

GOLD LINE JOINT POWERS BOARD

MINUTES

Wednesday, June 23, 2021

CALL TO ORDER

Chair McDonough called to order the Gold Line Joint Powers Board (JPB) meeting at 10:32 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: Brian Isaacson, Don Theisen, Erica Ellefson, George Hargrove, Jennifer Oehler,
Kevin Magnuson, Kris Longhenry, Lyssa Leitner, Mike Rogers, Sara Allen,
Stephanie Tiemann, Tabatha Hansen

Others Present: Brian McClung, Christina Palladino, Edward Sanderson, Josh Haider,
Shannon Watson

ACTION ITEMS FOR APPROVAL

Approval of Agenda

Motion by Commissioner Ortega, seconded by Commissioner Weik, to approve the agenda. Roll call vote; all in favor. Motion carried.

Approval of Minutes from Previous Meeting

Motion by Commissioner Ortega, seconded by Commissioner Weik, to approve the minutes from the April 28, 2021 meeting. Roll call vote; all in favor. Motion carried.

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Approval of Resolution 2021-08 Approving the Use of Grant Funds for Pre-Award Authority Expenditures for Right-of-Way Acquisition

Included in the packet with the resolution is a formal request from the Gold Line Project Office for right-of-way and relocation access for the months of July and August, for an amount not to exceed \$9,896,450. Chair McDonough noted that a lot of the requests are temporary for the construction and some are partial takes.

Commissioner Karwoski asked if a map could be provided in the future, displaying the physical locations as they are acquired. Lyssa Leitner commented that there is a lot of protected information with the acquisitions but will check with staff to see if there is something that could be provided.

Motion by Commissioner Karwoski, seconded by Commissioner Ortega, to approve Resolution 2021-08 Approving the Use of Grant Funds for Pre-Award Authority Expenditures for Right-of-Way Acquisition. Roll call vote; all in favor. Motion carried.

Approval of Amendment #1 to the 2021 Park Street Public Contract

This amendment request is due to unanticipated additional government relations efforts during the 2021 Minnesota Legislative session. Included in the packet with the amendment is a communications and outreach budget breakdown, requesting an additional \$10,000 to complete the 2021 Communications and Government Relations scope of work.

Motion by Commissioner Weik, seconded by Commissioner Ortega, to approve Amendment #1 to the 2021 Park Street Public Contract. Roll call vote; all in favor. Motion carried.

INFORMATION/UPDATES

METRO Gold Line Update

Lyssa Leitner gave a brief update from the Gold Line Project Office. Ms. Leitner presented the schedule on the Path to Full Funding Grant Agreement (FFGA). The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) has seen the schedule but not provided concrete feedback; they did ask for specific dates to be added. The JPB and County Board approvals will be added to the schedule once the FTA has provided feedback. The 90% plans were met in March and the project office will soon be submitting documents to the FTA for the upcoming risk assessment process. They are anticipating the next risk assessment to be in August, followed by the new contingency and potential new schedule. The cost will be updated once that feedback is received and then sent to the County Board for updated actions, resolutions, etc. By the end of 2021, FTA invites the project to submit the FFGA, with approximately six months for FTA review. Once invited to submit those documents, the Construction Request for Proposal (RFP) process can begin. Once the FTA approves the FFGA, civil construction can begin.

Chair McDonough asked if there would be one or multiple Construction RFPs. Ms. Leitner stated their plan is currently to have one main civil package, and the 494 parking structure to be a separate package.

Commissioner Karwoski asked if we are coordinating with the Kellogg Bridge project. Ms. Leitner confirmed they are, along with other bridge projects included in the Gold Line project. They have frequent coordination meetings and noted there is a risk if either schedule slides.

Ms. Leitner also mentioned the project office has been working with county staff to update the 90% Cost. The 60% Cost showed a fairly large increase, with the vast majority of that due to the Joint Development. With that removed, the 90% cost will look much lower. The addition of the electric buses is an additional cost driver, a new schedule driver, and unit costs updated to reflect 2021.

Joint Powers Board Financial Update

Erica Ellefson gave an update on the financials for the JPB through May 31, 2021 and highlighted the proposed 2022 Administrative Budget. There has been \$146,700 charged to the Administrative budget, which is currently \$220,000, with 33% of the budget remaining. They are anticipating underrunning on the 2021 budget, with any remaining funds at the end of 2021 programmed to spend in a future year. The proposed 2022 JPB Administrative Budget is the same as 2021 except for proposing to increase the communication and government relations budget by \$10,000 to \$50,000 total, allowing for flexibility of unforeseen circumstances. There has been \$22,270,000 spent on the Capital Grant Agreement, of which \$12,153,700 is actual ROW expense, and the remaining \$10,123,600 is Professional Services. There will continue to be larger draw payments to the Metropolitan Council for the remainder of 2021 to cover the land acquisitions required for the project. When comparing the 2021 budget with the actual expenses received through May 31, ROW is 34% of the way spent, Advanced Utility Relocation (AUR) is at 100% of the budget remaining, and Professional Services is 57% of the way spent. The total not to exceed amount for the Capital Grant Agreement remains at \$74,997,468. The proposed 2022 Capital Grant Agreement will be presented at the July 28 meeting.

Chair McDonough asked if funds are still available from the Gateway Corridor Commission. Erica stated that those funds were transferred to the Joint Powers Board.

Chair McDonough asked for clarification on the timeline of capital grant agreement approvals, if the JPB will approve the budget, recommend to each county board and regional rail authorities, followed by a final approval. Ms. Ellefson confirmed.

Communication and Legislative Update

Brian McClung, with Park Street Public, stated that Legislative Special Session is still ongoing. They appear to be making significant progress, with deals on 10 of the 13 budget bills. Public Safety will likely be the last bill sorted out. The expectation is they will complete the work soon, and not push into a state government shutdown. It is not a matter of money, but rather sorting through policy issues. As for the request for the 4th Street Bridge improvements, \$3.5 million was included in the proposal for the Transportation Bill. It will not be a line item in the agreement, as MNDOT did not want to see earmarks in the project, but a letter was included referencing a bridge over I-694, with understanding this is for

the 4th Street Bridge. The bill hasn't been passed yet but should move through smoothly and pass soon. Mr. McClung also mentioned a lot of time was spent with the Met Council on guideway language, operations, funding, and how that would all come together. There is no language anywhere on that issue, so there is an expectation there is going to be future conversations between the counties and the Met Council on how to navigate this issue. From his perspective, this is a positive outcome, being in a good position to have real conversation of how this would work. Mr. McClung also extended his thanks for approving the additional \$10,000 for their work on these issues.

On the strategic communications and social media side of things, they hosted a session on June 16 with the St. Paul Area Chamber of Commerce to provide an update to community groups, business groups, and residents. They felt it was a great group, with great questions and robust conversations. Coming from that, the Woodbury Chamber of Commerce President submitted a letter to the Woodbury Mayor and City Council members expressing their support for the project. They are planning another similar session in August, with more planned for later in the summer and fall.

Commissioner Karwoski thanked Mr. McClung and his staff for work on the project and commented on how important the social media work they've been doing has been. He also commented that with this being the first transit project in Washington County, getting the traffic and pedestrian lanes approved really satisfied residents in gaining their support. Commissioner Karwoski also strongly advocates for investment in public relations towards residents and businesses along the line.

Chair McDonough asked if there was a government shutdown if that would halt the project until there is a deal. Lyssa Leitner stated that as she understands it, the project office can continue work, but they may have to operate without MnDOT staff.

OTHER BUSINESS

Next Meeting – July 28, 2021, 10:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Virtual – WebEx – TBD

ADJOURNMENT

Chair McDonough adjourned the meeting at 11:14 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Oehler, Board Clerk