

GOLD LINE JOINT POWERS BOARD

MINUTES

Wednesday, March 24, 2021

CALL TO ORDER

Chair McDonough called to order the Gold Line Joint Powers Board (JPB) meeting at 10:35 a.m. Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, board members and staff conducted the meeting virtually via WebEx. Members of the public were given the opportunity to attend in-person at the Public Works North Shop in Conference Room 1201, or by sharing their comments or concerns prior to the meeting by calling (651) 430-4300 or sending an email to PublicWorks@co.washington.mn.us.

ROLL CALL

Members Present: Chair – Jim McDonough, Ramsey County Commissioner
Vice-Chair – Lisa Weik, Washington County Commissioner
Rafael Ortega, Ramsey County Commissioner
Stan Karwoski, Washington County Commissioner

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: Andrew Gitzlaff, Brian Isaacson, Don Theisen, Erica Ellefson, Jennifer Oehler, Jennifer Wagenius, Kevin Magnuson, Lyssa Leitner, Mike Rogers, Sara Allen, Stephanie Tiemann, Tabatha Hansen

Others Present: Adam Josephson, Brian McClung, Charles Carlson, Christina Palladino, Edward Sanderson, Elizabeth Jones, Janelle Schmitz, Josh Haider, Mary Richardson, Shannan Watson

ACTION ITEMS FOR APPROVAL

Approval of Agenda

- *Motion by Rafael Ortega, seconded by Lisa Weik, to approve the agenda. Roll call vote; all in favor. Motion carried.*

Approval of Minutes from Previous Meeting

Motion by Lisa Weik, seconded by Stan Karwoski, to approve the minutes from the January 27, 2021 meeting. Roll call vote; all in favor. Motion carried.

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Approval of Resolution 2021-02 Approving the Use of Grant Funds for Pre-Award Authority Expenditures for Right-of-Way Acquisition and Relocation

Sara Allen stated that included in the packet with the resolution is a letter from the Gold Line Project Office. Staff have reviewed the letter and found it to be sufficient. The letter includes costs for March and April 2021 right-of-way, 21 parcels, and for an amount not to exceed \$507,800. Also included is an attachment to the letter which includes parcels numbers and whether the parcel is a full or half take. The acquisition on these parcels is contingent on receiving entry into Engineering.

Motion by Rafael Ortega, seconded by Stan Karwoski, to approve Resolution 2021-02 approving the Use of Grant Funds for Pre-Award Authority Expenditures for Right-of-Way Acquisition and Relocation. Roll call vote; all in favor. Motion carried.

Approval of Resolution 2021-03 Approving the Use of Grant Funds for Pre-Award Authority Expenditures for Advanced Utility Relocation (AUR)

Ed Sanderson, Manager of Design and Engineering with the Gold Line Project Office, presented on the AUR Pre-Award Approval. Included in the use of pre-award authority is funds allowed for performing utility relocations, which are needed primarily to minimize utility conflicts, and conflicts between contractors, as well as manage critical infrastructure systems. The purpose of this resolution is to allocate funding for an agreement with Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) to be included in their construction procurement for the Mounds Boulevard Storm Sewer. Due to several projects in this location, there is a need for stormwater improvements, thus planning a design to build into their system by tying into a section to the north next spring. If not approved in March 2021, there is risk of the agreement not being executed, putting construction at risk, and leading to delay in the revenue service date. If approved, agreement and bid activities would continue on schedule, construction of early utility work would occur in the summer of 2021, and disbursements/expenses would be reflected in the 2021 JPB Budget.

Motion by Lisa Weik, seconded by Stan Karwoski, to approve Resolution 2021-03 approving the Use of Grant Funds for Pre-Award Authority Expenditures for Advanced Utility Relocation. Roll call vote; all in favor. Motion carried.

Chair McDonough addressed the commission to acknowledge that these expenditures that are approved early on always come with some risk, and we balance those risks working with professionals, the project office, and this commission between Ramsey and Washington County. He further stated that the goal as the JPB is to advance the project so that it is up and running for the benefit of residents and the region as part of an integrated transportation system. The commissioners, staff, and experts monitor and work to mitigate those risks. Chair McDonough is pleased to continue to evaluate and address these risks and continue to advance the project, to keep in on time and on budget.

INFORMATION/UPDATES

METRO Gold Line Update

Lyssa Leitner gave an update from the Gold Line Project Office. Ms. Leitner stated that after speaking with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and their Project Management Oversight Consultant (PMOC) they are still waiting for an update on entry into Engineering. They have indicated there are no further questions, which they feel is good news, and staff is following up with all of the information that was requested. They are hoping to hear some news within the next few weeks. Lyssa also wanted to give updates on three other subjects; the project office will be completely the 90% plan within the week. Next, they are expecting the FTA to sign the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) within the next week or so as well. Lastly, Lyssa provided an update to the Right-of-Way (ROW) Pre-Sward Approval Status through mid-March. The numbers do not include the item approved today. So far, of the 46 parcels approved in 2020 (not contingent on Engineering), they've made offers on 40 parcels, of which 19 have been accepted.

Chair McDonough asked about the timeframe of an expected entry into Engineering; having originally expected it in January and still waiting for it at the end of March. Lyssa stated that her understanding is that the FTA indicated back in January that they may have additional questions, which were never sent. She also expects that the change in Administration may have delayed the process.

Joint Powers Board Financial Update

Erica Ellefson gave an update on the financials for the JPB through February 28, 2021. As of yet, there have been no expenses to the JPB Administrative Budget this year. A few areas of the budget were underrun, such as the travel and materials/supplies budget not being utilized. A small amount was also allotted for contingency, and not needed. Any remaining funds not spent will stay within the JPB fund, and be available for use in a future year. The Capital Budget financials are currently in-line as scheduled, and remain at \$74,997,468.00; this includes funds set aside for right-of-way, advance utility relocation, and professional services.

Communication and Legislative Update

Brian McClung, with Park Street Public, stated that we have about 7 weeks left in the 2021 Minnesota Legislative Session. Legislators will be working through the week and then on break, returning Tuesday April 6. The first and second committee deadlines passed, so the policy bills are now finalized. They are moving into the budget process and finance bills. The Senate Republicans outlined their budget targets, Governor Waltz put out his revised budget recommendations, and House Democrats put out their recommendations yesterday. Finance bills are expected to start to appear after the Easter Passover break, moving into the heart of the legislative session. A record number of bills have been introduced, making a lot of work and some difficulty for moving things along, especially via Zoom.

Brian also mention that their government relations team has been tracking the proposed change on the county guideway responsibility. Area counties have come together to express their concerns about this change, making a strong case as to why they are concerned. House Chair Frank Hornstein has been clear

that the language in the budget bill will not be there, but their team will continue to have conversations on what language might be included. Their team has been very engaged in this and working very closely with both counties to be sure our voices are heard, as it poses a particular issue for Gold Line.

On the communications and public relations side, they've had some great media lately, with the apartment developments in Oakdale. He's also been looking into getting the Gold Line Partners together as suggested, and just holding for news of the entry into Engineering to make that happen.

OTHER BUSINESS

Next Meeting – April 28, 2021

Virtual – WebEx – members of the public may attend in-person at the Washington County Public Works North Shop.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair McDonough adjourned the meeting at 11:07 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Oehler, Board Clerk