



Minneapolis – Duluth/Superior
Passenger Rail Alliance
Wednesday, June 28, 2017
Pine County Courthouse
Pine City, MN

MINUTES

Appointed Representatives Present:

Elissa Hansen, **City of Duluth
Rick Goutermont, *Lake County
Linda Higgins, *Hennepin County, Vice Chair
Katie Draper, Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe
Jason Serck, City of Superior, WI
Stan Gustafson, City of Cambridge

Alternate Representatives Present:

Steve Chaffee, *Pine County

Appointed Representatives Not Present

John Quincy, ** City of Minneapolis

* 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. Seven (7) representatives in attendance constituted a quorum.

2. Additions to agenda

None.

3. Public Forum / Appearances

None.

4. Communications

A. Alliance Annual Financial Statement for year ended December 31, 2016 - Bob Manzoline reviews the Financial Statement for year ended December 31, 2016 for the Board. A **motion** by Commissioner Goutermont, **supported** by Vice-chair Serck to accept the report as presented. Unanimous.

5. Consent agenda

A. Approve minutes from meeting of May 24, 2017 –

B. Expenditure & Budget Analysis for May 2017 -

A **motion** by Commissioner Higgins, **supported** by Vice-chair Serck approve the May 24, 2017 meeting minutes and the Expenditure & Budget Analysis for May 2017 as presented. Unanimous.

6. Reports

- A. Media – Jill Brown - *(Attached and made part of the minutes)*.
- B. State / Federal / Legislative Report – Gary Cerkvenik and John Ongaro gave the legislative updates.
- C. Technical Advisory Committee Report – Ken Buehler – *(Attached and made part of the minutes)*.
- D. Administrative Report – Bob Manzoline - *(Attached and made part of the minutes)*.
- E. MN Department of Transportation – Frank Loetterle – Frank reviews the timeline of the project: in 2007 – 2009 the initial Feasibility Study was done, with Tier 1 Environmental Assessment started in 2009 and completed in 2013. Frank informs that the end is near with the Tier 2 Environmental Assessment process with a completion date of June 30th. Requirements of the Federal Rail Administration (FRA) have been completed for the funding that Alliance was given of \$8 million with \$5 million from the Federal Government and \$3 million in bonding from the State. By Friday, July 1st all deliverables will be provided as specified in the grant, which includes the Tier 2 Environmental Assessment, all comments received in the public forums, response to those comments have been submitted to FRA, draft Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI), the Service Development Plan, Financial Plan and preliminary engineering drawings. FONSI is expected to be issued before September 30th. Next step is applying for funding for design and upgrading crossings. Frank further informs that MN Department of Transportation Passenger Rail Office fully supports the project and having Alliance take on the role of “applicant” for funding and providing technical support moving forward. Meetings with the FRA have been very cooperative, supportive and revealed that the project is the first project in the country to get to the Tier 2 Environmental Assessment, whereby NLX has become a template for other projects of this nature in terms of how the ridership, preliminary engineering and environmental work was done.

7. Unfinished business

- B. Consider Alliance Budget adjustment for FY 2017 – This agenda item was considered before the Membership Contributions. Bob Manzoline reviews the budget for the first six (6) months of the year and informs that Alliance is under the budget that was adopted in January. Fund balance at the end of June is approximately \$14,000.00. Commissioner Higgins asked if this figure includes all accounts, and Bob informs that it does. Commissioner Higgins then asks if any additional areas of the budget could be reduced. Jill Brown explains the website and material portion of the budget and Bob informs that the rest of the budget is for contractual work. Commissioner Higgins then questions the lobbyist work at the State level and Bob defers to Mr. John Ongaro who explains the chances of a special session, but feels lobbyist efforts for the remainder of the year would be minimal, but contracts for lobbyist services are a monthly fee which is spread out over the year. Vice-chair Serck asks what the \$4,000.00 in the advertising, news ads and media portion of the budget consists of and Jill Brown responds boosting Facebook posts, opportunities along the corridor to do billboards and advertising

with the Chamber of Commerce's publications to build project awareness.

Following discussion, a **motion** by Vice-chair Serck, **supported** by Commissioner Goutermont to accept the budget adjustments as presented. (Yeas: Serck, Goutermont, Gustafson, Hansen, Draper, Chaffee. Nay: Higgins).

- A. Consider Alliance Membership Contributions for 2nd half year of 2017 – Following discussion, Commissioner Higgins informs that she does not feel that she would have the support from the Hennepin County Rail Authority Board to support the 2nd half of year 2017 contribution, even a small amount, and her vote would reflect that. Vice-chair Serck adds that he finds that Minnesota and Superior residents along with the Mayor of Superior are in full support of the project and alternative modes of transportation and felt that the project needs to move forward which is why he is in support of the contributions. A **motion** by Vice-chair Serck, **supported** by Commissioner Goutermont to approve the Alliance Membership Contributions for the 2nd half of 2017. Funding formula attached and made part of the minutes. (Yeas: Serck, Goutermont, Gustafson, Hansen, Draper, Chaffee. Nay: Higgins).

8. New business

- A. Consider applying for 2017 – 2018 Federal Transportation Investment Generation Economic Recovery (TIGER) Grant – Bob Manzoline informs of a new TIGER (FY 2017/2018) Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) will be released soon with a rather short response time, meaning September 2017 or so. Following discussion with MNDOT and Congressman Nolan's Office, it is recommended that the Alliance submit an application for the next TIGER grant solicitation. Work in preparing the application and subsequent work if a grant were to be received, would be a cooperative effort between Alliance and MNDOT. This request is being made to give a head-start if a TIGER NOFA were to be released in-between Alliance Board meetings. Grant terms, conditions, amounts will be brought to the Board for review/approval before application was made.

Bob further informs of the cooperation of MNDOT when the Tier 2 Environmental Study began, Alliance had a Memorandum of Understanding between Alliance Board and MNDOT with Memorandum of Understanding supplemented for purposes of this grant to reflect Alliance as the Applicant, with MNDOT continuing to be responsible for the NLX Project and assisting in putting together the grant application as well as providing technical work and assistance with the work covered by the grant. Bob informs that Commissioner Dan Krom (MNDOT) is very receptive and supportive of this and the backing of the Passenger Rail Office. Bob informs that if an outside consultant were to be hired to do the application, this type of application would cost approximately \$25,000.00 and felt that Bob and Frank Loetterle could complete the application in house, possibly from the consultants that worked on the Tier 2 (Charlie Quandel). Application and Memo of Understanding would be brought back to the Board for consideration.

Commissioner Higgins asked for more information regarding another grant for consideration which is the Consolidated Rail Infrastructure Safety Improvements (CRISI) Grant, which is part of the Fast Act (last transportation bill that was passed) and a component of that is also for rail crossing safety. Further discussion will be

held with the FRA before moving forward on this grant. Matching funds are not needed with either TIGER or CRISI Grants.

Following discussion, a **motion** by Vice-chair Serck, **supported** by Commissioner Goutermont (?) to approve making application to both the TIGER and the CRISI Grants, with Commissioner Higgins suggesting to make very clear in both grant applications and in the supplement to the Memo of Understanding that this is a State (MNDOT) project and not the Alliance. Mr. Fecker adds that this narrative description will be included in the new Memorandum of Understanding and applications which only pertains to the grants. (Yeas: Serck, Goutermont, Gustafson, Hansen, Draper, Chaffee. Nay: Higgins).

9. Other Business

None.

10. Next meeting

July 26, 2017
Pine County Courthouse

Adjournment

With no further business, a **motion** by Vice-chair Serck, **supported** by Commissioner Goutermont to adjourn @ 11:30 a.m. Unanimous.

Respectfully submitted by Birdie Oddo.

Elissa Hansen
Chair of the Alliance



Minneapolis to Duluth /Superior Passenger Rail Alliance- Attendees
Wednesday, June 26, 2017
Pine County Courthouse
Pine City, MN

<u>Name</u>	<u>Address/Organization</u>
Steve Fecker	Alliance Attorney
Birdie Oddo	St. Louis & Lake Counties RRA
Bob Manzoline	St. Louis & Lake Counties RRA
Jill Brown	NLX Contractor
Leonard Bonander	City of Sandstone
Francis Loetterle	Passenger Rail Office / MN DOT
Don Pflaum	City of Minneapolis
Marshall Lind	City of Braham
Nacho Diaz	Sub consultant - MN DOT
Nick Baker	Douglas County
Mark Perry	City of Hinckley
Ken Buehler	LSRM / N SSR
Gary Cerkenik	NLX Consultant
Terry Turnquist	Isanti County
Mike Jugovich	St. Louis County Commissioner
John Ongaro	St. Louis County