



PINELLAS SUNCOAST TRANSIT AUTHORITY  
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## PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES – MARCH 20, 2015

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The Planning Committee of the Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority (PSTA) Board of Directors held a meeting in the Auditorium at PSTA Headquarters at 9:45 AM on this date. The purpose of this meeting was to approve the minutes of the January 21, 2015 Planning Committee, review the Service Redesign Work Plan, the Budget Assumptions Forecast, and the Route Performance Monitoring System.

### Members Present:

Julie Bujalski  
Mark Deighton  
Patricia Johnson (Alternate)  
Janet Long  
Darden Rice  
Ken Welch

### Also Present:

Brad Miller, CEO  
Bill Jonson, PSTA Board Member  
PSTA Staff Members

## CALL TO ORDER

Brad Miller, CEO, opened the meeting at 10:00 AM, informing the group that the meeting was being broadcasted on the web via live streaming video.

## PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments.

## ACTION ITEMS

January 21, 2015 Meeting Minutes – Ms. Long made a motion, seconded by Ms. Bujalski to approve the minutes of the January 21, 2015 meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

## INFORMATION ITEMS

Service Redesign Work Plan – Mr. Miller explained that following the November 4, 2014 referendum, there was a need to “redesign” PSTA’s services to be even more focused and customer-oriented. He stated that before the agency develops and seeks public input on various service delivery scenarios or increased revenues, it will be important for the PSTA Board to collaborate on a “Path Forward” to set high-level policy guidance for the future direction of the agency. Mr. Miller indicated that this policy development will be prioritized over the next few months, preceding the required FY-2016 budget review and Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) Work Plan processes and suggested four key efforts: 1) a path forward, 2) FY-2016 budget approval, 3) service redesign consideration, and 4) public engagement.

Mr. Miller detailed eight guiding principles to help move PSTA forward in the next two to three years.

- Focus on constant improvement of core services
- Redesign current bus according to specific principles:
  - Straighten routes
  - Reduce number of very low ridership buses
  - Concentrate majority of operating funds where public transit works best-core routes
- Avoid major cuts
- Implement a sustainable bus replacement plan
- Use built-up reserves on bus replacements/seek additional resources to maintain what we have
- Seek to incrementally improve service, specifically premium bus rapid transit and express services and regional fare collection project
- Work towards the high-frequency grid network
- Review governance structure by strengthening roles of the Board, Committees, CEO and strengthening coordination with transportation partners.

Mr. Miller explained that the transit service redesign efforts will be analyzed at a staff level but that any changes will rely on the policy direction from the Board. Near-term specific service improvements will be balanced with longer term planning for transit pilot projects and overall system improvements.

Mr. Miller discussed the FY-2016 budget approval calendar and suggested agreeing on the policy process over the next two months, to be adopted by May before budget approval in June. He then presented the four suggested components of the service redesign consideration process: 1) approve “Path Forward” principles, 2) consider targeted areas of redesign, 3) coordinate with capital plan assumptions and revenue assumptions, and 4) public involvement. Mr. Miller indicated that the goal is to implement the first changes by October 1, 2015.

Ms. Long then gave a brief recap of her trip with Mr. Miller to Tallahassee, and suggested that the Committee members write a letter of support for the \$1.25 million for the Central Avenue Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) pilot project to the Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation, Tourism and Economic Development.

In response to Ms. Johnson’s question regarding the Transportation Disadvantaged (TD) program, Mr. Miller said that the PSTA will take the time to work on a high-level policy first before any changes are implemented. Ms. Bujalski suggested reinstating an advisory committee similar to the Advisory Committee for Pinellas Transportation (ACPT). Mr. Welch agreed with the suggestion of a new ACPT-type group. Ms. Long stated her believe that the Board would be more effective at setting high-level policy if additional members were added to the Executive Committee and suggested the outgoing Chairperson for continuity and a new member of the Board.

The Committee was given the opportunity to voice their concerns. Ms. Bujalski suggested that economic development be considered in this process. Mr. Eggers cautioned about rushing into decision-making and to make sure to engage the public at all times. Mr. Welch commented that if routes are eliminated, PSTA must provide the public with transportation alternatives. He also agreed that the expanded Executive Committee is a good idea.

Budget Assumptions/Forecast – Debbie Leous, Chief Financial Officer, presented the FY-2016 budget process and key assumptions. She provided the budget calendar overview and the Key Budget Assumptions report which included a multi-year budget forecast, key expenditure assumptions, and a multi-year operating plan. Ms. Leous reported on the reserves and indicated that staff is recommending the use of reserve in the short-term for bus replacement needs. Ms. Leous stated that for FY-2016, there is an anticipated \$1.2 million operating deficit, and outlined five potential strategic changes: 1) increase the property tax to the maximum millage, 2) increase the average fare, 3) increase advertising revenue by outsourcing, 4) implement administrative savings, and 5) service hour adjustments.

There was discussion about the five communities who do not pay into the ad valorem tax. Committee Chair Barkley suggested reviewing the number of discounts and the way they are operated. Mr. Welch requested a copy of the current advertising policy. There was also discussion about how a possible increase would affect the TD program. Mr. Deighton suggested exploring more grant opportunities.

Route Performance Monitoring System – Chris Cochran, Senior Planner, introduced the Service Performance Monitoring System and explained that this is a tool to use in conjunction with the work plan to assist in providing the data and information that will aid in helping make the best decisions. He described in detail the methodology for the new system using two screens – performance and qualitative assessment. Mr. Cochran described some options for the identified low performing routes: 1) improve marketing/branding; 2) monitor, research and redesign; or eliminate/reduce routes; 3) reallocate resources. Mr. Cochran showed a graph of the highest and lowest scoring routes with route recommendations for the lowest scoring routes: Route 444, East Lake Connector, Routes 1 and 30, Route 58 and the Jolly Trolley Coastal Route. He presented staff recommendations for each of those routes.

There was much discussion regarding this new system. Ms. Long requested a map be added to the presentation of each of the routes being discussed for clarification. Committee Chair Barkley said it would be helpful to know if PSTA is eliminating or dramatically changing a route, and what type of replacement or supplement transportation would be made available to adjust for those people currently being serviced by that route. Mr. Welch asked if PSTA has ever approached the Tourist Development Council (TDC) for support for the Trolleys where there is a connection to tourism.

Regarding the “Path-forward” development, Mr. Deighton believes that many people in the area have no idea how much TD work contributes to the rest of the area, and suggested adding a sign on the side of the buses to remind people that the buses do not just take people from place to place, but are a very big part of the community and the path forward.

### **OTHER BUSINESS**

No other business.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 10:48 PM.

**The next Planning Committee meeting will be held on April 15, 2015 at 10:30 AM.**