



PINELLAS SUNCOAST TRANSIT AUTHORITY
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BOARD MEETING MINUTES

APRIL 24, 2019

Chairperson Janet Long called the April 24, 2019 Board meeting to order at 9:00 AM. Members present: Janet Long, Chairperson; Joe Barkley, Vice-Chairperson; Pat Gerard, Secretary/Treasurer; Dave Allbritton, Richard Bennett, Vince Cocks, Gina Driscoll, Dave Eggers, Heather Gracy, Patricia Johnson, Charlie Justice, Darden Rice, and Josh Shulman. Member absent: Samantha Fenger. Also present: Brad Miller, CEO; Alan Zimmet, PSTA General Counsel; PSTA staff members, and members of the public.

PUBLIC HEARING – SERVICE ADJUSTMENTS

Chairperson Introduction – Chairperson Long read the statement as follows: Individuals wishing to make a presentation today are required to complete a yellow public hearing speaker card. This card can be given to staff either at the start of the hearing or during the hearing. Public comment is limited to three minutes per individual speaker, unless additional time is granted. A group can designate a spokesperson by completing the appropriate form and presenting it to staff. The spokesperson can then speak on behalf of the group, addressing staff for three minutes for each member of the group present in the audience who waives his/her right to speak, up to a maximum of ten minutes. Presentations will be limited to only the service reductions proposed for which the public hearing is being held. The public hearing will not be closed until all individuals so desiring have had an opportunity to make a presentation. Please raise your hand if you require a public hearing speaker card and one will be provided by staff.

Staff Statement for Record – Chairperson Long read the statement as follows: This public hearing has been scheduled so that the general public may be given the opportunity to comment on the proposed service adjustments.

A paid advertisement concerning this public hearing appeared in the *Tampa Bay Times* on March 20, 2019. Notices were posted at Park Street Terminal, Grand Central Station, Williams Park, Pinellas Park Transit Center, PSTA administrative headquarters, and on all PSTA buses on March 20th. A press release announcing the public hearing was e-mailed or faxed to major media contacts and social service agencies on March 21st. A notice regarding the public hearing was posted on PSTA's website on March 20th. To date, staff has received 307 comments concerning the proposal.

Staff Presentation – Cassandra Borchers, Chief Development Officer, provided a presentation outlining the proposed service changes. She said that staff looked at the low performing routes in the system. The routes proposed for elimination are the 22, 58, Safety Harbor Connector, Dunedin/Palm Harbor Connector, East Lake Shuttle, portions of the Route 16 and 5, as well as Demand Response (DART) service in areas where there will be no fixed service. Ms. Borchers indicated that staff is asking the Board to approve one of two options: A) approve the service reductions as proposed by staff for the June service change; or B) secure \$5 million in new annual operating funds by July 2019 to avoid service reductions in October 2019. Ms. Gerard added that the Planning Committee met on April 17th and unanimously recommended approval of Option B.

Public Comments - Mark O'Hara, Transit Riders Advisory Committee (TRAC) Committee Chair, commented that the TRAC Committee reviewed this item and unanimously recommended approval of Option B.

The following people provided public comment and all were in opposition of the service adjustments: Walter Slupecki, St. Petersburg resident; Douglas Towne, Pinellas Council of the Blind; Chase Hollowell, Seminole resident; Colby Gilbert, St. Petersburg resident; Dillion Stafford, Congressman Charlie Crist's office; Nereida Perez, St. Petersburg resident; Michael Thiel, St. Petersburg resident; Natalie Lemke, Sea Breeze Adult Day Center; Robin Shaw, Seminole resident; Carl Heissonbutt, Clearwater resident; Mark Shaw, Seminole resident; Marcia Stabolepszy, St. Petersburg resident; Nancy Clingenpeel (also speaking for Ronald Clingenpeel), Dunedin residents; Melissa Curry, St. Petersburg resident; Yvonne Ross, St. Petersburg resident; Minister (Dave) Smith, St. Petersburg resident; Harry Sherouse, Pinellas Park resident; and Austin Llewellyn, Palm Harbor resident.

Board Discussion – Mr. Justice asked about the process for going to referendum for the non-member cities. Chairperson Long and Whit Blanton, Executive Director of Forward Pinellas, talked about meetings that have been taking place between the County, PSTA, and Forward Pinellas regarding funding for transportation. Chairperson Long mentioned a County funding workshop that will be scheduled in the next few months. Mr. Justice requested that the back-up information on the non-member cities be included in these funding discussions.

Ms. Johnson spoke about the Transportation Disadvantaged (TD) people who need transportation. Ms. Rice thanked Mr. O'Hara for his work on the TRAC and the other citizens who spoke this morning. Mr. Bennett expressed concern about what will happen if PSTA does not find funding by July. He also mentioned the use of smaller

buses in certain areas. Ms. Gerard thanked the public for speaking at the public hearings. She is hopeful that PSTA will find a funding solution. Mr. Eggers would like to continue looking at how the Agency uses reserves and capital dollars, particularly on buses. Mr. Allbritton commented on how passionate the Board is on making this a great bus system for our citizens. Chairperson Long indicated that these are difficult decisions and pointed out that PSTA does a great job with the funds the Authority currently has; being the lowest funded system.

Board Action – Ms. Gerard made a motion, seconded by Mr. Barkley, to approve Option B. There were no further public comments. Motion passed unanimously.

This concludes the Public Hearing portion of the meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments.

COMMITTEE UPDATES

Forward Pinellas Update – Mr. Eggers reported on the Forward Pinellas Board meeting that took place on April 10th.

CONSENT AGENDA

Mr. Eggers made a motion, seconded by Ms. Gerard, to approve the Consent Agenda. The Board unanimously approved the Consent Agenda which included the approval of the March 27, 2019 Board meeting minutes and the bus stop construction services contract award.

INFORMATION ITEMS

Central Avenue Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Funding Plan – Abhishek Dayal, Director of Project Management, gave a presentation on the Central Ave BRT funding plan. He said that the project is moving forward at 30% of design and is on target to receive Small Starts funding from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). Mr. Dayal outlined recent concerns about local funding for the project and indicated that the St. Pete Beach Commission did not approve a Resolution to oppose the project. They asked their new St. Pete Beach City Manager to continue conversations with PSTA staff and come to an agreement. Mr. Dayal stated that there will be updates to the Board at each milestone. Board members had a brief discussion about the project, the funding, and meetings with St. Pete Beach.

REPORTS AND CORRESPONDENCE

Performance Updates – The information was included in the packet. Mr. Miller expressed his gratitude to Mr. Blanton and Barry Burton, County Administrator, for their willingness to hold meetings to discuss funding options. He reported that Spring Break brought up the ridership for March. He thanked Mr. Cocks and Ms. Driscoll for participating in the Car Free St. Petersburg campaign.

FUTURE MEETING SUBJECTS

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

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Justice announced that he is no longer able to be serve on the Planning Committee. Mr. Cocks said he is interested in serving on this Committee.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Ms. Driscoll spoke about participating in the Car Free St. Petersburg challenge.

Mr. Allbritton stated that he is very happy about how the vote went today and the need to get to work on raising funds to avoid service cuts.

Mr. Bennett concurred with Mr. Allbritton and looks forward to the Finance Committee's discussions on funding options.

Mr. Shulman spoke about connecting riders to employers along routes. He also suggested sharing with the public where PSTA's funds come from and how the programs are funded to avoid misconceptions with the public.

Mr. Eggers said he appreciates the meetings between Mr. Miller, Mr. Blanton, and Mr. Burton. He stated his opinion that PSTA needs to develop a compelling story about the Authority to get the public excited.

Ms. Gerard believes it may be complicated to explain the funding to the public and mentioned implementing a PSTA Citizen's Academy.

Mr. Barkley thanked everyone who came out to speak today. He also talked about funding options and mentioned Hillsborough's referendum that passed.

Ms. Johnson mentioned that CareerSource is a member of the TD Board and could possibly provide stories on how people are using PSTA in their everyday lives and what it means to them.

Mr. Cocks talked about his recent trip to Austin and their transit system. He also spoke about his participation in the Car Free challenge.

Ms. Gracy commented that she admires the Board's leadership. She said she was very moved by the people participating today and how PSTA fits into their lives.

Chairperson Long spoke about how difficult it is to change the culture of the community.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Chairperson Long adjourned the meeting at 10:48 AM. The next meeting is scheduled for May 29th at 9:00 AM.

Chairperson