



TPO Board Meeting

Marion County Commission Auditorium and via WebEx
601 SE 25th Avenue, Ocala, FL 34471
October 27, 2020
4:30 PM

MINUTES

Members Present:

Councilman Ire Bethea
Commissioner Jeff Gold, Chair
Councilwoman Valerie Hanchar
Commissioner Ronald Livsey
Councilman Brent Malever
Commissioner David Moore
Commissioner Michelle Stone
Commissioner Carl Zalak

Members Not Present:

Commissioner Kathy Bryant
Councilman Justin Grabelle
Mayor Kent Guinn
Councilman Jay Musleh

Others Present:

Rob Balmes, TPO
Derrick Harris, TPO
Shakayla Irby, TPO
Liz Mitchell, TPO
Anton Schauerte, TPO
Anna Taylor, FDOT
Amanda Tart, Marion County
Carlos Rodriguez, Metric Engineering
Karen Snyder, FDOT
Amy Windom, FDOT

Item 1. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Gold called the public hearing to order at 4:30pm.

Item 2. Roll Call

Shakayla Irby, Administrative Assistant called the roll and a quorum was present.

Item 3. Proof of Publication

Shakayla Irby, Administrative Assistant stated the meeting was published online at the TPO website and the City of Ocala, Belleview and Dunnellon and Marion County meeting calendars on October 20, 2020. The meeting was also published to the TPO's Facebook and Twitter pages.

Item 4a. I-75 Interchange at NW 49th Street PD&E Study

Mr. Carlos Rodriguez, Consultant Project Manager with Metric Engineering gave a presentation.

The Project Development and Environmental (PD&E) was gearing up for the conclusion of the section of the development phase for the new interchange project located at I-75 & NW 49th Avenue.

Mr. Rodriguez gave a presentation highlighting the key purposes and needs for the proposed interchange.

- Improve interstate and regional mobility within Marion County
 - Support a long range vision for a new east-west corridor parallel to US 27 and SR 326
- Accommodate future traffic growth
- Provide relief to existing interchange at US 27 and SR 326 by providing alternate access to I-75
- Improve economic vitality and promote job creation
 - Support viability and continued development of the Ocala 469 Commerce Park

There was a Phase 2C and Phase 2B presented:

- Phase 2C (part of the project)
 - New I-75 Interchange
 - Extension of NW 49th Street
- Phase 2B
 - Extension of NW 35th Street to Phase 2C
 - Currently in final design by Marion County

Mr. Rodriguez presented five interchange alternatives that included a Diamond, SPUI, Diverging Diamond, Partial Cloverleaf NE, and Partial Cloverleaf.

An Alternatives Evaluation was conducted and the preferred alternative was a Diverging Diamond which would provide two directions of traffic crossover to the opposite side at the on/off ramps. The advantage would be avoiding long left turns, facilitating operational maneuvers, and increasing safety.

The interchange justification report showed that a new interchange would attract approximately 26,500 vehicles per day. A new interchange would also operate at acceptable Level of Service (LOS).

A Categorical Exclusion Type II Report (environmental summary report) was prepared and was available for review and no significant environmental impacts were anticipated as a result of the project.

The Public Involvement portion of the project included:

- Ocala / Marion County February 06, 2019
Transportation Planning Organization
(TPO) Presentations
- Ocala 2035 Leadership
- West Ocala Community
Redevelopment Agency (CRA)
- Alternatives Public Meeting
- Public Hearing – November 18, 2020

Final recommendations and documents for the project were expected Fall of 2020.

Walk-On Agenda Item: TPO Director Performance Evaluations

Mr. Moore approved the walk-on agenda item. Ms. Hanchar seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Amanda Tart, Marion County Human Resources Director presented the walk-on.

Ms. Tart said that Mr. Balmes evaluations had been completed and she addressed the board for instruction on how to proceed with pay increase for Mr. Balmes.

Marion County employees received a 2% raise across the board for the upcoming budget year effective October 10, 2020.

Commissioner Moore asked how much the City of Ocala was able to give their employees. Councilman Malever responded 3% and Councilwoman Hanchar said that Belleview had also received 3%.

Commissioner Moore asked if the board would entertain a 3% raise for the TPO Director or if the board wished to follow the County and give a 2% raise. Commissioner Gold said he was in favor of giving the 2% raise that County employees received. Commissioner Zalak and Commissioner Stone agreed with the 2% raise.

Ms. Tart said that Mr. Balmes had not received an evaluation in May of 2020 and wanted to let the board know that the evaluation was late.

Commissioner Gold asked if Mr. Balmes could be retro payed back to May 2020 when he should have received his evaluation.

Mr. Balmes said the fiscal year for the TPO started July 1 and felt any retro pay he received should not go pass July 1 if the board chose so.

Commissioner Gold said that Mr. Balmes received a great evaluation from him and that Mr. Balmes has been great with communicating with him and had been meeting all requirements.

Approved –

FDOT had also made comments that Mr. Balmes was a pleasure to work with. Commissioner Gold said he would not have a problem with retro paying Mr. Balmes from July 1.

Ms. Tart said that last year merit raises had been given to County employees the previous fiscal year and prior to October 1 based on Mr. Balmes evaluation score he would have received a 5% increase.

Councilman Bethea said it seemed that Mr. Balmes would be losing on his possible merit increase due to a delay in his evaluation.

Commissioner Stone said Mr. Balmes was highly regarded across the region and asked if it would be in line as to July 1 to give him an increase based on merit increases for last year.

Ms. Tart said that next May an evaluation would be conducted for Mr. Balmes but not for a merit increase as County employees were treated.

Commissioner Moore made a motion for Mr. Balmes to receive a 5% retroactive raise starting July 1st based on his performance evaluation. Commissioner Stone seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Item 5a. Performance Evaluations, TPO Staff

Ms. Amanda Tart, Marion County Human Resources Director presented. As part of the TPO's Staff Services Agreement with Marion County, the TPO Director worked with the Human Resources Department to conduct annual performance evaluations of TPO staff, following rules and procedures in the County's Employee Handbook.

For Fiscal Year/2021, the Marion County Board of County Commissioners approved a 2% across the board increase with an effective date of October 10, 2020. The increase would replace the merit increase program for the fiscal year; however, evaluation would still be completed for employees on their anniversary dates.

Ms. Tart recommended the employees of the Ocala Marion TPO receive the same 2% across the board increase as all other Marion County Board of County Commissioner employees.

Mr. Balmes mentioned the TPO fiscal year started July 1 and that two staff members had evaluations completed and their raises went into effect July 1. However, two staff members that just had their evaluations completed and did not receive an increase.

Ms. Tart said that increases for the other two employees were based on hire date and also one employee was granted a promotion which started his hire date over again.

Ms. Tart said that TPO staff had been treated the same as County employees.

Commissioner Zalak agreed with Ms. Tart that TPO staff should be treated the same as the County employees.

Commissioner Moore made a motion to approve the 2% increase across the board for the TPO staff including the TPO Director effective October 1st. Commissioner Stone seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Item 6. Consent Agenda

Commissioner Moore made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Councilwoman Hanchar seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Item 7. Comments by FDOT

Ms. Anna Taylor said the construction report had been provided to the TPO board. FDOT had started back with public meetings in hybrid format with an online option. November 18th public meeting was scheduled in the area. The work program cycle had begun.

Item 8. Comments by TPO Staff

Mr. Balmes thanked the board for his evaluation and said it had been an honor to serve at the TPO and also mentioned the great work TPO staff does.

Mr. Balmes said the TPO wanted to continue improving working relationships.

The TPO would be participating in the collision for the I-4 corridor plan.

The TRIP list was submitted and incorporated into the regional priorities. The Marion Oaks Manor Interchange, the Overpass Flyover, and CR 484 widening to six lane project.

Commissioner Stone would be the Vice-Chair in 2021 for the MPOAC.

The MPOAC would meet on Thursday, October 29, 2020.

The Auditors at the Office of Inspector General met with Commissioner Gold and Mr. Balmes and gave a synopsis of what would be forthcoming in the audit report. The Auditors highlighted emphasis on the invoices and gave great feedback. During a TPO internal review an invoice dated September of 2019 had been identified where there was a small overpayment of \$1,232.92, the TPO had since communicated with FDOT to get the issue corrected.

Mr. Balmes said an area of improvement for the TPO in the upcoming year would be better alignment with invoicing processes by finding a software to better assist.

The Auditors also talked about the cost allocation in terms of how the Clerk's Office reports the deductions. The Clerk's Office would need to invoice the TPO for clearer back-up documentation.

Mr. Balmes said the TPO would continue to build a good communication relationship with the FDOT.

Item 9. Comments by TPO Members

Commissioner Gold presented Commissioner Moore with a Service Award as it was his final meeting with the TPO Board.

Commissioner Moore had served on the TPO Board from 2012 to 2020, including serving two consecutive terms as TPO Board Chair in 2017 and 2018.

Commissioner Moore had also been an instrumental leader for transportation in Marion County and had represented the TPO in numerous state and regional organizations including the Central Florida MPO Alliance and the Metropolitan Planning Organization Advisory Council (the MPOAC).

Councilwoman Hanchar attend the final MCORES meeting and said Marion County was well represented and that it was made clear Marion County did not want to be in sight including any greenways for any type of future projects. Instructions were sent if the project were to be forthcoming. Budget and funding would not be from other projects to fund the MCORES project.

Commissioner Moore thanked the TPO for a phenomenal job and said that the TPO was in a great position as well as the TPO board as a whole.

Commissioner Stone asked for consideration to be the next TPO Chair.

Item 10. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Item 11. Adjournment

Chairman Gold adjourned the meeting at 5:15pm.

Respectfully Submitted By:

Shakayla Irby, Administrative Assistant