

NORTHWEST FLORIDA TRANSPORTATION CORRIDOR AUTHORITY BOARD MEETING

Board Meeting Minutes
December 10, 2015

1. Call To Order

Chairman Montgomery called to order the meeting of the Northwest Florida Transportation Corridor Authority at 10:00 am CST on December 10, 2015 at the Walton County Chamber of Commerce, Santa Rosa Beach, FL.

Members Present:

Robert B. Montgomery, Chairman
Steve Norris, Vice-Chairman
James F. Anders, Secretary/Treasurer
Peter Bos, Member
J. Carey Scott, Member
Gordon Sprague, Member

Staff Present:

Steve Schnell, Project Manager
Nick Beninate, Attorney
Alicia Stephen, Administration

2. Pledge of Allegiance Pledge was conducted and Chairman Montgomery welcomed everyone.

3. Approval of Minutes

Review of meeting minutes from October 23, 2014 and January 22, 2015. Mr. Carey Scott made a motion to approve both meetings minutes and Mr. Gordon Sprague seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

4. Financial Report

Mr. Carey Scott asked Alicia Stephen if the financials were prepared and contained the same information as when they were originally prepared by Anita Meyer. Ms. Stephen said yes. Mr. Scott then offered assistance in the preparation of the financials in the future. Mr. Scott made a motion to approve the financials as presented and Mr. Anders seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

At this point in the meeting, Chairman Montgomery requested that we jump to item 5.H. of the agenda – FDOT Amendment to Discuss 2015/2016 Work Plan and Adoption of the Fiscal Year 2015/2016 Budget. HDR Project Manager, Mr. Steve Schnell, explained the draft 5th Amendment which extends the agreement between the Authority and FDOT to end of fiscal year 2017 and reallocates the remaining funds

over two years between the Administration and Professional Services tasks. Steve also explained Resolution 15-01.

Mr. Scott made a motion to accept the Budget, Amendment and Resolution as presented and explained by Mr. Schnell with the possibility of modifying later if necessary. The motion was seconded by Mr. Sprague. The Board voted and the motion was unanimously approved.

5. New Business

- A. Chairman Montgomery welcomed Mr. Bos as the newly appointed representative of Okaloosa County to the Authority.
- B – G. Mr. Steve Norris made the motion to approve all the listed invoices. Mr. Scott seconded the motion and the Board approved unanimously.
- H. Discussed earlier during the Financial Report portion of the meeting.
- I. Mr. Steve Schnell told the Board that there had been no changes made to the Master Plan since the Plan had been approved at its April 25, 2013 Board meeting. Mr. Sprague made a motion to accept the Master Plan and Mr. Norris seconded. The motion was unanimously approved.
- J. Mr. Nick Beninate explained that the Board's Public Officials Mgmt. & Employment Practices Liability insurance had expired. This insurance protected the Board members if they were personally named in a lawsuit. Mr. Peter Bos requested Mr. Beninate cite an example of a suit where the insurance would benefit the Board. Mr. Beninate said an example would be if a Board member violated a statute. This extra insurance is designed to provide peace of mind. The Chairman stated that in previous meetings Board members have expressed their personal views but since the Board hasn't been very active, this isn't the issue that it might have been in the past. Mr. Beninate agreed and said that liability isn't a big issue presently. The Chairman suggested that the discussion be put on hold. No motion was required.
- K. Mr. Norris, Vice Chairman, said that he was unable to continue in this position and would like to make a motion that Mr. Jim Anders become Vice Chairman and Mr. Carey Scott become Secretary / Treasurer. Chairman Montgomery asked Mr. Beninate if we could have the same members on both committees (Executive and Financial). Mr. Beninate said that this might be a simpler solution to be able to meet. The Chairman then asked if the Board wants the same people on both committees. Mr. Bos said yes. Mr. Norris made the motion for Mr. Anders to become Vice Chairman and Mr. Scott to become Secretary / Treasurer. Mr. Sprague seconded the motion and the motion was unanimously approved.
- L. Mr. Sprague reminded the Board that he'd suggested forming committees for potential projects during the January, 2015 meeting in Pensacola. He said that with funding, we could try to make something happen. The Chairman reminded the Board that the Authority was created to alleviate issues on US 98 and that the Board has held many public meetings throughout its existence to further this study.

Mr. Schnell then mentioned the many meetings that were held in the creation of the Master Plan to get consensus on the projects. The projects contained in the Plan

were presented and listed with the main crux looking at return on investment and job creation (higher ratio / higher return). No. 1 project in the Master Plan was the Destin Crosstown Connector which is now currently under design. This project moved up due to interest from the transportation and planning agencies. We should re-visit this listing and re-prioritize after identifying the projects that are now under design or construction by others. The Chairman agreed.

Mr. Bos said that there are new dynamics but he was more interested in Okaloosa County Projects and as the “new guy” would like to meet with Steve Schnell and get updated. Mr. Bos was in Chipley recently and is currently involved in several projects. Mr. Steve Norris mentioned that he’d like to get back to the Authority’s original intent of pursuing projects that can be toll since the Authority has authorization to toll roadways.

Mr. Lyle Seigler, FDOT, suggested that the Board look at US 98 projects with Strategic Intermodal System (SIS) designation. The only segment of US 98 that DOT is currently involved with is in Walton County. The SIS designation is important and an area where we can partner immediately. Mr. Norris mentioned that Gulf County and areas east are a hard sell due to the lack of growth in those areas. Mr. Seigler said that things might have changed with the new Secretary of Transportation, Secretary Boxold, regarding the tolling policy that was implemented by former Secretary Prasad.

Chairman Montgomery is trying to stay in contact with Jay Trumbull (FTC Chairman) and Chairman Trumbull has been a good ally to the Corridor Authority. Mr. Bos mentioned that we can deflect some of the heat from FDOT. Chairman met with ex-FDOT Secretary Prasad who felt that we were too big, so maybe we should lose 2 counties. Also, would it be possible to meet less? Mr. Beninate advised the Board that these changes would require new legislation. Chairman Montgomery suggested that in a future meeting with Secretary Boxold, he might discuss these items as well as the possibility of converting to more of an advisory role to assist FDOT.

The Chairman discussed several attempts that were made to create projects. One was the extension of SR 20 from the Airport to the Mid-Bay Bridge. Eglin Air Force Base was originally against the project but a new General came on Base and requested that a Study be done. The Study was done and while Hurlburt liked the results, Eglin AFB didn’t so the project was given to the Mid-Bay Bridge Authority. Also, there were meetings with the Port of Port St. Joe.

Mr. Bos gave a detailed description of the issues plaguing Okaloosa County, particularly Ft. Walton Beach, Destin, Crestview and areas surrounding Hurlburt and Eglin AFB. He said that the timing was now to be “bigger thinkers”. Chairman Montgomery suggested that Board members look in their respective areas for ideas and he will try to meet with Bob Kellner and Steve Schnell to discuss options.

Chairman Montgomery asked the Board if they wanted him to pursue the legislative changes discussed earlier. Mr. Norris asked if we can do something where we wouldn't have to get approval by FDOT. And the Chairman mentioned that we didn't want to ask for funding. Mr. Scott suggesting re-sizing the Authority to 6 counties and dropping Franklin and Wakulla Counties. Also seeing about the possibility of 2 mandatory meetings annually and the possibility of video conferencing. He also suggested the Chairman contact Jay Trumbull for assistance. The Chairman said that he would contact Franklin and Wakulla Counties to discuss.

Mr. Gordon Sprague requested information about what other Authorities are doing each year and the Chairman handed him the most recent Florida Transportation Commission Audit report.

6. **Public Comments**

None.

7. **Next Meeting Date**

To be determined.

8. **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 11:40 a.m. CST.