

RPC/POLICY COMMITTEE IN-PERSON AND VIRTUAL MEETING MINUTES
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 25, 2026, AT 1:30 PM; APPROVED APRIL 22, 2026

ENTITY	MEMBER	ATTENDING	PROXY
AVOCA	MAYOR ROBERT WHITEHORN		
BELLA VISTA	MAYOR JOHN FLYNN TAYLOR ROBERTSON	X	Megan Workman
BENTON COUNTY	JUDGE BARRY MOEHRING (TREASURER) JOSH BEAM JAY FRASIER	X X	
BENTONVILLE	MAYOR STEPHANIE ORMAN SHELLI KERR	X X	Tyler Overstreet
CAVE SPRINGS	MAYOR RANDALL NOBLETT		
CENTERTON	MAYOR BILL EDWARDS (VICE CHAIR) LORENE BURNS	X	
DECATUR	MAYOR BOB THARP		
ELKINS	MAYOR TROY REED		
ELM SPRINGS	MAYOR HAROLD DOUTHIT		
FARMINGTON	MAYOR ERNIE PENN	X	Melissa McCarville
FAYETTEVILLE	MAYOR MOLLY RAWN CHRIS BROWN JONATHAN CURTH	X X	
GARFIELD	MAYOR GARY L BLACKBURN		
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	
HINDSVILLE	MAYOR STEPHANIE CASEY		
HUNTSVILLE	MAYOR TRAVIS DOTSON		
JOHNSON	MAYOR CHRIS KEENEY (SECRETARY)	X	
LINCOLN	MAYOR DOUG HUTCHENS		
LITTLE FLOCK	MAYOR JEFF VAN SICKLER	X	
LOWELL	MAYOR CHRIS MOORE		
PEA RIDGE	MAYOR NATHAN SEE	X	Keegan Stanton
PRAIRIE GROVE	MAYOR DAVID FAULK		
ROGERS	LANCE JOBE JOHN McCURDY QUNITON HARRIS		
SILAM SPRINGS	MAYOR JUDY NATION CHRISTINA PETRICHES (INTERIM ADMIN.)	X	Ben Rhoads
SPRINGDALE	MAYOR DOUG SPROUSE (CHAIR) BEN PETERS JIM ULMER	X X	
SPRINGTOWN	MAYOR TERRI GLENN		
SULPHUR SPRINGS	MAYOR MICHAEL DRIVER		
TONTITOWN	MAYOR ANGELA RUSSELL		
WASHINGTON CO.	JUDGE PATRICK DEAKINS BRIDGETT RUSSELL SAM ATA	X	
WEST FORK	MAYOR HEITH CAUDLE		
WINSLOW	ANN MALKIE		
ARDOT PLANNING + DISTRICTS	TRAVIS BROOKS JASON HUGHEY (DISTRICT 4)	X	
BEAVER H2O DISTRICT	LANE CRIDER	X	
McDONALD COUNTY	COMMISSIONER BRIAN HALL		
MoDOT	AMANDA BARCH (FRANK MILLER)	X	
NAT. AIRPORT AUTH.	AARON BURKES		
PINEVILLE, MO	MAYOR GREG SWEETEN		
RAZORBACK TRANSIT	GARY K. SMITH (ADAM WADDELL)	X	
U OF A	MIKE OESTEREICHER (DIANE MEEK)	X	
OZARK REG. TRANSIT	JOEL GARDNER (NON-VOTING)		
ARDOT TRANSIT	GREG NATION (NON-VOTING)		
HWY COMMISSION	PHILLIP TALDO (NON-VOTING)		

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NWARPC STAFF: Tim Conklin, Nicole Gibbs, Tim Reavis, Cristina Scarlat, Luke Aitken, Shimon Beazer, Madison Kienzle, and Stephanie Marpe

OTHERS: Doug Thompson (NWADG), Dan Weese (Bentonville), Phillip Patterson (ARML), Rob Smith (NWA Council), Jason Corral (Jacobs), Greg Simmons (Freese & Nichols), Anthony Hunter (ARDOT), Sydney Buffalo (Sen. Tom Cotton), Diana Baker.

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 Mayor Doug Sprouse at 1:30 p.m. Members attending in person and virtually were welcomed.

(2) ROLL CALL OF MEMBERS

In-person attendees introduced themselves, and Executive Director Tim Conklin named the virtual attendees. Luke Aitken recorded member names and tallied votes. A quorum was reached.

(3) APPROVAL OF FEBRUARY 25, 2026, MEETING MINUTES

Chair Mayor Sprouse asked for any revisions to the February 25, 2026, meeting minutes, and none were heard. He requested a motion for approval.

MOTION: Mayor Keeney made a motion to approve the RPC/Policy Committee Meeting Minutes from February 25, 2026. Seconded by Judge Moehring. Motion carried unanimously.

(4) DIRECTOR REPORT & CLEARINGHOUSE REPORT

Chair Mayor Sprouse introduced the item and Tim Conklin reported that Northwest Arkansas Regional Planning Commission's FY 2025 Audit is complete. This will be sent to members next month ahead of April's RPC meeting. He also reminded members of the upcoming ULI Northwest Arkansas Spring Symposium on Infrastructure Financing scheduled for April 2, 2026, in Elm Springs. Jason Ferbrache from Oklahoma City's One Transit Executive Strategy Team will be presenting.

Conklin reported that NWARPC continues to monitor surface transportation reauthorization efforts, including the BASICS Act (H.R. 7437), and is coordinating with national partner organizations such as AMPO, NARC, and NACo to track potential impacts to regional funding and planning requirements.

(5) REGIONAL WASTEWATER STRATEGY PROJECT UPDATE

Chair Mayor Sprouse introduced the item, and Tim Conklin mentioned that Aaron Benzing of Hawkins-Weir Engineers was out for this month's meeting but that the project is still moving forward.

(6) NARTS 2025–2028 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP) AMENDMENT #4 – ORT FTA SEC. 5307 CHANGES (NARTS02 & NARTS14)

Chair Mayor Sprouse introduced the item, and Nicole presented the proposed TIP Amendment #4. Gibbs explained that Ozark Regional Transit (ORT) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) requested a TIP amendment to adjust the categorical distribution of FFY 2024 apportioned Section 5307 funds to be expended in FFY 2026 to support a project for safety fencing at their facility. Staff noted that the required public comment period was held from March 9 through March 23, 2026.

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A. RESOLUTION #2026-07: Amending the Northwest Arkansas Regional Transportation Study (NARTS) FFY 2025-2028 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

Chairman Sprouse asked whether there were any questions and, hearing none, requested a motion to approve Resolution #2026-07 Amending the Northwest Arkansas Regional Transportation Study (NARTS) FFY 2025-2028 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

MOTION: A motion was made by Mayor Keeney to approve Resolution #2026-07 Amending the Northwest Arkansas Regional Transportation Study (NARTS) FFY 2025–2028 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). This was seconded by Jim Ulmer and carried unanimously.

(7) FUSE FELLOWSHIP OPPORTUNITY – DISCUSSION

Chair Mayor Sprouse introduced the item and Tim Conklin presented information regarding the FUSE Crops Fellowship Program. Conklin explained that FUSE Corps is a national nonprofit organization focused on increasing the capacity of local governments by embedding private sector professionals within public agencies to lead strategic initiatives and improve service delivery.

Conklin said staff have identified two potential fellowship opportunities at the regional level:

- NWARPC Operational Systems & Strategic Impact Fellow
- NWARPC Regional Transportation Governance & Mobility Fellow

Conklin noted that participation would require a local match of approximately \$10,000 per fellow per year, and that the next step would be consideration of a resolution by the RPC/Policy Committee in April 2026 to authorize NWARPC to participate in the program.

Discussion among attendees followed regarding potential benefits of the program, including increased organizational capacity and support for implementation of regional initiatives as well as functional aspects of the program.

Nicole Gibbs clarified that FUSE would identify candidates for NWARPC to interview and select. Tim Conklin added that these candidates are typically mid-career professionals with 10–15 years of private-sector experience. He explained that FUSE Fellows would work full-time for NWARPC but would not be placed on NWARPC's payroll; instead, each fellow would hold a two-year contract directly with FUSE Corps. Conklin also noted that the Rogers City Council has approved two FUSE Fellows to work within their organization and that an estimated 6–8 FUSE Fellows are expected to be operating in the Northwest Arkansas region in 2026. An attendee suggested contacting organizations that have previously hosted FUSE Fellowships to gain insight into their experiences, including successes and challenges in other regions.

(8) PROJECT AND OTHER UPDATES

A. NWARPC Funding Programs (STBGP-A/TAP/CRP): FFY 2027)

Chair Sprouse introduced the item and Nicole Gibbs reported that the FFY 2027 Call for Projects was released in early January 2026, with applications due April 2, 2026 at midnight. Staff noted that approximately \$14.5 million in federal funding is anticipated to be available for award across the STBGP-A, TAP, and CRP programs, subject to Congressional action and reauthorization. Gibbs reviewed the upcoming project selection timeline, including TAC presentations, site visits, and final

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award decisions being announced in May 2026. She also reminded members of program requirements, including signed city council or governing body resolutions for new applications, coordination with ARDOT, and compliance with reporting and project management requirements.

Action/Activity	Date
Call for Projects (Applications Open)	Sunday, January 4, 2026
Application Deadline (Resolution Required)	Thursday, April 2, 2026 @Midnight
Project Sponsor Presentation to TAC Committee	Thursday, April 16, 2026
Selection Committee Site Visits/Scoring/Rec	April 29, 2026 (save the date)
Selection Committee Recommendation to TAC	Thursday, May 21, 2026
RPC/Policy Committee Award Decision	Thursday, May 27, 2026

Lastly, Gibbs stated that the obligation deadline for FFY 2026 awards, made last May, is August/September of 2026 and asked project sponsors to be in communication with NWARPC and ARDOT LPA staff if there are any delays to project development.

B. Other Ongoing Project Updates:

Tim Reavis mentioned that since the Forward 2050 MTP was adopted last month, updates concerning the plan will be centered around advancing the long-term regional investment priorities outlined in the plan. Reavis provided an update on the US-71B Corridor Plan, which represents the next phase of work following adoption of the Transit Alternatives Study (TAS) and identification of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) as the regionally preferred alternative within that study. The corridor study will include planning-level engineering, station area planning, and transit-oriented development (TOD) strategy recommendations to support long-term implementation of BRT on the US-71B corridor. Reavis stated that NWARPC staff will submit a STBGP-A application for this plan for consideration in the FFY 2027 funding pool, where it will be evaluated by the TAC and the selection committee alongside all other eligible applications.

Madison Kienzle provided an update on the Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG) Implementation Grant and the NWA Green Network, which includes 17 projects and two regional programs totaling \$36.25 million in investment across Northwest Arkansas. She highlighted specific progress across three projects in Fayetteville, Springdale and Rogers. Madison also provided an update on the Tri-Regional E-Bike Incentive Program stating the program development with APTIM is underway with a target date of early July for the first random voucher selection. Finally, Madison noted the continued local government support efforts, including planning and zoning assistance such as the Gravette Future Land Use Plan update, Huntsville Comprehensive Plan update, and Garfield Subdivision Code update.

C. Other Grant Opportunities:

Tim Conklin Staff provided updates on additional funding opportunities available to member jurisdictions. NWARPC heard that a NOFO for the USDOT Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) Grant Program may be opening soon, with a shorter application window being offered for this final round of the federal grant program, originally authorized under the 2021 IIJA. Several other grant

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opportunities included federal and state funding programs, including ARDOT-administered opportunities such as the Arkansas Commercial Truck Safety and Education Program (ACTSEP), with applications due April 30, 2026. Conklin also noted that the ARDOT Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) and Recreational Trails Program (RTP) application cycles are currently open, with the same April 30, 2026 deadline. Members were encouraged to coordinate with NWARPC staff for assistance with applications or questions around project eligibility.

(9) COMMITTEE AND GROUP UPDATES

A. Active Transportation Committee (ACT)

Chair Mayor Sprouse introduced the item and Luke Aitken reported that ACT meets every other month on the first Thursday with the last meeting taking place February 5, 2026, and the next virtual meeting scheduled for April 2, 2026, at 1:30pm.

B. NWA Open Space Coalition

Luke Aitken stated that the NWA Open Space Coalition meets every other month on the second Wednesday. Their last meeting took place February 11, 2026, with the next meeting scheduled for April 8, 2026, at 11:00am at the Bety Hinshaw Bird Sanctuary in Tontitown.

C. MS4 Stormwater Compliance Group

Luke Aitken shared the MS4 Stormwater Compliance Group meets every other third Wednesday. Their last meeting was February 18, 2026, with their next meeting scheduled for April 15, 2026, at 10:30am.

D. NWA GIS User Group

Luke Aitken shared that the NWA GIS Users group meet every other second Tuesday. Their last meeting took place February 10, 2026, and their next virtual meeting is scheduled for April 14, 2026, at 10:30am.

E. SMALL CITIES COMMITTEE

Madison Kienzle provided an update on the Small Cities Committee, which focuses on issues affecting communities with populations under 30,000. The next meeting is scheduled for April 7, 2026 at 10:00 a.m. with both in-person and virtual participation options.

(10) PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair Mayor Sprouse said that NWARPC received 20 public comments with 11 comments around the Razorback Greenway Corridor Plan and 9 comments concerning the US-412 Toll Feasibility Study. These comments were included in the member meeting packets. Chair Mayor Sprouse asked if there were any additional comments from the floor; none were offered.

(11) OTHER BUSINESS

A. Future Meeting Dates

Chair Mayor Sprouse outlined the future meeting dates:

- TAC Meeting – Thursday, April 16, 2026 @ 10:30 AM
- RPC/Policy Committee Meeting – Wednesday, April 22, 2026 @ 1:30 PM
- NWA Regional Mobility Authority (RMA) Meeting – Wednesday, April 22, 2026 @ 2:30 PM

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Other dates noted:

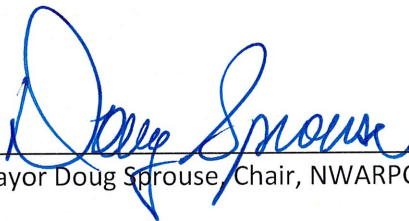
- CNU: May 12-16, 2026, being held in NWA, including a local government training day on Tuesday, May 12, 2026. Scholarship and Volunteer opportunities are available.
- ARDOT Public Meetings: Western NS Connector (Job 012560)
 - Tuesday, April 7, 2026, 4:30pm-6:30pm – First Baptist Church Highfill, 412 N.W. Main St., Highfill, AR
 - Thursday, April 9, 2026, 4:30pm-6:30pm – Hiwassee First Baptist Church, 13512 AR 72, Hiwassee, AR
- 2026 Arkansas Planning Official Training Series: Since 1999, the Arkansas Chapter of the American Planning Association (APA Arkansas) has partnered with the Arkansas Public Administration Consortium (APAC) to provide high-quality training for Arkansas planning officials. The 2026 course schedule, content and registration can be found here:
<https://ualr.edu/publicaffairs/apac/planning-official-training/>

(12) ADJOURN

Chair Mayor Sprouse asked whether there was any other business. Hearing none, a motion to adjourn the meeting was made.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:09 PM.

PASSED AND APPROVED ON THIS 22ND DAY OF APRIL 2026.



Mayor Doug Sprouse, Chair, NWARPC

ATTEST: 
