



PINELLAS SUNCOAST TRANSIT AUTHORITY  
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**BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING  
MINUTES – FEBRUARY 24, 2016**

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The Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority (PSTA) Board of Directors met in regular session in the Board Room at PSTA Headquarters at 9:00 AM on this date with the following members present:

Darden Rice, Chairperson  
Janet Long, Secretary/Treasurer  
Joseph Barkley  
Doug Bevis  
Mark Deighton  
Ben Diamond  
Dave Eggers  
Pat Gerard  
Bill Jonson  
Brian Scott  
Kenneth Welch  
Lisa Wheeler-Brown

Absent:

Julie Bujalski, Vice-Chairperson  
Samantha Fenger  
Patricia Johnson

Also Present:

Brad Miller, CEO  
Alan Zimmet, PSTA General Counsel  
PSTA Staff Members  
Members of the Public

**CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Chairperson Rice called the meeting to order at 9:07 AM and the Board was led in a moment of silence and the Pledge of Allegiance.

## PUBLIC COMMENT

Elizabeth Williams, Pinellas County resident, spoke about the transfer from the Route 14 to 18 at Williams Park. She stated her concern about Bus Operators telling riders to exit the bus where there are no bus stops.

**[Mr. Welch entered the meeting at 9:10 AM.]**

Vivian Peters, Largo, stated her opinion that the downtown grid system is a mess, adding that people cannot make their connections. She said this plan was in the works for months and believes it was poorly thought out.

## PRESENTATIONS

Federal Legislative Presentation – Harry Glenn, Van Scoyoc, delivered a Legislative update including a summary of the Fixing America’s Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, the Bus and Bus Facilities grant program, and the Lo-No Emissions grant program. He also spoke of the appropriations bill which includes the Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) grant program, and tax extenders for parking and transit. Mr. Glenn provided details on the President’s proposed 2017 Federal Transit Administration’s (FTA) budget which includes \$213 million for the Bus and Bus Facilities grant program, \$55 million for the Lo-No Emission grant program, \$599 million for ten new Small Starts projects, and \$525 million for a new Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) grant program. Mr. Glenn answered a few questions about the funding and timing of the disbursement.

**[Mr. Eggers entered the meeting at 9:24 AM.]**

Legislative Committee Update – Committee Chair Diamond provided an overview of the recent Tallahassee trip and summarized PSTA’s State Legislative priorities and discussions that took place with the delegation. He said that Senator Latvala reiterated his interest in PSTA and HART merging. Committee Chair Diamond noted that at the February 3rd Legislative Committee meeting, Mr. Zimmet summarized his position on the issue of whether PSTA has the legal authority to hire lobbyists, and Mr. Zimmet stated that it is his position that PSTA does have the authority to enter into contracts with lobbyists. Several Board members commented on Senator Latvala’s ongoing interest in a merger with HART. Mr. Miller gave a brief summary on the findings of two earlier merger studies. Committee Chair Diamond mentioned that there will be an opportunity to meet with Senator Latvala after the session ends to further discuss.

Customer Satisfaction Survey – Mark Aesch, CEO, TransPro Consulting, presented the results of a customer satisfaction survey conducted in November 2015 which included

an in-depth analysis of information in an effort to gauge PSTA's customer demographics, riding habits and trends, and determine additional customer demands and needs. Mr. Jonson asked questions regarding the choice riders survey results and if the routes could be identified, and also how often this survey should be performed. Mr. Aesch responded that the routes could be identified and suggested this survey be conducted semi-annually, at a minimum.

**[Ms. Long entered the meeting at 10:06 AM.]**

### **NON-BOARD COMMITTEES**

Transit Riders Advisory Committee (TRAC) – Elaine Mann, Committee Chair, reported on the February 16th TRAC meeting.

Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) – Mr. Eggers reported on the MPO/Pinellas Planning Council (PPC) Board meeting that took place on February 10th.

MPO's Local Coordinating Board (LCB) – Mr. Scott indicated that the MPO's LCB met on February 16th and provided some highlights.

### **CONSENT AGENDA**

Mr. Eggers made a motion, seconded by Mr. Bevis to approve the Consent Agenda. There were no public comments. The Board unanimously approved the Consent Agenda, which included the approval of the January 27, 2016 Board meeting minutes, the lawn maintenance and related services contract, and the remanufactured engines and transmissions contracts.

### **ACTION ITEMS**

Central Avenue Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Consultant Scope – Heather Sobush, Planning Manager, stated that staff is asking for approval of a \$700,000 task work order through the General Services Contract using Parsons Brinckerhoff and Jacobs Engineering for the Central Avenue BRT project development phase. She delivered a presentation on the accomplishments to date on the BRT project and also described the project development scope of services, the schedule/timeline, and the project development budget. She indicated that the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) will be providing \$500,000 with PSTA contributing the remaining \$200,000.

Mr. Barkley reported that the Finance Committee unanimously recommended approval of the BRT project development design task order. Mr. Deighton indicated that the Planning Committee was also in support of the consultant scope. Questions were

raised about the three suggested routes for the BRT project (Madiera Beach, St. Pete Beach, and Treasure Island). Discussion took place about St. Pete Beach and Treasure Island not participating in the ad valorem. Mr. Miller indicated that PSTA is working to schedule meetings with all three communities to discuss the project.

Mr. Bevis made a motion, seconded by Ms. Long to approve the \$700,000 for the project development design task order. There were no public comments. Motion passed unanimously.

## **REPORTS/CORRESPONDENCE**

PSTA Performance Report/Updates – The report was supplied in the Board packet.

Bus Technology Options & Timeline – Mr. Miller indicated that that Board will vote on August 24th to replace ten of the oldest buses and the six-month goal is for the Board to understand the technology trade-offs in order to make the decision in August. He also presented a timeline leading up to the August vote.

2016 American Bus Benchmarking Group (ABBG) Update – Mr. Miller briefly spoke about the annual ABBG report highlighting three areas of interest. He said that PSTA has the highest ridership growth of any of the other systems over the last seven years, PSTA is the lowest cost system, and the improved results of PSTA's increased vehicle maintenance training program.

2016 PSTA Planning Calendar – Mr. Miller presented the planning calendar for the year showing the decisions the Board will make, the budget process, and the schedule for the two Board workshops and the joint workshop with the PPC/MPO.

Ms. Long said in the past month, she has heard different agencies as it relates to transportation and solutions for the community and region. She commented on how quickly technology is changing and suggested that Clearwater Gas and TECO make presentations to the Board on the CNG bus technology. Mr. Eggers agreed that all the technologies need to be explored.

## **FUTURE MEETING SUBJECTS**

The Board was provided with a list of upcoming meeting subjects. Mr. Miller indicated that a tentative agreement had been reached with the labor union and there will be a vote on the contract on March 7th, and Board approval on March 30th.

## OTHER BUSINESS

No other business was discussed.

## BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Ms. Gerard said that there was some great and interesting information presented today.

Mr. Bevis stated that he is excited that there is a meeting scheduled with the North County Cultural Art Alliance to discuss incorporating art into the PSTA bus shelters.

Mr. Zimmet spoke about the history of the Resolution that the Board adopted years ago regarding the municipalities that do not participate in ad valorem contributions to PSTA. The Resolution states that the Board would not approach the municipalities about joining PSTA. Chairperson Rice added that these cities would have to have referendums.

Mr. Barkley said the article on the Direct Connect was very positive and also congratulated Mr. Miller for being on the cover of the *Mass Transit* magazine. He is also pleased that PSTA is doing well in the ABBG and believes it shows the Agency's efforts to enhance and improve the service to the community.

Mr. Welch asked for a copy of the Resolution that Mr. Zimmet referred to.

Mr. Jonson spoke about a possible presentation in May on the Clearwater access to the beach pilot/prototype programs. He reminded the Board members of the upcoming Town Hall meeting at the Park Street station in Clearwater. He also expressed his amazement that PSTA is the first Agency to have a Direct Connect agreement with Uber which shows that the Agency is moving forward and looking to the future.

Ms. Long indicated that she would be in favor of revisiting the Resolution pertaining to the cities that are not paying ad valorem.

Mr. Deighton asked for clarification on the Special Act and the Resolution, which Mr. Zimmet answered.

Mr. Scott stressed how important it is that all municipalities are brought on board and are all moving in the same direction.

Mr. Eggers suggested that PSTA reach out to the cities that are not part of PSTA and tell them what services they are missing out on. He said this is really impactful from a regional standpoint and from our County standpoint, and he suggested focusing on the

benchmarking, the Agency's innovative way of looking at buying equipment and buses, the BRT project, and exploring regional opportunities. He stated that there are a lot of good things happening at PSTA.

Ms. Wheeler-Brown indicated that she is looking forward to being a part of the conversation regarding merging PSTA with HART, and would like to get a copy of the past two merger studies.

Ms. Long mentioned the PSTA/HART merger issue, as well as the cities that do not pay into PSTA. She said it is important to ensure we have a solid message and to be prepared for these discussions.

Chairperson Rice stated her belief that the upside of the discussion about consolidation would be if it helps steer PSTA in a regional direction. She thanked Mr. Glenn for his presentation and Mr. Diamond for his detailed report. She also commented on the recent events such as the Direct Connect program, the Town Halls, and the Central Avenue BRT project.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, Chairperson Rice adjourned the meeting at 11:19 AM. The next meeting is scheduled for March 30th at 9:00 AM.

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Chairperson