

# **FLORIDA TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION**

**MINUTES OF: March 1, 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.
  - Stacy Miller has been chosen as the new District 6 Secretary.
    - She will continue to support the Department in her current role through the end of the legislative session.
  - FDOT will continue to implement the Vital Few which includes:
    - Improving safety
    - Enhancing mobility
    - Inspiring innovation
    - Fostering talent
  - Gas tax will decline by the end of the decade due to electric vehicles and higher fuel efficiency standards.
  - The 2021 Legislative Session starts, tomorrow, March 2.
  - The FY 2020/2021 Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA) Grant program has started, which funds projects of national and regional significance.
  - The Pensacola Bay Bridge will begin opening later this month.
    - FDOT hopes to meet phase 2 of the reopening by Memorial Day.
  - Operation Stride continues to be implemented to aid in the prevention of future fatalities on or near rail crossings.
    - Dynamic Envelopes have been installed at 440 out of 629 FDOT and State-owned rail crossings.
  - Florida is hosting the annual Southern Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (SASHTO) meeting in Orlando, Florida on August 1-4, 2021.

## **Statewide Public Hearing on the FDOT Tentative Work Program:**

- Ralph Yoder, Executive Director of the Florida Transportation Commission gave a detailed overview of the Florida Transportation Commission’s review of the Tentative Work Program.
- Secretary Thibault provided a response regarding the Tentative Work Program review.
  - While revenue forecasts indicate a positive rebound, the net projected revenues through fiscal year 2026 is still more than \$1 billion lower than what had previously been projected.
  - To balance the revenue shortfall the department has reduced planned commitments in their operating budget.
  - Governor Ron DeSantis announced his “Florida Leads” budget proposal.
- Commissioner Davis asked Secretary Thibault to provide some examples of what the state is doing to accommodate the move towards electric vehicles.
  - This move is not unique to Florida and is happening internationally, while keeping up with the Original Equipment Manufacturers, conducting studies regarding charging stations, and having discussions with national partners are just a few things being done.
- Each district, as well as the Turnpike and Rail Enterprise, gave a brief overview of their respective work programs and briefed the Commissioners on their challenges and accomplishments.
- Secretary Wolfe presented on behalf of District 6.
  - Commissioner Sarnoff thanked Secretary Wolfe for his presentation and reiterated how important the I-395 Signature Bridge is to the region as it provides a better flow of traffic, as well as provides amenities to the neighborhoods under the highway.
  - The Tamiami Trail is a great project environmentally as it helps protect the Everglades.
  - The Golden Glades Interchange was removed from the work program due to conflicts with the relocation of the Florida Gas Transmission pipeline. This project would alleviate chronic congestion, safety issues, mobility issues and would be a huge improvement to the north bound express lane.
- Secretary Nandam presented on behalf of District 1.
  - Commissioner Genson stated that the last phase of SR 82 as well as improvements to Colonial and the I-75 interchange are in the current work program.
  - Southwest Florida is seeing a migration of people moving from Miami and Broward. Many are saying their commute is just as long as when they lived on the east coast.
- Secretary Evans presented on behalf of District 2.
- Secretary Gainer presented on behalf of District 3.
  - Vice-Chairman Trumbull asked Secretary Gainer how they will coordinate the Brooks Bridge replacement.
    - The new bridge is wider and will be built beside the current bridge.

- Steve Braun, Director of Transportation Development for District 4 presented on behalf of Secretary Gerry O'Reilly.
- Secretary Jared Perdue presented on behalf of District 5.
- Secretary Gwynn presented on behalf of District 7.
  - Commissioner Davis asked if the recent ruling by the Florida Supreme Court regarding the All For Transportation sales tax for Hillsborough County will affect any current projects or future projects.
    - There may be a referendum on the 2022 ballot.
- Executive Director Nicola Liquori presented on behalf of the Florida Turnpike Enterprise.
  - Chairman Howse asked for an update on the electronic tolling changeout.
    - It was done section by section over time to ease the burden on toll collectors.
    - By the end of 2021, the 300-mile Turnpike mainline will be all electronic toll collection.
- Brad Thoburn, Assistant Secretary for Strategic Development provided an update on the Florida Rail Enterprise.
- Commissioner Browning mentioned having an aviation update at an upcoming meeting.
  - Executive Director Yoder stated that he would work on scheduling that for a future conference call.
- A motion was made by Commissioner Davis to accept the Commission staff's recommendation that the Tentative Work Program was found to be developed in accordance with state laws and Departmental policies. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Genson and unanimously approved.

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

- The Commission approved the meeting minutes from the January 21, 2021, and February 4, 2021, conference calls. The motion was made by Commissioner Davis and seconded by Commissioner Genson. The motion passed unanimously.
- Executive Director Yoder provided an FTC business update.
  - The next FTC meeting will be on March 18, 2021.

#### **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 APRIL 2021

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CHAIRMAN