year. We got full funding for the two trains that we have currently October is that appropriations for the next fiscal year. So they're working diligently on trying to make sure that they get the funds, they need to continue that service. That's what they talked about at our MORPAC meeting.

Bill Straatmann-That's great. How many people attend those meetings?

Craig Mueller-I would say about 30 there's representatives from all the stops that talk about their local stops, they talk about marketing for Amtrak. There are Amtrak representatives, there are Union Pacific representatives, there are MoDOT representatives, there are Missouri State Transportation representatives and tourism representatives from around those areas of the state as well.

Bill Straatmann-Sounds like a big committee.

Craig Mueller-All focused on trying to do everything they can to improve rail service.

Bill Miller-Hermann is ahead of Washington I see.

Craig Mueller-They are. You'll find especially around October, they get their peak season of people getting on and off the train there in Herman and yeah, it's a big deal to them to their tourism group.

Ray Frankenberg-Is there anything from us as a community you would like to have to bring back to them? I mean, do you have an opportunity to bring up a topic or speak or anything?

Craig Mueller-We do, Emily Hopkins, who's our Tourism Director usually attends those meetings and brings up those things. In fact, I think, talked recently they went on a station takeover in Illinois to promote our Chicago service. So a number of those Tourism Directors were at Springfield, Illinois and a couple of other stops along the way, kind of promoting those Missouri stops and now they have more direct access to them. So, yes, that, opportunity is there.

2. **Causeway-Missouri River Bridge Flood Issue-Bill Straatmann**-Anything new on that from MoDOT's point of view on the causeway or you guys cross the river? There's some funding identified in the STIP program, unfunded, to start a process just to do some hydraulics, I think. I don't know that we're going to see much on that probably until some of that comes out.

Ray Frankenberg-Do they put ratings on where this would rank in the state as far as projects go or anything like that?

Bill Straatmann-It's an unfunded so it's in the funnel, so to speak, but it's unfunded. So, the hydraulics is in the 1st tier of three. So, yeah it's beyond the five year plan. So whether it's 6,7 or 8, whatever, that's the question.

Sal Maniaci-I just was pulling up an email for the flood issue. In April, we submitted a letter to the Army Corps of Engineers for funding for a hydraulic study over there to determine if the causeway or levy whatever would work best or just what the effects of either would be. Just to get that study funded on July 20th, they responded and said in the next few months all of the proposals will be ranked nationally and then we'll find out if we get funded. So, I have not heard yet, but in July, they said they're still reviewing so and at least get the study, the hydraulic part done.

3. **Highway 47 Corridor Committee- Jim Grutsch**-We have not had a meeting of the Corridor Committee.

Bill Straatmann-On the Highway 47 Corridor Committee. There's not going to be much happening, but I can see where there's survey crews out there now, occasionally doing minor surveying and I guess that's so that they can start the process of planning that study together. Yeah, the study has to be done and that's what indicates the study is being done is that there are survey crews and you'll see marks along the side of the roads and whatever identifying locations along the way. I think it's going to be important as the study becomes closer to where they're going to offer it to the public that people become aware. That's where we will actually get our input is actually when that study is done and then be able to comment on the study itself because right now we know the money has been allocated to do the study. But the fruition of the thing is we have to stay on top of it and be a part of the study, particularly when it is presented. So anyway, I'm just reminding people that the fact that it's, we're going to keep it on the agenda because as these studies become due and done, it's going to be important for the public to be involved.

Ray Frankenberg-And I think that public involvement starts near the end of the study rather than after the study.

Stephen O'Connor-It's during.

Ray Frankenberg-And the study we're talking about is the capacity and safety improvements from Washington to Saint Clair.

Stephen O'Connor-That's it.

4. **Franklin County Transportation Committee-Jim Grutsch**-We met 2.5 weeks ago. We did have a quorum. The topic that was front and center was the approval of the recommendation of the administrator, myself, for the grants. And it was supported unanimously and forwarded to the commission for their approval. So that should happen in the next week or 10 days. Those funds immediately become available for the entities that had requested the grant once they are finished with their projects. It's all there and ready to go. It ended up being a total of \$459,000 that we awarded. Thank you.
5. **MoDOT 50/50 Grants- Sal Maniaci**-The only open one we have right now is actually the 100% grant for Oldenburg Industrial Park. We met with them twice last week with our personal contact there and he actually said, don't call us a grant any longer. This is just a funded project through MoDOT that we submitted. So, we have gotten the plans about 80% done with Cochran and they said once they're 90% done we can submit to them for review and then we'll be ready to go out to bid. So, talked to Cochran last week and they said they're still hoping construction can start this winter, which is in line with what we're proposing to start with Oldenburg improvements as well. That was the plan to keep those on the same schedule.

Bill Straatmann-How much is that grant?
Sal Maniaci-\$1.6 million? But that includes engineering cost.
6. **MoDOT Northeast District-Warren County-Joe Gildehaus**-Almost every night this week MoDOT is having a meeting. We have one tomorrow night in Warren County, Thursday night in Jonesburg, gives us an update on what they're doing for interstate 70 another three lanes. October 12th and 13th, Missouri Highway Transportation Committee will be in our county for a couple of days. But right now I-70 is probably our main focus right now.

Bill Straatmann-Theresa sent me about the projects and the I-70 program and I wrote a letter to the secretary being in favor of that I-70 improvement.
Joe Gildehaus-Tomorrow night from 4 to 6 at our administration building, we're more than happy to come up and listen or talk.
Stephen O'Connor-Tonight they're in Wentzville.
Joe Gildehaus-Tomorrow night at our place and then I think Thursday night in Jonesburg, they're just going up and down.
Stephen O'Connor-It's on our website modot.org.

Sandy Lucy-When do they anticipate starting?

Joe Gildehaus-ASAP.

Sandy Lucy-I mean this is what it is.

Joe Gildehaus-I understand certain projects, certain areas going to go out for bid, first part of the year and they want to be done by 2030.

Stephen O'Connor-Those meetings are open house.

Joe Gildehaus-Actually, we're going to have a meeting Wednesday night. Well, actually, really, to be honest with, from, I understand with MoDOT their main concern is the state itself three lanes, three lanes. So, the ramps may be on certain people's may be on us or certain other funding if that makes sense. So, some of the questions may be asked tomorrow night to where there's some overpasses, the six lanes are not going to make it under. So, they're going to have to be some improvement there. So, we're actually having a special meeting within our Wednesday night to see what kind of information they give us tomorrow night, so we can discuss it on Wednesday night if that makes sense.

Sandy Lucy-So, would the overpass be on you as well?

Joe Gildehaus-We'll talk about that. I, I don't know all that. I mean, there's several in our County. We have one in Saint Charles County, which is the major one up in Foristell. That's a real critical and then we've been working on one for three years on Stratts Church through Wright city. So, we got some, a little bit of funding to get that done. So, we're trying to work on this with some business leaders throughout the county. So we want to do this, we don't want to do it later. We like to do it all at one time.

Sandy Lucy-You get three lanes, you want to be able to use them.

Joe Gildehaus-Exactly. So, but then you're right. I mean it's 2.8 billion they have for the 200 miles, that's the six lanes. So, there's a lot of overpasses, off/on ramps that needs some addressing. So hopefully, so more you all can come and talk about it too for all of us.

Bill Straatmann-Well, I actually sent two letters, one from Freightways and one from my own personal business saying that it's necessary and that I am in favor of improvements to I-70. That crosses two different counties, obviously. You guys are Warren County and you're not in the East West Gateway.

7. **Washington Special Road District-Ed Fischer**-Just normal stuff. Basically. We don't have all the agreement on the finishing Pottery Road yet. We're working on it.
8. **Old Hwy 100 Bridge**- No new report.
9. **Airport-Sal Maniaci**-So, we have our final walk through for the hangars with the contractor and CMT our consultant on September 6th. So, we'll be able to make sure that everything final checklist, get them done. The new leases and new prices for the actually the increase in existing and the new prices for the new hangars are go to Council on Tuesday the September 5th for approval and then we're hoping to have all those leases start in effect October 1st with the new budget. And so I'm not sure if John ever updated the proposal was what we brought to council was \$25 increase per hangar per month on the existing and then set the prices on the new hangars around that same rate with not necessarily any additional amenities. There are a couple that are a little two of them that are a little bit bigger. So those will be \$310 a month, which is our most expensive. And then we're meeting with Anne Wagner's office. Actually, I believe next week, we're trying to nail down that schedule to figure out the guidelines of the appropriation dollars we got. Obviously very gracious of the \$3 million that we received in the Omnibus Bill, but that's not going to cover nearly the cost of widening and extending the runway. And so we're go to discuss with them if that could possibly go towards the consulting engineering, environmental and everything, so that if additional funding comes up, it's all available or we could either widen it or lengthen. We're going to talk to them about all our options next week. So, we'll have an update on that.
Bill Straatmann-How's the activity over there? Is it increasing? Can you tell?
Sal Maniaci-I'm hoping that our next month, I'll be able to actually show, our plan is to have month by month. I've just recently kind of taken over the airport but talking to Kevin and our new hire Matt that

it's activity is still steady. What actually what we're going to start doing is, we have a new spreadsheet every day. We'll track arrivals and departures and fuel sales just in a spreadsheet every day we'll put that in. And so that way I can just, every month show that. I know we used, I know John had that in other things, but that's just, I think one spreadsheet will be the easiest way to show that from here on out. So we've told them September 1st start that new tracking system. So, thank you. Anything else? I'll just stay up here for the next two.

Bill Miller-The proposal by Hoffman for a helicopter ride from the airport is that a go?

Sal Maniaci-I don't believe that's moving forward, but we've met with them about a year ago and we haven't heard anything since.

10. Team Track-Sal Maniaci-Honestly, right now, we don't have any of our businesses utilizing it on a scheduled basis. So, WEG was using it on a weekly basis. I believe with some of the price changes with Union Pacific and the other options they've had. They've decided to go with trucking or with another possible rail spur. As long as they're successful. That was an agreement with the grant that we had back in 2012. We're not losing any funding with them switching. So, that was fine with us, but we continue to market it as an available asset for the region.

11. East-West Parkway Sal Maniaci-There was a budget amendment done at the last council meeting to finalize the plans for that first leg of it off Bieker Road. I think the original project included the land sale but didn't have the full construction in there. So, we just made a tweak to that budget, but it is included in our Transportation Sales Tax. So, council approved that and I believe that gives Wunderlich and the developer, the go ahead they can start whenever they're ready now.

Bill Straatmann-So, I drove by there and saw the new water tank where it's going.

Sal Maniaci-This first of the East West Parkway will not quite go to that South Point Road where the water tank is, but that is the proposed connection point. It's right around where that new water tank is going will be the connection East West Parkway. So, we'll stub it for now and then we'll be able to connect it right there.

Bill Straatmann-So, it looks like a really great location for that tower just if you sit there in that spot and you just look around.

12. East West Gateway 2050 Plans- No new report.

13. Public Transportation- Teresa Lee-The MoRides Program that is administered by Boonselick Regional Planning continues to connect people needing transportation with transportation providers. We continue to look for additional public transportation options and additional opportunities for senior citizens and those with disabilities. Those are our major targets of opportunities to promote the program to them and let them know that it is available and that we are there to help.

Bill Straatmann-So how many people are you serving now? How many people are involved?

Teresa Lee-So, it's a statewide program. Over last year we had over 45,000 hits on our website. We've got a website we had almost 2,000 calls into our call center. Thank you. There's definitely a need. If anyone becomes aware of public transportation options please let us know so that we can include them in our resources for the people who call. Thank you.

14. Other Business-None.

15. Adjournment-Motion made and seconded to adjourn, passed without dissent at 8:30 a.m.