

Metroplan Board of Directors Meeting November 19, 2025

Attending:

Board Members

Mayor Crystal Herrmann, City of Alexander
Mayor Bernadette Chamberlain, City of Austin
Mayor Tom Farmer, City of Benton
Mayor Chris Treat, City of Bryant
Mayor Jeff Elmore, City of Jacksonville
Mayor Stephanie White, City of Keo
Mayor Wayne McGee, City of Lonoke
Mayor Caleb Norris, City of Maumelle
Mayor Mike Kemp, City of Shannon Hills
Mayor Charles Gastineau, City of Ward
Mayor Terry Don Robinson, City of Wooster
Mayor Derrick Rainey, City of Wrightsville
Judge Allen Dodson, Faulkner County
Judge Barry Hyde, Pulaski County
Judge Matt Brumley, Saline County
Mr. David Siskowski, ARDOT
*Mr. Robbie Alberson, City of Conway
*Mr. Jeff Arey, City of Haskell
*Mr. David Cook, City of North Little Rock

***Indicates Proxy**

Metroplan

Casey Covington
Bernadette Rhodes
Tammy Gillis
Leesa Freasier
Peritosh Jambhale
Jonathan Lupton
Daniel Holland
Sydney Dozier
Leesa Freasier
Brittany Nichols
Lynn Bell

Guest

Steven Taylor, ARDOT
Sunny Farmahan, ARDOT
Jennifer Hill, City of Alexander
Rebecca Kidder, City of Bryant
Robert Birch City of Jacksonville
Maneesh Krishnan, City of Little Rock
Joycelin Randle, City of Little Rock
Nick Stevens, City of Little Rock
Tab Townsell, Pulaski County
Mark Koch, Olsson
Joe Smith, Arkansas Municipal League (AML)
Mike Watson, Half
Jon Honeywell, Volkert
Hunter Hobby, Volkert
Truett Smith, Crafton Tull
Ben Reynolds, VES
Katie LeBlanc, HNTB – LR
Andrew Boatman, HNTB – LR
Lauren Palmer, Everstrive

I. Approval of minutes

A motion to approve the minutes of the August Board meeting was made by Mayor Kemp, seconded by Mayor Gastineau and passed by the Board.

II. Approval of the Financial Report

Ms. Gillis gave a brief financial report to the Board.

Ms. Gillis noted that the third quarter financials included in the Board packet were developed by staff and are currently being reviewed by Landmark.

A motion to approve the August financials was made by Mayor Kemp, seconded by Mayor Rainey, and approved by the Board.

III. Metroplan Report

Mr. Covington stated to the Board that staff has attended several meetings and conferences since returning from the Metroplan trip to Madison. Staff attended the

Arkansas Transportation Summit that was hosted by ARDOT. Ms. Rhodes and Ms. Freasier presented with representatives of Northwest Arkansas and Fort Smith on the CPRG grant implementation. Mr. Covington participated in a panel on the future of transportation. In addition, several staff attended the AMPO conference in Providence. There was a lot of valuable information acquired on Reauthorization. To date there is still no bill on Reauthorization, and it is expected to be established within the next 2 -3 months.

Mr. Covington stated that staff attended the City of Keo ribbon cutting for their electric charging station. Staff also attended the Saline River Recreational event.

Mr. Covington mentioned to the Board that he was recognized in the Arkansas Business Publishing Group publication listing of Arkansas' Most Influential Leaders. Mr. Covington also recognized staff and the Board for all of their support and efforts in leadership in the region that aided him in reaching such accolades.

Mr. Covington noted that several staff members are members national committee – representing Arkansas and Metroplan. Mr. Lupton is a member of the AASHTO committee on the Census Transportation Planning Product (CTPP) workgroup. Mr. Lupton gave a brief presentation to the Board on the document that was produced by the committee that was derived from the from the Census Bureau.

Mr. Lupton stated that the Census Transportation Planning product is a collaboration with the Census bureau, federal agencies, and transportation planning professionals utilizing special tabulation based on the American Community Survey.

Mr. Lupton noted that staff is already working on the next version of the document and Metroplan is using the Little Rock metro area as a trial for a potential forecasting synthesis version.

Mr. Covington further noted that staff continues to work with ARDOT on the SMART Streets Plan. Mr. Holland has been working with the department in the process of the development of the engagement list. Staff will be reaching out soon to receive some information to get current practices from each member of the Board and also ask several members to participate through the stakeholders and team guides.

Mr. Covington added that Mr. Haustein and Mr. Runder are currently working on county plans with about 50 maps and charts that look at population and demographics, land use and development patterns and master street plans.

Mr. Covington gave a brief update on the upcoming Call for Projects for 2026. There are some TAP grants available from Metroplan 2026 and 2027. ARDOT just announced their grants and there is also some CPRG funding for the upcoming year.

Mr. Covington provided the Board with the 2026 Metroplan calendar, which will be finalized at the December meeting. There will be no meetings for the months of February and October due to elections.

Mr. Covington indicated that there will be a 2-day summit rather than a benchmarking trip next year. It is suggested that a retreat on May 6th and 7th to possibly Lake DeGray or somewhere similar for 2-half-day meetings would be beneficial in discussing issues that are important in Central Arkansas.

Mr. Covington noted that included in the Board packet is a operational budget for review. The Board will be asked to approve the budget at the December meeting, which will also include engineering and project budgets.

Mr. Covington added that the membership dues for 2026 will not be changed and will be the same as this year.

Mr. Covington stated to the Board that there would be a peer research meeting at 11:00 with Lauren Palmer of Everstrive.

Ms. Palmer stated to the Board that her team is deep into the insight gathering phase of the process of examining both Metroplan and CAPDD. During the week she would be conducting a series of interviews to get a better understanding of the area.

Ms. Palmer stated that she would be back in mid-December to wrap up the information that she has been gathering. During this time there will also be some peer-one research. Information will be gathered from various sources.

The report will be given to staff for review in January and help inform the Board of Ms. Palmer's findings.

IV. Small Cities and TCC Bylaws

Mr. Covington stated that the bylaws for both committees will be approved by the Board at the December meeting.

Mr. Covington stated that Small Cities has been in effect for several years without bylaws. Bylaws for the committee were developed and approved during the summer. The committee does not have the authority to approve any action but can make recommendations to the Board on various issues.

Mr. Covington stated that the Technical Coordinating Committee has not been active for a while. It was noted that this committee which is comprised of primarily of the

Board's technical staff, engineering and planning staffs. The functions of the committee is to review technical aspects that staff prepare for plans.

Mr. Covington recommended that the TCC be reformed to provide technical assistance as we continue to move forward. The recommendation will be brought to the Board in December for approval.

V. Benchmarking Trip Review

Ms. Dozier gave a brief presentation on the benchmarking trip.

Ms. Dozier thanked those who were able to attend the benchmarking trip. The members met with various city officials, planning partners, and the MPO of Madison. There was a lot of information gathered on regional planning, resilience and collaboration and the impact on long-term planning.

VI. CPRG Call for Projects

Ms. Rhodes stated to the Board that there is a new opportunity for the communities in the region to receive some grant funding.

Ms. Rhodes noted that several areas have stated that they wanted to be able to plant some native species trees.

Therefore Ms. Rhodes asked the Board to release the "Call for Projects" for the CPRG round 2 of Green Networks grant funding. The Green Networks grants will allow for various categories such as multi-use trail construction, transportation options, land restoration, and restoring forests, streams, and prairies.

Ms. Rhodes stated that applications for this funding can be found on the online application on jot form.

Ms. Freasier stated to the Board that there is a 90% completion that must be done before the CPRG Trail Construction deadline of May 26th. Included in the Board packet is a list of the requirements for multi-use trail construction.

Ms. Freasier noted that once the requirements are met the next phase is to look at emissions. Staff will be available to assist with getting the projects through the process.

Ms. Freasier added that land restoration is being reviewed for some of the grant funding. There are contractors available to assist with these projects.

There is a link to the application on jot form; Metroplan CPRG Green Networks Application Form 2025-26.

A motion to approve the release for Call for Projects was made by Mayor Gastineau, seconded by Mayor Rainey, and passed by the Board.

VII. Safety Performance Targets

Mr. Haustein stated to the Board that ARDOT has developed the Safety Target for 2026. Included in the Board packet is the Performance Measures document for review.

A motion to approve Resolution 25-19 to support the 2026 Safety Targets was made by Mayor Rainey, seconded by Mayor Chamberlain, and passed by the Board.

VIII. UPWP Amendment

Mr. Covington stated to the Board that the UPWP was approved earlier in the year. The Federal Transit Association (FTA) has requested an amendment to reflect prior year funding.

A motion to approve the UPWP Resolution 25-20 was made by Mayor Gastineau, seconded by Mayor Farmer, and passed by the Board.

IX. Request for Partnership – Hwy 100 Study

Mr. Covington stated last year there were some partnering projects on transportation studies discussed with ARDOT, and there was a verbal agreement to partner on a study on Hwy. 100 looking at operational access. At this time a formal resolution is needed to reflect this with ARDOT providing a funding match for the project.

A motion to approve Resolution 25-21 was made by Mayor Farmer, seconded by Mayor Norris, and passed by the Board.

X. 2025 & 2026 Project Obligations

Mr. Covington stated to the Board that staff continues to meet its funding obligation requirements. In reviewing the progress for 2020-2025 there was approximately \$105 million in projects in Central Arkansas. Included in the Board packet is a list of the projects that received federal funding in 2025 and those expected to obligate in

2026.

XI. XI. Call for Projects

a. 2026 STBG and 2026 TAP – Additional Funding

Mr. Covington noted that there was some leftover STBG and TAP funding in the amount of \$4 million in unallocated funding for use in 2026. Staff recommended that these funds be used to make up any cost differences on projects that are ready to go and need additional funding.

b. 2027 TAP Funding

Ms. Freasier stated that the funding mentioned is to aid with unforeseen costs that were not obligated. All of these projects must be completely funded by September 2026.

A motion to approve the use of the remaining STBG and TAP funds was made by Mayor Kemp, seconded by Mayor Chamberlain, and passed by the Board.

XII. Agency Reports

A. Arkansas Department of Transportation

Mr. Siskowski stated to the Board there were three projects awarded in the September letting:

- Hwy 70 /University Avenue intersection improvement project
- I-57 creating design concepts
- County Rd. 71 3-mile overlay and County Rd. 76 in Lonoke Co. 1-mile overlay

Mr. Siskowski stated that there were two projects in the November letting:

- Selected Sections Preservation job for Hwy.70 in Little Rock – 4.3-mile between I-430 and Brody Creek
- Milling and overlay of Hwy. 5 – 2.2-miles I-430 to Otter Creek Rd.

Mr. Siskowski noted that the Transportation Summit will be held in Hot Springs next year and encourage everyone to attend.

B. Rock Region METRO

There was no report from Rock Region METRO.

C. Bill and Hillary Clinton National Airport

There was no report from the Clinton National Airport.

D. Federal Highway Administration

There was no report from FHWA.

E. Little Rock Port Authority

There was no report from the Little Rock Port Authority.

F. Congressional Offices

Mr. Pitchford stated to the Board that the Government is back up and running. The main focus between now and Christmas would be to get the Appropriations Bill passed.

Also, the issue of Affordable Housing will be examined and work done to get policies in place.

G. Arkansas Department of Economic Development

There was no report from CAPDD.

H. Arkansas Municipal League

Mr. Smith stated that January 14th – 16th will be the Municipal League Winter Conference and encouraged everyone to attend.

Mr. Smith also noted that the League was successful in getting all of the 500 city signatures needed for the opioid settlement.

Mr. Smith informed the Board that they should make sure that their budget includes the appropriate funding for the Workmen's Comp. If it doesn't the State can withhold turnback money that may be received.

XIII. Other Business

Judge Dodson commended Mr. Covington for his award recognition.

Mr. Covington reminded the Board that immediately following the Board meeting that the large and medium cities and the county judges would meet with Ms. Palmer for the peer review.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

SIGNED: _____
Allen Dodson, President
Judge, Faulkner County

ATTEST: _____
Matt Brumley, Secretary
Judge, Saline County