



PINELLAS SUNCOAST
TRANSIT AUTHORITY (PSTA)



&
HILLSBOROUGH AREA REGIONAL TRANSIT (HART)
JOINT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES
AUGUST 31, 2015

The Executive Committees of the Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority (PSTA) and the Hillsborough Area Regional Transit (HART) held a meeting in the Auditorium at PSTA Headquarters at 2:00 PM on this date. The purpose of the meeting was to approve the June 8, 2015 meeting minutes, follow up on the June 8th meeting, discuss the joint Pinellas Legislative delegation meetings, and discuss the joint meeting with Legislators/State Committees. The following members were present:

PSTA Executive Committee

Bill Jonson, Chairperson
Julie Bujalski, Vice-Chairperson
Janet Long, Secretary/Treasurer
Darden Rice
Ken Welch

HART Executive Committee

Mike Suarez, Chairperson
Katharine Eagan
Mickey Jacob
Karen Jaroch

Also Present:

Brad Miller, PSTA CEO
Patricia Johnson, PSTA Board Member
Alan Zimmet, PSTA General Counsel
Robert Stuart, Gray Robinson
Alan Suskey, Suskey Consulting
Ray Chiaramonte, TBARTA
PSTA and HART Staff Members
Members of Public

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Jonson opened the meeting at 2:03 PM.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Suarez made a motion, seconded by Ms. Long to approve the June 8, 2015 meeting minutes. There were no public comments. Motion passed unanimously.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Joint Representation at Hillsborough & Pinellas Legislative Delegation Meetings – Mr. Miller indicated that since the last meeting, PSTA has been moving forward with coordination on the Legislative agendas. He stated that PSTA's Board approved the Agency's agenda last week, which included these priority projects – Clearwater Beach to Tampa International Airport (TIA) Express Bus service, the Central Avenue Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project, and the Regional Fare Collection project. Mr. Miller reported that two meetings have been scheduled on September 22nd and 25th to meet with the Hillsborough Legislative delegation and the Pinellas Legislative delegation to jointly present the Tampa Bay regional priorities.

Ms. Eagan reported that HART's draft Legislative agenda will be presented to the full HART Board on September 14th. She indicated that HART is also trying to schedule a joint meeting with Senator Latvala to show regional support. She stated that HART has developed a strategy on how to be supportive of the projects in Pinellas County as well as regional projects. Ms. Eagan stated that the HART Committee voted in support of PSTA's BRT project and in the requesting for additional grant funding for the service from Clearwater Beach to TIA. Ms. Eagan reported that HART has been successful in securing FDOT funding for pilot projects, adding that the Agency does not have plans to seek funds at this time, stating that they are happy to support the initiatives in Pinellas County.

Mr. Suarez stated that regional cooperation is very important, especially for the Legislature with regard to the Regional Fare Collection. He added that it is extremely important to have both HART and PSTA speak to both delegations. Ms. Long congratulated Mr. Suarez and Ms. Eagan on their messaging for the region. Ms. Eagan mentioned that HART is searching for a Government Relations person who will also be leveraging the local projects in Tallahassee.

Mr. Miller introduced Alan Suskey, of Suskey Consulting, and Robert Stuart, of Gray Robinson, who said they believe this is a great step in the right direction and look forward to working with everyone. Mr. Jonson introduced Ray Chiamonte, Executive Director of the Tampa Bay Area Regional Transportation Authority (TBARTA), and Alan Zimmet, PSTA's General Counsel.

Ms. Jaroch stated her concern about approving projects that she does not have much information on and Mr. Miller assured her that the main goal is to show that the two Agencies are jointly supportive of the Regional Farebox Collection project and the Clearwater Beach to TIA Express Bus project, and each other's Legislative agendas.

Ms. Bujalski asked the HART Board members if Hillsborough's Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is aware of HART's Legislative priorities and whether they are supportive. Ms. Eagan replied that HART's priorities are usually not in the MPO's top ten, but there are some areas that can overlap.

Mr. Jacob asked if there are other organizations who could assist in talking to Legislature about transportation issues. It was suggested to reach out to TBARTA for their support.

Mr. Jonson asked if the two Agencies have considered traveling to Tallahassee together and Ms. Eagan suggested at the federal level as well. Mr. Miller mentioned the suggested Legislative timeline and that there is a joint trip to Tallahassee tentatively scheduled for the week of October 19th. He also suggested a joint federal trip to Washington D.C. in the spring.

Follow up on June 8th Joint Executive Committee Meeting Minutes – Mr. Welch asked if the two Agencies are planning on issuing joint press releases and Mr. Miller stated that the Agencies worked together, along with Congressman Jolly, on a letter supporting additional Congressional bus funding, adding his belief that there was a press release issued.

Mr. Miller spoke about Uber-type technologies and Ms. Eagan gave an update on what HART is proposing with Uber and other similar organizations. She indicated that HART will have a solicitation out in September for first mile/last mile transportation. There was also discussion about insurance and background checks.

Ms. Rice remarked that there is a Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged (CTD) and Senator Latvala sent a representative to testify to the Governor that the CTD did not need more funding. She said this news was especially discouraging in light of PSTA having to raise fares for the TD program. Ms. Rice stated that this appears to be an area where PSTA and HART could work together to better inform and work with the CTD. Ms. Eagan explained that HART is not the TD provider for Hillsborough County but said that HART and PSTA could still partner to get the message out.

Mr. Suarez briefly spoke about zip cars (short term rentals) which is another alternative transportation mode being explored by HART. Ms. Eagan added that another source of transportation being utilized is the Megabus going between Orlando and Tampa.

Ms. Eagan remarked that HART has plans for 2016-2017 to implement a route that would travel from TIA to Carillon to St. Petersburg. She indicated that there will be a study conducted next year.

Mr. Jacob spoke of the zip cars and how they can affect economic development. Ms. Bujalski added that the Millennials do not want to sit on a bus and believes this is why it is important to investigate other transportation options. Ms. Jaroch spoke about autonomous cars and new technologies in the future.

Mr. Jonson indicated that PSTA is in the process of implementing a communication effort to educate current and potential riders on how to ride the bus, how to pay your fare, and when the bus is arriving. He said that this might be an opportunity to coordinate with HART. Ms. Eagan agreed that this was an excellent suggestion. Mr. Jacob added that he believes that HART and PSTA could use social media and video to show how young people are utilizing the bus system in a successful and efficient manner.

OTHER BUSINESS

The next quarterly PSTA-HART joint Executive Committee meeting will be scheduled for January 2016.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 3:19 PM.