

# **NORTHWEST FLORIDA TRANSPORTATION CORRIDOR AUTHORITY MONTHLY MEETING**

Meeting Minutes

January 28, 2010

**1. Call To Order:** Chairman Robert Montgomery called to order the meeting of the Northwest Florida Transportation Corridor Authority at 10:00 am CST on January 28, 2010 at the Panama City Commission Chambers, Panama City, FL.

## **Members Present:**

Robert B. Montgomery/Chairman

Stephen K. Norris/Vice-Chairman

James F. Anders, II/Secretary-Treasurer

T.W. Maurice Langston

Cheryl K. Sanders

Robert E McGill, III

J. Carey Scott, III

Jason Alderman with FDOT

**Staff Present:** Mike Duncan, General Counsel

**Members Absent:** Ashton J. Hayward, III

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

## **3. Approval of Minutes**

### **A. Regular Authority Meeting November 19<sup>th</sup> 2009**

Motion by Cheryl Sanders To approve Regular Authority Minutes

Second by J. Carey Scott, III  
Approved 7-0

#### 4. New Business

##### **A. Resolution: NFTCA Officer Two-Year Term Adoption**

Motion by J. Carey Scott, III To adopt Resolution 10-01  
Second by Stephen K. Norris  
Approved 7-0

##### **B. Discussion/Vote new NFTCA website design**

Mr. Nick Arnio gave overview and presentation on the new NFTCA website design.

Chairman Montgomery held discussion with board members regarding new website, and inquired if a motion was needed to get the website uploaded. General Counsel, Mike Duncan stated no motion was needed. Chairman Montgomery requested the site be posted for the public.

##### **C. Approval of US 98 Franklin County Invoice No. 160394-H for \$20,800.06**

Motion by Cheryl K. Sanders To approve Invoice No. 160394-H  
Second by J. Carey Scott, III  
Approved 7-0

##### **D. Approval of US 98 Franklin County Invoice No. 167481-H for \$13,104.04**

Motion by Cheryl K. Sanders To approve Invoice No. 167481-H  
Second by Robert E. McGill, III  
Approved 7-0

Mr. Nick Arnio gave a US 98 Franklin County status update to the board members and public.

Ms. Cheryl K. Sanders inquired who was not in attendance at the Franklin County meeting. Ms. Sanders stated that the residents of Franklin County do not want to look at east/west routes, but are only interested in north/south alternatives. Ms. Sanders stated that the residents do not want an alternate US 98 in Franklin County.

Mr. Nick Arnio commented that the alternatives provided have been recommended by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and that the Authority must go through the process of identifying

alternatives and analyzing feasibility in order to be eligible for federal funding. Mr. Arnio commented that the multiple agencies that have reviewed the reports have made their comments, which can be accessed via the Efficient Transportation Decision Making (ETDM) link on the Franklin County Website, [www.us98-franklin.com](http://www.us98-franklin.com).

Ms. Sanders stated her concern with looking at any routes other than north/south routes in Franklin County.

Mr. Ray Reissener stated that the central part of the County had been armored. If the Authority goes through the process recommended by the FHWA, and discovers there are significant environmental impacts on the eastern part of US 98 in Franklin County, that it would then open up the opportunity to receive federal funding to improve the existing US 98 route.

Chairman Montgomery expressed that the entire board supporting Ms. Sanders and that the Authority is listening to the wishes of the Franklin County residents.

#### **E. Discussion Citizen Advisory Committee**

Chairman Montgomery opened up discussion by commenting that currently all the board members serve as volunteer citizens for the NFTCA and travel and participate at their personal expense. Mr. Montgomery added that all of the public is fully noticed and invited to attend and participate in public meetings as well as all citizens are at liberty to contact any of the board members at any time. Mr. Montgomery commented that with these considerations in mind, he does not currently recommend sponsoring a separate citizen advisory board/committee.

Mr. James F. Anders, II also agreed with Chairman Montgomery's comments and added that in addition to the public information opportunities, the Authority also provides websites for public information and participation.

Mr. J. Carey Scott, III stated that he also agreed that every citizen can fully participate in the public meetings.

General Counsel, Mike Duncan, commented that if the Board were to appoint a citizen advisory committee, that committee would then be subject to Sunshine State Law, and would require public notice, record-keeping, and all other compliance actions currently set forth under Sunshine Law. Currently the Authority does not have the administrative funding in order to support this.

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| Motion by | J. Carey Scott, III  | To not appoint a citizen advisory committee at this point |
| Second by | Robert B. Montgomery |   |
| Approved  | 6-1                  |   |
| Opposed   | Cheryl K. Sanders    |   |

**Board Comments:**

Mr. Montgomery commented to the Board that he had traveled to Tallahassee and met with the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) Secretary regarding funding. Mr. Montgomery also stated that he had met with leadership at Eglin Air Force Base and they are currently in need of a DOPPA (Description of Proposed Action and Alternatives), but have not acquired funding for that.

Mr. Anders presented an article from The News Herald regarding the safety concerns relating to US 98, and requested the article be made public record. Mr. Anders commented that he believed there might be an opportunity to do a feasibility study from Hurlburt Field to SR 85. He commented that he felt the Board should move forward on this once funding was available.

Mr. Jason Alderman, FDOT, inquired if Mr. Anders was referring to a Toll Feasibility Study or an Environmental Impact Statement. Mr. Alderman stated that the FDOT had an authority, the Florida Turnpike, which specifically focuses on Toll Feasibility studies.

Mr. Robert E. McGill, III asked what the feasibility study would lead to.

FDOT District Three Secretary, Tommy Barfield, commented that the next step would be a bonding grade feasibility study, and he would take the request to the FDOT Secretary as well as the Florida Turnpike Executive Director.

Mr. Ray Reissener commented that the Board would need an independent review for the bond market, and now would be an opportune time.

Chairman Montgomery agreed with Mr. Reissener

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| Motion by | James F. Anders, II | Requesting FDOT funding assistance to pursue a bond grade study for the Eglin Bypass |
| Second by | J. Carey Scott, III |  |
| Approved  | 7-0                 |  |

Mr. Scott announced that he was taking a business trip to Texas and will talk with transportation officials there about ideas to implement solutions including the possibilities of smart roads, here in the Panhandle. He stated he would report back to the Board in 60 days.

**Public Comments:**

Mr. Andy Smith, Apalachicola Riverkeepers: Mr. Smith stated that this was the first time he had heard the Board Members talk about alternative means of transportation (high speed rail in Central Florida). Mr. Smith asked if the Board could clarify that they have the ability to stop a project study at any time during the process.

General Counsel, Mike Duncan replied that the study is tied to project funding and the Board had the ability to pull the funding if they had other priorities, thus stopping the study.

Mr. Smith reiterated that he would like the Board to focus on the north/south routes in Franklin County, mainly SR 65 and CR 67.

General Counsel, Mike Duncan replied that the Board can rank the priorities and when funding becomes available, they can work on the top priority projects.

Mr. Smith asked if the Board Members could place their office phone numbers on the website so the public could contact them. He also added that he would like the Board to stay open to the idea of a Citizen's Advisory Committee.

Mr. Montgomery inquired with the board regarding Mr. Smith's request to place contact numbers for the board members on the website. The board unanimously agreed to place contact numbers on the NWFTCA website.

Mr. Scott inquired about holding public workshops in the past and if they have been helpful.

Mr. Smith responded the workshops have been very good in the past.

Mr. Montgomery responded that the Board will remain open to the possibility of a citizen advisory committee in the future, but recommended using workshops since they have produced positive results.

Ms. Linda Young, Clean Water Network of Florida: Ms. Young asked for clarification that the Board was working with FHWA and FDOT on the Franklin County Project. She inquired about the timing that the public comments would have a legal point of entry during the study. She asked when the Public would have a chance to challenge the decision.

General Counsel, Mike Duncan replied after FHWA approves the decision.

Ms. Young asked if there would be a vote by the Board Members to continue forward with an EIS or an EA for the Franklin County Project.

The Board Members stated yes, it would be subject to a vote.

Ms. Young asked how the board could be involved in projects involving non-tolled roadways.

General Counsel, Mike Duncan explained that another agency (FDOT) could pick up a study and make necessary improvements, hurricane evacuation, capacity, etc., after the NFTA completes the study.

Ms. Young explained that she will continue forward with forming a Citizen's Advisory Committee, and stated that she felt the board was opposed to working with the citizens, and she

would like to see the board be open to the ideas of the citizens and that the information provided would be used and helpful to the board.

Mr. Montgomery asked Ms. Young if she had ever called him to discuss her concerns or questions.

Ms. Young responded that she had not.

Mr. Montgomery inquired why Ms. Young had not contacted him to discuss her input or concerns so the board could address them.

Mr. Montgomery read aloud an article from the NW Fl. Daily News.

The Financial Feasibility Study was discussed and who would be liable for paying the Bonds if the NFTCA defaulted due to lack of Traffic.

Mr. McGill inquired about the NFTCA website and discussion was held regarding placing public comments on the website.

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| Motion by | Robert E. McGill, III | To place the public comments on the website |
| Second by | J. Carey Scott, III   |   |
| Approved  | 7-0                   |   |

Mr. Rich Walker of Bay County informed the Board that many folks in Bay County do not have access to internet or the news paper and the Board should use additional means to inform the Public about meetings and other activities involving the Board.

There was a Motion by Mr. Scott to Adjourn the Meeting

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| Motion by | J. Carey Scott, III | To Adjourn the NFTCA Board Meeting |
| Second by | James F. Anders, II |                                    |
| Approved  | 7-0                 |                                    |

The meeting adjourned at 11:45 am CST