



PINELLAS SUNCOAST TRANSIT AUTHORITY  
3201 SCHERER DRIVE, ST. PETERSBURG, FL 33716  
[WWW.PSTA.NET](http://WWW.PSTA.NET) 727.540.1800 FAX 727.540.1913

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING  
MINUTES – OCTOBER 28, 2015**

---

The Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority (PSTA) Board of Directors met in regular session in the Board Room at PSTA Headquarters at 9:00 AM on this date with the following members present:

Bill Jonson, Chairperson  
Julie Bujalski, Vice-Chairperson  
Janet Long, Secretary/Treasurer  
Joseph Barkley  
Doug Bevis  
Mark Deighton  
Ben Diamond  
Dave Eggers  
Samantha Fenger  
Pat Gerard  
Patricia Johnson  
Wengay "Newt" Newton  
Darden Rice  
Brian Scott  
Kenneth Welch

Also Present:

Brad Miller, CEO  
Alan Zimmet, PSTA General Counsel  
PSTA Staff Members  
Members of the Public

**CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Chairperson Jonson called the meeting to order at 9:03 AM and the Board was led in a moment of silence and the Pledge of Allegiance.

**[Ms. Rice entered the meeting at 9:04 AM.]**

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Grady McDonald, President of Mainlands VI, stated that there are 1,937 homes in the complex with many senior citizens that would be adversely affected if Route 444 were discontinued.

M.J. Binz, Pinellas resident, expressed her concern about illegal activity on the buses, unclean buses, and late buses.

**[Mr. Eggers entered the meeting at 9:09 AM.]**

Tom Rask (also speaking for Sully Grasso), spoke about Ms. Long's comments at the last Board meeting regarding the bell curve. He also mentioned Mr. Miller's new evaluation form.

**[Mr. Newton entered the meeting at 9:15 AM.]**

Vivian Peters, Largo, mentioned the 2015 American Bus Benchmarking Group (ABBG) Customer Satisfaction Survey and stated her belief that PSTA is going backwards and declining in progress.

Carl Heissenbuttel, Clearwater resident, talked about the redundancy of buses with two buses arriving back-to-back. He suggested that the start times on the bus to Tampa be adjusted to accommodate workers. He also said bus connection times continue to be a problem.

## **AWARDS AND RECOGNITION**

Incoming Board Member – Samantha Fenger – Chairperson Jonson introduced and welcomed Ms. Fenger of Largo who replaces Curtis Holmes.

Driver of the Year – Faysal Monzer – Jeff Thompson, Director of Transportation, delivered a brief background on Mr. Monzer and thanked him for his excellent 12 years of service. Mr. Monzer said a few words of thanks and Chairperson Jonson presented him with a certificate.

## **NON-BOARD COMMITTEES**

Transit Riders Advisory Committee (TRAC) - Elaine Mann, Committee Chair, reported on the October 20th TRAC meeting. She said that the TRAC approved the 2016 TRAC meeting schedule and the amendments to the TRAC By-Laws. She indicated that the TRAC received presentations on the System Redesign-Phase 2, the East Lake pilot

program, the Bus Operator training program, and the 2015 ABBG Customer Satisfaction Survey.

Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) – Ms. Bujalski reported on the October 14th MPO meeting. She noted that two of PSTA’s legislative priorities align with MPO’s key focus areas identified at the last MPO workshop. Ms. Bujalski stated that MPO staff presented a study of U.S. 19 south of Gandy to the Pasco County line to address access to transit and the number one issue discussed was the need for lighting around bus stops. She said that the MPO Director reported on a discussion about the CSX opportunity and noted that there will be a Transportation Management Area (TMA) meeting regarding the CSX on November 6th. The MPO Board will have a follow-up workshop on December 4th and there will be a joint PSTA-MPO Board meeting on January 22, 2016.

MPO’s Local Coordinating Board (LCB) – Ms. Johnson indicated that the MPO’s LCB did not meet in the month of October but reported on upcoming events. She stated that the Community Transportation Coordinator (CTC) Evaluation Subcommittee meeting will be held on November 3rd. Ms. Johnson reported that very few TD customers have expressed concern about the \$2.75 increase in cost to the 31-day TD pass. She mentioned that she spoke to the Staff Director of Senator Latvala’s Transportation Appropriations Committee about gathering data from the TD Commission to present to Senator Latvala. The next LCB meeting will be held on November 17th.

## **CONSENT AGENDA**

Mr. Bevis made a motion, seconded by Mr. Welch to approve the Consent Agenda. There were no public comments. The Board unanimously approved the Consent Agenda, which included the approval of the September 9 and 23, 2015 Public Hearing meeting minutes, the September 30, 2015 Board meeting minutes, the TRAC By-Laws, and the PSTA bus and facility maintenance supplies contract.

## **ACTION ITEMS**

2016 Meeting Schedule - Mr. Newton made a motion, seconded by Mr. Welch to approve the 2016 meeting schedule. There were no public comments. Motion passed unanimously.

Gillig Bus Purchase – Mr. Miller delivered a presentation with updated information on the replacement bus purchase. He stated that staff is recommending the purchase of seven hybrid electric diesel buses with the BAE Series transmissions (cost \$4.9 million) to replace the oldest 2001 buses, in addition to applying for the Federal Lo-No Electric Bus Grant funds. He added that the Finance Committee’s recommendation was to purchase nine

diesel buses (cost \$4.5 million). There was a very lengthy and robust discussion regarding the merits of electric, diesel, hybrid electric, and Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) buses. The Board asked many questions relating to the environment and social aspects of each type of bus along with the costs associated with each. Mr. Eggers requested a reserve analysis.

**[A break was taken from 10:58 – 11:03 AM.]**

In response to Chairperson Jonson's call for public comment, Raemona Mae Clark, Largo, stated her opinion that PSTA should purchase electric buses.

Mr. Rask (also speaking for Mr. Grasso), states that although he is not against electric buses, electric buses produce CO<sub>2</sub> and CO at the source of electric generation, adding that there is much misinformation regarding pricing and emissions calculations. He recommended regular diesel bus purchase with further evaluation next year.

Phil Compton, Sierra Club, (also speaking for Mr. Handcock, Mr. Lawrence, and Ms. LaSalla), commented that electric buses are both affordable and practical for PSTA. He spoke of the costs and maintenance associated with the electric versus diesel buses, as well as an emissions comparison. Mr. Compton stated that the Sierra Club strongly supports PSTA's application for the Lo-No grant.

James Anderson, St. Pete Beach, noted that he is a clean air advocate and asked the Board to vote for the zero emissions electric buses.

Brooke Anderson, St. Pete Beach, agreed with Mr. Anderson and said please vote for the electric buses.

George Root, Clearwater, spoke about future technology and energy production and urged the Board to take into consideration that using electric alternatives will be an increasingly more effective and efficient method for the future.

Frank Jackalone, Florida Staff Director of the Sierra Club, (also speaking for Cora Kostka), commented that he supports electrification of Pinellas County's transportation system because it is cleaner and it is better for the climate. He also spoke of the sea level rising and climate change and recommended that PSTA purchase five diesel hybrid buses and two electric buses.

Bruce Nissen, St. Petersburg, stated that there are differing facts and figures and that the facts are leaning to the electric buses.

Milagros Padilla, Pinellas resident, commented that she supports the electric buses and spoke about the financial, social, and environmental factors. She also mentioned the healthcare costs to the citizens due to diesel emissions.

Dr. Dale Potter, St. Petersburg, urged the Board to purchase electric buses and talked about climate change and rising sea levels.

Lawrence Potter, unincorporated Pinellas, commented on the amount of pollution on his window sills from the exhaust and remarked that PSTA should buy as many electric buses as possible.

Michael Miller, Clearwater, talked about the changing environment and the atmosphere.

Jasmina Forcan, Clearwater, commented that she is for electric buses 100%. She stated that there is a \$7 million surplus from the bed tax and suggested using that to buy charging stations and then lease them back to PSTA.

Tom Krumreich, Tampa, stated his opinion that PSTA does not have to wait to get the grant to buy electric buses and spoke of the Complete Coach refurbished buses. He also commented on the issue of charging the buses at PSTA and encouraged the Board to buy electric.

L. Vandenberg, Largo, talked about the propulsion system of a bus and the batteries.

In response to Chairperson Jonson's request for questions from the Board, Mr. Welch asked why the staff recommendation and the Finance Committee's recommendation differed. Mr. Miller responded that at the time of the Finance Committee, staff had not gathered all the information, but did present two options to the Finance Committee. The Finance Committee also asked for additional information.

Ms. Long stated that since there was different information provided at this meeting, she suggested delaying a decision for a month so staff could make another presentation to the Finance Committee. Mr. Barkley reported on the Finance Committee meeting and also suggested taking additional time to develop a more exact and thorough presentation to bring back to the Board. Ms. Gerard spoke of the amount of piecemeal information received and stated her wish that she had all the information at once. Mr. Scott noted that it is a fiscally responsible decision to buy as many buses as possible and believes the Board should approve the Finance Committee's recommendation to purchase nine diesel buses.

Ms. Bujalski suggested making the decision now and then use next year to explore other options. She made a motion, seconded by Mr. Welch, to accept staff's recommendation of the purchase of seven Gillig replacement buses with new BAE Series hybrid-electric

transmissions at a cost not to exceed \$4.9 million, to authorize PSTA to submit a federal grant application for Lo-No grant funds to purchase electric buses for a Pinellas demonstration, and to continue to develop a long-term bus replacement strategy by April 30, 2016 that balances all aspects of PSTA's adopted sustainability program: financial stability, environmental stability, and social stability.

Mr. Welch asked for an annualized cost analysis for each bus type. Mr. Eggers stated that more time was needed to process the information and does not believe that taking another month to make a decision would be harmful. Mr. Diamond expressed his belief that this item should go back to the Finance Committee and that the Lo-No grant application should be reviewed by the Legislative Committee. Mr. Newton said that he does not believe that another meeting is needed and pointed out that it is very important to get the 2001 diesel buses off the road as quickly as possible.

Chairperson Jonson indicated that the technical staff for the City of Clearwater advised that a detailed feasibility analysis be conducted for the electric distribution. Ms. Gerard mentioned that she would also like to review the Lo-No grant application. Ms. Fenger spoke of the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) and the five-year plan and the need for more information. Ms. Rice indicated that she is open to taking some more time to consider the electric buses and suggested that the Planning or Executive Committee see the new information in addition to the Finance Committee. She also suggested that PSTA set a goal to go carbon-neutral by 2050. Mr. Bevis stated his opinion that the decision should not wait another month.

Ms. Long indicated that she will vote today for the hybrid; however, she does not want to be in this position next year. She requested all the information needed to make a decision on the best technology available. Mr. Barkley said there is a social responsibility to show the citizens that PSTA is making the right decision. He asked for an amendment to the motion that two of the bus purchases would be electric, seconded by Ms. Rice. Ms. Bujalski and Mr. Welch, makers of the original motion, did not agree to amend the motion.

After discussion took place about voting the items separately, Ms. Bujalski amended the original motion to just include item 6A - approve the purchase of seven Gillig replacement buses with new BAE Series hybrid-electric transmissions at a cost not to exceed \$4.9 million. There were no public comments. Motion passed (8:7) with Mr. Eggers, Mr. Diamond, Mr. Scott, Ms. Rice, Ms. Johnson, Ms. Fenger, and Mr. Barkley dissenting.

Mr. Bevis made a motion, seconded by Ms. Bujalski to authorize PSTA to submit a federal grant application for Lo-No grant funds to purchase electric buses for a Pinellas demonstration. There were no public comments. Motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Gerard made a motion, seconded by Ms. Bujalski to continue to develop a long-term bus replacement strategy by April 2016 that balances all aspects of PSTA's adopted sustainability program: financial stability, environmental stability, and social stability. There were no public comments. Motion passed unanimously.

**[Mr. Eggers left the meeting at 1:15 PM and did not return.]**

### **INFORMATION ITEMS**

Community Bus Plan Review – Due to time constraints, it was decided to defer this item to a later date.

System Redesign Phase 2 – Williams Park – Ms. Borchers informed the Board of five upcoming workshops focused in St. Petersburg.

### **REPORTS/CORRESPONDENCE**

PSTA Performance Report/Updates – The report was included in the Board packet. Mr. Miller pointed out that this year was the fourth year in a row with record ridership.

East Lake Transportation Alternatives Pilot – Mr. Miller stated that this item was presented to the Planning Committee and is included in the Board packet. This item will come back to the Board at their December 9th meeting.

### **FUTURE MEETING SUBJECTS**

The Board received a schedule of future meeting subjects.

### **OTHER BUSINESS**

Mr. Miller indicated that the Legislative Committee will be meeting in November to review the Lo-No grant application. The Board received information about a Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) public hearing regarding the five-year tentative work program.

### **BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS**

None.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, Chairperson Jonson adjourned the meeting at 1:19 PM. The next meeting is scheduled for December 9th at 9:00 AM.

---

Chairperson