

MEMORANDUM

To: RRC Members
Debbie Alke, Administrator/Aeronautics Division
D. John Blacker, Administrator/Maintenance Division
Mike Bousliman, Administrator/Information Services Division
Monte N. Brown, Operations Manager/Business Process Solutions Unit
Robert E. Burkhardt/Federal Highway Administration
Jim Currie, Deputy Director/Department of Transportation
Jeffery M. Ebert, P.E./District Administrator-Butte
Larry Flynn, Administrator/Administration Division
Loran Frazier, P.E., Administrator/Highway and Engineering Division
Jim Lynch, Director/Department of Transportation
Dennis Sheehy, Administrator/Motor Carrier Services Division
Jerry Stephens, P.E./WTI MSU
Sandra S. Straehl, Administrator/Rail, Transit, and Planning Division

From: Susan C. Sillick, Manager
Research Programs

Date: September 22, 2008

Subject: Summary of Minutes from the August 26, 2008 RRC Meeting

The following RRC members were present: John Blacker, Mike Bousliman, Bob Burkhardt, Jim Currie, Dennis Sheehy, Sue Sillick, Jerry Stephens, and Lynn Zanto (for Sandy Straehl).

1. **Budget Report**

John asked if budget or anticipated expenditures were used for Departmental budget meetings. Jim Currie indicated anticipated expenditures were used.

Sue added that the current budget report reflects Research's 2009 current obligations. Since we are near the beginning of FY 2009 and the RRC approves projects as often as monthly, this amount currently available will decrease throughout the year. Sue indicated that annual expenditures are typically very close to the budgeted amount.

2. **Research Project – current listing**

Sue reported on the status of the nine new projects from the January Solicitation. Two have been let to contract. Two have had RFP's issued. One had a Scope-of-Work prepared and was presented to the RRC for Approval-in-Concept today. Two proposals are being prepared by MSU staff. One has been tabled pending action by operations. One has been cancelled.

2a. Determine Erionite Occurrence in Southwest Montana and Relationship to MDT Highway Construction, Past and Future (08.009)

Brian Goodman/Environmental Services met with the RRC to request a Scope of Work Approval-in-Concept on behalf of the Technical Panel so that an RFP can be issued.

This project involves an assessment of the presence of Erionite in Montana and its potential impact in use on past construction projects and the risk of future activities.

Even though DEQ and DPHHS are on the Technical Panel, there was a concern that the health agencies are not engaged. They haven't classified Erionite as a hazardous material. It was felt that, even though this research focused on transportation, this is a much larger issue than transportation and we should be a partner, if research is needed, but should not be leading the research.

Jim Currie felt we didn't need to conduct research to develop a specification to protect MDT employees from a potential hazard.

The RRC decided that this proposal should be returned to the Technical Panel for further discussion and suggested the agencies on the Technical Panel approach EPA asking them to provide guidance on EPA's role and how state agencies need to proceed. The Technical Panel will also discuss specification development with Construction and Maintenance staff.

2b. Montana Rest Area Use: Data Acquisition and Estimation

John Blacker/Maintenance Division made this presentation on behalf of Maintenance and Sandy Straehl/Rail, Transit, and Planning Division.

This problem statement is being presented to the RRC outside of the Solicitation cycle as an Administration High Priority topic. The purpose of the project is to allow rest area investments to be considered by an asset management approach.

Jim Currie made a motion to move this problem statement forward to a Technical Panel. John Blacker seconded the motion. All RRC members present voted in favor of the motion. The motion passed.

3. Reports: Available Upon Request

3a. Bozeman Pass Wildlife Monitoring – Progress Reports – May, June, and July 2008

3b. Evaluation of the Montana Department of Transportation's Research Project Solicitation, Prioritization, and Selection Process – Final Report – FHWA/MT-08-005/8117-29

4. **Contract Extensions:** None

5. **Proposals:**

5a. Smart Transportation and Land Use Planning

Hal Fossum/Transportation Planning attended the meeting and spoke in favor of funding this proposal on behalf of the Technical Panel.

Sue reminded the RRC that this project was moved forward to the Technical Panel stage, the RRC approved the Scope of Work, an RFP was issued, and the RFP evaluation committee unanimously chose the Cambridge Systems proposal as the best proposal.

The purpose of this project is to develop a toolkit, focusing on 4 areas: local transportation system financing, development and extension of local street networks, assessment of development impacts on local and state roads, and directions for multimodal/transit development. There is genuine interest and need for this tool. In addition, local governments are participating on the Technical Panel and the project includes stakeholder involvement and outreach. These efforts will facilitate implementation.

John Blacker made a motion to fund this project for \$299,873.00. Jim Currie seconded the motion. All members present voted in favor of the motion. The motion passed.

5b. Safety Analyst – Pooled Fund Study

Pierre Jomini/Traffic Safety met with the RRC and spoke in favor of funding for this pooled fund study.

Safety Analyst is a Software Data Management Tool being developed through a cooperative effort of FHWA and 20 plus DOT's. This tool will allow MDT to conduct safety analyses using MDT's data. It consists of the following modules:

1. Network screening,
2. Diagnosis,
3. Countermeasure appraisal,
4. Economic appraisal,
5. Priority Ranking, and
6. Evaluation.

The benefits to MDT are improved safety analyses and identification of areas of interest based on better statistical methods.

MDT would receive software and engineering support for data preparation, testing, validation of software analyst, and access to software maintenance and enhancement. There are a number of caveats including:

1. Montana has a multitude of crash referencing systems complicating data management.
2. Montana's lack of full computerized roadway characteristics data elements will not allow a full use of the software.
3. The Montana Highway Patrol is implementing a new crash investigator's report.

Other concerns expressed, include keeping ISB and the traffic records committee apprised of progress and the unknown cost to implement and maintain this software.

Mike Bousliman made a motion to fund this project for \$20,000.00. John Blacker second the motion. All RRC members present voted in favor of the motion. The motion passed.

6. Implementation/Technology Transfer

6a. Evaluation of the Montana Department of Transportation's Research Project Solicitation, Prioritization, and Selection Process

Due to a time issue, this item will be held over until the next meeting.

7. Department/Division Hot Topics – RRC Members Roundtable Discussion

John reported that Maintenance had changed the variable message board near Bozeman and Maintenance is now able to provide the public with up-to-date messages. This has proven so successful that he has put in a request to fund another variable message board in the Hogan area.

Bob reported that Denny Judycki, FHWA Administrator for Research, has retired. No replacement has been named.

Mike said that ITS grant proposal has been submitted and he is waiting to hear if MDT has been selected to receive any funding.

Jerry thanked the Department for all of the cooperation he has received. He indicated they are working on a number of proposals for MDT.

cc: Craig L.Abernathy/Research Programs
Kent M. Barnes, P.E./Bridge Bureau
Kevin Christensen/Highways and Engineering Division
Tim Conway, P.E./Consultant Design Bureau
Lisa Durbin/Construction Administration-Bureau
Mike Dyrdaahl/Highways and Engineering Division
Paul R. Ferry, P.E./Highways Bureau
John Horton/Right-of-Way Bureau
Paul Jagoda, P.E./Construction Engineering Bureau
Jennifer Jensen/Human Resources Division
Michael P. Johnson/District Administrator-Great Falls
Dwane Kailey, P.E./District Administrator-Missoula
Tom Martin, P.E./ Environmental Services Bureau
Ray Mengel/District Administrator-Glendive
Jeanne Nydegger/Research Programs
Suzy Price/Contract Plans Bureau
Timothy W. Reardon/Legal Services
Stefan Streeter, P.E. /District Administrator-Billings
Matt Strizich, P.E./Materials Bureau
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