

PENNSYLVANIA STATE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
QUARTERLY MEETING MINUTES
HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA
MAY 12, 2016
WWW.TALKPATRANSPORTATION.COM

CALL TO ORDER:

Secretary Leslie Richards convened a quarterly business meeting of the Pennsylvania State Transportation Commission (STC) at 10:06 a.m. on Thursday, May 12, 2016 in Bedford, PA.

ROLL CALL:

Commissioners Present:

Honorable Leslie S. Richards, Chairwoman
Honorable Robert B. Pease, P.E., Vice Chairman
Honorable Edward J. Cernic, Sr.
Honorable Ronald J. Drnevich
Honorable William F. Keller, alternate present
Honorable James D. Kingsborough
Honorable George M. Khoury
Honorable Sharon L. Knoll
Honorable Frank E. Paczewski
Honorable John C. Rafferty, alternate present
Honorable John Taylor, alternate present
Honorable John N. Wozniak

MINUTES:

ON A MOTION by Commissioner Cernic seconded by Commissioner Paczewski, and unanimously approved, the minutes of the February 25, 2016, STC quarterly business meeting were accepted as presented.

SECRETARY'S REMARKS:

Secretary Richards delivered brief opening remarks and welcomed local officials and representatives from the Bedford and Somerset area communities.

TWELVE YEAR TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM:

2015 Highway and Bridge Program Adjustments/Major Project Adjustments

Deputy Secretary Jim Ritzman presented the 2015 Highway and Bridge Program adjustments, stating that between January 30, 2016 and April 22, 2016 there were 1,001 program adjustments:

- 266 Project/Phase Additions
- 653 Project/Phase Changes
- 22 Project/Phase Deletions
- 60 Adjustments to Funding Line Items

Mr. Ritzman noted that there was an \$80 million increase in the program, representing a tenth of a percent change in the program. He stated that this represented routine changes over the reporting period, and that the program is a snapshot in time. Unspent funds can return to regions as completed projects are closed out through a process called deobligation.

Mr. Nolan Ritchie asked if there have been significant changes from the original \$63 billion 2015 Twelve Year Program approved in August of 2014. Mr. Ritzman stated that the program had not changed significantly since it was adopted by the STC in 2014.

ON A MOTION by Commissioner Paczewski, seconded by Commissioner Cernic and unanimously approved, the 2015 Highway and Bridge TYP Adjustments/Major Project Adjustments were accepted as presented.

Aviation Four-Year Plan

Deputy Secretary Toby Fauver presented the Aviation Four Year Plan. The Aviation Four-Year plan is released every year. There are 218 airport projects anticipated for the Four-Year Plan.

Senator Wozniack asked if passenger enplanements at John Murtha Airport in Johnstown were tracked for the Essential Air Service program. Mr. Fauver said that they are tracked and that the Department has done some critical investments at airports who are in danger of losing their Essential Air Service subsidy. Commissioner Cernic noted that the Essential Air Service subsidy drops when passenger enplanements fall below a certain level and there is a tight threshold. Mr. Fauver said that the Department can help look for certain capital investments to keep airports viable and he used the example of Dubois Regional Airport, which retained Silver Airline's maintenance hub by spending \$2 million to help upgrade their maintenance facility. Other airlines may use the same maintenance facility now that the upgrades are completed.

Commissioner Kingsborough asked where funding for capital investment for appraisals at airport rehabilitation originates. Mr. Fauver stated the funds come from within the Aviation program.

ON A MOTION by Commissioner Paczewski, seconded by Commissioner Cernic and unanimously approved, the Aviation Four-Year Plan was accepted as presented.

2015 RTAP and 2015 RFAP Recommended Projects

Deputy Secretary Toby Fauver presented the 2015 RTAP and 2015 RFAP recommended projects.

The Rail Transportation Assistance Program (RTAP) Capital Budget program and Rail Freight Assistance Program (RFAP) are grant programs administered by the Bureau of Rail Freight, Ports and Waterways. The apportionment for the 2015 programs total \$30 million from Capital Budget funds for RTAP and \$6 million from Act 89 (dedicated rail multimodal) and Act 13 (Marcellus shale) funds.

There were 15 RTAP projects and 16 RFAP projects presented for recommendation by the STC.

Mr. Ritchie stated that RJ Corman Railroad's projects were not among the recommended projects. Mr. Fauver stated that they withdrew their application due to the drop-off in coal traffic.

ON A MOTION by Mr. Eric Bugaile, seconded by Commissioner Cernic and unanimously approved, the 2015 RTAP and RFAP Recommended Projects were accepted as presented.

WORKING SESSION

TAC Bicycle and Pedestrian Study

Deputy Secretary Fauver and Mr. Jonathan Heilman from Gannett Fleming delivered the TAC Bicycle and Pedestrian Study, approved by the Transportation Advisory Committee on April 7, 2016.

The policy study purpose was to:

- Strengthen existing bicycle/pedestrian policy
- Recognize limited funding
- Identify policy implementation methods
- Anticipate implementation.

The policy's recommendations are to establish goals and performance measures, specify an accepted planning methodology to identify bicycle and pedestrian improvements, establish a statewide planning and programming approach, establish criteria based processes for incorporating bicycle and pedestrian improvements into current and future projects and define the appropriate means and structure for funding planning and project design and construction.

Leadership support and involvement are key, and the policy and working groups who developed the study were highly involved and supportive.

Secretary Richards asked if the study helps to identify how a project can move forward if the cost is exorbitant in a bicycle/pedestrian accommodation project. Deputy Secretary Fauver stated that the Route 6 Bicycle Master Plan was released and would identify phased improvements during maintenance projects. In addition, TAP and Multimodal funds may be available .

Commissioner Cernic asked about the Blairsville trails and their construction. Mr. Fauver said that he would follow up, and that there were applications for multimodal funds submitted for them.

Senator Wozniak stated that the Bedford Springs to Bedford trail was a success and suggested that a trail from Bedford to Bedford Village could be a pilot program.

Deputy Secretary Scott Christie stated the funds for maintenance comes out of county budgets and there may not always be funds identified for upgrading roads to accommodate bicyclists.

Commissioner Knoll also stated that local municipalities are also reluctant to maintain some facilities due to limited funding.

Secretary Richards stated that the Department did not want the maintenance part of bicycle facilities to become a burden on the counties and municipalities, so funding should be identified early in the project development phase.

ON A MOTION by Commissioner Cernic, seconded by Commissioner Paczewski and unanimously approved, the TAC Bicycle and Pedestrian Policy Study was accepted as presented.

PennDOT District 9-0 Overview

District Executive Tom Prestash delivered an overview of projects and district activities underway in District 9-0. The overview of projects included a virtual aircraft tour of the US 219 Four Lane Divided Relocation project in Somerset County, currently under construction. This is a \$330 million project. The District is actively studying connections to the north on US 219, and the PA 56 corridor, which connects Johnstown with I-99.

Commissioner Cernic asked about traffic light timings in West Saylor Township, Cambria County. Mr. Prestash stated the traffic lights were a safety feature in place due to the current construction project along that stretch of roadway.

2017 Twelve Year Program Update: Photo Contest

Ms. Jessica Clark presented a briefing on the 2017 Twelve Year Program update. The Planning Partners were challenged to find photos for the cover of the 2017 TYP document, to be presented and adopted by the STC at the August Quarterly Meeting. The photo contest nominees were presented to the commissioners for their vote. Votes were recorded after the meeting.

Ms. Clark also discussed the Planning Partner Focus Group, held on April 25, 2016. The Focus Group discussions delivered a great deal of useful information that will aid in the development of the 2019 Twelve Year Program.

REPORTS:

Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC)

TAC Chairman Lou Schultz presented a brief update on TAC activities.

At the April TAC Business meeting, after receiving PennDOT comment and review, the TAC further discussed proposed studies related to the Panama Canal expansion, a review of the Automated Red Light Enforcement Program (ARLE), and Pennsylvania State Police (PSP) funding. Deputy Secretary Toby Fauver discussed the issues at the Port of Philadelphia and the TAC suggested he return with a more in-depth presentation. The TAC voted to advance the ARLE review study and to conduct the PSP funding study as a white paper.

Chairman Schultz also announced his retirement from the TAC.

Administrative/Budget

Deputy Secretary Suzanne Itzko delivered the Administrative and Budget Deputate report.

Deputy Secretary Itzko highlighted progress on facilities projects, such as salt sheds, roof replacements, and truck washes. They are critical projects to winter maintenance operations. Ms. Itzko also highlighted IdeaLink. Savings from over 400 IdeaLink initiatives have saved the Department \$8.6 million since August 2015. Other Commonwealth agencies are interested in IdeaLink, and the Governor's office is interested in more employee engagement.

Driver and Vehicle Services

Deputy Secretary Kurt Myers delivered the Driver and Vehicle Services Deputate report. Mr. Myers highlighted the Government Accounting Office's review of safety inspection programs nationwide. The Department's safety inspection program is considered a very good one within North America. Deputy Secretary Myers also highlighted the Act 89 \$5 fee for local use, which has expanded to eleven counties including three counties whose fees would go into effect in June and July (Chester, Greene and Cambria).

Mr. Myers clarified a news item involving the sale of driver records. The vehicle code authorizes the Department to sell driver records to authorized companies. Pennsylvania charges \$9 per record. The process is customer initiated, such as someone applying for a bank loan, vehicle insurance, or employment. The practice is common nationwide and is legal at the state and federal level—Delaware charges \$25 per record. The information is not sold for marketing purposes, as was inaccurately reported in the media. In 2015, the program raised \$41 million for the Multimodal fund, the Motor Vehicle License fund, and Pennsylvania Public Transportation funds.

Highway and Bridge Program

Deputy Secretary Scott Christie delivered the Highway and Bridge Administration Deputate report, highlighting ongoing bridge projects, structurally deficient bridges, and trends in posted bridges, fatalities, and winter services expenditures. Mr. Christie also discussed project delivery performance.

Commissioner Khoury asked about a high bid for a precast culvert project in District 2. The District had to reject the bid because it was too high due to the supplier being unable to deliver the components unless a premium was paid. Mr. Khoury asked if this was happening elsewhere in the state. Mr. Christie stated that this was occurring around the state due to the P3 bridges under construction. They have stretched the precast concrete industry to the limit. The Department is postponing some precast culvert projects and directing staff to other projects.

Multimodal Transportation

Deputy Secretary Toby Fauver delivered the Multimodal Deputate report, highlighting transit consolidation efforts around the state, such as in Crawford and Venango Counties. Shared ride consolidation in south-central Pennsylvania is underway, and eight counties are managed under the same system.

The Department received 251 applications for the Multimodal program, totaling over \$281 million. Only \$40 million is available in Multimodal funding.

Statewide, transit ridership has dropped roughly 2% and Amtrak *Pennsylvanian* train ridership is down 10%, attributed to the fall in the price of gasoline. Keystone Corridor ridership between Harrisburg, Philadelphia and New York City has increased. Ridership and revenue have grown and the state's subsidy has declined as a result.

Commissioner Kingsborough asked about the number of applications for multimodal funds and how it compared to the previous year. Mr. Fauver stated that the number this year was higher than last year.

Commissioner Knoll asked if the intermodal container incentive program for ports would be expanded. Mr. Fauver said that the container program encourages growth, which lowers ongoing operating subsidies at the port, and that the Department would like to do the same for the Ports of Erie and Pittsburgh.

Planning

Deputy Secretary Jim Ritzman delivered the Planning Deputate report, highlighting local government collaborative efforts. Mr. Ritzman highlighted the \$2.7 million paid to counties via their fee for local use ordinances, and highlighted the Highway Turnback Program.

Deputy Secretary Ritzman also discussed the State Transportation Innovation Council (STIC) and the P3 Office. The P3 Board approved the Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) infrastructure project for transit. He also discussed the ongoing rapid bridge replacement project and a similar but smaller initiative that will address 33 locally owned bridges in Northampton County.

Mr. Ritchie asked if the municipalities who receive Pennsylvania State Police (PSP) fine revenues have coverage from the PSP or their own police coverage. Mr. Ritzman said that municipalities are eligible for funds if they have a population of less than 3,000 and no police services or a population of greater than 3,000 and provide at least 40-hours a week of local police services.

OTHER BUSINESS

Secretary Richards delivered a brief report on the legislative discussions involving the Pennsylvania State Police funding, stating the discussions are still ongoing and are productive.

The Commission acknowledged Chairman Lou Schultz's work with the TAC with a resolution.

Open Public Comment

No comments were offered during the open public comment period.

NEXT MEETING:

The next STC quarterly business meeting is scheduled for Thursday, August 11 2016, in Langhorne, Pennsylvania.

ADJOURNMENT:

ON A MOTION by Commissioner Cernic and seconded by Commissioner Paczewski, the STC quarterly business meeting was adjourned at 12:31 p.m.