

**NIACOG EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE - MINUTES**  
**Bennigan's, 2023 7th Ave. N, Clear Lake, Iowa**  
**March 11, 2024 at 5:15 p.m.**

Members in Attendance: Members in attendance included: A.J. Stone, David Vikturek, Sis Greiman, and Mark Johansen. Others in attendance included: Executive Director Myrtle Nelson, Senior Planner John Robbins, Fiscal Officer Kris Urdahl, and Teresa Collins, as well as, several transit drivers including: Gene Anderson, Scott Kitner, Dan Cross, Michael Brown, Doc Floden, Mike Morton, and Grant Harrod.

Members Absent: Jim Wherry

1. Call to Order: Chair Stone called the meeting to order at 5:18 p.m.
2. Approval of Agenda and Minutes of Previous Meeting: The members reviewed the current agenda, as well as, the minutes for the Executive Committee meeting held on February 14, 2024. Greiman made a motion to approve the agenda and the minutes as printed. Johansen seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.
3. Financial Report – January 2024 Financial Reports: Nelson reviewed the ‘Statement of Net Assets’, the ‘Statement of Revenue and Expenses’, and the ‘Monthly Disbursement Detail’ (listing of checks) for January 2024.
  - a. Post-Purchase Approval (pre-approved 1/8/2024): Bus Purchase – 2023 Turtle Top Terra Transit LD, VIN 1FDEU6PG3NKA24140, \$112,595: Nelson requested post-purchase approval for the bus that was preapproved for purchase on January 8, 2024.

Vikturak made a motion to approve the financial report and post-approval of the 2023 Turtle Top Terra Transit LD, VIN 1FDEU6PG3NKA24140 offered by Nations Bus Sales at a price of \$112,595. Greiman seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.
4. Communications and Reports - No communications or reports were raised.
5. New Business
  - a. Approval of Out-of-State Travel (APA National Planning Conference): Nelson said that she would like to attend the APA National Planning Conference. She noted that it would be much cheaper to attend this year because it is being held in Minneapolis, which would require no air fare. She would be able to stay with her brother so hotel cost could be avoided as well. Travel cost would include registration of \$840, as well as, mileage and some meals. Nelson said that the travel budget had essentially been met, but that it would save money over attending in a different year due to the reduced costs. Vikturek recommended considering if other staff might want to attend, and Robbins indicated that he had not reviewed the agenda and would want to do that before determining whether the

conference would be of value to his work.

Johansen made a motion to approve the out-of-state travel for Nelson and for Robbins if he should find the conference sessions to be valuable to his work. Vikturek seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.

- b. Conflict of Interest Policy for Federal Funding: Nelson said that NIACOG accepted work that involves housing rehabilitation for households affected by COVID. She said that the funding comes from Housing Rehabilitation Pilot Program (HRPP) and was funded by the American Rescue Plan Act and administered by the Iowa Finance Authority (IFA). She then explained that IFA is requiring that a Conflict of Interest Policy be adopted by the NIACOG board to satisfy the federal requirements. Nelson briefly reviewed the attached 'Conflict of Interest Policy for Federal Funding'. She stated that the policy says that NIACOG employees, officers, and their families cannot have a financial interest in a project with federal funding that is received by NIACOG. The policy also states that potential conflicts of interest must be disclosed in writing to the NIACOG Board of Directors chairperson. Johansen made a motion to approve the Conflict of Interest Policy for Federal Funding. Vikturek seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.
- c. RLF Administrative Plan (De-federalized Legacy) – Update: Nelson reviewed proposed changes to the Revolving Loan Fund Administrative Plan as outlined in the attached pages from the RLF Administrative Plan. She called attention to the following substantial changes proposed.
  - Increase the percentage of interest income that could be used for administration from 50% to 100%
  - Remove the requirement of a bank turn down letter
  - Require the environmental preparation solely for projects that involve construction or renovation
  - Remove provisions for minimum loan fund balance and sequestration

Greiman made a motion to approve the modifications to the Revolving Loan Fund Plan as presented. Vikturek seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.

6. Old Business:

- a. FY24 Budget Enhancement Progress & Plans: Nelson said that the roll out of the TripMaster software went fairly well for the drivers, but poorly with migration of data, trip scheduling, and submitting data to Medicaid for compensation. She said that another training is being planned with TripMaster staff on-site to overcome some difficulties at a cost of approximately \$5,000. Nelson also reviewed the attached PowerPoint presentation that had been presented to transit staff on Saturday, February 17, 2024.

7. Bus Driver Concerns: Gene Anderson asked the Executive Committee members if they were familiar with the work of the Region 2 drivers. He talked about the bus drivers and their work that includes, not only driving the bus, but a door-to-door service that requires

pushing wheelchairs for some passengers to get them on the bus. The City of Mason City transit drivers do not have to do this. He said that he works to get paid. He also said that he is accustomed to the long hours.

Vikturik said that the board members have heard from people in the community and have received 98% positive comments about the drivers and the Region 2 transit system. He explained that the million dollar increase in expenses per year, combined with the flat level of revenues for the past 10 years, has put the transit system in a very different financial position. Vikturik also reviewed the limited parameters within which revenues can be increased unlike private businesses. He said that the board desires to treat the drivers as fairly as possible within the constraints of the budget.

Greiman said that Nelson keeps the board informed about the dedicated work of the drivers.

Gene Anderson said that he believes that wages should be raised high enough so that young drivers could make a living at the job.

Dan Cross expressed frustration about the part-time drivers being paid at a lower rate than the full-time drivers. Teresa Collins noted that the part-timers' flexibility is important to filling gaps in the schedule. Nelson explained that she believes that the part-time drivers do the same kind of work as the full time drivers. She also explained that the disparity in wage was made when none of the drivers were willing to accept full-time work, so the full-time wage was bumped up to encourage the part-timers to consider a full-time schedule. She said that the situation had changed to the extent that now more drivers want to go full time instead of part-time. So the previous issue has resolved.

Doc Floden said that he believes too many drivers are on the road at the same time. He said that previously a maximum of 5 drivers were on the road at a time and now 7 are sometimes on the road at the same time. He also said that a higher starting wage is needed to recruit more drivers.

Gene said that, at one time, the system had only 2 full-time drivers on staff. The system currently has 9 full-time drivers; however, some of that difference may be due to having assumed more systems into the Region 2 operations (Winnebago County, Mitchell County, etc.).

Gene Anderson said that he believes that the Operations Manager should work more hours.

Vikturik said wages are important. We also need to have money to cover wage increases.

Grant Harrod said that he would like to see an increase in pay for part-time drivers. He also said, "This job warms my heart."

Mike Morton said that some good discussion had been held, and that the driver job is important because of the impact that it has.

Stone said that the input provided at the meeting would be mulled over and revisited at the following meeting.

8. Other Items from the Board: Nelson noted that some issues with health insurance have arisen that might require a special Executive Committee meeting prior to the next scheduled meeting in April. The Committee members expressed willingness to accommodate a special meeting if one is needed.
9. Next Meeting: Stone noted that the next meeting is scheduled to be held on Wednesday, April 17, 2024 at noon in the NIACOG office.
10. Adjournment: Stone adjourned the meeting at 6:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Myrtle Nelson, AICP  
Recording Secretary