



PINELLAS SUNCOAST TRANSIT AUTHORITY
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**BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
MINUTES – JULY 22, 2015**

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:

Bill Jonson, Chairperson
Janet Long, Secretary/Treasurer
Joseph Barkley
Doug Bevis
Ben Diamond
Dave Eggers
Pat Gerard
Curtis Holmes
Wengay "Newt" Newton
Darden Rice
Kenneth Welch

Absent:

Julie Bujalski, Vice-Chairperson
Mark Deighton
Patricia Johnson
Brian Scott

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 Jonson called the meeting to order at 9:03 AM and noted that Mr. Miller was absent from the Board meeting due to a medical procedure. The Board was led in a moment of silence and the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Lon Phillips, Seminole resident, remarked that the buses do not run early or late enough on the weekends and stated that it is hard for people to work on the weekends because of the inconvenient bus schedule. Mr. Welch inquired about which routes he was referring to.

[Mr. Newton entered the meeting at 9:08 AM.]

Barbara Rutherford (also speaking for Harold Rutherford), New Port Richey resident, stated that her husband was illegally terminated from PSTA and, in her opinion, the Union did nothing to represent Mr. Rutherford. There were many questions from the Board members which Mr. Zimmet answered. Anthony Candela, attorney representing Mr. Rutherford, described the situation for the Board and answered questions. Due to time constraints, Chairperson Jonson asked Mr. Candela to leave information about this situation for the Board if he wished.

Carl Heissenbuttel, Clearwater resident, indicated that he has been riding the bus for ten years and believes there should be more buses late at night, especially on Routes 19, 52 and 18. He stated that there needs to be better service on Sunday's so people may attend church and do their shopping. He also noted that some bus signs are marked illegibly. James Bradford, Chief Operating Officer, met with Mr. Heissenbuttel to further address his concerns.

Mr. Welch asked some further questions of Mr. Zimmet and Mr. Candela regarding Mr. Rutherford's situation. Mr. Bradford was invited to join the dais at 9:35 AM and answered the Board's questions.

PRESENTATIONS

Tampa Bay High Speed Ferry – Cassandra Borchers, Chief Development Officer, introduced Ed Turanchik, Akerman Senterfitt, LLC, who delivered a presentation on passenger ferry service in Tampa Bay. At the end of the presentation, Mr. Turanchik asked for Board support of the concept and requested staff to work with HMS Ferries, Inc. and Akerman Senterfitt to further explore and evaluate water transit options. He indicated that this presentation was also delivered to the Pinellas Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), the Pinellas Board of County Commissioners (BCC), and the St. Petersburg City Council. Ms. Rice noted that the St. Petersburg City Council voted unanimously to support this project and said she believes this is a great way to tie into the St. Petersburg Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project. Mr. Newton spoke about the

possibility of getting to the Tampa International Airport (TIA) via the ferry. Ms. Long asked what action needs to be taken to support the ferry concept, and Chairperson Jonson suggested bringing this item back to the next Board meeting, but Ms. Long suggested discussing it at the Executive Committee meeting instead. She asked Mr. Turanchik for ideas on how PSTA could support this effort. Mr. Welch inquired about the fares and cost of the project.

NON-BOARD COMMITTEES

Transit Riders Advisory Committee (TRAC) – Elaine Mann, Committee Chair, reported on the July 14th TRAC meeting. She said that the TRAC addressed the change in the attendance policy and the change in the ByLaws which the TRAC unanimously endorsed. She indicated that Ms. Borchers, Heather Sobush, Planning Manager, and Bob Lasher, External Affairs Officer, presented an overview of the Phase 1 Route Redesign. Ms. Mann said that the TRAC served the system well during the July meeting, providing a forum for public feedback from individuals who voiced their concerns about the route changes/eliminations. Ms. Mann indicated that the next TRAC meeting will be held on August 18th at 4:00 PM.

Metropolitan Planning Organization – Mr. Eggers reported on the July 8th MPO Board meeting. He said that the MPO welcomed their new Executive Director, Whit Blanton, who was in attendance at today's PSTA Board meeting. Mr. Eggers reported that there will be an MPO Board meeting on September 21st to discuss regional issues. He said the MPO approved an amendment to a St. Petersburg study that will assist PSTA with designing a grid network to replace the transit hub at Williams Park. Mr. Eggers said that there was a lot of discussion regarding the regional priorities for inclusion in the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) work program, noting that the list includes three PSTA priorities out of a total of 11 regional priorities: 1) the Regional Farebox system as one of the "Top 5" priorities, 2) Central Avenue BRT, and 3) Clearwater Beach to the Airport Express Services. Ms. Long asked if there was any conversation about expanding the thought process about how the Surface Transportation Program (STP) funds are used. Mr. Eggers replied that Mr. Miller and Mr. Blanton have already had several meetings and believes that may be discussed at the September 21st meeting. Ms. Long suggested that item be added to the MPO meeting agenda and added how happy she is to be in agreement on the Legislative priorities. Mr. Newton asked about expanding the security cameras on the trail and Ms. Rice replied that she will get him that information.

MPO's Local Coordinating Board (LCB) – Chairperson Jonson stated that PSTA's representative on the LCB, Ms. Johnson, was absent from today's Board meeting, so he

delivered a short report on the LCB. He indicated that there were no LCB meetings since the June PSTA Board meeting. Chairperson Jonson noted that there will be a special meeting of the LCB to focus on the Transportation Disadvantaged (TD) Bus Pass changes on August 18th at 10:00 AM in the Pinellas County Planning Department's conference room in downtown Clearwater, and said everyone is welcome to attend.

CONSENT AGENDA

Chairperson Jonson indicated that staff would like to pull item 5C from the Consent Agenda. Mr. Newton asked for item 5K to be pulled for further discussion. Mr. Welch made a motion, seconded by Ms. Long to approve the remaining Consent Agenda items. Mr. Zimmet read Resolution #15-08 by title. The Board unanimously approved the Consent Agenda, which included the approval of the June 24, 2015 Board meeting minutes, the MPO 5305 Funding Agreement, the TD Coordination Agreements (Non-Profit Funding)/State Agreement, Goodyear Tire Program, Oil and Lubricants, Uniforms (Purchase/Rental and Supplies), Diesel Fuel, Batteries-Transit Vehicles, TRAC By-Laws – Attendance, and the FY 2016 Employee Health Benefits.

Chairperson Jonson indicated that item 5C is an Interlocal Agreement with Pam Dubov, Pinellas County Appraiser, who was in attendance at the Board meeting. Mr. Zimmet indicated that the reason staff pulled the item is because the agreements are still being finalized, so staff is asking the Board to authorize Mr. Miller to execute the final agreement with approval by Mr. Miller and Mr. Zimmet. Mr. Barkley noted that the Finance Committee discussed this item at great length and recommended approval once all the details are finalized. At Ms. Long's request, Ms. Dubov gave a brief overview about the agreement and the process of investigating and auditing of property tax exemptions. Ms. Long made a motion, seconded by Ms. Gerard to allow Mr. Miller to execute the final agreement. There were no public comments. Motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Newton asked that item 5K be pulled based on some comments made at the Legislative Committee meeting. Ms. Rice indicated that the Legislative Committee had substantial discussion on the contract extension and amendment for Gray Robinson. She said the current agreement is ending soon and with the Legislative schedule earlier next year, there was not enough time to go out with a full Request for Proposal (RFP) process. She said the Committee approved adding performance measures and also the additional \$4,000 expenditure for Gray Robinson to work with the Alan Suskey lobbying group. Ms. Rice indicated that there was concern about the extra expenditure and not going through an RFP process, but after much discussion, the Committee did vote to recommend approval. Mr. Diamond commented that he did support the

extension with the understanding that staff was going to convene an RFP process once the Legislative session is through. Mr. Newton made a motion, seconded by Ms. Rice to approve the contract extension/amendment for Gray Robinson.

Ms. Long spoke of the successful joint Executive Committee with HART and one of the initiatives PSTA/HART agreed to work together on was the Legislative focus. Ms. Rice indicated that there is another PSTA/HART meeting and she invited Gray Robinson and Mr. Zimmet to attend. Ms. Leous responded to Mr. Eggers' question about why an RFP was not executed sooner. Mr. Holmes asked Mr. Zimmet about an email from a citizen questioning the authority to lobby and citing a Florida statute. Mr. Zimmet responded that that case was dismissed and he will provide information to the Board. Mr. Barkley suggested starting the RFP process now and suggested that the extension specify it is for 10 months at \$4,000 per month for a maximum of \$40,000. Ms. Gerard said she has a serious issue with raising Gray Robinson's contract by 80% and does not see the benefit. Ms. Rice commented that it is Mr. Miller's belief that it would be beneficial for PSTA to have a lobbying firm with strong connections to Pinellas County. Mr. Suskey has worked with Congressman Jolly when he was a lobbyist and he also has strong connections with Senators Brandes and Latvala. Mr. Welch said he is not happy with the amount of extra money, but added that the timing strategically makes sense for PSTA.

Mr. Newton questioned the procedure for adding items to the Consent Agenda without the Board discussing first. Chairperson Jonson suggested that in the future, the Committees should be asked if they want to recommend the item for Board approval on the Consent Agenda or as an Action Item.

There were no public comments. Motion passed (7:4) with Mr. Barkley, Mr. Holmes, Mr. Eggers, and Ms. Gerard dissenting.

ACTION ITEMS

FY 2016 Budget Truth in Millage (TRIM) Notice – Ms. Leous delivered a presentation on the FY 2016 Budget TRIM Notice which included millage rate history, the proposed FY 2016 millage rate and the impact of that on taxpayers, and the millage rate increase alternatives. Ms. Leous reported that currently, the millage rate for FY 2015 is .7305, and the proposed millage rate for FY 2016 is the cap of .7500 which will generate an additional \$1 million in revenue. She noted that the average homeowner would experience an increase of \$1.98 over FY 2015. Ms. Leous compared the Path Forward sustainability with and without the property tax increase. Ms. Leous noted that both the Finance and Planning Committees recommended approval.

Mr. Barkley reported that the Finance Committee discussed this item at their July 15th meeting. He explained that the Committee made several pro and con comments shown on page 68 of the agenda packet. Mr. Barkley stated that the Finance Committee ultimately voted three to one to recommend publishing of the required FY 2016 TRIM notice with a millage rate of 0.7500. Ms. Long made a motion, seconded by Ms. Rice to approve the publishing of the required FY 2016 TRIM notice with a millage rate of 0.7500. Ms. Rice reported that the Planning Committee also discussed this item at their meeting on July 15th, and after much discussion, they unanimously approved.

There were no public comments. Mr. Welch said in light of the long-term plan, he is supportive of the 0.7500 millage rate. Mr. Eggers stated that he is not supporting the millage increase this year because in his opinion, PSTA has a lot going on right now with its strategic direction and believes the reserves are adequate for the next two or three years. Ms. Rice stated that she is looking at the big picture and with what is happening to federal and state transportation funding, with more pressure being put on PSTA to run its own business and find its own funding. She believes that it is important to show that the agency has capped out the millage rate before going to the MPO for funding and supports the millage increase. Mr. Bevis remarked that he agrees with Mr. Eggers in that the agency has done a great job with the Path Forward and should not increase the millage rate. Mr. Newton asked if the \$1 million could be used to help the routes that are being cut. Ms. Leous explained that in order to keep the operating budget balanced, PSTA has to raise the millage rate, adding that there will be \$200,000 for enhancements to the routes. Mr. Barkley stated that the Board has a fiduciary responsibility to keep the agency solvent and moving forward. Ms. Long commented that she will be supporting the increased millage rate. Chairperson Jonson stated that he will support the tentative increase today, but he is not committing himself to the final vote in September.

Ms. Long made a motion, seconded by Ms. Gerard to approve the publishing of the required FY 2016 TRIM notice with a millage rate of 0.7500. There were no public comments. Motion passed (7:4) with Mr. Bevis, Mr. Newton, Mr. Eggers, and Mr. Holmes dissenting.

Mission Statement – Chairperson Jonson explained that the Executive Committee was tasked by the Board to revise PSTA’s Mission Statement. He said the Executive Committee’s primary reasons for the changes were to reflect a greater focus on customer-oriented service embodied in the new Path Forward Strategic Plan, and to better articulate how PSTA supports the communities. Chairperson Jonson indicated that his objective was that the Mission Statement would tell not only what PSTA does but why it does it. The proposed new Mission Statement reads, “PSTA provides safe, convenient, accessible and affordable public transportation services for Pinellas County residents and visitors,

and supports economic vitality, thriving communities, and an enhanced quality of life.” The Board was also presented with a list of proposed Guiding Principles. Mr. Bevis made a motion, seconded by Mr. Welch to approve the new Mission Statement and Guiding Principles. There were no public comments. Motion passed unanimously.

INFORMATION ITEM

Phase 1 Route Redesign – Cassandra Borchers, Chief Development Officer, along with Heather Sobush, Planning Manager, and Bob Lasher, External Affairs Officer, presented an overview of the Phase 1 Route Redesign plan, which is based on the 2013 Community Bus Plan. Ms. Borchers stated that the goal is to attract riders and build transit constituency and financial sustainability. She noted that the Community Bus Plan considered three scenarios: optimal plan, new revenue, and no new revenue; taking into consideration analysis of ridership and other data, extensive public outreach, and a redesigned route network.

Ms. Borchers indicated that the Community Bus Plan data revealed that riders want more frequency, a longer span of service, and faster travel times from destination to destination. She said the data points to changing to a grid-like system to streamline the routes and improve service, and reported that the Board will be considering additional budget decisions in combination with service changes to ensure a long-term balanced budget.

Ms. Borchers explained that the Route Redesign Work Plan includes 10 phases of system review from years 2015 to 2017. Over this time, every route in the system will be examined for efficiencies and changes. She noted that phase I will begin by examining the lowest performing routes and recommending elimination, realignment, or redesign. Ms. Borchers reported that after collecting data through a system performance evaluation by route, PSTA proposes to eliminate Routes 30, 58, 444 and the East Lake Connector, realign the Route 18 to serve St. Petersburg College Seminole Campus, and redesign Route 1, which will become a new Route 22.

Staff reviewed each of the routes and discussed performance evaluation, demographic analysis, ridership analysis, financial implications, and transportation alternatives. They also presented planned public engagement activities. Staff reported meeting with stakeholder groups along the routes being changed to gather information about how these changes might affect the businesses and their employees. In addition, on-board surveys were conducted with riders to find out what their concerns were and what options they have if routes were changed. Staff stated that a series of public workshops will be offered in different areas of the community, in proximity to the route changes, so

that the public can provide input and ask questions. A Public Hearing will also take place August 26, 2015 at 9:00 AM prior to the regularly scheduled Board meeting.

Staff indicated that after the Board decisions are finalized, staff will inform riders to ensure they are prepared for the adjustments, and outreach efforts such as Ambassadors on buses, posting various signs and notices, and social media notifications will be implemented. There was much discussion among the Board on the presentation and it was suggested that in the future, Board workshops be held on critical issues such as route changes.

[Mr. Diamond left the meeting at 12:16 PM and did not return.]

[Mr. Eggers left the meeting at 12:17 PM and did not return.]

REPORTS/CORRESPONDENCE

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

FUTURE MEETING SUBJECTS

The Board received a schedule of future meeting subjects.

OTHER BUSINESS

No other business was discussed.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Mr. Bevis noted that the *Tampa Bay Times* listed the "20 Best Places to Start a Business in the Tampa Bay Area" and Oldsmar was listed as #1.

Mr. Barkley stated his belief that a lot of work was accomplished at this Board meeting, and said it is important to remember that PSTA has a fiduciary responsibility to the citizens of Pinellas County.

Mr. Welch thanked the Board, staff, and the community for a good meeting. He suggested a review of the procedure when the CEO is absent from a Board meeting, as well as a review of the procedure for recording grievance hearings and other meetings involving personnel.

Mr. Newton recognized 25 Bus Operators, one Customer Service Representative (CSR), and PSTA's receptionist for passenger commendations and thanked them for their service.

Chairperson Jonson reminded the Board that the CEO's annual performance rating worksheets have been sent to everyone and are due back by July 31st, then the Personnel Committee meeting will be held on August 7th to review them prior to the August Board meeting. Chairperson Jonson thanked everyone for their support of the updated Mission Statement.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Chairperson Jonson adjourned the meeting at 12:35 PM. The next meeting is scheduled for August 26th at 9:00 AM.

Chairperson