

**EAST ALABAMA RURAL PLANNING ORGANIZATION  
MEETING MINUTES  
DISTRICT POLICY COMMITTEE & TECHNICAL ADVISORY  
COMMITTEE for the NORTHERN DISTRICT  
*May 13, 2010 – 1:30 p.m  
Leesburg Town Hall***

*Policy Committee Members in Attendance:*

Mayor Tony Wilkie, City of Centre  
Judge Melvyn Salter, Cherokee County  
Mayor Edward Mackey, Town of Leesburg  
Dawn Landholm, representing Bill Curtis, EARPDC

*Technical Advisory Committee Members in Attendance:*

Mr. Johnny Harris, ALDOT  
Mr. Les Hopson, ALDOT 1<sup>st</sup> Division  
Mr. Corey Chambers, Cherokee County  
Mr. Robert Nail, Etowah County

*Other Attendees:*

Mr. Ben Thackerson, ALDOT District 5  
Ms. Stacey Browning, EARPDC

Chairman Mayor Wilkie called the meeting to order at approximately 1:35.

Under “Old Business,” Mayor Wilkie asked if there were any corrections to the minutes from the previous meeting in January. After determining that there were no corrections necessary, Mayor Wilkie asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Judge Melvyn Salter moved to approve the minutes, and Mr. Robert Nail seconded. The minutes were approved.

It was determined that there was no other “Old Business.”

Ms. Stacey Browning gave a staff report on the Highway Trust Fund. She provided a handout that discussed the HIRE Act, which extended surface transportation authorization through the end of the year. The bill also provides \$19.5 billion for the Highway Trust Fund. She also mentioned that the Act restores the money that had been rescinded from the state departments of transportation. Ms. Browning said that now that a longer-term extension had been passed, the Senate would begin working on a six year transportation authorization. A copy of the handout is attached to these minutes. Mayor Edward Mackey asked a question about the money that is coming out of the Alabama Trust Fund. Ms. Browning replied that the bill to take money out of the trust fund needs to be voted on by the public in November. Mr. Johnny Harris affirmed this, and mentioned that when if the money is taken out for road and bridge projects, 70 percent

will go to State projects, while 30 percent will go to county and city projects. He said that the formula for deciding how much money the cities and counties will receive will be similar to the gas tax formula. Every town will be guaranteed some of the money, but this percentage may be based on population.

Mr. Robert Nail mentioned that he believes that the money will be distributed based on the same method as gas tax money. A certain amount will be allotted, and then the remainder will be based on population. Mr. Corey Chambers said that he had seen a memo saying that the amounts given would be based on the 2000 census data. Mr. Harris said that the money might amount to a resurfacing project for Leesburg if they save it for a few years. Ms. Dawn Landholm mentioned that EAC staff would try to obtain a copy of the bill and summarize it for the next meeting.

Mr. Harris mentioned that \$70 million of that yearly money will be for State projects. He said that he was not sure if some of that money would be earmarked or not. Mr. Nail said that there were already earmarks as a part of the bill. He believes that the city/county portion of the money is actually closer to 75 percent, but the earmarks will make it closer to 70 percent. Mr. Nail also said that the money will be able to be used for maintenance and material, but not equipment, in a similar manner as the gas tax fund.

Mayor Wilkie then moved on to item #2 on the agenda, an update on road projects from ALDOT. Mr. Les Hopson mentioned that the SR 273 project had received a work permit, and the construction engineer said that the contractor would be beginning the project in about three weeks. Mayor Mackey mentioned that it would be nice if their PEMCO project could be incorporated. He said that the weather had held up the project, but it was moving on now. More equipment is being moved in. Mr. Hopson mentioned that there were more resurfacing projects in Cherokee County this year, including one on SR 35. Mr. Harris mentioned that the resurfacing budget had been cut back about 50 percent, but about 30 percent had been given back. He said that ALDOT is still adjusting their resurfacing projects for the funding. Mayor Mackey asked how this would affect the 411 project. Mr. Harris said that ideally it would be let before the end of the year. It had not been designed as quickly as had been expected. The middle portion is still in the 5 year plan, and is scheduled for FY 2013. He said that the plan was to get funding for the base and pave part of the project. Mr. Harris mentioned that a lot would depend on what Congress does with the next transportation bill for funding. If there is adequate funding, then the project can progress over the next three to four years. He said it would be at least five years before the project is complete to Gadsden. Mayor Mackey asked if the right of way had been purchased, and Mr. Harris responded that right of way had been bought, but it might not be sufficient for today's design standards. The right of way was purchased years ago. Most of it has been acquired. He said that if funding stays constant, it should take about six to eight years to complete.

Ms. Landholm asked about rural Etowah County. Mr. Harris said that ALDOT is resurfacing 179 in Etowah and Marshall Counties. He also said that there are a couple of bridge culvert replacements on 179. Mr. Hopson said that there are discussions about

realignments. Mr. Harris said that these projects should come up in the next five year plan, but that these smaller projects might get lost in funding issues.

Mr. Ben Thackerson said that 9 is going to be let from Cedar Bluff to 35. It should have been let on May 11<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Hopson said the 9 project will be let on the 28<sup>th</sup>. Mayor Wilkie asked about the cutting of the right of ways. ALDOT has begun cutting, and should have it done before Memorial Day. Mayor Mackey asked about a problem on the bridge where the City is unable to mow in the median.

Mayor Wilkie moved on to other new business. Mr. Harris formally introduced Les Hopson, the new pre-construction engineer. Mr. Hopson will serve on the TCC staff on the MPO as well as on the RPO in lieu of Curtis Vincent. Mayor Wilkie then asked if there was any open discussion or announcements. Ms. Landholm said that at the next meeting we would be planning the fiscal year. She asked for requests for topics for presentations at upcoming RPO meetings. The next meeting date was announced as July 8, 2010 in Gadsden. After this, the meeting was adjourned.