

# NORTHWEST FLORIDA TRANSPORTATION CORRIDOR AUTHORITY MONTHLY MEETING

## Meeting Minutes

July 26, 2012

1. Call To Order - Chairman Montgomery called to order the meeting of the Northwest Florida Transportation Corridor Authority at 10:00 am EST on July 26, 2012 in Port St. Joe, Florida at the Gulf County Commission Meeting Room.

### **Members Present:**

Robert B. Montgomery, Chairman

Stephen K. Norris, Vice Chairman

J. Carey Scott III

Cheryl Sanders

Wakulla County (Vacant)

Escambia County (Vacant)

### **Staff Present:**

Nick Beninate, General Counsel

### **Members Absent:**

Robert McGill, James Anders

### **2. Welcome** NFTCA

Chairman Montgomery welcomed everyone to the meeting in Port St. Joe, Florida

### **3. Approval of Minutes**

The Board did not have a quorum, minutes from the March 22, 2012 meeting were not approved.

- **Financial Report**

Chairman Montgomery asked if anyone had any questions regarding the Financial Report.

- **New Business**

- **Approval of Invoice – Harrison, Sale, McCloy, General Counsel, \$4,063.52**  
The Board did not have a quorum, invoice was not approved.
- **Approval of Invoice – Harrison, Sale, McCloy, General Counsel, \$245.00**  
The Board did not have a quorum, invoice was not approved.
- **Approval of Invoice – Harrison, Sale McCloy, General Counsel, \$332.50**  
The Board did not have a quorum, invoice was not approved.
- **Approval of Invoice – HDR/GCI (Task 1 & 2), \$3,21.62**  
The Board did not have a quorum, invoice was not approved.
- **Approval of Invoice – HDR/GCI (Task 1 & 2), \$1,494.80**  
The Board did not have a quorum, invoice was not approved.
- **Approval of Invoice – HDR/GCI (Task 1 & 2), \$14,842.25**  
The Board did not have a quorum, invoice was not approved.
- **Approval of Invoice – HDR (Task 3), \$147,698.15**  
The Board did not have a quorum, invoice was not approved.
- **Approval of Invoice – HDR (Task 3), \$255,704.58**  
The Board did not have a quorum, invoice was not approved.
- **FDOT update on Gulf Coast Parkway**  
Brandon Bruner from FDOT gave an update on the Gulf Coast Parkway. He stated there were 5 alternatives under evaluation which was a result of the corridor analysis. The analysis reduced the list from 12 alignments to 5. Mr. Bruner reviewed the schedule stating the Public Hearings would begin in February 2013, selection of a preferred alternative in March 2013, final EIS submitted and reviewed Summer 2013 and the record of decision submitted in the Winter of 2013. Mr. Norris asked why was there such a delay. He stated the Board was told last year that the public meetings would be held by the end of the 2012. Mr. Bruner stated the review time with FHWA is twenty months. Jason Peters stated the nationwide average for an EIS was typically 4 -5 years. During this time, federal regulations can change and the EIS has to address the new federal requirements. Mr. Norris stated he understood the process, but stated it was very frustrating. Mr. Norris also wanted to make sure the Board and FDOT were aware how a northern connection would be beneficial to the Port of Port St. Joe. He also encouraged FDOT to consult with the port on Alignment 15. Mr. Norris also stated he felt all the stakeholders had not been represented. Mr. Bruner stated that all alignments would be brought to the public for discussion. Chairman Montgomery stated the Authority could make an official request for the port regarding Alignment 15. Steve Schnell stated the alignments were discussed at the Workshops. He also stated that by the end of the year, we would know the benefits of each alignment and how it will benefit the port and at that time a

recommendation could be made to FDOT. Jason Peters stated that it would be a good idea for the Board to have a letter of support for a preferred alignment. Nick Beninate stated the Authority could draft a letter outlining the Board's position.

- **Debrief on Master Plan Workshops**

Bob Kellner stated there were stakeholder meetings and a candidate list of projects had been developed based on the information from the Workshops. Mr. Kellner stated at the second Workshop, there was a lot of feedback on the draft project list. He also stated they were looking at the October timeframe for a third Workshop and continuing the TPO outreach as well as coordination with FDOT and environmental agencies. He stated there was a lot of input and everything was transparent so at the end of the day there would be a consensus. The feedback from the Workshops was positive and encouraging.

- **Discussion on Partnering resolution/memorandum with FDOT**

Bob Kellner discussed a partnering resolution with FDOT to help make Northwest Florida more competitive. He stated one of the issues that came from the Workshops was funding. Northwest Florida would be competing for statewide funding. Steve Schnell stated he wanted to continue the momentum generated by the Workshops in order to see a plan come together. Mr. Schnell stated HDR would be proactive and inform Board on a regular basis. He also stated that HDR holds progress meetings and would meet individually with the Board to give updates. He encouraged the Board to contact him with any questions. Jason Peters stated that going back to 2006, the FDOT had experienced an \$11 billion reduction in their Work Program. He stated projects had to be moved and deferred. He stated this was a statewide issue and is discussed at the monthly Executive Committee Meetings that Secretary Barfield attends. Mr. Peters also stated that another subject being discussed statewide are returns on investments as well as looking at partnering. Mr. Peters discussed the US 331 bridge project that began as a discussion with the locals and both parties bringing money to the table. Mr. Peters complimented the Authority and stated they were headed in the right direction. He also complimented their coordination efforts with the TPOs. He also complimented the Boards' efforts with the Eglin Bypass Study that brought to light other opportunities. Bob Kellner stated he appreciated Mr. Peters' comments and that he and the Board were dedicated to do what was right for the region. Mr. Peters stated that everyone is beginning to see it is going to take partnerships and tolling to move forward with projects. Chairman Montgomery also thanked Mr. Peters for his comments.

- **Status update on Airport Connector**

Bob Kellner stated the Turnpike was going to look at a Traffic Study. He also stated Okaloosa County, the Air Force and FDOT like the idea. Jason Peters stated that Tommy Barfield had briefed Secretary Prasad and he was excited about the project. It was an example of a team coming together for a project. Mr. Kellner stated Eglin was going through a restructuring. After this restructuring was complete, there would be one command structure. He stated the two

commanders had stated they would revisit the Connector project once their reorganization was complete. Mr. Kellner stated he has weekly conversations with the Air Force officials and they remain positive about the project.

Mr. Norris asked Jason Peters about the interest earned on the \$25 million Earmark for the Gulf Coast Parkway. Mr. Norris asked who held the interest on the funds. Mr. Peters said he would have to check and that Earmarks are so specific. Cheryl Sanders cautioned the Board about Earmarks stating that Franklin County had a \$1 million Earmark taken away.

Mrs. Sanders stated Franklin County had received a grant from FDOT on CR 67. She stated the project was completed, but was concerned that Tropical Storm Debbie may have caused damage. She asked Jason Peters to have FDOT check on the issue. Jason Peters stated he would have FDOT check on the issue.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

There were no public comments.

The meeting adjourned at 11:15 am, EST.