



**SIERRA VISTA METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
MEETING MINUTES: JANUARY 28, 2021**

**APPROVED**

**MEETING LOCATION:**

City of Sierra Vista, City Hall  
City Manager's Conference Room  
1011 North Coronado Drive  
Sierra Vista, AZ 85635

To attend the meeting by telephone:

Call 1-415-655-0001. Meeting 287 957 271 #  
Enter # for Attendee ID. For Arizona Relay  
Service use 1-800-367-8939, or dial 7-1-1.

**MEETING DATE AND TIME:**

January 28, 2021  
2:40 PM

**FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO REQUEST  
ACCOMMODATION FOR SPECIAL NEEDS:**

Website: [www.svmppo.org](http://www.svmppo.org)  
Email: [SVMPO@SierraVistaAZ.gov](mailto:SVMPO@SierraVistaAZ.gov)  
Administrator Phone: 520-515-8525

**EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:**

Chair	Rick Mueller, Mayor, City of Sierra Vista
Vice-Chair	<i>Vacant</i>
Member	Rachel Gray, Vice-Mayor, City of Sierra Vista
Member	Johann Wallace, Mayor, Town of Huachuca City ( <i>appointed 12/17/2020</i> )
Member	Peggy Judd, County Supervisor, Cochise County ( <i>appointed 1/26/2021</i> )
Member	Richard Searle, STB District 3 ( <i>telephonically in at 3:30 p.m</i> )

**EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBERS NOT IN ATTENDANCE:**

Member	Sarah Pacheco, Councilmember, City of Sierra Vista
--------	--

**STAFF:**

SVMPO Administrator: Karen L. Lamberton, AICP

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

Jeremy Moore, Arizona Department of Transportation (*telephonically for Rod Lane*)  
Cynthia Butterworth, Councilmember, Town of Huachuca City, (*alternate member/telephonically*)  
Carolyn Umphrey, Councilmember, City of Sierra Vista (*incoming member/telephonically*)  
Kevin Adam, RTAC Liaison (*telephonically*)  
Kit Judd, Citizen

**1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL**

Chair Mueller called the meeting to order at 2:43 p.m. Members Gray and Judd were present. Member Wallace was present telephonically. A quorum was present. Town Councilmember Cynthia Butterworth, who is the designated alternate to Member Wallace was also present by telephone. [*Member Searle would join the meeting later, at about 3:30 p.m. telephonically.*]

## **2. ACCEPTANCE OF THE AGENDA**

Chair Mueller asked if the Board had any changes to the Agenda. Hearing none, the Chair asked for a motion to accept the agenda, as presented. Member Gray made the motion, Member Judd seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

**MOTION:** Member Gray

**SECOND:** Member Judd

**ACTION:** PASSED UNANIMOUSLY 4/0

## **3. CALL TO THE PUBLIC**

Chair Mueller noted that one member of the public was present at the meeting and asked he, or anyone who had called in, had anything to present at the Call to the Public. Hearing none, the Call to the Public was closed.

## **4. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES (November 19, 2020)**

Chair Mueller asked any Board member has any comments or corrections to the Board of Directors Regular Meeting Minutes of November 19, 2020. Hearing none, he called for the question. Member Gray made the motion, Member Judd seconded, and the motion to approve the November 19, 2020 meeting minutes was unanimously approved.

**MOTION:** Member Gray

**SECOND:** Member Judd

**ACTION:** PASSED UNANIMOUSLY 4/0

## **NEW BUSINESS: PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION/POSSIBLE ACTION**

### **5. LEGISLATIVE UPDATE**

The RTAC Liaison, Kevin Adam, described current activities occurring at the State legislature and briefly discussed these updates with Board members. Highlights included the possibility of additional federal funding specifically for transportation activities in the amount of about \$182 million to off-set COVID decreases in Federal HURF dollars; however, he cautioned that there was only a restriction on these funds to distribution some portion of it to areas larger in size than 200,000 in population (MAG and PAG).

It will be up to the State Transportation Board if they wish to allocate any funds down to the rural regional or local agencies or spend those additional funds on State projects that are underfunded or have been removed from the five-year State/ADOT plan.

There are a large number of bills, over 1,100 already in the state legislative hopper, and these do include several related to potential changes in transportation funding 1) to index the gas tax to inflation and 2) to bring alternative fuel vehicles into the fee schedule so that there is equity in what those vehicle owners pay for the transportation system. The observation was made that in Arizona it has been 30 years since an increase in fuel tax has been made. However, the repeal of the safety fee in July, currently funding DPS, will leave a large gap of about \$161,000 that appears, right now, to be re-directed to come out of the general fund. In the past, HURF revenues has been the State legislative go to for funding DPS.

In spite of job losses, the Arizona budget appears to be doing better than forecasts and this is hopeful, but it is still very unpredictable what the next year will bring given the challenges of COVID and the rising unemployment numbers.

The Board discussed the potential negative impacts of tax cuts on local jurisdiction budgets and the need to address deteriorating highways and roads in the region, both in the SVMPO region, but also in SEAGO/rural areas in general. The improvements needed to Highway 191 directly impact the viability of the Port of Entry at Douglas and potential expansion there. It was noted that continued state under-investment in rural roads would eventually become a huge financial challenge to overcome. Chair Mueller stated that he had discussed these concerns directly with State Representative Gail Griffin just a few hours ago.

Kevin Adam noted that at the Federal level there is some discussion of a potential ½ Billion in one-time direct transportation fund allocation but a discussion about how much and when this might occur is not yet settled.

The Chair thanked Kevin Adam for providing this updated information to the Board.

This was an information and discussion item.

## **6. ELECTION OF BOARD VICE-CHAIR TO VACANT POSITION**

Per the SVMPO By-Laws election of SVMPO officers occur every other year, and the elected Chair and Vice-Chair typically serve two-year terms. The Vice-Chair position being currently vacant, Chair Mueller stated that the preference was that the Vice-Chair position be held by a different jurisdiction than the Chair (Chair position currently held by the City Mayor) and the Board was looking for a Vice-Chair from either the County or the Town of Huachuca City. Member Judd immediately nominated Mayor Johann Wallace for the position of Vice-Chair. Member Wallace indicated his willingness to undertake that role. Member Gray then seconded the motion. Chair Mueller then called for the question. The motion then passed unanimously.

**MOTION:** Member Judd

**SECOND:** Member Gray

**ACTION:** PASSED UNANIMOUSLY 4/0

Board members then congratulated the new Vice-Chair, and Chair Mueller offered to meet with Vice-Chair Wallace in the near future to discuss the SVMPO roles and responsibilities. Vice-Chair Wallace indicated he would welcome that opportunity and would coordinate a date to get together soon.

## **NEW BUSINESS: PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION/POSSIBLE ACTION**

### **7. WORK PROGRAM AMENDMENT EIGHT**

Administrator Lamberton presented to the Board an updated Fiscal Year 2021 Work Program Budget that reflected budget changes made after the reconciliation of both the state and federal fiscal year budgets transmitted to the SVMPO in December 2020. She noted that there was only a slight decrease in the total budget of \$2,141 dollars and that amount had been removed entirely from the Travel and Training line item, given the reduction in Travel and Training activities in the last year and anticipated reductions in this category through the rest of the fiscal year.

She also directed the Board's attention to the Agenda packet memo that described specifically the adjustments made throughout to adjust earlier estimated costs for active Work Program tasks to the now known contracted amounts. It was noted that these types of adjustments to the Unified Work Program and Annual Budget are a typical mid-fiscal year activity presented to the Board of Directors.

There were no recommended changes in the SVMPO work plans, programs or activities in this proposed Amendment.

Chair Mueller asked if any of the Board members had any questions about the proposed changes or concerns with removing the full amount of the reduced budget from the travel and training line item. Hearing none, he called for the question. Vice-Chair Wallace made the motion, Member Judd seconded. The motion then passed unanimously.

**MOTION:** Vice-Chair Wallace

**SECOND:** Member Judd

**ACTION:** PASSED UNANIMOUSLY 4/0

## **8. NHS & SAFETY PERFORMANCE MEASURES**

Administrator Lamberton advised the Board members that on an annual basis the State sets potential thresholds, known as targets, as goals related to roadway performance and safety measures. She noted that of the roadway performance measures the only one related to our region was the decrease in the percent of roadways that the State felt should be in poor condition. On the safety measures, it was also noted that the earlier 2020 declines in crashes as traffic volumes decreased, seemed to have reversed itself for no known reason: crashes are now exceeding previous vehicle miles traveled (VMT). This trend has been observed nation-wide, but in Arizona, and specifically within Cochise County, an increase in what could be called "reckless driving" and specifically increases in passing in No Passing zones. The Administrator stated that social distancing ought to apply to driving behavior too, and encouraged Board members to raise this issue when appropriate, as the region does not want to see this increase in crashes and severe injuries continue to occur.

Administrator Lamberton directed the Board's attention to the specific recommended targets in the agenda memo. Regional governments review these performance goals and may choose to adopt the State performance measures or set their own targets for their region.

Chair Mueller noted that this item had been discussed as an informational item at the last meeting and the consensus of Board members at that time was that it made sense to adopt the State measures, rather than expend the time and funds to do these ourselves. He then asked if any Board members had any questions or discussion on this topic. Member Gray asked if the Board would like to adopt the measures in perpetuity or review them each year. Chair Mueller asked the Administrator if the performance measures were likely to change each year, and she confirmed that they were adjusted annually. Given this information, the Board felt more comfortable reviewing and voting on these measures each year at this time. Hearing no further

discussion or questions, Chair Mueller called for the question. Member Gray made the motion, Member Judd seconded, and the motion unanimously passed.

*Note: Member Searle joined the SVMPO Board meeting during this Agenda item.*

**MOTION:** Member Gray

**SECOND:** Member Judd

**ACTION:** PASSED UNANIMOUSLY 5/0

## **INFORMATIONAL ITEMS/DIRECTION TO SVMPO ADMINISTRATOR MAY BE GIVEN**

### **9. FY22 TITLE VI PLAN (Preliminary Draft)**

The SVMPO Administrator advised the Board that one of the annual mandated plans the MPO produced was a Title VI plan that described the demographics of our region. This preliminary FY22 draft is before the Board now because this is one plan that requires adopted minutes as part of the final submitted plan, due in June of this year. The next March meeting will provide a full Final Draft Plan but for those interested in seeing maps of the regional demographics now may view these on the SVMPO.org website. Administrator Lamberton briefly noted highlights of the changes in the region, stating none of them were of any surprise to this Board: an increase in elderly white, an increase in younger minorities, more individuals indicated that they spoke English well compared to last year, and relevant to the need for on-line connectivity, the Administrator also stated that it may be of interest that about 11% of the region's households indicate they have no computer/on-line access.

Chair Mueller indicated to all Board members that if they had any questions or comments on the drafted Title VI Plan to let the Administrator know so that this Plan could be finalized by the required deadline.

This was an information item. No action was taken.

### **10. WORK PROGRAM MID-YEAR EXPENDITURES AND PROJECTED FY22 MATCH**

The SVMPO Administrator provided Board members with the first preliminary draft of the next Fiscal Year Budget and potential jurisdiction match amounts that may be required. These early numbers are to assist the member jurisdictions as they begin their own local agency budget processes. As soon as updated fiscal year financial numbers are known, the SVMPO Administrator stated she would send them out to the Board. She noted that these formulas are based on Census data and the Census 2020 data has yet to be released as of this date. As a result, these preliminary estimates were based on best known numbers at this time and on the previous fiscal year federal transportation allocations. Administrator Lamberton also noted that there will be an adjustment in the amount of transit planning funds, almost doubling from last year, and this will assist the region's transit agencies, in particular, Vista Transit, in meeting some of their FTA mandated plans and reports.

Chair Mueller asked that each member jurisdiction to share this information with their Finance Departments so they could be prepared for their obligations for next fiscal year. He asked if there were any other questions on this item for the Administrator. Hearing none, the Board moved to Agenda Item 11.

This was an informational item. No action was taken.

## **11. STATE TRANSPORTATION BOARD/SOUTHCENTRAL DISTRICT REPORT**

Richard Searle, the State Transportation Board representative and Board member, advised the Board that the State Transportation Board had just begun to review the first draft of the next five-year State plan. It is heavy on preservation activities but has no capital projects planned in the SVMPO region in the next five to ten years. There is one project in the SEAGO region, on Highway 191, to reconstruct the Cochise Overpass, a railroad overpass that has been a barrier to oversized loads traveling up and back to the Port of Entry in Douglas. It is currently scheduled for FY23/FY24. Chair Mueller stated that this is a project that may require coordination and support from not only SEAGO, but also ADOT and the SVMPO, due to its importance in the region related to international trade and economic impact within the region. Member Searle also noted that although it is known that additional funds are being directed to ADOT for transportation projects it may be several months before it is known how those funds will be distributed. There are many transportation needs at the State level and projects that had been removed from the previous five-year plan.

Jeremy Moore, ADOT Engineer, noted that the Huachuca City pre-emption signal was wrapping up with an anticipated final replacement of the full-sized electrical cabinet on Feb. 2<sup>nd</sup>. Board members expressed their appreciation for ADOT's assistance in seeing that project happen as it was much needed in that area of the Highway for safe emergency service access.

This was an information item. No action was taken.

## **12. ANNOUNCEMENTS & JURISDICTION UPDATES**

SVMPO Board were offered an opportunity to share their own local agency information or current events.

Vice-Chair Wallace stated that the Huachuca City area Roadway Assessment was starting up and they would be looking at all the Town's roads to see what might be done to improve them over time in the future. The Town is especially interested in the results of the review of the roadway to the landfill which takes large weights and heavy trucks, and they want to make sure they construct that road in such a way to handle the actual traffic on it. The Town is also very pleased with the emergency signal project and stated that this improvement has already been a great help to their emergency services.

Member Judd stated she had nothing to add for the County.

Member Gray also had no new items related to the City of Sierra Vista. Chair Mueller stated that a lot was going on at this time and the City continues to just keep working through it.

## **13. UPCOMING SCHEDULED MEETINGS and ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT (Written Report)**

COG/MPO/ADOT Directors Meeting: February 24, 2021 at 10 a.m.

BPAC Mtg: March 2, 2021 at 10 a.m. Public Works Training Room or Virtually/Telephonic

SVMPO Board Meeting: March 25<sup>th</sup>, 2021 at 2:30 p.m. SV City Managers Conference Room

The SVMPO Administrator directed the Board members attention to the lengthy agenda memo

detailing out the active Work Program and TIP activities currently underway. There are now four active Work Program contracts out, as well as several mandated MPO plans, underway at this time. She advised the Board that the Census 2020 numbers, that the MPO does rely on quite a bit in our work, are not yet released, and she will let Board members know as soon as she is aware that this data is released (but also noted that elected officials may be made aware of the data release before the regional government staff are).

The last item in this Agenda item report, noting the potential increase in thresholds for MPO's, raised a question by Member Searle about what happens to existing MPO's if this is passed. Administrator Lamberton stated that when proposals like this have come up in the past, existing MPO's under the thresholds were often allowed to grandfather in or opt out, but this federal register notice did not mention anything about what might happen or a potential timeline. Chair Mueller noted that having put in all the effort of the past 7-8 years in building this MPO it would not make sense to dismantle it at this stage. Member Judd asked what the current population was of the SVMPO and Administrator Lamberton stated it was about 70,000.

This was an information item. No action was taken.

#### **14. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

Administrator Lamberton advised that the next scheduled SVMPO Board meeting is set for **Thursday, March 25<sup>th</sup> at 2:30 p.m.** Items under consideration may include the adoption of the FY22 Title VI Plan, and she hopes to have drafted existing conditions and modeled results for the 2050 Long-Range Transportation Plan and Short-Range Transit Plan for advance Board review.

In addition, the Board may take under consideration for possible action several revisions to SVMPO By-Laws and the Work Program related to SVMPO staffing and procurement activities. These recommended revisions, drafted by the SVMPO's Fiscal Agent's attorney, Nathan Williams, have been attached to the January Agenda Packet for Board member advance review of the March SVMPO Board meeting. Chair Mueller stated one noted revision may need to be added to revise the strict language of "follow Robert's Rules of Order" to "shall generally follow" in order to allow the flexibility typical of both City and MPO meetings e.g., not restating each motion four times. The number that constitutes a quorum may need adjusted as well as the MPO has now added the State Transportation Board as a voting member. Any other revisions that may be needed were requested to be brought to the Chair and/or Administrator's attention.

Member Gray noted that the scheduled March SVMPO meeting conflicts with a City Strategic Plan meeting. The Administrator was asked to look for another date. Member Searle noted that the State Transportation Board was supposed to be in Tombstone in March, but they have received notice that this meeting will be held virtually. As a result, potentially, Thursday, March 18<sup>th</sup> is a possible date, and the Administrator will check with Board member calendars and set a different Board meeting date as soon as possible.

This was an information item. No new topics were suggested for discussion. The Administrator was directed to set a different March meeting date given the conflicting date/time with the City's Strategic Plan scheduled meeting. *[SVMPO Board meeting was re-set to March 31<sup>st</sup> at 2:30 pm]*

#### **15. ADJOURNMENT of REGULAR SESSION**

Chair Mueller adjourned the SVMPO Board regular meeting at 3:51 p.m.