



Minneapolis – Duluth/Superior Passenger Rail Alliance
Wednesday, February 28, 2018
Pine County Courthouse
Pine City, MN

MINUTES

Appointed Representatives Present:

Elissa Hansen, **City of Duluth, Chair
Jason Serck, City of Superior, Vice-chair
Matt Ludwig, *Pine County Commissioner
Mike Jugovich, *St. Louis County Commissioner
Andrew Johnson, *City of Minneapolis

Alternate Representatives Present:

Rick Goutermont, *Lake County Commissioner

Appointed Representatives Not Present:

Stan Gustafson, City of Cambridge

*County Commissioner

**Council Member

Other meeting attendees attached and made part of the minutes

1. Call to order / introductions.

Chair Hansen called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m., welcomed all and introductions were made. Five (5) representatives in attendance constituted a quorum. Chair Hansen explained Executive Director Bob Manzoline, Gary Cerkvenik and St. Louis County Commissioner Keith Nelson are in Washington D.C. meeting on NLX with Sens. Smith and Klobuchar and Rep. Nolan. Secretary Birdie Oddo is unable to attend. Jill Brown and Ken Buehler are taking notes.

2. Additions to agenda

A. None

3. Public forum / appearances

A. Kathy George, Sandstone, shared an image from the 1970s showing people rallying in front of the Sandstone train station with signs asking for Amtrak service. *(Attached and made part of the minutes).*

4. Communications

A. None

5. Consent agenda

- A. Approve minutes from the re-scheduled meeting of January 24, 2018 -
- B. Expenditure & Budget Analysis of January 2018 – A motion and second to approve the January 24, 2018 and January 2018 Expense & Budget Analysis as presented. Unanimous.

6. Reports

- A. Media – Jill Brown – (*Attached and made part of the minutes*). Talking point highlights from D.C. packet are for use by members as they tell people about the FONSI and next steps.
- B. State / Federal / Legislative Report - Ken Buehler filled in for John Ongaro and Gary Cerkenik. Big news that FONSI was received Feb. 20. Very few projects make it that far; most fall by the wayside due to expense or years of commitment needed. MnDOT, Zan Associates and Jill Brown are completing news releases and letters.
- C. Technical Advisory Committee - Ken Buehler-- The TAC met Feb. 21. Meeting notes are (*attached and made part of the minutes*). March 26 rollout in Duluth will start at 11:30 a.m. at the St. Louis County Heritage and Arts Center. MnDOT Commissioner Zelle has confirmed his attendance. Chair Hansen, the Duluth mayor and hopefully the Minneapolis mayor are sending out invites. All NLX Alliance members are included. Plan on a lunch after the meeting. This will be a celebration of reaching the FONSI milestone with emphasis on next steps.

Chair Hansen is going out to D.C. next week and will follow up on this week's meetings.

TAC is evolving into a nuts and bolts action committee, under chair's direction. It's getting things done in between meetings. We haven't heard if MN Power selected our grant application for \$3,500 to assist in strategic planning. If awarded, we'll start the work with the TAC and bring a proposal to the Alliance.

TAC also discussed NOFA (Notice of Funding Availability). \$73 million FRA. TAC recommended the Alliance direct staff to reissue Tiger application into a new NOFA application. FONSI will help in TIGER application....safety benefit for freight and later higher speeds for passengers. If we get a TIGER grant, there are four additional crossings not covered that could go into a new NOFA.

Councilor Johnson said Minneapolis is looking at legislative talk of a constitutional amendment on roads and bridges. He wonders about getting transit added. Don't want to be left behind. Is the project focused

on federal funds at this point? Chair Hansen said we're looking at how we advocate for state partnerships, too.

Derrick James with Amtrak provided a federal update. Ridership was up last year 1.5% to 31.7 million rides. Safety is foremost. Improvements need to be made in safety and culture. Positive train control will be on all lines Amtrak owns by the end of the year. Any freight line that doesn't have it, Amtrak will not operate over them. The goal is to have the railway safety culture be like the airline safety culture, in behind the scenes operations. On funding, a new grant program has been announced, CRISI. It's a consolidated rail and safety effort. In 2017, Congress established \$190 million and enacted \$68 million. Funds are for safety and reliability. Eligible entities are states, local government, Amtrak, class 2 and 3 railroads, research boards, and certain nonprofits. Projects can include improvements to track, station and equipment, or implementing PTC, or congestion mitigation, or environmental planning, or safety improvements. There's also \$5 million in operational support in another pot. Derrick has a presentation he can forward. Amtrak's new leadership, Richard Anderson formerly of Northwest Airlines and Delta, says Minnesota is of high interest. James would like to have him visit. Amtrak will always have a need for capital support, but they are moving to no operating subsidy from the federal government.

7. Unfinished business

A. None.

8. New business

A. Consider St. Louis County Auditor's Agreement for year 2018 accounting services for \$6,000 - Moved by Commissioner Jugovich. Seconded by Jason Serck. Unanimous.

B. Consider instructing staff to pursue new Notice of Funding Available from Federal Railroad Administration. Chair Hansen said the NLX Alliance would not be financially liable. TIGER grants can be pursued for years without success. This is another opportunity that is set up very similar to the TIGER program. Motion by Serck supported by Commissioner Jugovich. Unanimous.

9. Other business

Chair Hansen thanked Councilor Andrew Johnson for attending. Councilor Johnson is chair of the intergovernmental committee for Minneapolis. He's excited about NLX and looking forward to working on it.

10. Next Meeting

March 28, 2018
Pine County Courthouse @ 10:00 a.m.
Pine City, MN

A **motion** and **second** to adjourn approximately 11:00 a.m. Unanimous.

Respectfully submitted by Jill Brown.

Elissa Hansen
Chair of the Alliance



Minneapolis to Duluth /Superior Passenger Rail Alliance

Wednesday, February 28, 2018 @ 10:00 a.m.

Pine County Courthouse

Pine City, MN

<u>Name</u>	<u>Address/Organization</u>
Steve Fecker	Alliance Attorney
Jill Brown	NLX Contractor
Nick Baker	Douglas County, WI, Supervisor
Leonard Bonander	City of Sandstone
Kathy George	City of Sandstone
Phillip Kester	City of Sandstone, Council Member
Pete Spartz	City of Sandstone, Mayor
Derrick L. James	Amtrak
Tim Franklin	Hinckley News
Ken Buehler	LSRM
Mark Perry	City of Hinckley
Rick Olseen	Rep. Nolan's office