



PINELLAS SUNCOAST TRANSIT AUTHORITY
3201 SCHERER DRIVE, ST. PETERSBURG, FL 33716
WWW.PSTA.NET 727.540.1800 FAX 727.540.1913

**LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES – SEPTEMBER 2, 2015**

The Legislative Committee of the Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority (PSTA) Board of Directors held a meeting in the Auditorium at PSTA Headquarters at 9:30 AM on this date. The purpose of the meeting was to receive an update from Gray Robinson and Van Scoyoc, to approve the August 5, 2015 meeting minutes, and recommend the PSTA/HART Joint Legislative Agenda. The following members were present:

Darden Rice, Committee Chairperson
Ben Diamond, Committee Vice-Chair
Pat Gerard
Wengay Newton

Absent

Doug Bevis

Also Present:

Brad Miller, CEO
Bill Jonson, PSTA Board Member
Patricia Johnson, PSTA Board Member
Harry Glenn, Van Scoyoc (via conference call)
Fred Leonhardt, Gray Robinson (via conference call)
Robert Stuart, Gray Robinson (via conference call)
Chris Dawson, Gray Robinson (via conference call)
PSTA Staff Members
Members of the Public

CALL TO ORDER

Committee Chair Rice opened the meeting at 9:31 AM.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments.

INFORMATION ITEMS

Federal Strategy Update – Mr. Miller remarked that he, Committee Chair Rice, and Board Member Janet Long and he are planning a trip to Washington D.C. on October 6-8. Mr. Glenn indicated that he is trying to finalize a meeting with Chairman Shuster regarding bus funding, and will request a meeting with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to discuss the process of applying for Small Start funding for the Central Avenue Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project. Mr. Miller suggested scheduling a meeting with someone regarding the LoNo Emission Bus funding. Mr. Glenn indicated that last year, the FTA awarded ten grants totaling \$55 million and the FTA will announce in September their upcoming funding amount. Mr. Glenn asked if PSTA wanted to amend their federal strategies to include the LoNo Emission Bus funding. He added that the Senate has re-established a competitive bus program for \$180 million per year; however, \$55 million is taken out for the LoNo Emission program.

[Mr. Newton and Ms. Johnson entered the meeting at 9:40 AM.]

Mr. Miller recommended making the LoNo Emission funding a federal legislative priority. Committee Chair Rice suggested having the Florida Public Transit Association (FPTA) also advocate for this funding. It was agreed that the Van Scoyoc team would produce a write-up for the LoNo Emission priority which will be presented to the Board. Mr. Newton made a motion, seconded by Ms. Gerard to add the LoNo Emission Bus funding to the federal agenda, and that the funds not be taken out of the competitive bus program. Motion passed unanimously. Mr. Glenn stated that he would develop the priority and send to Mr. Miller.

Ms. Gerard mentioned the LoNo Emission grant process and Mr. Miller said he will talk about it during his visit to D.C. Mr. Glenn said that he will pull the prior successful grant applications to help PSTA prepare for the application process.

State Strategy Update – Mr. Stuart spoke about the Central Avenue BRT and the Clearwater Beach to Tampa International Airport (TIA) Express Service and said the strategy has not changed. In October, there will be a meeting in Tallahassee with the Department of Transportation (FDOT) Secretary on the two priorities, which Senator Brandes requested to be a part of. He reported that the Legislature reconvenes for the first Committee week in September then there are three Committee meeting weeks in October, two of which will be Special Sessions to redraw the Florida Senate maps.

Mr. Miller informed the Committee that he is the Vice-Chair, and soon to be Chair, of the Florida Public Transit Association (FPTA), and stated that the idea of a statewide

advocacy program for the LoNo Emission funding would be great. He said that he spoke with Ed Coven, FDOT's State Transit Manager, to let him know about the meeting with FDOT's Secretary and Senator Brandes. Mr. Miller indicated that Mr. Coven suggested an advance meeting be scheduled locally with Paul Steinman, FDOT's District Secretary, along with Senator Brandes to also show the District's support.

ACTION ITEMS

PSTA/HART Joint Legislative Agenda - Mr. Miller stated that PSTA's goal is to collaborate with HART and speak with one voice. He mentioned a possible joint Legislative priority list and indicated that there was support from HART to jointly present to the Legislative delegations in Pinellas and Hillsborough. Those events have been scheduled for September 22nd and 25th.

Mr. Miller asked for the Committee's guidance on how PSTA can support HART's Legislative agenda. Mr. Newton asked if this would require a Resolution by both Agencies. Committee Chair Rice expressed her concern about approving a Resolution where PSTA might inadvertently approve a project that both Authorities might be competing with. Mr. Miller commented that in speaking with HART about a Resolution, they stated that they will follow PSTA's lead.

Ms. Johnson brought up an issue that PSTA had with the Legislature last year regarding additional funding for the Transportation Disadvantaged (TD) program. Mr. Miller indicated that increased state-wide funding for the TD program is one of PSTA's Legislative priorities. Committee Chair Rice suggested staff create a fact sheet and explore ways to pressure the Legislature for more funding for the program. Mr. Johnson suggested PSTA produce one sheet with all the Legislative priorities listed.

Mr. Newton moved for a Resolution to support HART's 2016 Legislative agenda. Mr. Diamond indicated that he would support a Resolution, but not before the two Agencies discuss and agree on it together, adding that he does; however, like the symbolic gesture of a Resolution.

Since there was no second to Mr. Newton's motion, that motion failed. It was agreed to continue discussions at the next meeting.

August 5, 2015 Meeting Minutes – Ms. Gerard made a motion, seconded by Mr. Newton to approve the minutes. There were no public comments. Motion passed unanimously.

FUTURE MEETING SUBJECTS

PSTA 2015-2016 Legislative Timeline – Committee Chair Rice referred to an extensive list of meetings scheduled for the next few months. This list was provided in the Committee packet. Ms. Johnson asked if the TD program will be part of the Legislative agenda and Mr. Miller replied yes, and a one-page fact sheet and strategy will be developed for additional funding for the TD program. Ms. Johnson offered to travel to Tallahassee in support of more funding for the TD program.

OTHER BUSINESS

No other business was discussed.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 10:36 AM. The next Legislative Committee meeting will be held on October 9th at 2:00 PM.