

Tampa-Hillsborough County Expressway Authority  
Minutes of the February 21, 2022, Board Meeting  
1104 E. Twiggs Street  
Tampa, FL 33602

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The Tampa-Hillsborough County Expressway Authority held a public meeting at 1:30 p.m. on February 21, 2022, at THEA Headquarters, 1104 E. Twiggs Street in Tampa Florida. The following were present:

**BOARD:**

Vincent Cassidy, Chairman  
Daniel Alvarez, Secretary  
Secretary David Gwynn, Member

Bennett Barrow, Vice Chairman  
Mayor Jane Castor, Member  
Commissioner Ken Hagan, Member

**STAFF:**

Greg Slater  
Amy Lettelleir  
Sue Chrzan  
Bob Frey  
Brian Pickard  
Jeff Seward  
Emma Antolinez  
Charlene Ponce  
Chaketa Mister

Julie Aure  
Shari Callahan  
Krystina Steffen  
Judith Villegas  
Gary Holland  
Debbie Northington  
Anna Quinones  
Shannon Bush  
Brian Ramirez

**OTHERS:**

Todd Josko, Ballard Partners  
Carlos Ramos, Ballard Partners  
David Hubbard, HNTB  
Jim Drapp, HNTB  
Al Steward, HNTB

Rick Patterson, Raymond James  
Joseph Stanton, NMRS  
Sally Dee, Playbook  
Matthew Sansbury, RBC  
Stefanie McQueen, HDR

**I. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance**

Chairman Cassidy called the meeting to order at 1:30 pm, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and invocation.

**II. Public Input/ Public Presentations**

There were no public presentations.

**III. Consent Agenda**

The Chairman continued with the Consent Agenda and approvals.

**A. Approval of the Minutes from the January 31, 2022, Board of Directors Meeting**

**B. Increase in Funding to EXP U.S. Services Inc. Contract CEI services for Twiggs Street Improvements from Nebraska Avenue to Meridian Avenue - \$30,000.**

*The Chairman asked for a motion to approve the consent items. Daniel Alvarez moved approval, seconded by Bennett Barrow. The motion carried unanimously.*

**IV. Discussion/Action Items**

**A. Operations & Maintenance – Bennett Barrow, Chairman – Brian Pickard, Staff**

**1. South Selmon Capacity Enhancement Task Order Request**

Mr. Brian Pickard presented a task order request for the South Selmon Capacity Enhancement. The request is to utilize THEA's General Engineering Consultant (GEC), HNTB, to assist staff with developing the concept plans in 3D, assist staff in procuring a Design-Build contractor, and procure the CEI Team with a focus on 3D design and construction for the South Selmon Capacity Project. The cost is \$300,000 and will come from the capital budget.

The request is for the Board to authorize the Executive Director to execute a task order with HNTB to help develop 3D concept plans and assisting in the procurement of a contractor and CEI.

*The Chairman asked for a motion to approve. Bennett Barrow moved approval, seconded by Daniel Alvarez. The motion carried unanimously.*

Chairman Cassidy asked if there would be additional requests related to this project in the next month or so. Mr. Pickard stated there would not.

**2. CSX Agreement and Funding**

Mr. Pickard presented the CSX agreement and funding for the East Selmon Slip Ramp Project. He noted the purpose is to execute an agreement with CSX and pay for preliminary engineering costs, flagger costs, CSX inspection services, and to fund that agreement. Funding will come from the capital project budget.

The request is for the board to authorize payment to CSX in an amount not to exceed \$385,000 for the CSX preliminary engineering, flagger, and inspection costs related to the East Selmon slip ramp project near the 22nd Street ramp.

*The Chairman asked for a motion to approve. Daniel Alvarez moved approval, seconded by Bennett Barrow. The motion carried unanimously.*

Mr. Slater commented on the previous item - the South Selmon Capacity Enhancement project - clarifying that there will be two more items coming to the board within the next year or so, but nothing in the near term.

**B. Budget and Finance – Ken Hagan, Chairman - *Jeff Seward, Staff***

**1. Budget Amendment**

Mr. Jeff Seward presented a budget amendment to provide \$543,000 of funding for unanticipated/unbudgeted operating expenditures for FY2022. He reviewed each line item in the amendment, which included funding for Toll Operations to address the backlog in image review and a general consultant for Toll Operations support. Temporary staffing (procurement and finance) and an ITS Manager, as well as travel/professional development were also included. Funding for the request would come from general revenue.

To put the request into context, Mr. Seward also presented THEA Financials, including Toll Revenue, Expenditures, Cash & Investments, and Investment Income. He also presented FY2022 Budget to Actual Revenue Comparisons.

Chairman Cassidy asked how THEA is tracking today versus pre-COVID. Mr. Seward noted about 7% better.

Mr. Seward requested the board approve a budget amendment in the amount of \$543,000 for unanticipated/unbudgeted operating expenditures for FY2022.

***The Chairman asked for a motion to approve. Daniel Alvarez moved approval, seconded by Bennett Barrow.***

The Chairman asked about the fall off from December 2021 to January 2022 and whether it was a surprise to the agency. Mr. Seward responded that it was not. The Chairman then asked for clarification on the image review backlog and whether the need to hire a vendor is indicative of the current vendor's inability to perform. Mr. Seward replied it is not.

The mayor asked about the cause of the backlog. Mr. Seward explained that there is an increase in toll-by-plate transactions; more and more individuals are opting to not get a transponder; and we're seeing a greater transitory population throughout the state of Florida. Additionally, the technology that is used for the evaluation of the toll-by-plate is done through optical character recognition. The quality of the plate images that are collected has degraded over the years based on different fonts, different types of tags, the appearance of some of the vanity plates, backgrounds on the plates, etc. Staffing has also been an issue, which is being addressed.

The Chairman asked if we know whether the Toll-by-Plate traffic is primarily visitors or local residents. Secretary Gwynn mentioned FDOT/FTE is experiencing similar issues.

The Chairman asked if there is any revenue attached to the backlog that wasn't forecast. Mr. Seward noted that the Toll-by-Plate transactions are going up, and at the same time the use of transponders is decreasing. THEA is looking at the differential between SunPass and Toll-by-Plate.

The Chairman then asked if any of these openings for staffing have anything to do with not currently having a Director of Toll Operations. Mr. Seward said they did not. Finally, the Chairman asked for clarification on the ITS Manager position. Mr. Seward explained that THEA's current ITS staff is internal and is focused on THEA Headquarters. The ITS Manager position referenced is external – all ITS related activities outside of this building (1104 E. Twiggs Street).

Board member Bennett Barrow asked Mr. Seward if, at the next meeting, he could add the 2019 actual numbers to his update.

Board member Daniel Alvarez suggested a campaign to incentivize the use of transponders. He also asked about the travel and professional development number presented in the budget amendment and whether it was high enough. Mr. Seward responded that it was. Mr. Slater pointed out that this is just for now to the end of the fiscal year. Mr. Alvarez asked about temporary staffing and if that number represented time and hours of work for staff we already have or to add new staff. Mr. Seward clarified that there are two elements to that number. First is an \$80,000 Task Order for a temporary Procurement Manager, and second is \$20,000 to make up for an underbudget for a temporary Controller.

Mr. Slater reiterated that the procurement position is vacant. Regarding the tolling issue, he noted that this is something that is being tackled nationwide. The debate in the industry right now is the customer-focused component. If customers are saying they don't want transponders, do we think more about how to meet them where they are and will that require more resources, or do we embark on a campaign.

Mr. Alvarez asked about the reasons it's trending away from transponders. Mr. Slater mentioned a variety of reasons he's heard but noted that the more interoperability we have the better.

The Chairman asked staff to find out if there has been a reduction in the use of transponders in Florida.

*The motion carried unanimously.*

## **V. Staff Reports**

### **A. Operations and Maintenance**

Mr. Pickard provided an overview of the East Selmon Slip Ramp Project, noting completion of both the west and east ends of the project is expected to be completed in the summer of 2023. He also reported that THEA successfully completed its cyber security awareness training, with 100% participation.

## **B. Toll Operations**

Ms. Antolinez gave an update on toll transaction counts for January 2022 compared to FY2019, as well as totals for the month. She noted that we closed January down 5% from 2019 but up 20% from 2021.

Chairman Cassidy pointed out that the same December to January fall off was not reflected in these numbers as in the budget numbers. Ms. Antolinez noted that these are toll transactions. He asked if they equate to revenue. Secretary Gwynn pointed out that sometimes it's a simple matter of how many weekdays were in a month.

Ms. Antolinez continued, noting that when the extension is included, we are up 4% from 2019 and 32% from 2021. Year to year we are up 39%.

She reported a 26.4% increase in total accounts year to year and a 39.8% increase in toll transactions year to year. The average daily traffic comparisons for January 2022 are also up with a 25.4% increase in the West Group and a 13% increase in the East Group + REL.

Ms. Antolinez reviewed the traffic counts for Selmon West Extension, which continue to exceed expectations.

- C. Communications – Ms. Chrzan provided an update on communication efforts. She reported THEA has been actively promoting its new Executive Director, Greg Slater, and introducing him into the community. Bay News 9 featured a story about him, which ran 35 times – this resulted about \$40K in earned media. Tomorrow night, THEA is hosting a public hearing on the Whiting Street PD&E.

Ms. Chrzan discussed last month's board presentation by Dr. Sisinnio Concas regarding THEA's Economic Impact and that she and her team have been working hard to get the word out.

She also reported:

- The Selmon extension has now won 10 awards.
- The Selmon STEM Scholarship Bridge Building Competition was held 2/19/2022 at USF
- Former Executive Director Joe Waggoner is a finalist for the Christine Burdick Downtown Person of the Year Award
- CV Pilot was featured in Roads & Bridges Magazine

## **VI. Executive Reports**

### **A. Executive Director – *Greg Slater***



## **1. Contract Renewal and Expiration Report**

Before giving the report on contract renewals, Mr. Slater updated the board on his efforts to acclimate and embed himself into the community. He briefly discussed efforts to fill key vacancies. He noted that THEA is closely watching the financial market and interest rates, as well as monitoring the Infrastructure Bill.

Mr. Slater took a moment to congratulate Anna Quiñones for completing the IBTTA Leadership Program, and he welcomed back Lisa Pessina, THEA's Controller.

He then reported on one contract renewal with Public Trust Advisory for investment advisory services. The contract is for three years with an additional two, one-year renewal options. THEA is exercising the first of the two one-year renewals.

Chairman Cassidy noted it would be helpful for the board to understand the extent of THEA's contracts that might be exposed to inflationary factors. Mr. Slater agreed and advised that THEA is currently working the inflationary factors into our estimates and putting that out there as part of our budget.

## **B. General Counsel – *Amy Lettelleir***

Ms. Lettelleir followed up on Mr. Slater's comment as well as the mayor's question from the prior board meeting about capitalizing on lower interest rates. She noted the current refunding of THEA's 2012 D Bonds is coming up and that will save us about 4.5%. This can be done in the bond market or a bank loan.

She also discussed cash optimization, in which case we might defease some of our 2017 bonds, and subsequently get into the tax-exempt market. This will all be brought back to the board in March for review and approval.

## **C. Chairman – *Vincent Cassidy***

### **1. Upcoming Meetings**

- Board Workshop – March 14, 2022
- Board Meeting – March 28, 2022

The Chairman encouraged Board members to attend the upcoming workshop and to reach out to staff for a briefing ahead of time.

## **VII. Old Business**

No old business

## **VIII. New Business**

No new business

**IX. Adjournment**

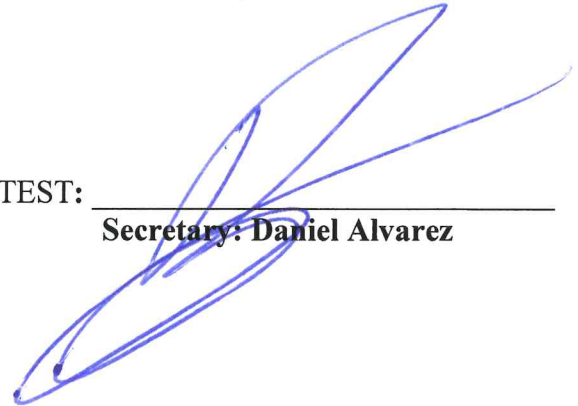
With no further discussion, the meeting adjourned at 2:10 pm.

APPROVED: \_\_\_\_\_



Chairman: Vince Cassidy

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_



Secretary: Daniel Alvarez

**DATED THIS 28th DAY OF MARCH 2022.**