



PINELLAS SUNCOAST TRANSIT AUTHORITY
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**PUBLIC HEARING – FINAL FY 2017 MILLAGE RATE/
FINAL FY 2017 OPERATING & CAPITAL BUDGET/
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
MINUTES – SEPTEMBER 28, 2016**

The Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority (PSTA) Board of Directors held a public hearing concerning the final FY 2017 Millage Rate and the final FY 2017 Operating & Capital Budget in the Board Room at PSTA Headquarters at 6:00 PM on this date with a regular Board of Directors meeting immediately following. The following members were present:

Darden Rice, 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:

Julie Bujalski, Vice-Chairperson
Ben Diamond
Samantha Fenger

Also Present:

Brad Miller, CEO
Nicole Nate, 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 6:00 PM and the Board was led in a moment of silence and the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC HEARING – FINAL FY 2017 MILLAGE RATE & BUDGET

Chairperson Introduction – Chairperson Rice read the Chairperson’s statement as follows: The purpose of this public hearing is to receive public input and allow the public to ask questions concerning the Authority’s tentative millage rate and tentative operating and capital budget for FY 2017. Copies of our tentative budget are available if you have not already obtained one. The tentative FY 2017 Budget is included herewith, totaling \$90,240,661. (Operating Budget \$70,175,913 and Capital Budget \$20,064,748). The FY 2017 tentative millage rate is .7500. The FY 2017 rolled-back rate is .6838. The FY 2017 tentative millage rate of .7500 is 9.68 percent greater than the rolled-back rate. PSTA’s millage rate limit is .7500. The tentative property tax rate is used to fund the FY 2017 budget.

Staff Statement - Mr. Miller read the staff statement as follows: This public hearing has been scheduled so that the general public may be given the opportunity to comment on the proposed millage rate and budget for FY 2017.

A paid advertisement concerning this public hearing appeared in the *Tampa Bay Times* on September 1, 2016. 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 August 26, 2016. Information fliers were distributed via insertion in all Schedules-By-Mail requests, on the PSTA bus fleet, and at the Customer Service Centers beginning on August 26, 2016. A press release announcing the public hearing was e-mailed or faxed to major media contacts and social service agencies on September 12, 2016. A notice regarding the public hearing was posted on PSTA's website on August 26, 2016.

To date, staff has received no written comments from the public concerning the issue. Mr. Miller indicated that there were ten comments supporting the increase of service hours and four comments that were not supportive of specific changes to the routes posted on social media platforms.

Staff Presentation – The presentation was included in the packet, but since the Board heard the staff presentation at the last public hearing, the presentation was not repeated.

Public Comment - Tom Rask, unincorporated Pinellas County, (also speaking for Sully Grasso), stated his belief that no service cuts have been done as promised if Greenlight Pinellas did not pass. He pointed out that very few people attend PSTA's meetings and it is his belief that is because the public does not think their input has any effect on the Authority's decisions. He stated that he is opposed to the millage increase.

Carl Heissonbittel, Clearwater resident, asked about last year's millage and budget compared to this year. He also questioned why PSTA is cutting service and raising the rates. Mr. Miller pointed out that 100% of the additional \$1.1 million will be used for additional service; not a decrease.

Board Discussion – Mr. Jonson said he consulted with his city and the business community for their input about PSTA's proposed millage increase. He added that some members of the business community indicated that they are having difficulties getting their employees home at night. He indicated that he will support the millage increase. Mr. Eggers pointed out the deficit that PSTA will face in five years and does not believe the Board is addressing the issue. He believes the Authority should have fiscal caution on behalf of the riders and would like to see a pilot program first for the service improvements. He will not support the millage increase. Mr. Bevis stated that he does not believe that the Authority should raise the millage to the cap and should, instead, get the non-participating municipalities to contribute to the ad valorem. He will not support the millage increase. Mr. Scott noted that with the \$3 million surplus from last year and the \$3.1 million expected from property taxes, he believes that there will be enough funds without increasing the millage.

Adopt Final FY 2017 Millage Rate Resolution – Ms. Nate read Resolution #16-14 by title. Mr. Welch made a motion, seconded by Mr. Barkley to adopt the FY 2017 Millage Rate Resolution. Motion passed (9:3) with Mr. Scott, Mr. Eggers, and Mr. Bevis dissenting.

Announce Percentage, if any, by Which Rate Exceeds Rolled-Back Rate – Chairperson Rice stated that the FY 2017 proposed millage rate is .7500. The FY 2017 rolled-back rate is .6838. The FY 2017 proposed millage rate of .7500 is 9.68 percent greater than the rolled-back rate. PSTA's millage rate limit is .7500.

Adopt Final FY 2017 Budget Resolution – Ms. Nate read Resolution #16-15 by title. Mr. Jonson made a motion, seconded by Mr. Barkley to adopt the FY 2017 Budget Resolution. Motion passed (9:3) with Mr. Scott, Mr. Bevis, and Mr. Eggers dissenting.

This concluded the public hearing portion of the meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Heissonbuttel reiterated his concerns about cutting service and increasing rates. He stated his belief that Pinellas County is going backwards. He pointed out that Route 62 does not have Sunday service and believes the changes in October will make the service worse. He also stated that the buses need to connect better.

Judy Schneider, Pinellas County resident, indicated that she is unsure which routes she needs to take to get to her volunteer work. Cassandra Borchers, Chief Development Officer, spoke with her.

AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

Recognize Outgoing Board Member – Ken Welch – Mr. Miller thanked Mr. Welch for his nine years of devoted service on the PSTA Board and presented him with a plaque and a lifetime bus pass. Mr. Welch said a few words and all the Board members thanked him for his role on the PSTA Board and his dedication.

COMMITTEE UPDATES

Transit Riders Advisory Committee (TRAC) – Elaine Mann, Committee Chair, was not in attendance to give an update, but the Committee met on September 20th.

Forward Pinellas – Chairperson Rice reported on the Forward Pinellas Board meeting that took place on September 13th.

Forward Pinellas Local Coordinating Board (LCB) – Ms. Johnson indicated that the Forward Pinellas LCB met on September 20th and provided some highlights.

CONSENT AGENDA

Mr. Bevis made a motion, seconded by Mr. Welch to approve the Consent Agenda. There were no public comments. The Board unanimously approved the Consent Agenda, which included the approval of the August 24, 2016 Board meeting minutes, the Committee appointments, the wheelchair restraints contract, and the Community Transportation Coordinator (CTC) renewal.

INFORMATION ITEMS

St. Pete Beach Draft Commitment Agreement for BRT Route – Heather Sobush, Planning Manager, outlined upcoming dates and indicated that the project could be delayed as much as a year if a decision is not made by the deadline. Mr. Welch

reported that at the joint Planning and Finance Committees meeting, there was a good discussion and the consensus was that St. Pete Beach is the best corridor, but they are not contributing to the ad valorem. Mr. Barkley said he understands that St. Pete Beach is not a member, however; he believes this is the best route for the new BRT service. He emphasized the importance of keeping this project on schedule. Ms. Long asked if the federal government will still approve the BRT project if St. Pete Beach is not a contributing partner. Ms. Borchers said it does not matter where the local money is coming from, but the federal government would like to see a commitment from PSTA and the state.

Mr. Bevis stated belief that the process needs to begin for a referendum for the cities that do not contribute to the ad valorem. Ms. Johnson mentioned other cities being a part of PSTA that would like to have the BRT service in their city, such as Madeira Beach. Ms. Sobush noted the study indicated that the route to St. Pete Beach would serve the most people because of their population density and they have the most tourists.

Mr. Bevis pointed out that North County has probably the least amount of service, but pays their share. Mr. Deighton stated his belief that Madeira Beach is a good location if St. Pete Beach does not want to participate in the ad valorem. He brought up Greenlight Pinellas and the fact that St. Pete Beach did not vote for it.

Mr. Miller thanked folks who were part of the discussions, adding that the hotel owners and the Tampa Bay Beaches Chambers of Commerce completely support it. He invited Board members to attend the October 11th St. Pete Beach Council workshop. Both Ms. Gerard and Ms. Long expressed the same feelings about St. Pete Beach getting free service and not paying their fair share. Chairperson Rice agreed, but pointed out the importance to have continued negotiations with the City to reach an agreement that satisfies both parties. She does feel that this is a great service from St. Petersburg to the beach.

Direct Connect Expansion Contract – Mr. Miller gave an introduction then turned the discussion over to Chris Cochran, Senior Planner. It was noted that this item was originally planned as an action item, but the Finance Committee asked that this be changed to an information item with the option to take a vote, if desired, after staff made some changes to the contracts as requested by the Committee. Mr. Cochran provided some background information and outlined the changes to this program. Mr. Barkley reported that the Finance Committee had a very robust discussion about this exciting concept but ran out of time for further discussion. There was much discussion and many questions by the Board members, although no action was taken.

Chairperson Rice indicated that this item will be taken back to the Finance Committee and then voted on at the next Board meeting on October 26th.

REPORTS AND CORRESPONDENCE

PSTA Performance Report/Updates – The report was supplied in the Board packet. Mr. Miller indicated that ridership was down in August by 6%, which was an improvement over the last several months.

Pinellas County Department of Human Services (PCDHS) Client Transportation – A presentation was included in the packet, and Mr. Miller provided an update on the current situation with the County.

Forward Pinellas Priorities – Mr. Miller noted that Forward Pinellas, for the first time in its history, voted on a multimodal transportation priority list that included public transit projects.

FUTURE MEETING SUBJECTS

The Board was provided with a list of upcoming meeting subjects. Mr. Miller indicated that the October 14th Board workshop has been cancelled and will be rescheduled for when the St. Petersburg College (SPC) Collaborative Lab is available.

OTHER BUSINESS

No other business was discussed.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

There were no Board member comments.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Chairperson Rice adjourned the meeting at 8:21 PM. The next meeting is scheduled for October 26th at 9:00 AM.

Chairperson