



PINELLAS SUNCOAST TRANSIT AUTHORITY
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**PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES – JUNE 19, 2015**

The Planning Committee of the Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority (PSTA) Board of Directors held a meeting in the auditorium at PSTA Headquarters at 10:30 AM on this date. The purpose of the meeting was to approve the minutes of the May 20, 2015 meeting, and present information on the FY 2016 Draft Budget and the New Shelter Plan. The following members were present:

Members Present:

Julie Bujalski, Committee Chair
Mark Deighton
Darden Rice
Ken Welch

Members Absent:

Patricia Johnson (Alternate)
Janet Long

Also Present:

Brad Miller, CEO
Bill Jonson, PSTA Board Member
PSTA Staff Members
Members of the Public

CALL TO ORDER

Committee Chair Bujalski opened the meeting at 9:35 AM.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments.

ACTION ITEMS

May 20, 2015 Meeting Minutes – Mr. Deighton made a motion, seconded by Mr. Welch to approve the minutes of the May 20, 2015 meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

INFORMATION ITEMS

Fiscal Year 2016 Draft Budget - Debbie Leous, Chief Financial Officer, presented the FY 2016 Draft Budget and its impact beyond 2016. By the end of FY 2015, PSTA is anticipating a surplus of \$486,860. However, next year will see a deficit of approximately \$382,000 which will continue to grow annually if no programs or adjustments are put into place to change this trend. In addition, fare revenue is expected to decline as riders take advantage of the Transportation Disadvantaged (TD) program. Five savings and revenue methods have been examined: administrative savings, fare adjustments, outsourced advertising, increasing the Ad Valorem millage rate, and various service adjustments. If decisions are made before September, PSTA will accomplish a more sustainable budget and achieve a long term positive impact for the next five years, including the policy direction to achieve a sustainable but replacement funding. In the spirit of the Path Forward strategic directive, PSTA is focusing on customer satisfaction, allocating funds to a strategic marketing plan, two new bus cleaner positions, training, customer service, and satisfaction surveys. The budget includes merit-based compensation for bargaining as well as a federal lobbyist.

In response to Mr. Welch's question as to the number of cleaners currently employed by PSTA and how often the buses are cleaned, Mr. Miller replied that PSTA currently employs three cleaners who average a detailed cleaning of one bus every two months. The addition of two new cleaners would bring it to once a month. Mr. Miller pointed out that the buses are swept and the exterior is washed once a day and that pest control is used inside the buses. Additionally, the new Customer Code of Conduct suggested by the Transit Riders Advisory Committee (TRAC) includes stricter rules for eating and drinking on the bus which should help improve the cleanliness of the buses.

To sustain a sound financial plan, PSTA is also prioritizing funding to bus replacements and moving \$7 million from deleted projects to \$15 million from built up reserves. The proposed draft budget is down \$1.6 million from the FY 2015 adopted budget.

Ms. Leous confirmed Mr. Jonson's observation that the capital and operating reserves would be insufficient by FY 2021. Mr. Deighton recalled a decision to raise fare revenues every three years to which Ms. Leous responded that, while this is not reflected in the FY 2015 Financial Impact Chart, is reflected in the FY 2016 draft budget.

Mr. Welch asked that the budget assumptions be put on the web site for future reference. Ms. Leous pointed out that FY 2016 will be the first year attrition will be included in the budget explaining that if a position is vacated, the savings during that vacated position will be reflected in the budget.

In response to Ms. Rice's request for clarification on the savings of \$930,000 in the service adjustments, Cassandra Borchers, Chief Development Officer, explained that this represents only Phase I of the 10-phase System Redesign Work Plan.

Mr. Welch asked when the Planning Committee will be reviewing fare adjustment recommendations. Mr. Miller responded that route redesign would be presented in July, and fare adjustments in August. Also in July, Planning will be reviewing the recommendation for the Ad Valorem increase. Mr. Miller also said a proposal has been put together regarding the impact of TD to revenue fares and will be presented later. Ms. Sarah Perch, from the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), said that they will be studying the proposal in August. Mr. Miller pointed out that there are two key stakeholders in the TD Program: the Local Coordinating Board (LCB), and their subcommittee, which includes Ross Silvers, PSTA Mobility Manager, Patricia Johnson, Chair of the LCB and PSTA Board member, and Brian Scott, PSTA Board member. The Homeless Leadership Board will also be involved.

Mr. Miller told the Committee that the budget includes \$200,000 for service enhancements each year to which Mr. Jonson expressed that raising the millage rate may not be needed immediately. Other Committee members said that the time was right for raising the Ad Valorem. Mr. Welch felt that the term "Operating Reserves" as shown in the Plan Forward Financial Impact chart should be changed to "Reserves" to reflect that the reserves could be used for capital needs and are not related to the "two-month operating reserve."

New Shelter Plan - Chris Cochran, Senior Planner, presented the New Shelter Plan. Staff has identified initial replacement locations which will include approximately 30 shelters with implementation by January 2016. A distribution strategy has been developed that focuses customer needs, taking into consideration locations that benefit the most riders, maximizing the area impact and taking into account geographic equity per Title VI. Phase II of the strategy will look at community revitalization by complimenting existing and future municipal plans, leveraging investments by other agencies and local jurisdictions, fostering partnership opportunities and supporting local economic development.

Ms. Borchers interjected that staff regularly meets with city and county staff to review projects and partnership with PSTA. In July, PSTA will host a “Municipal Open House,” inviting city and county staff to talk about PSTA amenity and service redesign projects so that everyone is working in concert.

The Committee asked several questions regarding the shelters. Mr. Welch questioned shelter size and Mr. Cochran described the new shelters as being a 4 x 8 (the most popular), 8 x 12, and 2 x 12 with bench seating and taking into account wheel chair accessibility. In response to Ms. Rice’s question about shelter from the sun at certain angles, Mr. Cochran said that some shelters are placed to avoid direct sun but placement is limited by visibility and right-of-way space.

In response to Mr. Jonson’s question about Signal Shelters and shelters on US 19, Mr. Cochran said that the shelter program does not include removing any of the 61 Signal Shelters and the shelters that were removed on US 19 for construction will be replaced. The Committee was in agreement that US 19 should receive shelter priority.

Mr. Welch asked how stops with no benches or shelters are prioritized. Mr. Miller advised that out of 5,000 bus stops, only 10 that have greater than 50 boardings per day currently do not have shelters. Mr. Cochran said that the criterion for installing a shelter is 50 boardings per day for a shelter and 25 boardings per day for a bench. Mr. Welch asked staff to provide the number of stops without benches or shelters.

Mr. Deighton inquired about PSTA’s policy if a town wants to partner with PSTA in shelter design or financing. Mr. Cochran said that the Amenities Partnership Program, while currently on hold, was created to address that opportunity. He said that PSTA is refining the program and hopes to come up with a catalogue of options that is also approved by Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT). In the meantime, PSTA will offer four shelter sizes to choose from. Chair Bujalski asked for a one page quick-fact sheet on shelter inventory which includes criteria on shelters, benches, etc., as well as comparisons to other cities. In response to the Committee’s concern about providing shelters, Ms. Borchers assured them that staff will be looking at every stop and analyzing improvements in conjunction with the service redesign.

FUTURE MEETING SUBJECTS

The committee was provided with a list of upcoming meeting subjects.

OTHER BUSINESS

No other business was discussed.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 11:08 AM. The next Planning Committee meeting will be held on July 15, 2015 at 10:30 AM.