



PINELLAS SUNCOAST TRANSIT AUTHORITY
3201 SCHERER DRIVE, ST. PETERSBURG, FL 33716
WWW.PSTA.NET 727.540.1800 FAX 727.540.1913

**LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES – APRIL 8, 2015**

The Legislative Committee of the Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority (PSTA) Board of Directors held a meeting in the Auditorium at PSTA Headquarters at 10:00 AM on this date. The purpose of the meeting was to receive an update from Gray Robinson and to approve the March 4, 2015 meeting minutes. The following members were present:

Darden Rice, Committee Chairperson
Doug Bevis
Ben Diamond
Wengay Newton

Absent

Pat Gerard

Also Present:

Brad Miller, CEO
Robert Stuart, Gray Robinson (via conference call)
Bill Jonson, PSTA Board Member
PSTA Staff Members

CALL TO ORDER

Committee Chair Rice opened the meeting at 10:09 AM.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments.

ACTION ITEMS

March 4, 2015 Meeting Minutes – Mr. Bevis made a motion, seconded by Mr. Diamond to approve the minutes. There were no public comments. Motion passed unanimously.

INFORMATION ITEMS

PSTA's State Legislative Agenda Update – Mr. Miller reported that on March 25-26, he and Chairperson Jonson, Mr. Bevis, and Mr. Newton were in Tallahassee along with a few County Commissioners and numerous members of area Chambers. He said that the Chambers arranged for each Legislator to come and speak to the Chambers. Mr. Miller explained that PSTA arranged individual meetings with State Representatives and Senator Joyner to discuss the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project. Mr. Miller indicated that it was a successful visit because prior to the trip, PSTA's BRT project was not in Senator Latvala's Appropriation Committee's recommended budget. He reported that last week, Senator Latvala approved an amendment to include \$1 million in the Senate budget which included funds for the BRT final design. Mr. Miller said that the BRT is not in the House budget, but it is being supported and actively worked on by Representative Rouson. Mr. Miller stated that he and Gray Robinson also had a meeting with Representative Peters to discuss her concerns about the BRT project, and he believes that many of those concerns were addressed.

Mr. Stuart thanked those that were in Tallahassee and said he believes it was impactful. He noted that Senator Latvala sponsored the amendment with back-up from Senator Brandes and Senator Joyner. He indicated that he had conversations with Representative Rouson to make certain that he spoke with Representative Ingram, Chair of the Transportation & Economic Development Appropriations Subcommittee in the House, to inform him that the money was in the budget. Mr. Stuart explained how the system works and the process to get a budget accepted.

Mr. Stuart commented on a current bill for government accountability, which is an attempt to combat fraud and abuse, and in particular, public funding being used for bonuses and extra compensation. He asked Mr. Miller to review the bill and see if there were any provisions to strike that might affect PSTA.

Mr. Miller commented that he received an update from Lisa Bacot, Executive Director of the Florida Public Transportation Association (FPTA) about some other PSTA priorities. She indicated that there was no movement on the Community College Fees to pay for transportation. Mr. Stuart agreed that the stance is the same as last year because of concerns raised about increasing costs to students.

Mr. Miller described a meeting with Ed Coven, Director of Transit, and the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), who said it is important to coordinate the BRT project with the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and FDOT. Mr. Miller also reported that he had a meeting with the Chief Executive Officers (CEO) of the Tradewinds Hotel and the Sirata Hotel and they indicated that they will call Representative Peters and

Senators Latvala and Brandes in support of the BRT project. Mr. Miller explained the BRT system in Jacksonville and how they obtained Florida New Starts Funding as well as Federal New Starts funding.

Procurement of a Contracted Federal Lobbyist – Mr. Miller informed the Committee that staff is preparing a draft of the Request for Proposal (RFP) for a federal lobbyist which will be brought to the Legislative Committee for approval.

[Mr. Newton entered the meeting at 10:38 AM]

Mr. Bevis suggested Jacksonville's lobbyist. Committee Chair Rice asked what PSTA's requirements are in the RFP. He indicated that the federal lobbyist contract will include performance measures, reporting measurements, and attendance at regular meetings with key legislatures. Mr. Diamond suggested Alan Zimmet, General Counsel, review PSTA's agreement with Gray Robinson for accountability metrics and also be involved with the RFP process.

Mr. Miller reported that Pinellas County held their first-ever federal legislative delegation meeting. Congressman Jolly, Congressman Bilirakis, staff representatives of Congresswoman Castor, Senator Nelson, and Senator Rubio talked to the Pinellas County Commission. Mr. Miller explained that Congressman Jolly highlighted his position on general transportation funding and his support for the policy of devolution. He indicated that Congressman Jolly talked about the federal gas tax of 18¢; which 80% goes to highway and 20% goes to transit. He reported that Congressman Jolly is one of eight co-sponsors of a bill to eliminate the mass transit account explaining that he would like to bring all transportation dollars back to the states as a way to increase transportation funding. Mr. Miller stated that he asked APTA for their talking points on devolution which he will share with the Committee.

Mr. Bevis reported that Senator Latvala is vying for the Senate Presidency. He expressed his concern that Senator Brandes is not supportive of this, and suggested that at the next trip to Tallahassee, PSTA should let Senator Brandes know that his help is needed in supporting Senator Latvala for the Senate Presidency.

OTHER BUSINESS

None.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 11:12 AM. The next Legislative Committee meeting will be held on May 6th at 9:30 AM.