

**SOUTHERN HIGH-SPEED RAIL COMMISSION
FULL COMMISSION MEETING
GM&O Building, Mobile, Alabama
June 8, 2012
2:00 pm**

The quarterly meeting was called to order by Chairman Billy McFarland at approximately 2:00 p.m. and was followed by The Pledge of Allegiance. The Commissioners' Roll was called and a quorum was confirmed.

ALABAMA

Aubrey Miller (proxy to Bennington)
Toby Bennington
Billy McFarland
Greg White

MISSISSIPPI

Kay Kell (proxy to Knox Ross)
Charles Ozier
Knox Ross
Representative Tommy Woods

LOUISIANA

Martin Bruno
Colonel Phil Jones
Michael Jackson
Rep. Walt Leger (proxy to McFarland)

SARPC

Chris Miller

GUEST

Rick Cowan, GoRail
Michael Hersh

Chairman McFarland asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the March 16, 2012 Commission meeting. Commissioner Knox Ross motioned for approval and seconded by Commissioner Tommy Woods. A motion to approve the minutes of the Executive Committee teleconference call on May 11 was made by Commissioner Martin Bruno and seconded by Representative Tommy Woods.

OLD BUSINESS

Report: March 2012 Congressional Briefing Trip:

Commissioner Knox Ross stated that the group was able to meet with a lot of the delegates themselves and they were very knowledgeable and very interested in helping us restore the service from Baton Rouge. He expressed that what he came away with was "how can we take their good will and support and do something sustaining?" Chairman McFarland stated Congressman Backus' concern with the Birmingham to Mobile route since the state did not put up the match and asked that the FRA extend the deadline. Since that time the surrounding localities, City of Birmingham, Montgomery County, City of Montgomery, and perhaps the City of Mobile (not decided) to complete the first phase between Birmingham and Montgomery since they have not secured the funding with the match. It is still unknown if Mobile will participate.

For each individual delegate appointment a follow-up letter was mailed to the delegate or staff member from the Commission.

NEW BUSINESS

Resolution No. 2012-2 Travel Reimbursement:

It was decided on no action to be taken at this time.

GoRail Presentation

A presentation was given by Rick Cowan from GoRail lobbying for SHSRC support by contacting Senator Jeff Sessions to re-regulate the rail industry and allow the industry to continue to invest in its own future and the economic growth of Alabama.

Call to Executive Session

Commissioner Martin Bruno suggested that we consider a motion to go in to Executive Session be added in to record:

- 1) Executive Session for the purposes of discussion of the good name and character of several persons in State Government and this information be recorded as confidential. Commissioner Knox Ross motioned for approval with second by Commissioner Toby Bennington.

Consideration: Approve Amendments to Rail Commission By-Laws

Not able to approve because two thirds of the commission majority not present for a vote. Also, a discussion was made regarding changing the name of the Commission to reflect a name more oriented toward attracting state funding without compromising federal funding opportunities.

Consideration: Governmental Relations Proposal

A proposal was presented by Adams and Reese to provide government relations services for the SHSRC. After much discussion, Commissioner Martin Bruno made a motion for the Executive Committee to retain the services of Adams and Reese as described in their proposal for the remainder of the fiscal year for \$2500 a month. Commissioner Toby Bennington seconded the motion.

Report: Gulf Coast Rail Summit, Mobile, Alabama, August, 2012

Chris Miller reported that Mayor Sam Jones asked for help to get the Amtrak service east of New Orleans restored. The City of Mobile has been very aggressive on this. There is a relationship with Mayor Jones and Rep. Corrine Brown who is the ranking member of a transportation subcommittee that deals with Amtrak. We are working on trying to get a Summit set for some time in August. The plan would be to get all the mayors involved from the surrounding areas from New Orleans to Jacksonville. Commissioner Greg White motioned that the Commission be a co-sponsor with a \$2500 donation with a second from Commissioner Tommy Woods. The motion carried unanimously.

Discussion: Vacancies on Rail Commission

Commissioners discussed vacancies on the Commission from each state and the methods of filling them.

Consideration: Alabama Governmental Update:

The Alabama delegation discussed as part of the Executive Session.

Mississippi:

Commissioner Knox Ross reported that he had met with a couple of groups, Go Rail Mississippi representative and sent letters to them and chamber partnerships. He did meet with the Government Relations Representative of the Norfolk Southern in Birmingham at a rail safety meeting.

Louisiana:

The compact that has been formed in Louisiana is a major step. The federal money filters through the LADOT we administer to the MPOs. The MPOs in turn use it to match each other plus the Baton Rouge Area Foundation fills in the gap. That's a major accomplishment to bring these entities together. Along the same lines, the corridor development had some legislation passed last year that recognizes that and also establishing a rail authority to oversee all this which will be the keystone. Despite the political thin ice with high speed rail we are seeing movement toward passenger rail. The key to success for the Baton Rouge/New Orleans effort is going to be where the money will come from for long term construction. We magically brought together the money for the study that's needed but now where is the money for construction. It would be a great help if the consulting firm can help us find where we can put it all together.

FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

Chris Miller presented the financial report on pages 14 through page 17. A motion was made to approve SARPC invoices 24-26. Commissioner White asked for confirmation that the SARPC invoices did include the travel expenses. Chairman McFarland asked for a motion to approve, Commissioner Knox Ross motioned for approval and seconded by Commissioner Greg White. The motion carried unanimously.

FUTURE MEETING DATES

A September date in New Orleans, Louisiana will be determined.

Adjourned