



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

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
Julie Bujalski, Vice-Chairperson
Janet Long, Secretary/Treasurer
Joseph Barkley
Doug Bevis
Mark Deighton
Dave Eggers
Pat Gerard
Patricia Johnson
Bill Jonson
Brian Scott
Kenneth Welch
Lisa Wheeler-Bowman

Absent:

Ben Diamond
Samantha Fenger

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 9:00 AM and the Board was led in a moment of silence and the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Tom Rask, unincorporated Pinellas County resident, commented on the voting conflict forms filled out by Mr. Diamond from the June Legislative Committee and the June Board meetings. Mr. Rask expressed his opinion that the forms were not filled out correctly and explained why he believed it was incorrect.

Wilma Henrikson, Pinellas County resident, spoke about the re-routing of Williams Park and the fact that she has to walk three blocks to catch the bus. She said this is also causing inconvenience to people with walkers. She noted that the Route 11 runs hourly and she had to wait in the sun for an hour at a stop without a bench.

PRESENTATIONS

Regional Fare Collection – Cyndi Raskin-Schmitt, Director of Communications, unveiled the branding and cell phone application for the regional fare collection project called “Flamingo.” Walt Lenz, PSTA Project Manager, provided background information on this smart card project and introduced Lucien Campillo, Hillsborough Area Regional Transit Authority (HART) Project Manager.

Mr. Campillo delivered a presentation explaining the project status, the cost, and the schedule. He indicated that there will be a pilot program from September 5, 2016 to March 4, 2017, with full implementation by the Summer of 2018. Mr. Campillo noted that the pilot \$11.00 three-day consecutive pass can be used on all HART and PSTA fixed routes, Express, Flex, the HART TECO Streetcar line, and the Clearwater Jolley Trolley.

Mr. Welch indicated that the Planning Committee had a great discussion on this project. He asked how the data is handled and Mr. Campillo responded by cellular and is instantly sent to the computer system at PSTA’s facilities. Ms. Johnson expressed her concern about people who do not have a smart phone. Mr. Lucian responded that there will be plastic cards available at multiple facilities throughout the County. Mr. Scott asked about the potential for fraud and Mr. Campillo demonstrated the security feature on the app. Mr. Eggers asked if this could track destinations and Mr. Lenz replied that this will provide some information which can also be combined with Clever Devices data.

COMMITTEE UPDATES

The Committees did not meet.

CONSENT AGENDA

Mr. Welch made a motion, seconded by Mr. Jonson to approve the Consent Agenda. There were no public comments. The Board unanimously approved the Consent Agenda, which included the approval of the July 27, 2016 Board meeting minutes, the printing services contract, the Annual Financial Policies, and the Transit Development Plan (TDP).

ACTION ITEMS

Trolley Agreements – Cassandra Borchers, Chief Development Officer, explained that PSTA shares the cost of four Jolley Trolley routes with local partners – the Beach Route, Coastal Route, Safety Harbor Route, and the Clearwater Marine Aquarium Route. PSTA also partners on the Looper Route in St. Petersburg. Ms. Borchers indicated that instead of four different contracts with the Jolley Trolley, PSTA and the Jolley Trolley will enter into a single one-year agreement for all four routes, pursuant to a new Federal Transit Administration (FTA) National Transit Database (NTD) reporting requirement. She also indicated that PSTA will issue a procurement next year for these services.

Ms. Borchers presented each of the four Jolley Trolley routes and the cost to PSTA. She noted that the City of Safety Harbor has decided not to be a funding partner in the Safety Harbor Route; therefore, staff's recommendation is to continue service only through February 2017. Ms. Borchers reported that PSTA's contribution for the four Jolley Trolley routes is \$903,802 and \$140,000 for the downtown St. Petersburg Looper Route. Mr. Barkley indicated that after a discussion on this contract, the Finance Committee is recommending approval.

In response to Chairperson Rice's call for public comment, Mr. Rask mentioned the Safety Harbor service and the fact that ridership is low. He said staff should have cut that service last year. He stated his belief that PSTA should be cutting service for cost savings and that St. Petersburg should fully fund the Looper service.

Mr. Welch mentioned the ferry project in St. Petersburg and questioned whether PSTA will have the capacity to handle the passengers. Ms. Borchers responded that the Authority will ensure that there is a connection to the ferry location, which is slated to begin on November 1. She added that there are no ridership projections at this time. Ms. Bujalski thanked staff again for working with Dunedin on the route changes in their community and believes it will increase ridership. Ms. Borchers mentioned the Jolley Trolley seven-day and expanded service hours starting in October. She noted that in February, the Jolley Trolley will be a one-seat ride from Tarpon Springs to Clearwater Beach. Ms. Bujalski added that the Jolley Trolley will also provide seasonal service to the

Blue Jays stadium. Mr. Barkley thanked Ms. Borchers and staff for all the research and thought in this endeavor. Mr. Jonson asked about the Jolley Trolley route in Safety Harbor. Ms. Borchers explained that the Palm Harbor Connector will be extended to Safety Harbor. She also spoke about the service development grant for Safety Harbor saying that the City has decided to discontinue their contribution. She noted that there needs to be a public hearing to eliminate this service and that will be accomplished in conjunction with the February service changes.

Mr. Barkley made a motion, seconded by Mr. Jonson to approve FY 2017 Trolley Agreements with Jolley Trolley, Inc. and the Looper Group, Inc. in St. Petersburg. There were no public comments. Motion passed unanimously.

INFORMATION ITEMS

FY 2017 Budget/Service Improvements - Mr. Miller said that in June, a first draft summary of the FY 2017 budget was presented to the Board for review. In July, the Board voted to set the Truth in Millage (TRIM) Notice at the maximum of .7500. Mr. Miller indicated that staff was tasked with reviewing the budget to determine if savings of \$1.1 million, equal to the fiscal impact of the maximum millage, could be found to pay for the proposed service improvements in lieu of increasing the millage.

Debbie Leous, Chief Financial Officer, reported that even though PSTA is the most cost efficient Authority in its benchmarking group, staff was not able to find savings of \$1.1 million. She presented three different five-year budget scenarios: no increased service and no ad valorem change, increased service and no ad valorem change, and increased service and ad valorem change. Ms. Leous pointed out that even with the proposed increased service, 51% of the weekday service has greater than or equal to 60 minutes headways and 58% of service ends before 8:00 PM. She noted that adding service without offsetting revenues requires PSTA to take away from the capital reserves for buses to use for on-going operations.

Mr. Barkley stated that every year PSTA defers raising the ad valorem rate, it accelerates the time when the Authority will go into a deficit situation. Mr. Scott asked if it was assumed in the scenarios that the two electric buses are fully grant funded and Ms. Leous responded yes. Mr. Bevis asked what the amount of lost revenue is from the cities that do not participate in the ad valorem for PSTA and Ms. Leous responded \$3.6 million at the maximum millage. Mr. Bevis expressed his concern about increasing the millage on the participating municipalities while providing increased service to those cities that do not participate. He also stated his concern about asking Forward Pinellas for funds when PSTA is not at their maximum ad valorem. Ms. Long agreed with Mr. Bevis' concern.

Mr. Welch stated that the ex-Mayor of St. Pete Beach understood the need to be a participant of PSTA in order to receive premium service. He asked if the reserves are exclusive of the two-month operating budget and Ms. Leous replied yes. Mr. Welch stated that he is supportive of the millage rate increase. Mr. Deighton said that it is important to get people to and from work and believes these service improvements will help tremendously. He also spoke about the non-participating cities and suggested that people go to their own city councils and ask them to put a referendum on the ballot.

Ms. Gerard stated that she is in support of the service improvements. She said the budget shortage in upcoming years needs to be addressed, and it is unlikely that a referendum would pass, but she believes that the city should pay the full amount for the premium Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) service. Mr. Eggers noted that PSTA has a major issue with respect to replacing the buses and the capital requirements are going to be greater and accelerated because of that. He said operationally, PSTA must sustain itself to be socially responsible for the riders. He indicated that he is concerned about raising the millage at this time, pointing out that property values continue to rise.

Bus Rapid Transit Beach Alternatives – Mr. Miller indicated that a decision on this item will be made at the October Board meeting. Heather Sobush, Planning Manager, stated that staff has been focused over the past few months on the technical analysis of the three beach alternatives, as well as conducting public outreach workshops. She reviewed the five evaluation criteria for each beach alternative – fit, speed, access, market, and competitive. Ms. Sobush described how each city scored in those areas. Based on the technical results and public outreach, staff is leaning toward the South Pasadena/St. Pete Beach alternative.

Mr. Jonson mentioned Madeira Beach and Treasure Island, questioning whether either of those would be a better alternative. Ms. Sobush explained that for most people, St. Pete Beach would be a one-seat ride from downtown St. Petersburg. Mr. Welch asked what the cost would be for the two stations in St. Pete Beach and Mr. Miller replied \$180,000 capital costs per station. Mr. Welch indicated that St. Pete Beach currently pays \$500,000 for the incremental cost of service they have now. It is his belief that the City would pay an additional \$500,000 for the BRT service, adding that if the City was part of PSTA, the revenue from ad valorem would be \$1.8 million. Mr. Welch stated his opinion that if they want premium service coming to their City, then they should pay closer to what the ad valorem generates. Mr. Barkley added that So. Pasadena expressed excitement about the benefit of the BRT to their city.

Mr. Eggers questioned whether the \$500,000 that St. Pete Beach would contribute would allow PSTA to legally have stations there, even if they are not participants in the ad

valorem. Mr. Zimmet responded yes, as long as the route is generated from or to a PSTA service area.

Pinellas County Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS) UPASS Update - Mr. Miller reported that PSTA and DHHS have reached a workable arrangement and provided some background information. He explained that for the past few years, the DHHS purchased an average of 100-150 TD passes per month for their clients. He said the County asked PSTA if an arrangement could be made, similar to the UPASS program, where clients could use their blue health card to ride the bus. Mr. Miller indicated that PSTA was informed on August 5, 2016 that the County had distributed 3,500 blue health cards to their clients and the County expects that number to rise to 5,000 per month in the next year. Mr. Miller said PSTA and DHHS have agreed to not use the blue health card to ride the bus for free. Instead, DHHS's clients will show their blue card at a PSTA terminal and they will receive a regular paper TD bus pass paid for by DHHS.

Ms. Gerard indicated that County staff has not yet spoken with the Commission about this situation. Ms. Long asked about checks and balances for verifying DHHS's clients' qualifications. Mr. Miller explained that there is a specific process dictated by the state that both PSTA and Pinellas County follow to verify the income level of the person. Comments were also made regarding how important it is to communicate better and make sure that all the terms are discussed and incorporated into future contracts.

Chairperson Rice said it was brought to her attention by Mr. Rask that various side conversations between some Board members occurred. She indicated that at the end of the meeting, she will ask the Board members to state the nature of their conversations.

REPORTS AND CORRESPONDENCE

PSTA Performance Report/Updates – Mr. Miller reported that ridership was down for July by 10.4%. He spoke about the Legislative timeline that was included in the packet. Mr. Miller indicated that Congressman Bilirakis recently visited PSTA for a tour and next week, Congressman Jolly will be at the Authority to participate in a Skype conversation with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Administrator, Carolyn Flowers. Mr. Miller indicated that there will be a joint meeting with HART to share Legislative priorities and a trip to Washington D.C. in January.

[Ms. Johnson left the meeting at 11:31 AM and did not return.]

Ms. Bujalski requested additional information on why ridership is down and asked that every month an update be included in the report showing trends. Ms. Gerard added that she would like to see the trends on a broader scale.

FUTURE MEETING SUBJECTS

The Board was provided with a list of upcoming meeting subjects. Mr. Miller indicated that Forward Pinellas will be adopting a multi-modal transportation priority list on September 14th.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Zimmet handed out copies of Mr. Diamond's Conflict of Interest forms for the Legislative Committee and the Board meetings in June 2016. He read into record the two forms.

Regarding Mr. Rask's concerns about the side conversations, Chairperson Rice requested that Ms. Long, Ms. Bujalski, Mr. Deighton, Mr. Jonson, Mr. Welch, Mr. Eggers, and Ms. Wheeler-Bowman state the nature of their conversations, to which they complied.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Mr. Bevis gave kudos to the Flamingo team saying it is a huge step for the region.

Mr. Jonson gave credit to the Jolley Trolley staff for their hard work on the contract.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Chairperson Rice adjourned the meeting at 11:55 AM. There will be a budget/millage public hearing on September 15th at 6:30 PM. The next regular Board meeting is scheduled for September 28th at 6:00 PM, which is also the final budget/millage public hearing.

Chairperson