



PINELLAS SUNCOAST TRANSIT AUTHORITY
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**LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES – NOVEMBER 17, 2015**

The Legislative Committee of the Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority (PSTA) Board of Directors held a meeting in the Auditorium at PSTA Headquarters at 9:00 AM on this date. The purpose of the meeting was to approve the September 2, 2015 meeting minutes, approve the 2016 meeting schedule, recommend approval of the Central Avenue Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Federal application, and to receive updates from Gray Robinson and Van Scoyoc. The following members were present:

Darden Rice, Committee Chairperson
Ben Diamond, Committee Vice-Chair
Doug Bevis
Wengay Newton

Absent
Pat Gerard

Also Present:
Brad Miller, CEO
Bill Jonson, PSTA Board Member
Steve Palmer, Van Scoyoc (via conference call)
Robert Stuart, Gray Robinson (via conference call)
PSTA Staff Members
Members of the Public

CALL TO ORDER

Committee Chair Rice opened the meeting at 9:07 AM.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments.

Mr. Jonson requested an addition to the agenda to talk about a roundtable discussion with Senator Jack Latvala. Mr. Newton made a motion, seconded by Mr. Diamond to add the item. There were no public comments. Motion passed unanimously.

ACTION ITEMS

September 2, 2015 Meeting Minutes – Mr. Diamond made a motion, seconded by Mr. Newton to approve the minutes. There were no public comments. Motion passed unanimously.

2016 Meeting Schedule – The meeting schedule was amended to include a November 30th meeting. Mr. Diamond made a motion, seconded by Mr. Newton to approve the amended 2016 meeting schedule. There were no public comments. Motion passed unanimously.

Senator Latvala Update – Mr. Jonson informed the Committee about a roundtable discussion between Senator Latvala and the Suncoast League of Cities. He reported that the Senator is interested in focusing on two areas: 1) keeping the Tampa Bay Rays in Pinellas County, and 2) mass transit. Mr. Jonson indicated that Senator Latvala also reiterated his belief that there would be a benefit if PSTA and Hillsborough Area Regional Transit Authority (HART) merged. Mr. Diamond requested a copy of the studies that were conducted in the past regarding merging the two authorities, and Mr. Jonson suggested that the Finance Committee also review.

[Mr. Bevis entered the meeting at 9:13 AM.]

Mr. Jonson noted that there will be a meeting at PSTA on December 11th with the Tampa Bay Transportation Management Area (TMA) to discuss the CSX proposal about the possibility of utilizing their rail lines.

Central Avenue BRT Federal Application – Cassandra Borchers, Chief Development Officer, presented a history on the Central Avenue BRT and the current status of the project. She explained the process for obtaining capital funding from New Starts funds and Small Starts funds. Ms. Borchers stated that in order to advance the Central Avenue BRT project and be eligible to compete for future federal funding through the Small Starts program, PSTA must request permission from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to enter into Project Development (PD). Ms. Borchers also outlined a proposed five-year schedule for the BRT project. She indicated that staff is asking the Committee to recommend approval to apply for entry into PD under the FTA Small Starts program.

Mr. Newton made a motion, seconded by Mr. Diamond to recommend approval of moving this project into PD under the FTA Small Starts program. Committee Chair Rice stressed that the FTA is very interested in PSTA's and St. Petersburg's public outreach for this project. Mr. Diamond requested that the Board be provided with an explanation on how PSTA is using reserves, and Mr. Miller responded that the Finance Committee is receiving a presentation at their next meeting. There were no public comments. Motion passed unanimously.

INFORMATION ITEMS

Federal Lo-No Grant – Mr. Miller indicated that the Board unanimously supported the submission of an application for the FTA Lo-No grant program. He provided a presentation on the funding and eligible project elements and indicated two proposed routes: 1) the St. Petersburg Circulator – Route 32, and 2) Route 11 - 28th Street. Mr. Miller spoke about the recommended charging station options, possible partnerships, and next steps. He indicated that the total cost of this project would be \$9.52 million and PSTA's match would be \$4.65 million. Mr. Palmer spoke briefly about the Lo-No grant program and answered questions from the Committee.

Federal Legislative Updates – Mr. Palmer gave an update on the Senate as well as provided information regarding the transportation bill and the annual appropriations bill.

January 22 PSTA-MPO Meeting Agenda – Mr. Miller indicated that there will be a joint meeting on January 22nd with the Pinellas Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Board and the PSTA Board. Whit Blanton, MPO Executive Director, noted that the meeting agenda will include identifying the roles and responsibilities of each agency, their priorities, and the prioritization process for transportation projects. Mr. Blanton also spoke of three MPO emphasis areas – the U.S. 19 corridor, the Gateway area, and enhanced beach access.

State Legislative Update – Mr. Stuart provided an update on current events in Tallahassee and Gray Robinson's work on PSTA's behalf. He indicated that there have been two special legislative sessions over the past few months; Congressional redistricting and a Senate special session, both of which ended without a resolution. He indicated that Senator Latvala conceded his bid for the Senate Presidency race, but he was named the Budget Chair for 2016 – 2018.

FUTURE MEETING SUBJECTS

Mr. Miller reviewed the upcoming Legislative schedule indicating that the Legislative Committee meeting on December 2nd has been cancelled and the next meeting will be on January 6th. He said there is a Tallahassee trip planned for January 20-21, noting that January 21st is the first ever Florida Statewide Transit Day and also the Transportation Disadvantaged (TD) Day. He also mentioned that the Pinellas Chambers and PSTA staff will travel to Tallahassee on February 8th for Leadership Pinellas.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Newton mentioned that this was his last Legislative Committee meeting and thanked everyone. He stated his belief that it is very important to continue to advocate in Tallahassee for PSTA's projects.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 10:45 AM. The December 2, 2015 has been cancelled and the next Legislative Committee meeting will be held on January 6th at 9:30 AM.