



COPPER VALLEY DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION

CRV REGIONAL PLANNING ORGANIZATION

Meeting Minutes

February 5, 2025; 5:00 – 6:00pm

Copper Valley Air Conference Room – Gulkana Airport

- I. Call to Order by Gary Schliesing at 5:11pm
 - RPO Members Present: Gary Schliesing (Glenn Transport/Gulkana Fuel); Martin Boniek (Copper Valley Air); Brett Nelson (DOT&PF); John Becker (GCVCC); Jerry Lesemann (Crowley); Dennis McGlothlin (CVDA); Jennifer Bowman (CVDA staff); Asa Brewi (CVDA staff)
 - RPO Members Absent/Excused: Joe Bovee (Ahtna, Inc.)
 - Guests: Jason Hoke (CVDA Board President); Michael Deegan (WM); Mark Weeks (Ahtna, Inc.); Terry Valentine (JC Enterprises)
- II. **12. Motion to approve the agenda by John Becker, 2nd by Dennis McGlothlin, Discussion: A request to add Funding and Priorities to the agenda under new business requested by Jason Hoke. Motion passed.**
- III. **13. Motion to approve the 12.4.24 Meeting Minutes by Jerry Lesemann, 2nd by John Becker, motion passed.**
- IV. Elections:
 - Nominations for three open Committee Member Seats: Joe Bovee and Gary Schliesing have stepped down, Jerry Lesemann would like to stay on the committee for another term.
 - Terry Valentine (JC Enterprises); nominated by John Becker
 - Michael Deegan (WM); nominated by Jason Hoke
 - Jerry Lesemann (Crowley); Incumbent

Candidates' Intros: Jason Hoke - Commissioner Anderson recommended that we recruit an at-large transportation industry business to sit on the committee. Jason Hoke nominated Mike Deegan – Waste Management State Director for all of Alaska and Hawaii. Discussion followed, committee members online to text or email their votes. Michael introduced himself. John Becker nominated Terry Valentine, private business owner in the region. Jerry Lesemann, incumbent.

- Election Results.
 - Terry Valentine – Committee member (term 2027)
 - Michael Deegan – Committee member (term 2027)
 - Jerry Lesemann – Committee member (term 2027)
- Committee Chair Nominations:
 - Terry Valentine
 - John Becker
- Committee Chair Election Results:
 - Terry Valentine (term 2027)

Election Schedule:

Timeline for seats up for re-election

2026 Committee Seats: John Becker, Martin Boniek, Designated Seats: DOT&PF and CVDA

2027 Committee Seats: Terry Valentine, Michael Deegan, Jerry Lesemann



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- V. DOT&PF – Brett Nelson. Updates old business from December Meeting. *“DOT&PF to correct the erosion at Simpson Hill to prevent damage or further erosion and potential damage to the road and safety concerns especially the winter conditions. The committee requested additional jersey barriers be provided for better safety and asked DOT&PF if they are studying the rate of erosion and what is the schedule for the work to be performed at this location?”*
- Jersey Barriers Safety at Simpson Hill – Traffic & Safety Engineer for the Northern Region and Brett reviewed the latest aerial images. Based on standards and specifications it does not warrant additional guardrail or jersey barrier at this location but DOT&PF will keep an eye on the erosion should it get worse and creep closer to the edge of the pavement.
 - Simpson Hill realignment is not currently in the STIP.
 - Reflector brightness: The level of reflection is required by standards, these were installed to meet that specification, but the reflection will diminish as time goes on and be less glaring.
 - Construction Map for Northern Region Proposed Projects: in Glennallen #15 MP143-154 Resurfacing on track to advertise in April with summer construction. #24 South of Glennallen Richardson MP97 – 106.5 Resurfacing, on track to advertise in April with summer construction.
 - Previous meeting with Commissioner Anderson and Central region. Asked about the STIP Amendment #1 – Glenn Hwy MP 66 – 92 (outside CRV-RPO region) STIP Amendment #2, Brett thinks that MP 85-92, part of the larger project will be MP 85-92 is tentatively in STIP Amend #2.

Discussion: CRV-RPO - STIP Comments sent by the RPO, Jen requested a review of the STIP comment submitted by the CRV-RPO be reviewed in a meeting with DOT&PF. Some of the projects submitted may be in the upcoming STIP amendment #2, Brett suggested scheduling the review after those are public. Jason Hoke requested the DOT&PF superintendent for the area be invited to future CRV-RPO meetings. It is important to understand what's going on with O&M. **Action Item:** *Brett to invite to Chad Heller, request attendance at upcoming meeting.* Terry Valentine noted the realignment of Simpson Hill is a priority, before it becomes emergency it would be nice to get it done. Brett confirmed it is not in the STIP but will check with Russ. Gary noted that the re-alignment is a real safety issue, if you miss the turn, it will have very serious consequences

VI. Old Business:

RAISE FY 25: DOT & PF, CVDA, and CRV-RPO submitted an application for the RAISE FY25 Grant for the realignment of the McCarthy Road along Long Lake, MP 44- 48.5. The grant would cover planning up to construction. If awarded, DOT&PF will do the bulk of the work and we would be working with them on public outreach and participation throughout the grant. Award announcements are expected in June 2025. Discussion: *Martin made note that someone from the CRV-RPO needs to replace Bruce's seat on the McCarthy Road PEL study committee.* **Action item:** *Jen will inform the PEL group that the CRV-RPO will be putting up a replacement.*

ROW: Funding was identified and will be paid directly from DOT&PF to CVDA. This is a priority and the CVDA/CRV-RPO needs to start working on this. Jen to set up a strategy meeting with DOT&PF to discuss the next steps and the plan for moving forward, roles responsibilities. Discussion: *John Becker requested that he and Terry be part of this as it is a priority for them to get a plan of action going to get this done and requested a meeting.* **Action item:** *Jen to schedule a ROW kick-off meeting and include Terry and John, schedule ASAP.*



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GKN Update: Jason hosted a meeting in Anchorage with Commissioner Anderson, transportation private industry businesses, AK legislation and regional stakeholders. Jason reported there was an exceptionally good turnout, a lot of businesses are very interested in the plans for GKN Airport and see its potential. Walking away from the meeting with homework, people want more information a look at the numbers. DOT&PF is putting together data from Ted Stevens Airport, fuel consumption, destinations, wait times and will try to determine the commerce traffic through our region from Canada and the port of Valdez to Fairbanks. The expansion of the GKN Airport for fuel, food and commerce goods will have a tremendous economic impact on the region. We need to build the case.

Action Item: *Jen to send PPT to the team.* Discussion followed: Terry, the guidance from Commissioner Anderson, was don't stop, keep pushing the airport, don't lose momentum.

VII. New Business:

Annual Meeting: An annual meeting is to be scheduled for the CRV-RPO. Does the CRV-RPO want to combine the CVDA and the CRV-RPO annual meeting? Is there anything in the CVDA bylaws or CRV-RPO operating agreement that would prevent this? *Discussion: Jason Hoke, nothing in the CVDA Bylaws that would prevent a co-meeting, this seems like a good idea. The next CRV-RPO Meeting is April 2, 2025. 14. Motion by Dennis McGlothin to schedule a joint annual meeting with the CRV-RPO and CVDA Annual meeting, 2nd Jerry Lesemann.* Discussion followed, should we choose the date now, CVDA and the CRV-RPO need a 30-day public notice, date TBD after the CVDA BOD meeting next week. CRV-RPO, **Motion Passed.** RPO is to provide a report for the meeting.

Funding and Priorities: Jason Hoke reported to the committee that the Governor has \$6.5 million dollars in the FY25 budget to build a road from Chitina to Haley Creek, called the "Copper River Highway". This was never brought to the CRV-RPO's attention. I have reviewed all of the recommendations submitted to the state since the CRV-RPO's inception and there was never a recommendation from the RPO to put in a road for a private for-profit corporation, Ahtna, Inc. This was brought to the attention of the Governor, Lt. Governor, Senator Cronk and Representative Schwanke. Why is the State giving a for-profit corporation \$6.5M for a road that serves no purpose for the region other than to allow people to go down to Haley Creek and pay Ahtna to go dip netting? The CRV-RPO was never in favor of this.

Cooperative Agreement, between the CVDA & Alaska DOT&PF, executed and signed on 8/13/22, by the CVDA Board President, Jason Hoke, the Alaska DOT&PF Commissioner Ryan Anderson, and Governor Dunleavy:

CRV-RPO Purpose:

"The purpose of this Agreement is for the DOT&PF and CVDA to work together on transportation priorities within the Copper River Census Area, and to increase communication and cooperation in this effort. Forming a Pilot Regional Planning Organization (RPO) will ensure regional and local input by the Copper Valley Census Area to identify local transportation needs and allow for better planning, prioritization and decision making to feed into DOT&PF's capital project development and benefit the region."

Copper Valley Development Association | P.O. Box 9, Glennallen, AK 99588

Phone: (907) 822-3071 • www.coppervalley.org • info@coppervalley.org



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Jason Hoke formally requested that the RPO committee act and draft an official letter to the Governor, Legislature, and DOT&PF requesting that the \$6.5 million for the “Copper River Highway” (the “Haley Creek Highway”) be reallocated to the Gulkana Airport for economic development projects such as two or three large hangars, or two large hangars and warehouse space, a food hub, or other structures that businesses can lease.

Discussion: GKN is a port of entry from Canada, hangars, warehouses, food hub, emergency food supply, food distribution hub, other business structures will provide much needed economic development and stability for the region.

15. Motion by: Dennis McGlothin, 2nd by Martin Boniek for the CRV-RPO Committee to write a formal letter to the Governor, the Legislature and Alaska DOT & PF asking to reallocate the \$6.5 million in the Governors FY25 budget from the “Copper River Highway” (Trail to Haley Creek) to the Gulkana Airport project improvements for economic development. Motion Passed. For: 6; Against: 0; Abstain: Brett Nelson

16. Motion to adjourn at 6:35 pm by Terry Valentine, 2nd Dennis McGlothin, motion passed

VIII. Next Meeting April 2, 2025, at 5:00 pm, at the Copper Valley Air Conference Room