



PINELLAS SUNCOAST TRANSIT AUTHORITY
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**BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
MINUTES – APRIL 22, 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
Pat Gerard
Curtis Holmes
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 9:00 AM and the Board was led in a moment of silence and the Pledge of Allegiance.

[Mr. Newton entered the meeting at 9:03.]

PUBLIC COMMENT

Tom Rask, Seminole (also for Sully Grasso), spoke about Earth Day. He stated that he had sent an email to the Board regarding new leadership for PSTA and he mentioned the Homeland Security grant. Mr. Rask spoke of the route cuts cited in the Greenlight Plan and also commented on PSTA's letter to the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) regarding priorities.

[Mr. Welch entered the meeting at 9:08.]

NON-BOARD COMMITTEES

Transit Riders Advisory Committee (TRAC) – Elaine Mann, Committee Chair, reported on the April 14th TRAC meeting. She said that Cyndi Raskin-Schmitt, Director of Communications, presented a new advertising initiative for expanding the bus advertising program. The Committee made comments and this initiative will be presented again in further detail at the May meeting. Jeff Thompson, Director of Transportation, presented changes to the Rider Courtesy Guidelines currently under review, and the Committee offered their input. Committee Chair Mann reported that Debbie Leous, Chief Financial Officer, and Ross Silvers, Mobility Manager, addressed the Fare Revenue Policy currently in place and a possible fare increase. She said that Heather Sobush, Planning Manager, presented the next steps in the Service Redesign Plan and reported that staff is conducting further performance monitoring on various routes with the findings to be presented at the June and July TRAC meetings. She indicated that the next TRAC meeting will be held on May 19th at 4:00 PM.

Metropolitan Planning Organization's Local Coordinating Board (LCB) – Ms. Johnson reported that the MPO's LCB did not meet, but the LCB's sub-committee did on March 26th to review possible changes to the Transportation Disadvantaged (TD) bus pass program. They also discussed TD trends and its impact upon PSTA's finances and discussed reviewing other potential sources of revenue. It was also suggested to reach out to the Homeless Leadership Board and other agencies before making changes. She reported that at the next LCB meeting on May 19th and the sub-committee will present the TD information. Changes to the program must be approved by the LCB, the MPO Board, and PSTA.

CONSENT AGENDA

Mr. Bevis made a motion, seconded by Ms. Long to approve the Consent Agenda. There were no public comments. The Board unanimously approved the Consent

Agenda, which included the approval of the March 25, 2015 Board meeting minutes as amended, the FleetNet Software Support renewal, and the TRAC nomination.

ACTION ITEMS

Amend Rules & Regulations to Expand Executive Committee and Appointment – Chairperson Jonson explained that at the last Board meeting, it was proposed to expand the Executive Committee to five members and indicated that the rule change was provided in the agenda packet. Mr. Zimmet read Resolution #15-03 by title. Ms. Rice made a motion, seconded by Mr. Welch to adopt Resolution #15-03. There were no public comments. Motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Diamond reported that the Nominating Committee recommended Ms. Rice as the fifth member on the Executive Committee. Ms. Long made a motion, seconded by Mr. Bevis to approve the appointment of Ms. Rice. There were no public comments. Motion passed unanimously.

“Path Forward” Framework Approval – Chairperson Jonson stated that the “Path Forward” framework was presented at the last Board meeting as well as the Executive and Planning Committees.

In response to Chairperson’s call for public comment, Barb Haselden, St. Petersburg, spoke about the “Path Forward” and cited some operating numbers over the past three years. She commented on the 2011 operating expense projections and the 2014 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) total expenses. She stated her belief that there was a 35% increase in operating expenses in three years. Ms. Haselden also spoke about her public records request for written correspondence between PSTA and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) regarding the grant.

Mr. Rask stated his opinion that PSTA has no direction and should call the “Path Forward” the “Path to Trust.” He also spoke about the increase of TD riders and suggested calculating the riders who pay the full fare to determine the real demand. He stated that PSTA is losing the public’s trust.

In response to the comments, Mr. Miller reported that operating expenses in 2012 were \$56 million as compared to the 2014 CAFR operating expenses of \$62.4 million, which is \$9 million over three years or about 4-5% per year. He spoke about the “Path Forward” and approval of a strategic direction to move forward and stated that the Executive Committee had abundant discussion about the “Path Forward” framework. Ms. Long

added that countless hours had been spent on the “Path Forward” issue and believes that PSTA is moving forward in a very thoughtful and diligent manner.

Chairperson Jonson explained that resulting from the April 10th Executive Committee meeting, the Committee made five recommendations to the Board:

1. Approve the framework of the “Path Forward” policy direction.
2. Conduct a full-day Board workshop on Friday, May 22nd to review and approve the plan’s Strategic Priorities.
3. Place emphasis on community communication and messaging.
4. Utilize the “Interim Accountability Measures” to monitor progress toward implementing the “Path Forward” plan.
5. The Executive Committee will review PSTA’s existing “Guiding Principles” and make suggested modifications for Board approval.

After discussion and feedback from the Board members, Ms. Long made a motion, seconded by Mr. Newton to approve the “Path Forward” framework. There were no further public comments. Motion passed unanimously.

Chairperson Jonson presented the four Interim Accountability Measures and timeline:

1. Board approval of the “Path Forward” strategic plan – by May 27, 2015
2. “Path Forward” performance tracking – by June 1, 2015
3. Demonstrated coordination with Hillsborough Area Regional Transit Authority (HART) – by August 1, 2015
4. Demonstrated coordination with the Pinellas MPO – by December 31, 2015

There was discussion on the timing of the four Interim Accountability Measures and whether the May 22nd workshop should be set up as a regular meeting so action could be taken or as an informational workshop. Mr. Zimmet said that the workshop could either be an informational workshop or noticed as a special session, in which action could take place, if desired.

[Mr. Bevis left the meeting at 10:17 AM and did not return.]

Ms. Bujalski made a motion, seconded by Ms. Gerard to have an informational workshop only on May 22nd. There were no public comments. Motion passed (13:1) with Mr. Holmes dissenting.

Metropolitan Planning Organization Report – Chairperson Jonson remarked that the letter to the MPO was presented at the last Board meeting and went back to the Planning and Executive Committees for revisions. Ms. Bujalski reported that there was

an MPO Board meeting on April 8th, and MPO members and staff discussed PSTA's Surface Transportation Program (STP) funding request that had gone through their Committee structure. She said that the Committees recommended to the MPO Board that a process be put in place to determine priorities for the STP funding. In addition, they also wanted to add bicycle and pedestrian amenities and infrastructure to the list for STP funding. She reported that at her request, the MPO Board postponed this discussion until the new Director of the MPO arrives in June. Ms. Bujalski explained the revisions that were made to the letter and stated that both the Executive and Planning Committees recommended approval.

Mr. Rask (also for Mr. Grasso), stated his belief that the MPO letter is flawed and believes the effort does not have direction. He spoke about the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) priority and the sustainability adding that he questions the process.

Mr. Scott made a motion, seconded by Mr. Newton to approve the MPO letter. There were no public comments. Motion passed (13:1) with Mr. Deighton dissenting.

Ms. Bujalski reported that the MPO received a presentation from the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) on the Express Bus service from Pinellas through Hillsborough. In the past, PSTA sent a letter to FDOT expressing concern about how the bus service would be funded and the lack of bus lanes in Pinellas County. Ms. Bujalski explained that the MPO Board approved a motion to request that FDOT reassess the traffic forecast used for the Express Lane Study for I-275 to downtown St. Petersburg without Greenlight Pinellas. They also expressed concern that the express lanes are currently planned to end in the Gateway area.

INFORMATION ITEMS

Legislative Committee Report – Ms. Rice reported that the Committee met on April 8th after members of the Board and Committee returned from the Pinellas Chamber Legislative trip to Tallahassee on March 25th. She stated that the Committee's discussion was focused on PSTA's state legislative priorities including the Central Avenue BRT project as the top priority. She said Senators Latvala and Brandes included funds in the approved Senate budget for the final design of the BRT project. Ms. Rice noted that the Committee supported the issuance of a Request for Proposal (RFP) for a federal lobbyist. She explained that Gray Robinson is our state lobbyist, but PSTA does not have a full-time federal lobbyist in Washington, D.C.

Executive Committee Report – Chairperson Jonson gave a summary of the issues that were discussed by the Executive Committee on April 10th. He reported that the

Committee agreed to regularly meet with HART's Executive Committee. He commented that he met with the Chairperson of HART on April 15th and he strongly supports the meetings. Chairperson Jonson said the Committee recognized a need for strong Board member participation and will explore alternatives in that area.

Fare Revenue Assumptions – Mr. Miller said the Planning Committee reviewed and discussed this information at their last meeting. It is his belief that the full Board should also receive this information as it is a very important component of the overall “Path Forward” plan as well as the FY2016 budget.

Debbie Leous, Chief Financial Officer, presented a graph showing revenue per customer and indicated that customers are getting more rides for the same or less money and. She spoke about the three reserves: Operating, Insurance, and General. Ms. Leous reported that the majority of PSTA's revenue comes from the ad valorem tax (\$35.4 million) and passenger fares (\$13.9 million). She noted that there are no specific recommendations yet on the revenues and how to achieve increases, but the goal would be to increase the average revenue per ride by 15% to generate an additional \$1.2 million.

Ross Silvers, Mobility Manager, spoke of the huge expansion of the TD program and the successful UPASS program, which have an impact on revenues. He noted that the number of TD bus passes issued in the past year almost doubled which PSTA anticipated but did not predict demand unleashed by some TD program improvements. Mr. Silvers explained that the money for the TD program is coming from co-pays and a grant from the State, which is based on how many trips PSTA provides every year. He also explained some challenges PSTA faces if fares are increased.

In response to Mr. Holmes' earlier question regarding the Homeland Security grant, Chairperson Jonson spoke briefly about the grant and some policy changes that were subsequently made. Ms. Rice mentioned that the Executive Committee is scheduled to review the grant process. It was suggested that if any new Board member needed more information, they could review the archived Board videos or meet one-on-one with Mr. Miller or Mr. Zimmet.

REPORTS/CORRESPONDENCE

PSTA Performance Report/Updates – The report was included in the Board packet.

FUTURE MEETING SUBJECTS

The Board received a schedule of future meeting subjects. Mr. Miller indicated that the Board workshop will be on May 22nd with an Executive Committee meeting on May 11th to prepare for the workshop. He explained that the Board will be presented the draft FY2016 budget in June.

OTHER BUSINESS

No other business.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Mr. Barkley believes the Board is doing all that is required to help move PSTA forward.

Ms. Johnson said she wanted to assure the TD riders that PSTA is working very hard to make it possible for them to continue to have transportation.

Mr. Eggers thanked the Board for their high energy level and moving PSTA in the right direction.

Mr. Scott echoed Ms. Johnson's comments regarding the TD program.

Ms. Rice thanked everyone for voting for her to join the Executive Committee and she said she looks forward to the new role and working on the "Path Forward."

Mr. Newton thanked everyone for all their hard work and wished everyone a happy Earth Day. He also recognized 44 Bus Operators for passenger commendations and thanked them for their service.

Ms. Bujalski said that this is a Board appointment that requires a lot of work and a lot of meetings. She noted that PSTA is a large agency that requires meetings more than once a month. She stated that she is very proud of her fellow colleagues who are putting in the time and effort.

Mr. Welch stated that he is excited where PSTA is going, and commented that even though it is a different path than the Board thought last year, the potential for improving transit is possible. He said that it is called the "Path Forward" not the path backward, adding that he looks forward to the work ahead.

Chairperson Jonson indicated that he was very pleased with the discussions that took place. He said he believes the diversity in opinion makes the Board stronger. Chairperson Jonson thanked the Board for their passion and dedication and their interest in continuing to improve the Board's governance. He stated that governance is all about connecting with the community and being accountable and providing public service to the citizens.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Chairperson Jonson adjourned the meeting at 11:20 AM. The next meeting is scheduled for May 27th at 9:00 AM.

Chairperson