

# **Florida Transportation Commission**

## **Minutes**

### **Administrative and Operational Issues Workshop**

#### **Orlando Executive Airport Conference Room**

**July 16, 2015**

Commissioners Present: Chairman Jay Trumbull, Vice Chairman Ken Wright, Secretary Beth Kigel, Commissioners John Browning, Maurice Ferré, Ron Howse, Katherine Frazier, and Jim Sebesta.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Trumbull at 11:22 a.m.

Chairman Trumbull stated that the primary purpose of the meeting was to discuss the focus and direction of the Commission. The Chairman noted that a summary of the April 16 workshop in Orlando has been provided to the Commissioners. At the April 16 workshop, a major topic of discussion was the need for the Commission to refocus and decide the function and goals for the future. The purpose of today's meeting is to discuss the Commission's relevance and how the Commission can become more effective and used as a resource. He noted that in the past many of the Commission's activities were matters that the department asked the Commission to look into.

Also included on the agenda today is a status report on the Executive Director search and a discussion of other operational issues raised by the Commissioners.

This stimulated a general discussion on several issues, as follows:

The Commissioners discussed the history of the Commission. Commissioner Browning discussed the origin of the Commission and recalled that Senator Malcolm Beard, who served as Chairman of the Senate Transportation Committee when the Commission was created in 1987, was concerned about the frequent turnover of FDOT secretaries and saw the Commission as a way of providing policy continuity and oversight of the department. Commissioner Browning felt that the Commission should look at issues as a Board of Directors.

Executive Director Bob Romig read a portion of the Commission's enabling statute (s. 20.23 (2) Florida Statutes). Mr. Romig stated that the statute specifically provided the Commission's statutory responsibilities as follows:

1. Recommend major transportation policies for the Governor's approval and assure that approved policies and any revisions are properly executed.
2. Periodically review the status of the state transportation system including highway, transit, rail, seaport, intermodal development, and aviation components of the system and recommend improvements to the Governor and the Legislature.
3. Perform an in-depth evaluation of the annual department budget request, the Florida Transportation Plan, and the tentative work program for compliance with all applicable laws and established departmental policies. Except as specifically provided in s. [339.135](#)(4) (c) 2. (d), and (f), the commission may not consider individual construction projects, but shall consider methods of accomplishing the goals of the department in the most effective, efficient, and businesslike manner.
4. Monitor the financial status of the department on a regular basis to assure that the department is managing revenue and bond proceeds responsibly and in accordance with law and established policy.
5. Monitor on at least a quarterly basis, the efficiency, productivity, and management of the department using performance and production standards developed by the commission pursuant to s. [334.045](#).

6. Perform an in-depth evaluation of the factors causing disruption of project schedules in the adopted work program and recommend to the Governor and the Legislature methods to eliminate or reduce the disruptive effects of these factors.
7. Recommend to the Governor and the Legislature improvements to the department's organization in order to streamline and optimize the efficiency of the department. In reviewing the department's organization, the commission shall determine if the current district organizational structure is responsive to this state's changing economic and demographic development patterns. The initial report by the commission must be delivered to the Governor and the Legislature by December 15, 2000, and each year thereafter, as appropriate. The commission may retain experts as necessary to carry out this subparagraph, and the department shall pay the expenses of the experts.
8. Monitor the efficiency, productivity, and management of the authorities created under chapters 348 and 349, including any authority formed using part I of chapter 348; the Mid-Bay Bridge Authority re-created pursuant to chapter 2000-411, Laws of Florida; and any authority formed under chapter 343. The commission shall also conduct periodic reviews of each authority's operations and budget, acquisition of property, management of revenue and bond proceeds, and compliance with applicable laws and generally accepted accounting principles.

Commissioner Wright added that the statute also contained the following restrictions on Commission activities:

The commission or a member thereof may not enter into the day-to-day operation of the department or a monitored authority and is specifically prohibited from taking part in:

1. The awarding of contracts.
2. The selection of a consultant or contractor or the prequalification of any individual consultant or contractor. However, the commission may recommend to the secretary standards and policies governing the procedure for selection and prequalification of consultants and contractors.
3. The selection of a route for a specific project.
4. The specific location of a transportation facility.
5. The acquisition of rights-of-way.
6. The employment, promotion, demotion, suspension, transfer, or discharge of any department personnel.
7. The granting, denial, suspension, or revocation of any license or permit issued by the department.

There was a discussion about these statutory responsibilities. It was noted that one responsibility was for the Commission to review and evaluate the department's annual budget. The Commissioners wanted to place more emphasis on this.

It was requested that the FTC website include these specific responsibilities verbatim (not a summary). The Commissioners also agreed that this item should be included in the FTC Workshop next week in St. Augustine during the discussion with Secretary Boxold. The role of the Commission should also be discussed with the Secretary in a more informal setting at a place and time to be determined.

Commissioner Ferre' stated that the FTC's enabling statute was very clear and that no changes to the statute were needed.

There was a discussion of the FTC's involvement in the development of major policy issues. Commissioner Wright stated that he serves as the FTC representative on the Steering Committee overseeing updates of the Florida Transportation Plan (FTP) and the Strategic Intermodal System (SIS) Plan. He also serves as Chair of the SIS Advisory Committee to the FTP/SIS Steering

Committee. It was suggested that we include an update of the FTP/SIS Update process on the agenda for our September Commission meeting in Miami.

Commissioner Ferre asked if Chairman Trumbull has met with the Governor to discuss his view of the Commission's role. The Chairman stated that he has not had such a meeting to date. He felt that the Commission needed to have further discussions to solidify some specific recommendations that could be shared with the Governor.

Chairman Trumbull shared an e-mail that FTC Assistant Executive Director Mark Reichert sent to him with his views on ways that the Commissioners had become relevant, citing specific examples of Commissioners' involvement in statewide and local activities.

Chairman Trumbull advised the Commissioners that he and Bob Romig met recently with Senator Jeff Brandes, Chairman of the Senate Transportation Committee. Chairman Brandes expressed a high level of support for the Commission and wants the Commission to concentrate on issues such as Autonomous/Connected Vehicles, Transportation Data, and issues concerning the future of transportation and how Florida can become a nationally-recognized leader in transportation.

Commissioner Ferre stated that he believes the Commission needs to pick 2 or 3 key issues to discuss with the Governor. There was general agreement on this point.

Commissioner Ferre identified a list of issues he sees as important for the Commission to focus on. They are as follows:

- Identify a dedicated source of funding for infrastructure to meet surface transportation needs, other than gas tax. From a local funding point of view.
- Redefine the metrics to reflect new technologies.
- Take a "return-on-investment" (ROI) view towards a better use of assets.
- Better definition of "risks" as the private sector invests in transportation systems (P3s). What does "risk" mean? Need to define "risk" beyond availability funding.
- ITS applications for more capacity. Ensure that new technologies be used in current designs. "Technology is cheaper than asphalt".
- View transportation as a utility. User pays based on usage, with safety net.
- Federal, state, and local agencies need to work better together.
- Doing the job better, faster, cheaper. State vs Federal processes.
- National tolling interoperability.
- Organization of data exchanges. Simple, cost-effective architecture.
- Managed lanes/express lanes as a basis for mass transit systems to connect hubs (fixed-guideway, bus rapid transit, maglev systems).

The Commissioners then had an open discussion of issues that they would like to discuss with the Secretary and/or Governor. They authorized the Chairman to prioritize the issues. The list is as follows:

- Discuss with the Governor and Secretary
  - Alternative funding sources for the future.
- Discuss with the Secretary
  - Small Business Initiative. Providing more work to smaller companies. Is the \$15 million threshold to identify small businesses the correct level? Should it be \$5 million? Other? Is it possible to have local engineering firms, which tend to be smaller firms, review transportation plans to gain local knowledge.
  - Permitting. How to expedite?
  - Public Involvement. Are the right people in the Districts giving presentations at public meeting in a way that is clearly understood by the public?

- Need to notify Commissioners when public hearings and ribbon-cuttings are held.
- Commission should be more involved in policy development. Two areas were identified:
  - Future Corridors/Sector Planning and policies/principles being implemented based on recommendations from the East Central Florida Corridor Task Force.
  - Technology and policies related to Autonomous/Connected Vehicles.
- Update on Executive Compensation Study.
- Update on recommendations from the Cambridge Systematics Study on Expressway Authorities.
- FTC should hold workshops on factors that disrupt project schedules following the Annual Performance and Productivity Review.

### **Status of Executive Director Search**

Chairman Trumbull asked Bob Romig to give an update on the search for an Executive Director. Mr. Romig stated that, in accordance with the search plan approved by the Commissioners at the June 18 FTC Teleconference, the position has been advertised in the State of Florida “People First” human resources system. To date, 59 applications have been received. Based on an initial screening of the applications received against the criteria in the position advertisement, two applicants have been identified as viable candidates. Commissioner Browning disclosed that he has a current business relationship with one of the applicants and asked Mr. Romig to check with the Commission’s legal counsel to determine if it was appropriate for him to vote on the final selection of the Executive Director.

Following a brief discussion, Commissioner Wright made a motion to authorize the Chairman to begin negotiations with Mr. Steve Precourt as a first choice for the position of Executive Director and to move to negotiations with Mr. Matt Ubben as a second choice. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Howse. Upon the realization that the current advertisement period runs through July 31, the Commissioners felt that it would be best to let the advertisement period run its course and evaluate all applicants at that time. Commissioner Wright then withdrew his motion.

The Commissioners authorized the Chairman, in consultation with Executive Director Romig, to screen and shortlist the applicants following the July 31 application deadline. Mr. Romig was asked to set up a conference call Monday, August 3 at which time the Commission will discuss the shortlisted applicants and decide what action to take.

**Public Comment:** There were no public comments

The meeting concluded at approximately 4:20 p.m.