

**RPC/POLICY COMMITTEE IN-PERSON AND VIRTUAL MEETING MINUTES**  
**WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 28, 2024, AT 1:30 PM; *DRAFT***

| ENTITY                     | MEMBER  | ATTENDING   | PROXY              |
|----------------------------|---|-------------|--------------------|
| AVOCA                      | MAYOR ROBERT WHITEHORN  |             |                    |
| BELLA VISTA                | MAYOR JOHN FLYNN<br>TAYLOR ROBERTSON  | X<br>X      |                    |
| BENTON COUNTY              | <b>JUDGE BARRY MOEHRING (CHAIR)</b><br>JOSH BEAM<br>JAY FRASIER/DEAN KLINGMON | X<br>X      |                    |
| BENTONVILLE                | MAYOR STEPHANIE ORMAN<br>SHELLI KERR  | X<br>X      |                    |
| CAVE SPRINGS               | MAYOR RANDALL NOBLETT   | X           | David Keck         |
| CENTERTON                  | <b>MAYOR BILL EDWARDS (SEC'Y)</b><br>LORENE BURNS                             |             |                    |
| DECATUR                    | MAYOR BOB THARP   |             |                    |
| ELKINS                     | MAYOR TROY REED   |             |                    |
| ELM SPRINGS                | MAYOR HAROLD DOUTHIT  |             |                    |
| FARMINGTON                 | <b>MAYOR ERNIE PENN (VICE CHAIR)</b>  | X           | Melissa McCarville |
| FAYETTEVILLE               | MAYOR LIONELD JORDAN<br>CHRIS BROWN<br>JONATHAN CURTH                         | X<br>X      |                    |
| GARFIELD                   | MAYOR GARY L BLACKBURN  | X           |                    |
| GATEWAY                    | MAYOR CHERYL TILLMAN  |             |                    |
| GENTRY                     | MAYOR KEVIN JOHNSTON  |             |                    |
| GOSHEN                     | MAYOR RUSSELL STROUD  |             |                    |
| GRAVETTE                   | MAYOR KURT MADDOX   | X           | Ami Murray         |
| GREENLAND                  | MAYOR JIM RENFROW   |             |                    |
| HIGHFILL                   | CASSIE ELLIOT   | X           | Tim Conklin        |
| HINDSVILLE                 | MAYOR STEPHANIE CASEY   |             |                    |
| HUNTSVILLE                 | MAYOR TRAVIS DOTSON   | X           | Brandi Holt        |
| JOHNSON                    | <b>MAYOR CHRIS KEENEY (TREASURER)</b>   | X           |                    |
| LINCOLN                    | MAYOR DOUG HUTCHENS   |             |                    |
| LITTLE FLOCK               | MAYOR JEFF VAN SICKLER  | X           | Nicole Gibbs       |
| LOWELL                     | MAYOR CHRIS MOORE   | X           |                    |
| PEA RIDGE                  | MAYOR NATHAN SEE  |             | Jessica Grady      |
| PRAIRIE GROVE              | MAYOR DAVID FAULK   |             |                    |
| ROGERS                     | LANCE JOBE<br>JOHN McCURDY<br>QUNITON HARRIS                                  | X<br>X      |                    |
| SILOAM SPRINGS             | MAYOR JUDY NATION<br>ALLAN GILBERT  | X           | Ben Rhoads         |
| SPRINGDALE                 | MAYOR DOUG SPROUSE<br>PATSY CHRISTIE<br>JIM ULMER                             | X<br>X<br>X |                    |
| SPRINGTOWN                 | MAYOR TERRI GLENN   |             |                    |
| SULPHUR SPRINGS            | MAYOR SHANE WEBER   |             |                    |
| TONTITOWN                  | MAYOR ANGELA RUSSELL  | X           | Mark Latham        |
| WASHINGTON CO.             | JUDGE PATRICK DEAKINS<br>BRIAN LESTER<br>SAM ATA                              | X           | Bridgett Russell   |
| WEST FORK                  | MAYOR HEITH CAUDLE  |             |                    |
| WINSLOW                    | ANN MALKIE  |             |                    |
| ARDOT PLANNING + DISTRICTS | BRAD McCALEB<br>JASON HUGHEY (DISTRICT 4)                                     | X           | Sunny Farmahan     |
| BEAVER H2O DISTRICT        | LANE CRIDER   | X           |                    |
| McDONALD COUNTY            | COMMISSIONER BRIAN HALL   |             |                    |
| MoDOT                      | MARVIN MORRIS<br>(Ezekiel Hall)   |             |                    |
| NAT. AIRPORT AUTH.         | AARON BURKES  | X           |                    |
| PINEVILLE, MO              | MAYOR GREG SWEETEN  |             |                    |
| RAZORBACK TRANSIT          | GARY K. SMITH<br>(ADAM WADDELL)   | X           |                    |
| U OF A                     | SCOTT TURLEY<br>(JAY HUNEYCUTT)   | X           |                    |
| OZARK REG. TRANSIT         | JOEL GARDNER (NON-VOTING)   |             |                    |
| ARDOT TRANSIT              | GREG NATION (NON-VOTING)  |             |                    |
| HWY COMMISSION             | PHILLIP TALDO (NON-VOTING)  |             |                    |

**RPC/POLICY COMMITTEE IN-PERSON AND VIRTUAL MEETING MINUTES  
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 28, 2024, AT 1:30 PM; *DRAFT***

**NWARPC STAFF:** Tim Conklin; Nicole Gibbs; Tim Reavis; Cristina Scarlat, and Luke Aitken

**OTHERS:** Phillip Patterson (ARML); Doug Thompson (NWADG-Press); Doug Tapp (Bella Vista) Mark Latham (Tontitown); Nathan Becknell (TEC); Cassie Storey (Beaver H2O).

***NOTE: THIS MEETING WAS HELD IN-PERSON AND VIRTUALLY; VIRTUAL PARTICIPATION CONTINUES TO BE OFFERED AS NWARPC REMAINS COMMITTED TO PROVIDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.***

**(1) CALL TO ORDER**

The hybrid, in-person and virtual NWARPC/Policy Committee meeting was called to order by Chair Judge Barry Moehring at 1:31 p.m.

**(2) ROLL CALL OF MEMBERS**

In-person attendees introduced themselves and Tim Conklin named the virtual attendees. Nicole Gibbs recorded member names and tallied votes. A quorum was reached.

**(3) APPROVAL OF THE JULY 24, 2024, RPC/POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**

Chair Judge Barry Moehring introduced the item and requested a motion for the approval of the April 24 and May 22, 2024, RPC Meeting Minutes.

**MOTION: Mayor Chris Keeny made a motion to approve the July 24, 2024 RPC/Policy Committee meeting minutes as presented. Mayor Doug Sprouse provided the second. The motion passed unanimously.**

**(4) DIRECTOR'S REPORT/CLEARINGHOUSE REPORT**

Chair Judge Barry Moehring introduced the item and Tim Conklin stated that the Commission had successfully completed a cloud server migration in recent weeks, which will provide greater file security and server reliability for staff. Conklin also mentioned a recent transition to a new internet phone system and noted that many staff phone extensions have now changed and are shown in new staff email signatures. He thanked members for providing feedback to consultant MHP-SI in support of our strategic communications efforts. He said that progress is also being made on funding agreement development for the EPA CPRG Tri-Region Implementation grants, and that staff is meeting with their designated EPA contacts next week for more information. He then outlined the federal funding requests shown in the July Clearinghouse Report, most notably the local law enforcement block grant program which some member cities had applied for, as shown below.

**(5) NARTS FFY 2025-2028 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP) ADOPTION**

Chair Judge Barry Moehring introduced the item and Tim Conklin stated today's vote will be to approve the regional Transportation Improvement Program for 2025-2028. He said this list of transportation infrastructure projects across NWA includes a financial plan to fiscally constrain key projects, as well descriptions such as type and size of improvements, and a classification map to assist the public in understanding the regional significance of each proposed project. He said the funding figures shown in the TIP include over \$885 million in funding slated to be distributed to the listed projects over the next four years.

Conklin said the most notable projects within this TIP include Highway 612 Springdale Bypass, I-49 J Street Interchange, and Highway 112 improvement projects. He said in response to a previous comment, that ARDOT has shown the 612 Bypass as being funded in 2025 in the past but the TIP now shows the project as funded in 2028. He said he was told by ARDOT staff the project can still be

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funded whenever it is ready to be bid. He stated that the I-42 east to west corridor from Tulsa to I-49 will connect into the 612 Bypass, bringing a second interstate corridor to the NWA region. Conklin also reminded attendees of the Highway 112 Regional Vision, championed and adopted by the Commission, which outlines a higher caliber design for the highway desired by corridor communities. He said the design shown in the regional vision includes roundabouts, access management, sidewalks and a shared use path, all features that improve traffic flow while maintaining a high level of safety for all road users. Conklin stated that the Hwy 59 Passing Lanes project is moving forward earlier than expected, before the end of 2024, and as such was removed from this TIP.

Conklin mentioned that Lowell Mayor, Chris Moore, requested that Highway 264 improvements from Bellview to Goad Springs Rd, be added to the 2025-2028 TIP. He stated that the STBGP-A Selection Committee chose to award \$506k to the Hwy 264 project contingent ARDOT agreeing to partner with the city to carry out and fund future phases of the project and to program the project in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). He said the project in question has not yet been included in the STIP. Fayetteville provided a comment letter on this TIP to ARDOT requesting funding for Intersection improvements at Hwy 45 and Hwy 265. Centerton provided comments requesting funding for Hwy 102B improvements between Hwy 102, as well funding for Hwy 279 improvements from Hwy 102 to Holloway Road. NWARPC also submitted a comment letter requesting an increase in project development on regionally significant projects for NWA, many of which will take 5+ years to complete once construction begins. Lastly, Conklin requested a motion by the committee to approve the FFY 2025-2028 TIP. Sunny Farmahan of ARDOT confirmed that the state will send their STIP, with this TIP and its projects included, to the FHWA in early October and expects full approval by federal agencies by Mid-December.

**A. RESOLUTION #2024-14 – Adopting the Northwest Arkansas Regional Transportation Study (NARTS) FFY 2025-2028 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)**

Chair, Judge Moehring asked whether there were any questions and hearing none, requested a motion to approve Resolution #2024-14 Adopting the Northwest Arkansas Regional Transportation Study (NARTS) FFY 2025-2028 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

**MOTION: Mayor Chris Moore made a motion to approve Resolution #2024-14 Adopting the Northwest Arkansas Regional Transportation Study (NARTS) FFY 2025-2028 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Mark Latham Provided the second. The motion passed unanimously.**

**(6) BEAVER WATER DISTRICT 2023 WATER MASTER PLAN AND PROJECT UPDATES – Lane Crider, Executive Director, Beaver Water District**

Chair Judge Barry Moehring introduced the item and Tim Conklin provided a summary of the work carried out by Beaver Water District staff. He stated that Lane was asked to present to this group after staff heard many comments from members and planning partners around the needs for increasing water treatment and pumping capacity for our growing region. Lane Crider, Executive Director of the Beaver Water District, outlined the growth in drinking water demand the region has experienced recently and showed forecasted growth of demand occurring into the future by up to 10% year over year. Growth in BWD's maximum day sales is shown below:

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Crider stated that the water district recently completed its first master plan update since 2015 and discovered that it's Western Corridor Pipeline would be operating near it's new increased capacity within years of its completion. An 80 million Gallons per Day Plant Expansion in Lowell will increase water transmission capacity by 57% for \$354 Million of investment and is estimated to be completed early 2029.

Crider emphasized the need for it's biggest municipal customers such as Bentonville and Springdale, to implement messaging around water conservation and to begin tracking water main leaks more closely to ensure water is not wasted as demand increases. Crider said for the water district to keep up with the region's rapid growth, over \$700 million in capital investment in water treatment, storage, and pumping infrastructure will need to be made over the next decade. Crider stated that our regions storage rights, a given allocation of Beaver Lake Reservoir, will need to be increased within 10-15 years to ensure the drinking water needs of the region can continue to be met once more treatment and pumping infrastructure is online in NWA. Lastly Crider outlined plans to increase rates over the next five years. He stated their consultant Carollo used the 2023 Black and Veatch Water Master Plan to develop a rate adjustment study, featuring 5 different financial model scenarios. Less than 10% Rate increase per year was the ideal target, and the preferred scenario chosen by the BWD board would see rates increase just 8.91% (This scenario includes a 20% contingency on Capital Improvement Project costs and assumed a 4% annual water demand growth rate)

Chair Judge Barry Moehring asked if there were any questions or comments on the item and hearing none Thanked Lane Crider for his presentation and moved onto the next item of new business. Tim Conklin also thanked Crider for his work and for providing the presentation.

**(7) PROJECT AND OTHER UPDATES**

**A. NWARPC Funding Programs (STBGP-A/TAP/CRP) – Project Development & Obligation Plan**

Judge Barry Moehring presented the item and Tim Conklin shared the current FFY 2024 obligation plan scenario with attendees, noting the importance of jurisdictions progressing their federal aid projects and keeping accurate records of all expenditures. Conklin said ARDOT staff are working through development of all new project agreements for recently awarded projects. He stated that staff had submitted their FFY 2024 Obligation Plan Scenario to ARDOT yesterday afternoon. Tim

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Conklin said that some projects need to provide additional documentation of progress to ARDOT soon, to avoid any complications with funds reimbursement, and that ARDOT or NWARPC staff may reach out to cities soon for clarification on project timelines, specifically if a project is eligible for earlier funding obligation than previously anticipated.

Nicole Gibbs said the chosen obligation scenario will obligate \$10.86 million to projects throughout the region, with another \$7 million in funds potentially able to be obligated to additional projects if they are ready to accept funds by the end of the year.

**B. NWARPC 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP)**

Tim Reavis provided the committee with an overview of recent progress made on the update to the MTP, carried out every five years. Reavis said that NWARPC is now under contract with consultant WSP which will assist staff in developing two key components of the MTP: an update to the Travel Demand Model (TDM) and a new Transit Alternatives Study (TAS) highlighting potential impacts of transit development in NWA. Reavis outlined the purpose and functions of the Travel Demand Model and mentioned that this update will include three different land use scenarios, showing the function of our regional transportation network in each scenario of future growth. He stated that the project is now underway with the consultant working to gather regional data and meet with project stakeholders. He said these model updates will be done using 2050 population projections from the Arkansas Economic Development Institute, and the models will show how population growth can be allocated across the cities of our region. Reavis stated that the TDM & TAS updates will be incorporated into the 2050 MTP update which is targeted for adoption by the policy committee once completed in March 2026.

Reavis also mentioned that the City of Rogers adopted a new Future Land Use Plan recently and said NWARPC will be working with communities to incorporate their most current long-range plans into the TDM update to get a more accurate picture of future regional development patterns. Reavis stated that the RPC members will also have a 1-year subscription to access the Replica online data platform. He said this is a tool which WSP and the RPC staff will use to develop the MTP, and he hopes that our members will find it useful to supplement their own planning efforts in 2025.

**C. Other Ongoing Project Updates**

Nicole Gibbs summarized the Phase 2 SS4A project deliverables, which will include the development of tailored Community Safety Action Plans for Bentonville, Centerton, Rogers, Springdale, and Fayetteville, 2 safety demo projects, 2 systemic safety webinars, and the main resource, a Regional Complete Streets Design Guide. She said a safety demonstration project will take place in Bentonville in early October with their Fire Department to supplement the third and final Complete Streets Working Group meeting Oct 2<sup>nd</sup> from 11am-2pm here at the commission office. She stated also a systemic safety virtual webinar would be held Thursday September 5<sup>th</sup> from 12-1pm, for which invites will be sent out soon. Phase two of the SS4A project is anticipated to be completed by December 2025.

Moving on to the NWA Energy and Environment Innovation (EEI) Comprehensive Action Plan (CAP), Gibbs said this next phase of CPRG work will be creating a more comprehensive deliverable for the CPRG Planning Grant, using the funding suballocated to us by Arkansas Department of Energy and Environment (ADEE). She said that staff will be hosting multiple open houses for public outreach as a part of this phase, one in Huntsville on September 17<sup>th</sup> and one in Springdale on September 19<sup>th</sup>. Staff plans to bring the Comprehensive Action Plan (CAP) to the RPC for adoption in the Spring of

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2025 which will build upon the priority measures outlined in the Priority Action Plan (PAP) adopted by the Board in May.

Gibbs also provided an update on the NWA Strategic Communications Plan, funded by a grant from the Walton Family Foundation, which seeks to advance the regional conversation around mobility to respond to the rapid growth of the region. She said consultant MHP-SI has conducted focus groups, which provide the first level of insights from this project, showing overall themes of the public's impressions around transportation planning taking place in the NWA region. She stated a scientific public opinion survey is now underway and that the MHP-SI team has begun interviewing stakeholders to develop a language and messaging guide for use by staff around conversations of regional mobility and mobility choice in NWA. Gibbs stated a stakeholder questionnaire has also been developed by the consultant team and she shared the link with attendees to provide further information on their perceptions of the NWARPC and Transportation Planning efforts in the region.

Gibbs shared recent progress made by staff on the NWARPC Public Participation Plan (PPP) Update. She said that this a federally required document to be updated every 5 years along with the MTP update. She stated the plan will incorporate best practices identified in our strategic communications work which could assist staff in reaching a larger public audience to solicit feedback on future planning projects. Gibbs said staff held their first meeting with an update subcommittee last week and will be working on a first draft to bring to the subcommittee for feedback in the coming months.

**D. Other Grant Opportunity Updates**

Tim Conklin provided an overview of some newer grant programs offered by the US Department of Transportation (USDOT) from the Key Notices of Funding Opportunity Webpage at the following link: (<https://www.transportation.gov/bipartisan-infrastructure-law/key-notices-funding-opportunity>). He mentioned that staff is working on letters of support today to send out to any agencies in our area applying for tomorrow's SS4A grant deadline. Conklin said that opportunities for funding electric vehicle charging stations are available through the FHWA's Charging and Fueling Infrastructure Programs and also highlighted the recently closed Strengthening Mobility and Revolutionizing Transportation (SMART) Grants Program, which aims to support demonstration projects that enhance transportation safety and efficiency through smart technology and information systems. He stated that applications are now open for the EPA Community Change Grants Program and the US H.U.D Pathways to Removing Obstacles to Housing (PRO Housing) Program. Conklin stated that Ozark Regional Transit has applied for \$1.5 Million of federal funding from the SMART program for the NWA Dynamic Signal Priority Project, which will allow ORT and NWA communities to evaluate implementation of Transit Signal Priority. Conklin also provided an update on the recently opened Reconnecting Communities Pilot (RCP) Program and encouraged communities to apply by September 30, 2024. Lastly, he informed the group that Ozark Regional Transit received a \$14.9 million grant from the FHWA Charging and Fueling Infrastructure Program which will fund the installation of up to 17 new Electric Vehicle charging sites within Springdale, Rogers, Fayetteville, and Bentonville.

**(8) COMMITTEE AND GROUP UPDATES**

**A. Active Transportation Committee (ACT)**

Due to time constraints the previous month's meetings were not recapped under committee and group updates. Luke Aitken encouraged anyone interested to come join the next ACT meeting

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virtually on September 19, 2024, at 1:30 PM.

**B. NWA Open Space Coalition**

Luke Aitken encouraged anyone interested in Open Space Coalition to come out to their next meeting at Lake Bella Vista in Bentonville for their next meeting on September 11, 2024, at 10:30 AM.

**C. MS4 Stormwater Compliance Group**

Luke Aitken encouraged anyone interested in regional stormwater to attend the compliance group's next meeting virtually, on October 16, 2024, at 10:30 AM.

**D. NWA GIS User Group**

Luke Aitken encouraged anyone interested in the group to attend their next meeting virtually, on October 8, 2024, at 10:30 AM.

**(9) PUBLIC COMMENT**

Chair Judge Moehring asked whether there were any public comments for consideration and there were none heard.

**(10) OTHER BUSINESS**

Chair Judge Moehring provided an overview of the upcoming meeting dates below.

**A. Future Meeting Dates:**

- **TAC Meeting** – Thursday, September 19, 2024 @ 10:30 AM
- **RPC/Policy Committee Meeting** – Wednesday, September 25, 2024 @ 1:30 PM

**B. APA Quad State Conference** – October 7-9, 2024, Fayetteville, AR

**C. ULI Northwest Arkansas Place Summit 2024** – November 20-21, 2024, Bentonville, AR

Chair Judge Barry Moehring asked whether there was any other business, and hearing none, requested a motion to adjourn the meeting.

**(11) ADJOURN**

With no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:47 PM.

**PASSED AND APPROVED ON THIS 4TH DAY OF DECEMBER 2024.**

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Judge Barry Moehring, Chair, NWARPC

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_