



PINELLAS SUNCOAST TRANSIT AUTHORITY
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**LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES – MARCH 2, 2016**

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 February 3, 2016 meeting minutes, receive an update from Gray Robinson, and discuss the state government affairs procurement. The following members were present:

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

Also Present:

Brad Miller, CEO
Robert Stuart, Gray Robinson (via phone)
PSTA Staff Members
Members of the Public

CALL TO ORDER

Committee Chair Diamond opened the meeting at 9:00 AM.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments.

ACTION ITEMS

February 3, 2016 Meeting Minutes – Committee Chair Diamond asked that approval of the February meeting minutes be deferred until the April meeting so that additional language could be added to fully reflect Alan Zimmet's (PSTA General Counsel) comments regarding the hiring of lobbyists. The Committee agreed.

INFORMATION ITEMS

2016 Federal Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) Grant Application – Mr. Miller stated that Darden Rice, PSTA Chairperson, Ms. Long, and Cassandra Borchers, Chief Development Officer, will be joining him on a trip to Washington, D.C. for the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) Legislative Conference. He indicated that Van Scoyoc, PSTA’s federal government affairs consultant, is setting up meetings with Legislative staff.

Mr. Miller reviewed PSTA’s 2016 federal legislative agenda, noting that Van Scoyoc has advised PSTA to wait another year for the Central Avenue Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) New Start funding. He said there will be a meeting in Washington with the Federal Transit Administration’s (FTA) lead staff to ensure the correct process is being followed.

Mr. Miller indicated that PSTA and the Hillsborough Area Regional Transit Authority (HART) will be jointly submitting an application for a TIGER grant for the regional fare box collection project. He suggested meeting jointly with HART to make a pitch to the Hillsborough delegation for the TIGER grant.

Committee Chair Diamond suggested bringing a sheet of talking points outlining PSTA statistics to the meetings with Senate staff. He asked if PSTA has also shared its thoughts with Congressman Jolly on the TIGER grant and Mr. Miller responded that the Congressman is personally aware that the Agencies will be applying for this regional grant. Ms. Johnson requested staff add information about the population of elderly in Pinellas County and how many rides the Agency has provided them in the past year.

State Government Affairs Procurement – Mr. Miller stated that PSTA has a five-year contract with Gray Robinson for the state government affairs consultant. He said that the Legislative Committee agreed to launch a new Request for Proposal (RFP) after the end of this Legislative session. Mr. Miller indicated that a draft has been drawn up and is ready to be published. He noted that the RFP will include performance metrics. Mr. Miller asked if there is some formal way for Board members to provide some insight and knowledge on the firms that they have worked with. Committee Chair Diamond suggested that Mr. Miller speak with Mr. Zimmet about this issue. He also suggested that Mr. Zimmet remind Board members that the bidders are not supposed to approach them during the procurement process.

State Legislative Priorities – Mr. Stuart provided a summary on PSTA’s priorities. He said that in an effort to avoid a veto on the Clearwater Beach to Tampa International Airport (TIA) project, it was decided to go through the same process as the BRT project by having

the delegation sign a joint letter of support urging the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) to fund this project.

[Ms. Long entered the meeting at 9:30 AM.]

Mr. Stuart indicated that \$8 million in Transportation Disadvantaged (TD) funding was returned to the state. The Senate wanted to re-allocate the entire amount and the House did not, so they agreed to allocate \$4 million this year and \$4 million next year with half going to rural counties. He said there also was agreement to conduct a \$200,000 TD study to look at the TD funding for urban versus rural areas. He noted that this was a victory for PSTA.

Mr. Miller provided an email from Lisa Bacot, Executive Director of the Florida Public Transportation Association (FPTA), which provided details on the TD issue. Mr. Miller indicated that there is a coalition of the urban systems including Orlando Lynx, HART, Miami-Dade, Broward, and Jacksonville which have all agreed on the study.

There was discussion about the Executive Director of the TD Commission possibly meeting with PSTA regarding the allocation of funds. It was noted that there is not a TD Board member from the Tampa Bay region and Ms. Long suggested that staff research the process of how people are appointed to the TD Board. She also mentioned that Senators Latvala or Brandes may be able to help get someone appointed from the Tampa Bay region. Ms. Johnson mentioned that most of the kids at the St. Petersburg Boys & Girls Club do not know how to ride the bus nor are they or their families knowledgeable about the TD program.

Committee Chair Diamond asked if a separate letter was going to be written for Senators Latvala and Brandes' signatures supporting the Clearwater Beach Express Bus project and Mr. Miller responded that the strategy is for them to make phone calls. He added that according to FDOT, the Agency has to get this project approved on the Pinellas Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) priority list and the next steps on how to get on the priority list were discussed.

FUTURE MEETING SUBJECTS

The Committee was provided with a list of upcoming meeting subjects.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Miller mentioned that the Legislative Committee usually does not meet in the summer. It was decided to wait and see if a summer meeting is needed. Ms. Long suggested that Mr. Suskey and Mr. Stuart give a Legislative wrap-up talk at the April meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 10:17 AM. The next Legislative Committee meeting will be held on April 6th at 9:00 AM.