



PINELLAS SUNCOAST TRANSIT AUTHORITY  
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**PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING  
MINUTES – APRIL 15, 2015**

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The Planning Committee of the Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority (PSTA) Board of Directors held a meeting in the Auditorium at PSTA Headquarters at 9:45 AM on this date. The purpose of this meeting was to approve the minutes of the January 21, 2015 Planning Committee, review the Service Redesign Work Plan, the Budget Assumptions Forecast, and the Route Performance Monitoring System.

Members Present:

Julie Bujalski, Committee Chair  
Darden Rice, Vice-Chair  
Mark Deighton  
Janet Long  
Ken Welch

Members Absent:

Patricia Johnson (Alternate)

Also Present:

Brad Miller, CEO  
Bill Jonson, PSTA Board Chairperson  
Vivian Peters, Transit Riders Advisory Committee (TRAC) Member  
PSTA Staff Members

**CALL TO ORDER**

Committee Chair Bujalski opened the meeting at 10:39 AM.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

There were no public comments.

## ACTION ITEMS

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

Revised Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Letter – Mr. Miller told the Committee that since the PSTA Board decided at its February 2015 meeting not to submit a request for Federal Surface Transportation Program (STP) funds for PSTA bus replacement, further discussion will focus on whether to send no letter or revise the letter based on the recommended “Path Forward.” One of the specific recommendations in this proposed action plan is to defer any use of STP funds for transit buses until after PSTA has exhausted all possible current PSTA revenues including reserves, and also defer discussions until the new Executive Director of the MPO was on-board.

At the April 10, 2015 PSTA Executive Committee meeting, discussion of whether or not to send a formal letter to the MPO concluded with the suggestion to send a substantially different letter with no specific request for funds. The Planning Committee reviewed a revised draft of this letter and Mr. Miller asked for a decision as to whether to recommend this letter to the PSTA Board for approval. The Committee suggested the following changes:

- The letter should be more specific and make clear that PSTA will be in need of funds in the future.
- Add specific information about the amount of funding that will be needed.
- Change the general tone of the letter to one more positive.
- Remove the word “specific” under the paragraph entitled “Future Collaboration.”
- Change the word “eliminates” to the word “postpones” under the paragraph entitled “Change in PSTA’s Plans.”
- Include the words “Path Forward” in the title “Change in PSTA’s Plans.”
- The last sentence of the final paragraph should be re-worded to include “ongoing discussions.”

Ms. Long made a motion, seconded by Mr. Welch to approve the revised letter with the changes suggested. Motion passed unanimously.

## INFORMATION ITEMS

Fare Revenue Assumptions – Mr. Miller; Debbie Leous, Chief Financial Officer; and Ross Silvers, Mobility Manager; worked together to present a Fare Revenue Policy. Mr. Miller led the presentation by continuing the discussion of PSTA’s new “Path Forward” concept and told the Committee that staff will be looking at ways to generate the appropriate amount of revenue from fares.

In the past, PSTA focused on maximizing the amount customers paid (fare box recovery) which sometimes negatively affected ridership. PSTA’s new direction is toward a customer-oriented transit. This includes having a fare that is best for the customer such as U-Pass and other innovative programs. Fares remain a key source of revenue and provide \$14 million annually, but strategies must be developed to increase fares, allowing adequate revenue for the future.

Ms. Leous began by reviewing PSTA’s current reserves stating that operating reserves are currently at two months, insurance reserves are fully covered, and general reserves are up as well. A good portion of these revenues come from the PSTA property tax, with some revenue coming from the state. To account for total fare revenue declines in the past few years, despite increasing ridership, PSTA staff is looking at increasing fare revenue to generate an additional \$1.2 million.

Mr. Silvers continued the presentation with a brief discussion about revenue generated from the U-Pass Program indicating that nearly 50,000 U-Pass trips occur each month, many trips being to destinations other than school and work. Thirty-nine percent of the U-Pass riders are new riders.

The Transportation Disadvantaged (TD) Program has also seen increased ridership. A year ago, 2,500 riders were receiving discounted bus passes. Today, that figure is 5,500 and still growing. Bus passes for TD trips are \$8.25 per month as compared to \$65.00 for a regular bus pass. The TD program also offers a 10-day pass for \$5.00. The increase in trips may result in some additional grant monies, supplementing the loss of revenue through discounted tickets, but not entirely. Those riders using the TD program must meet three criteria:

- Must live in Pinellas County
- Have no other means of transportation for life-sustaining purposes
- Have a household income below 150% of poverty level

PSTA works with agencies that serve the homeless and other agencies that provide assistance to those who need it. In the past, applicants needed to fill out a 2-page report

documenting all medical and work related trips which then had to be verified by PSTA. This procedure was very labor-intensive and was recently changed to a more simplified process, allowing riders to qualify much faster. TD bus passes were also supplied to agencies that went through a certified training process with PSTA. These agencies work with PSTA to get riders who are in crisis get qualified within one hour. Non-profit agencies also receive a 10% discount on regular bus passes for those who do not qualify for the TD program.

It is important that PSTA find ways to increase revenue to compensate for the difference between the full retail value of TD passes and the amount received for those passes from both the customer and the grant combined. The Local Coordinating Board (LCB) has formed a subcommittee which includes two of PSTA's Board members. Public hearings will be planned for September 2015, after which time changes to the program will be voted upon.

Explanation of Route Performance Monitoring Tool Methodology – Due to time constraints, this subject will be presented at the next Planning Committee meeting on May 20, 2015.

FY-2016 Budget-Personnel Assumptions – Due to time constraints, this subject will be presented at the next Planning Committee meeting on May 20, 2015.

### **OTHER BUSINESS**

No other business.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 12:13 PM.

**The next Planning Committee meeting will be held on May 20, 2015 at 10:30 AM.**