



PINELLAS SUNCOAST TRANSIT AUTHORITY
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LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES – JUNE 6, 2016

The Legislative Committee of the Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority (PSTA) Board of Directors held a meeting in the Auditorium at PSTA Headquarters at 1:00 PM on this date. The purpose of the meeting was to approve the April 6, 2016 meeting minutes and the state government affairs team recommendation. The following members were present:

Ben Diamond, Committee Chair
Janet Long, Committee Vice-Chair
Doug Bevis
Patricia Johnson

Absent

Lisa Wheeler-Brown

Also Present:

Brad Miller, CEO
Senator Jeff Brandes
Bill Jonson, PSTA Board Member
Harry Glenn, Van Scoyoc
Steve Palmer, Van Scoyoc (via telephone)
Whit Blanton, Forward Pinellas (Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO))
PSTA Staff Members
Members of the Public

CALL TO ORDER

Committee Chair Diamond opened the meeting at 1:04 PM.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Tom Rask, unincorporated Pinellas County, commented that he attended the Hillsborough Area Regional Transit Authority's (HART) Board meeting today and they held a vote to seek an Attorney General's opinion on lobbyists, which did not pass. He

urged PSTA to take a vote as well. He also indicated that Senator Brandes spoke at the HART meeting and gave an excellent presentation. Mr. Rask stated his opinion that everyone is on the cusp of a transportation revolution and suggested that PSTA explore every transit option.

PRESENTATIONS

Senator Jeff Brandes – Committee Chair Diamond introduced and welcomed Senator Brandes and thanked him for his leadership on the funding requests for the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) projects.

Senator Brandes shared his vision and thoughts on the direction that transit is moving toward due to technology changing so rapidly and quickly. He briefly mentioned the Uber and Lyft partnerships. Senator Brandes said he believes that PSTA needs to rethink its metrics because other transit options are being developed that may pull ridership away from PSTA. He said that going forward, PSTA has to be in the mobility business, not just the bus business, and encouraged the Authority to think about new metrics that will be used to judge PSTA's success. Senator Brandes also spoke about autonomous vehicles and believes that the Agency has to maximize its options for the future. He commented on partnerships as a way to move forward and be successful.

Ms. Long asked if the Senator agrees that there is a new and better way to address how Florida funds transportation projects. She mentioned that the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) does their planning in twenty or thirty year cycles. Senator Brandes said that the Legislature funds in five-year cycles. He believes that there is an opportunity to learn from Florida's federal partners as well because they have Transportation Investments Generating Economic Recover (TIGER) grants, adding his belief that Florida should also offer TIGER grants.

Ms. Johnson said that Pinellas is the most densely populated County and if there are fewer buses, there will be more cars on the road. Senator Brandes spoke about the need for efficiencies and maximizing options such as Uber. Mr. Johnson spoke about the service that PSTA is providing to the community and Senator Brandes provided his thoughts on different ways PSTA could benefit the community such as providing 24-hour service utilizing vouchers with taxi cabs and Uber.

Mr. Bevis thanked the Senator for speaking with the Committee about his excellent ideas for the future of transit. Committee Chair Diamond stressed the importance of the Clearwater Beach BRT to Tampa International Airport (TIA) project and asked the Senator for help with FDOT on that issue.

Mr. Miller thanked Senator Brandes for his assistance in getting the partnership with Uber implemented. He said that on June 10th, the Commission for Transportation Disadvantaged (CTD) will be asked to recommend approval of PSTA's proposed partnership with Uber and taxi cabs to provide all night discounted rides for TD riders. Mr. Miller also mentioned the planned "Mobility Summit" on July 20th and the Floridians for Better Transportation conference which Senator Brandes will try to attend.

Harry Glenn, Federal Update – Mr. Glenn and Mr. Palmer provided a Legislative update. They both congratulated PSTA for the hard work that went into the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) advancement of the Central Avenue BRT project into the Small Starts Project Development (PD) phase. Mr. Glenn talked briefly about funding for the Small Starts program. Mr. Palmer spoke about the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act and PSTA's two applications – the Bus and Bus Facilities Program and the LoNo competitive grant. Mr. Glenn spoke about the HART/PSTA TIGER grant application for the Regional Fairbox project indicating that those funds are expected to be awarded in the fall. He also provided a status of the 2017 appropriations bills. Mr. Miller added that a summary of all the grant programs that PSTA is applying for is included in the agenda packet. He indicated that this summary will be provided to the full Board as well.

ACTION ITEMS

April 6, 2016 Meeting Minutes – Ms. Long made a motion, seconded by Mr. Bevis to approve the minutes. Motion passed unanimously.

State Government Affairs Team Recommendation – Committee Chair Diamond stated that since he is now a candidate for the Florida House, he believes it is prudent that he abstain from the discussion and voting on this issue. He turned the discussion over to Committee Vice-Chair Long.

Mr. Miller said PSTA completed the procurement for the state government affairs team and received eight proposals. He noted that recommendation forms were sent to the Board members and received feedback on the firms. Mr. Miller indicated that staff met earlier today and developed final scores for the two finalists. He stated that the top ranked firm recommended by staff is RSA Consulting Group with the addition of a Pinellas-oriented team member, Alan Suskey. Mr. Miller introduced Ron Pierce and Natalie King with RSA Consulting Group who were in attendance.

Mr. Miller provided background information on RSA Consulting saying that they are extremely strong with Hillsborough and with the Tampa Bay delegates. He noted that the

Selection Committee believed that RSA Consulting's proposal could be enhanced and improved for PSTA with the addition of a team member that has strong relationships with the Pinellas delegation, so they recommended that RSA Consulting team up with Mr. Suskey. Mr. Miller indicated that the price proposal for the combined team is \$7,500 per month (all inclusive) which is a decrease in price from the current \$9,000 per month. He stated that this is a three-year contract with two optional years.

Mr. Bevis made a motion, seconded by Ms. Johnson to recommend approval of the contract with RSA Consulting Group. Ms. Long said she was concerned about the strength of the relationship of RSA Consulting with the PSTA Board and PSTA's key strategies going forward with the Legislature. Mr. Pierce and Ms. King spoke about their relationships in Tampa Bay and Pinellas County. Mr. Pierce indicated that they already have developed Legislative strategies and communication strategies for the next year and beyond. Mr. Pierce and Ms. King responded to Ms. Long's question about their experience and relationships with specific elected officials. There were no public comments. Motion passed (3:1) with Committee Chair Diamond abstaining.

FUTURE MEETING SUBJECTS

The Committee was provided with a list of upcoming meeting subjects. There was discussion if the Committee should meet in July and it was decided to meet next at the scheduled August 3rd meeting. Mr. Miller mentioned the need to schedule a joint Executive Committee meeting with HART and PSTA in the summer. Ms. Long suggested scheduling that meeting before the Legislative Committee meeting on August 3rd.

OTHER BUSINESS

Ms. Long asked if the Committee is in a position today to decide if there should be a Board vote on whether or not to get an Attorney General's opinion on the use of lobbyists. Mr. Miller reminded the Committee that this was discussed in detail at a Legislative Committee meeting a few months ago. The Committee agreed that this subject had previously been adequately discussed and addressed.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 2:41 PM. The next Legislative Committee meeting will be held on August 3rd at 9:00 AM.