

**Executive Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
October 5, 2022**

**Members Physically Present:**

Commissioner Chris Cloudman, Vice Chairperson  
Commissioner Victor Ramos  
Councilwoman Christine Power  
Mayor Bill Partington  
Mayor David Alfin  
Council Vice Chair Barbara Girtman, Chairperson  
Council Member Billie Wheeler

**Representing:**

DeLand  
Deltona  
Edgewater  
Ormond Beach  
Palm Coast  
Volusia County, District 1  
Volusia County, District 2

**Others Physically Present:**

Colleen Nicoulin  
Anna Taylor  
Claire Hartman

**Representing:**

TPO Staff  
FDOT  
Ghyabi Consulting

**Others Virtually Present:**

Debbie Stewart, Recording Secretary  
Pam Blankenship

**Representing:**

TPO Staff  
TPO Staff

**I. Call to Order / Roll Call / Determination of Quorum**

The meeting of the River to Sea Transportation Planning Organization (TPO) Executive Committee was called to order at 9:00 a.m. by Chairperson Barbara Girtman. The roll was called and it was determined that a quorum was physically present. Due to the COVID-19 virus, the meeting was held in a hybrid format with seven voting members physically present.

**II. Public Comment/Participation**

There were no public comments.

**III. Business Items**

**A. Review and Recommendation of Performance Evaluation for the River to Sea TPO Interim Executive Director**

Chairperson Girtman asked if members had an opportunity to review the Interim Executive Director's evaluations.

Commissioner Cloudman replied it seems as if all members are on the same page.

Chairperson Girtman stated she reviewed her evaluation with Ms. Nicoulin and explained why she interpreted things to be in the middle as there are things we have not had the opportunity to do but we are moving in the right direction.

Commissioner Cloudman asked if Strategic Government Resources (SGR) was still available for negotiations and if that was something that the TPO had paid for.

Ms. Nicoulin replied that was part of the contract with SGR regardless of who was recommended for the position. She will reach out to Mr. Doug Thomas at SGR to discuss the next steps.

Commissioner Cloudman commented that it makes sense to have a third party along with Chairperson Girtman be part of the negotiation. Ms. Nicoulin's current contract expires on October 31, 2022; therefore, we need to

make a recommendation to the TPO Board this month on what the next step is. He asked if there are any objections to recommending Ms. Nicoulin as the TPO's permanent Executive Director.

Chairperson Girtman replied that from what we know from the evaluations and Ms. Nicoulin's performance there is no other direction to take.

Commissioner Cloudman added that Ms. Nicoulin has done an excellent job and has grown throughout this process over the last six months.

Council Member Wheeler added that she is continuing to move the TPO in a different direction that is encouraging and what is needed.

Chairperson Girtman asked if FDOT had any input or if there is anything the Executive Committee should be aware of.

Ms. Taylor replied no, things have been great. She and Ms. Nicoulin have bi-weekly phone calls which have been very beneficial; FDOT is pleased with the relationship with the TPO and the effort Ms. Nicoulin has provided. She has moved mountains to get invoices submitted on time and she cannot say enough about Ms. Nicoulin and her team for prioritizing that. The year-end close-out went perfectly; they have started a new Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) and there have been no issues.

Chairperson Girtman asked how long the TPO would remain under special conditions status.

Ms. Taylor replied part of that is because the TPO does not have staff in place and the Interim Executive Director status. As FDOT sees staff stabilizing it will help; hiring financial staff has been very helpful. The TPO has put some financial policies in place. She does not want to put a timeframe on the special conditions status but things are moving in the right direction. Currently, invoices are submitted for review and FDOT has the ability to review them and send them back with any edits; they are then resubmitted for processing. Part of FDOT's recommendations were to put some financial controls in place and that has been occurring. Removal of special conditions status will occur when the TPO is close to not having any edits or comments.

Ms. Nicoulin added that now we are in a new UPWP with a new structure; the new UPWP has a number of financial controls in place.

Commissioner Cloudman stated that he would like to see regular communication with FDOT continue even after the special conditions have been lifted.

Ms. Nicoulin agreed and noted that it has been very helpful to have that communication.

***MOTION: A motion was made by Commissioner Cloudman to recommend moving forward with contract negotiations for Ms. Colleen Nicoulin to become the River to Sea TPO's permanent Executive Director. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Ramos and carried unanimously.***

**B. Review and Recommendation of Approval to Reschedule the November 23, 2022 TPO Board Meeting to November 30, 2022**

Chairperson Girtman stated that the November 23, 2022 TPO Board meeting falls the day before Thanksgiving so it will be rescheduled to November 30, 2022.

Ms. Nicoulin stated this rescheduling is consistent with what we have done over the last two years.

***MOTION: A motion was made by Council Member Wheeler to recommend rescheduling the November 23, 2022 TPO Board meeting to November 30, 2022. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Power and carried unanimously.***

C. Review and Approval of September 7, 2022 Executive Committee Minutes

**MOTION:** *A motion was made by Commissioner Cloudman to approve the September 7, 2022 Executive Committee minutes. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Ramos and carried unanimously.*

D. Review and Approval of October 26, 2022 TPO Board Agenda

Ms. Nicoulin stated that since the TPO Board meeting was cancelled last month due to Hurricane Ian, the agenda items carried over. There was a TIP amendment and an LRTP amendment so she confirmed with FDOT that they were both able to be pushed back a month. She reviewed the draft agenda including the consent agenda and action items. A Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) amendment needs to be added to the Action Items; she explained that when the new UPWP was developed there were some Federal Transit Administration (FTA) grants that carried over because not all of them ended on June 30, 2022; therefore, we made an estimation of what was anticipated to carry over. The TPO had anticipated some of that funding going to Flagler County Public Transportation for support of their Transit Development Plan (TDP) but they did not submit the invoice prior to the end of the fiscal year. Those funds will be put back into the new UPWP so they can be utilized. She reviewed the presentation items.

**MOTION:** *A motion was made by Commissioner Cloudman to approve the draft October 26, 2022 TPO Board agenda as amended adding a UPWP amendment to the Action Items. The motion was seconded by Mayor Partington and carried unanimously.*

IV. Staff Comments

Ms. Nicoulin provided an update on the condition of the TPO office and what happened during Hurricane Ian; the TPO shut down Wednesday at noon and was closed Thursday and Friday. She came into the office Friday and there was no power; there was water in the large conference room, the waiting room, three offices and the copier room. The landlord called in a contractor to extract the water which they did on Friday using the battery of their truck; however, because there was no power they were unable to run the fans and dehumidifiers until Sunday when the power came on. Ms. Stewart lives close by and was able to let the contractor in to turn on the fans and dehumidifiers which ran for 72 hours and were just shut off this morning. There are areas that may need to be replaced in terms of drywall and carpet. There have been issues in the past with water leaks in the building; a water heater broke earlier this year and flooded the conference room. Drywall was replaced then but it is a concern because of environmental factors and health risks. She is going to speak to the landlord about what improvements they are going to do. According to the contractor that extracted the water, water is coming in two ways; it is coming in where the second floor starts and it is coming in through the walls and under the carpets. Unless the cause of the leaks is fixed, it is not helpful to replace the materials.

Members discussed the issues with the building and the concerns regarding leaks, water damage, and environmental and health risks related to mold from water damage. It was noted that the TPO considered moving a few years ago but that space is no longer available.

Ms. Nicoulin stated she has spoken with the Executive Directors of other TPOs about their office space; some rent space from their municipalities or counties; and some have smaller offices and utilize a hotel conference room. This location is centrally located and easy for committee and board members to get to; however, it would be a good idea to explore other locations.

Chairperson Girtman asked if staff had considered space at the Daytona Beach International Airport.

Ms. Nicoulin replied staff looked at a number of office spaces including the airport but we were able to negotiate the current space at a lower cost. She has found that other TPOs of a similar size pay significantly less for office space than we do.

Commissioner Cloudman asked if there could be an opportunity to partner with another organization and use their conference room; the Regional Planning Council have their offices in the Lynx building and they use their conference room. Perhaps the NASCAR building has space we could use.

Ms. Nicoulin noted that the TPO hosts the TDLCB meetings at Votran and uses their conference room. She does not know if Votran was considered before for office space.

Mayor Alfin asked how much square footage is needed for office space; he is in commercial real estate and he can explore some locations.

Ms. Nicoulin replied she has not figured that out yet but will work on getting a range.

Councilwoman Power suggested looking at two options; one with a conference room and one without.

Members discussed the possibility of relocating to another location and what locations to look into; it does need to be centrally located and easy for committee and board members to get to. Ms. Nicoulin will explore some options; she noted there are still five years left on the current lease.

Mayor Partington asked who is responsible for the water mitigation and the drywall repairs.

Ms. Nicoulin replied the Root Company, the landlord. Their contractor pulled off the baseboards in the rooms that had water damage and ran the dehumidifiers for 72 hours. They will test those areas today and may possibly fog those rooms if needed. The landlord has been responsive with this issue but she is not sure how committed they are in fixing the cause of the leaks in the building. She believes they may want to redevelop this area; several spaces have been vacated in the area. She will put together the square footage needed for office space and other needs the TPO has.

Ms. Nicoulin stated staff has been working with FDOT to program the SU funding for projects on the priority list; staff provided FDOT with a draft programming amount and she had a follow up meeting with FDOT on Monday. The TPO has some additional funding that has come through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) regarding carbon reduction. It is a formula funding that can be programmed on certain projects; much of it is specific to bicycle/pedestrian projects but can also be programmed for Transportation Systems Management and Operations (TSMO) projects such as coordinated signals and roundabouts. There is a quick turnaround on programming it.

Council Member Wheeler asked how much the funding is.

Ms. Nicoulin replied it is different each year but approximately \$1 million per year. It is extra funding on top of the SU funding but weighs heavily toward bicycle/pedestrian projects. We have to provide a list by next Wednesday; it will be projects from the priority list. Because this funding weighs more heavily for bicycle/pedestrian projects, the TPO may program more of the SU funding for traffic operations projects.

Members discussed the funding and what projects it could go toward; it can be used for design or construction.

Ms. Nicoulin stated that FDOT is concerned about the funding for this year and next year. The funding is through 2028; FDOT has suggested looking at projects already in the Work Program. The programming will be based on the priority list and will go toward projects that fit. There are two urbanized areas in the TPO's planning area; one in Deltona encompasses all of the west side of Volusia County and the other is Palm Coast/Daytona Beach/Port Orange. FDOT has been asked if the pots of funding have to stay within those urbanized areas; she is still waiting on an answer. The projects have to be vetted through FDOT and had intake meetings. Staff will be looking at what is already programmed and ready to go. This is a new funding source that came up this week. There is also a state allocation and the SR 44 and Kepler Road roundabout project could be a possibility.

## **VI. Executive Committee Member Comments**

Chairperson Girtman commented that there are going to be a lot of road and infrastructure challenges from Hurricane Ian and it could bring a change in how we do our business.



Mayor Partington commented a damage assessment is needed but the TPO does not have the staff to do it; it would be good to have the TPO's response to storm damage at the next Executive Committee meeting. FDOT is working hard to bring repairs to the roads in Lee County and is assessing the damage in Volusia County. They will need our response and cooperation with that as well as from each city.

Chairperson Girtman agreed; we may not be able to take any action but we need to show some type of support and leadership in the community.

Ms. Nicoulin noted that there is the possibility of funding that is needed for repairs coming off a project.

Mayor Partington asked if federal relief funding would be funneled through the TPO.

Ms. Nicoulin replied that when Hurricane Michael came through the panhandle, FDOT had to put a lot of funds there for repairs so funds statewide had to be shifted. It affected the entire state. We have to make sure our plans and documents are able to support any funds that may come through.

Mayor Alfin stated the emergency managers may be a good source to get a general outlook of road conditions; he noted that in Flagler County, 18 miles of beach no longer have any sand dunes so SR A1A is a potential victim of another storm.

Chairperson Girtman commented we need to think about what our communication to the public should be. We need to be clear on what our focus is. We are saying we are going to present ourselves differently to the community and redefine what our role is; planning, education and outreach regarding safety, Complete Streets, transit, etc.

Ms. Taylor stated she has a meeting with Secretary Perdue tomorrow and he plans to address the storm damage at the Central Florida MPO Alliance meeting on Friday. Each area has engineers assessing the damage and she suggested yielding her report at the TPO Board meeting to an engineer or operations manager so they can provide an update. Volusia County is on the radar from the state's perspective.

Chairperson Girtman agreed and added that it is important that we connect to the regional message. It is rare for Volusia County to be connected to Secretary Perdue and the Speaker of the House in Florida; we need to acknowledge this moment and leverage these relationships.

#### **VIII. Adjournment**

The Executive Committee meeting adjourned at 9:58 a.m.

**River to Sea Transportation Planning Organization**

  
**VOLUSIA COUNTY COUNCIL VICE CHAIR BARBARA GIRTMAN**  
**CHAIRPERSON, RIVER TO SEA TPO**

#### **CERTIFICATE:**

The undersigned duly qualified and acting Recording Secretary of the River to Sea TPO certifies that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the minutes of the October 5, 2022 regular meeting of the Executive Committee approved and duly signed this 2<sup>nd</sup> day of November 2022.

  
**Debbie Stewart, Recording Secretary, River to Sea TPO**

**\*\* A recording of the October 5, 2022 Executive Committee meeting is available upon request.**