

# **FLORIDA TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION**

**MINUTES OF: February 4, 2021**

**Teleconference Call**

## **Attendance:**

Members on the call were: Chairman Ron Howse, Vice-Chairman Jay Trumbull, Commissioners John Browning, Richard Burke, Julius Davis, David Genson and Teresa Sarnoff.

## **Call to Order and Chairman's Opening Remarks:**

Chair Howse called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

## **Florida Department of Transportation Agency Update:**

- Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) Secretary Kevin J. Thibault provided an agency update.
  - Jim Wolfe, FDOT District 6 Secretary, announced his retirement, which will take place in early March.
  - FDOT will fill the vacancy for Multimodal Programs Director in the coming days.
  - Last Thursday, Governor DeSantis released his Florida Leads budget proposal.
    - The proposed budget for the department includes \$10.4 billion, and \$9.47 billion for the State Transportation Work Program, which includes vital funding to increase infrastructure capacity, new highway construction, bridge repairs, as well as seaport, aviation, and transit program improvements.
    - Provides \$50 million for the Economic Development Transportation Fund.
  - On January 28, 2021, Secretary Thibault joined Governor DeSantis in celebrating the completion of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Street Flyover project in Panama City.
  - US DOT Secretary Pete Buttigieg was confirmed by the US Senate.
  - Florida is set to receive \$470 million from the COVID relief package that was signed into law late last year.
  - The Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act includes funds for Transit Authorities.
    - Some funds will be provided directly to transit agencies and some will flow through the department.
    - The Tampa Bay region's transit authorities are set to receive \$30.8 million, which is expected to be split between the Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority, and the Hillsborough Area Regional Transit Authority.

- Seven other areas have received funding.
    - Jacksonville received \$33 million.
    - Miami received \$250 million, to be used by the Miami Department of Transportation Public Works, Broward County Transit, Palm Tran as well as SFRTA.
    - Orlando and Kissimmee received \$11.5 million, of which \$3.5 million was sub-allocated to SunRail.
    - Sarasota Bradenton received \$5.3 million for use by Sarasota County transit as well as Manatee County area transit.
    - Tallahassee received close to \$4 million.
    - Gainesville received a little over \$6 million.
  - The department received an additional \$32.2 million to ease the impact on rural transportation providers.
    - The department is targeting transportation providers that did not receive CARES Act funding.
- Chairman Howse asked the Secretary to provide an update from the Legislative Committee Weeks.
  - Committee Weeks started on January 11.
  - The Department provided an overview of the department since there were many new committee members.
  - The Department also provided an update on SunPass, as well as budget recommendations.
  - The Department's legislative package is very similar to last year's.
  - The Legislative Session begins March 2.

### **Annual Transportation Transit Authority Oversight Report:**

- Ralph Yoder, Executive Director of the Florida Transportation Commission provided a detailed overview on the history of the Annual Transportation Authorities Monitoring and Oversight Report.
- Executive Director Yoder presented the individual transit authority results, and representatives from each transit authority were given the opportunity to respond to their respective portion of the report.
- The Transit Authorities monitored include:
  - Central Florida Regional Transportation Authority (CFRTA/LYNX)
  - Jacksonville Transportation Authority (JTA)
  - South Florida Regional Transportation Authority (SFRTA/Tri-Rail)
  - Tampa Bay Area Regional Transit Authority (TBARTA)
- Commissioner Genson mentioned reviewing the performance measures in the Tolling Authority meeting, since many are outdated. FTC staff will begin working on this.
- Executive Director Jim Harrison presented on behalf of LYNX.

- LYNX met four performance measures.
- Ridership was down 4.3% in fiscal year 2019.
- LYNX does well on forward facing metrics such as safety, on time performance and responding to customer complaints.
- They do not do as well with metrics related to revenue miles and passenger miles due to how large their service area is (largest in the state in terms of bus miles).
- Tri-county area remains one of the leading growth areas of the state.
  - Covid-19 had a huge impact on transit in the area.
  - Focus was put on the health and safety of LYNX passengers and employees.
  - Ridership dipped over 70% in March.
  - A fare free policy was implemented to minimize contact and to ease economic strains.
  - Lynx went back to a full-service schedule on May 11, 2020 and began collecting fares on September 1, 2020.
- Chairman Howse asked how the fare box was affected since fares were suspended?
  - They were dramatically affected and were down nearly 50% for the last fiscal year. Even when fares were being collected again, ridership was still only at 50%.
- CEO Nathaniel Ford presented on behalf of JTA.
  - JTA met four performance measures related to bus, five measures related to skyway, and all performance measures related to highways and governance.
  - Ridership declined about 70% in March.
  - JTA continued to charge fares.
  - JTA applied for and received CARES Act funding, which helped keep operations going throughout the pandemic.
  - Fare box receipts declined around 22% from the previous fiscal year on fixed route services, and 18% including all modes.
  - Ridership is beginning to improve.
- Commissioner Sarnoff asked what JTA's overall annual budget is.
  - For operating, it is approximately \$110 million. When adding capital projects funding, JTA's budget is nearly \$200 million.
- Executive Director Steven Abrams presented on behalf of SFRTA.
  - SFRTA met six performance measures.
  - Due to the pandemic, ridership initially dipped 80%.
  - Services were reduced and fares were suspended temporarily.
  - Ridership is now steady at 40% of pre-pandemic levels.
- Executive Director David Green presented on behalf of TBARTA.
  - SB 1672, effective July 1, 2017 renamed TBARTA as a transit agency.
  - Performance measures and operating indicators are not yet applicable.

- Commissioner Davis mentioned the importance of some of the new transportation-related projects being implemented in the Tampa Bay region, especially considering the number of new residents moving to the area.
- Commissioner Genson praised TBARTA on their annual report and asked if the NASA report is still expected to be completed by Spring 2021.
  - Some preliminary results were expected to come out in the Spring; however, the timeline has been updated to Fall 2021.
- Commissioner Genson asked for additional information on why the region went from seven counties down to five.
  - This was most likely due to the original size of the area initially set out in Florida Statutes.
- Chairman Howse entertained a motion to accept the Transit Authority Monitoring Report as presented.
  - The motion was made by Commissioner Genson and seconded by Commissioner Burke. The motion passed unanimously.

### **General FTC Issues/ Business**

- Executive Director Yoder provided an FTC business update.
  - FTC Staff are currently working on developing the report for the upcoming Tentative Work Program Review.
  - The Tentative Work Program Review meeting will be on March 1, 2021, and will be held virtually through Microsoft Teams.
- Chairman Howse entertained a motion to approve the January 7, 2021, meeting minutes.
  - The motion was made by Commissioner Genson and seconded by Commissioner Davis. The motion passed unanimously.
- Commissioner Genson volunteered to represent the FTC at meetings while reviewing the performance measures for the authorities.

### **Public Comment:**

Chair Howse asked for any public comments. No comments were made.

### **Adjourn:**

Chair Howse adjourned the conference call.

MINUTES APPROVED: \_\_\_\_\_ AS READ \_\_\_\_\_ AS AMENDED  
THIS 1<sup>st</sup> DAY OF MARCH 2021

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CHAIRMAN