

NORTHWEST FLORIDA TRANSPORTATION CORRIDOR AUTHORITY MONTHLY MEETING

Meeting Minutes

March 22, 2012

1. Call To Order - Chairman Montgomery called to order the meeting of the Northwest Florida Transportation Corridor Authority at 10:00 am CST on March 22, 2012 in Panama City, Florida at the Panama City Hall.

Members Present:

Robert B. Montgomery, Chairman

Stephen K. Norris, Vice Chairman

James F. Anders, Secretary/Treasurer

J. Carey Scott III

Bob McGill

Cheryl Sanders

Wakulla County (Vacant)

Escambia County (Vacant)

Staff Present: Nick Beninate, General Counsel

Members Absent:

2. Welcome Chairman Montgomery welcomed everyone to the meeting in Panama City, Florida
NFTCA

3. Approval of Minutes

Monthly Meeting January 5, 2012

Mr. Scott made motion to approve, seconded by Mr. Anders and unanimously approved.

- **Financial Report**

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

- **New Business**

- **Approval of Invoice – Harrison, Sale, McCloy, Duncan & Jackson, General Counsel, \$3,239.03**

Mr. Norris made a motion to approve, seconded by Mrs. Sanders & unanimously approved.

- **Approval of Invoice – HDR, \$2,089.50**

Mrs. Sanders made a motion to approve, seconded by Mr. Norris & unanimously approved.

- **Approval of Invoice – HDR, \$106,174.58**

Mr. Anders made a motion to approve, seconded by Mr. Norris & unanimously approved.

- **Attorney Discussion regarding Public Records, Sunshine Law & Ethics**

Nick Beninate stated he had met with Amy Paulk and reviewed the NFTCA records. He stated he would be contacting each Board member to schedule individual Ethics training. The Board also discussed having all email requests come through Amy Paulk.

- **Overview of Transportation Planning Organizations in the West Florida Regional Planning Council**

Mary Beth Washnock and Mary Robinson from the West Florida Regional Planning Council gave a briefing to the Board on the WFRPC role and introduced the staff. Mrs. Washnock stated the area MPOs and TPOs are federally mandated and made up of local government representatives and are established for urban areas with greater than 50,000 in population. She stated the WFRPC currently provides staff for Florida-Alabama TPO, Okaloosa-Walton TPO, Bay County TPO, Bay Partnership and the Northwest Florida Regional TPO. She also mentioned the governing board must be between 5 and 19 members & that County Commissioners had to make up at least 1/3 of the members. Ms. Robinson mentioned the current transportation bill that could change the population requirement for the MPO/TPOs from 50,000 to 200,000. Mr. Norris asked if the bill passed what would happen to the current TPOs. Ms. Robinson stated that she was uncertain what would happen, but one course of action would be to grandfather in the current MPOs and TPOs. Ms. Robinson also stated how a

partnership with the Authority would be very beneficial.

- **Distribution of the 2011 Master Plan**

Steve Schnell stated he had met with Rick Gallant with the Florida Transportation Commission. Mr. Gallant had stated the Board should distribute the 2011 Master Plan updates in order to be in compliance. Mr. Schnell stated that although there were no updates to the Master Plan, the letters were being prepared and would be distributed next week.

- **2012 Master Plan Status Update**

Steve Schnell stated in order to accomplish the Board's goal of getting their message to all parties, the NFTCA website had been overhauled and newsletters were being distributed. He stated he had met with the TPOs to coordinate information as much as possible and had received positive feedback for their efforts. HDR will continue with the data collection as well as traffic count information. He discussed the recent Master Plan Update Workshops that were held in Panama City and Navarre. Mr. Schnell stated the workshops were designed to establish working groups. The second series of workshops would be conducted in the next few months. He stated he had received positive feedback from the workshop attendees. Mr. Anders stated he enjoyed the workshop and found it to be very informative.

- **Introduction of Larry Newsome**

Larry Newsome, Assistant Escambia County Administrator, introduced himself to the Board. He stated he was familiar with all eight counties the Board represented. He had a background in Traffic Engineering and was born and raised in Santa Rosa County. Mr. Newsome stated Escambia County was interested in working from a regional standpoint by erasing boundaries with Santa Rosa County. He also stated the Chairman of the Regional TPO, Mr. Valentino was also interested in a regionalized approach. Mr. Newsome stated he would like to be able to bring items back to the Authority for discussion. Chairman Montgomery stated he would welcome his input.

- **Eglin-Airport Connector**

Bob Kellner reviewed the results from the toll feasibility study conducted by the Turnpike Enterprise. The study was done on the segment from SR 87 to SR 85. The study projected a \$1.1 billion shortfall. Chairman Montgomery had met with Secretary Prasad in August of last year. Secretary Prasad had suggested the Board look at alternative segments that could be more successful & viable. Mr. Kellner stated a potential segment for construction was from SR 123 to SR 85. This segment is an extension of SR 293 and has been designated as the Airport Connector. Mr. Kellner reviewed the positive aspects of the project including, the creation of an east/west link, the potential to qualify as a SIS project and the enhancing Eglin's mission. He also stated that in the discussions with Eglin, they wanted to pull all parties together and decide if the project should move forward. Chairman Montgomery stated the meetings with Eglin were very positive. He

also said the big issue is how to pay for the project. Mr. Kellner said he wanted to obtain real traffic numbers, determine how many cars are going north and south as well as how many vehicles use the road.

- **Consideration of Highway 331 Public Outreach Concept**

Kitty Whitney from the Walton County Chamber of Commerce briefed the Board on the data they had compiled on US 331 to convey to DOT as well as the public the importance of the project. Mrs. Sanders stated the Board had always put a high priority on US 331. Mr. McGill asked the Board to consider using funds to educate the public on the need for the widening of the Bridge. Ms. Whitney stated the Chamber had tried to educate the public on the process. Nick Beninate stated the Board should coordinate with DOT and FHWA. Mr. McGill stated the Board could explore the possibility of advertisements to show the benefits of the bridge & to encourage Walton County residents to take advantage of the opportunity. Mrs. Sanders suggested the Chairman draft a letter stating the Board supports the project and considers it a priority. Chairman Montgomery stated there was no question the Board supported the project, but what was the monetary support the Chamber was looking for. Mr. McGill made a motion to contribute \$25,000 and the possibility of up to \$40,000 to get the information out to the public. He mentioned the use of television or newspaper ads. Jason Peters stated FHWA would need to review any campaign before any money was expended. Chairman Montgomery asked How do we define what we are doing here and are we opening a door for anyone to ask for this kind of support? Mr. Anders suggested the Board move the next Authority meeting from Pensacola to Walton County. He asked Ms. Whitney if the Chamber could accommodate the meeting. Ms. Whitney stated yes, she would be happy to schedule it. Art Miller, a resident of Walton County, stated he had been assisting the Chamber with compiling the information to educate citizens. He encouraged the Board to educate people on the needs of the bridge and welcomed any support the Board could provide. He also stated ads could be placed in the paper as well as holding economic development sessions with the public. Mr. Miller stated he felt if something wasn't done that negativity would take over. Mr. Anders asked if there was a specific dollar amount he had in mind. Mr. Scott suggested an op-ed piece in the local papers. He also suggested drafting a resolution stating the Board supports the project but contingent upon the verbiage being approved by Nick Beninate as well as DOT and FHWA. Mr. McGill made a motion for the Board to contribute up to \$10,000 contingent on approval from DOT and FHWA. He stated he would draft a letter and have Nick Beninate review before it was presented to DOT. Mr. Norris seconded the motion.

Mr. Norris asked the Board for their support to encourage the Apalachee Regional Planning Council to be more helpful to smaller counties. Bryant Paulk with FDOT, stated the FDOT has a contract with the Planning Council. This contract is for the Council to meet with the small rural counties and provide them information about the Department's Work Program as well as address their transportation concerns. Mrs. Sanders stated the Lighthouse Association from Franklin County went before the CRTPA

asking for assistance. Mrs. Sanders further explained they did not receive any help since they were not a part of the CRTPA. Mrs. Sanders stated she had received a letter from Lesley Cox with the Lighthouse Association requesting copies of any documents or information the Authority may have related to Franklin County. Mrs. Sanders made a motion to respond to the letter received from Ms. Cox and let her know we would provide her with the requested data. Seconded by Mr. McGill & unanimously approved.

Mrs. Sanders made a motion to move the next meeting from Pensacola to Walton County. Seconded by Mr. Norris and unanimously approved.

Chairman Montgomery mentioned Alan McMillan from Pensacola had submitted his application for the Escambia County vacancy on the Board. His appointment was awaiting the governor's signature.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

There were no public comments.

The meeting adjourned at 12:50 pm, CST.