

**Executive Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
November 3, 2021**

**Members Physically Present:**

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

**Representing:**

DeLand  
Deltona  
Edgewater  
Ormond Beach  
Volusia County  
Volusia County

**Members Absent:**

Commissioner Jason McGuirk

**Representing:**

New Smyrna Beach

**Others Present:**

Debbie Stewart, Recording Secretary  
Colleen Nicoulin  
Stephan Harris  
Anne Ruby  
Anna Taylor  
Maryam Ghyabi  
Jon Cheney  
Melissa Winsett

**Representing:**

TPO Staff  
TPO Staff  
TPO Staff  
Citizen  
FDOT  
Ghyabi & Associates  
Volusia County Traffic Engineering  
Volusia County Traffic Engineering

**Others Virtually Present:**

Pam Blankenship  
Jay Williams  
Kelvin Miller

**Representing:**

TPO Staff  
Volusia County  
Votran

**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 10:00 a.m. by Chairperson Billie Wheeler. 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 six voting members physically present.

**II. Public Comment/Participation**

Mr. Jon Cheney, Volusia County Traffic Engineering Director, stated his professional career with Volusia County will be ending in 14 months and introduced Ms. Melissa Winsett, Volusia County's Transportation Planner; she will be replacing him at these meetings.

**III. Discussion Items**

**A. Update on COVID-19 Business Practices and Impacts**

Ms. Nicoulin stated the TPO has continued hosting hybrid meetings with a physical quorum in attendance and offering the option for remote participation; we will continue this through the end of the year and revisit it in January.

**B. Discussion on TPO Staffing**

Ms. Nicoulin stated last month TPO staffing needs were discussed particularly regarding the Accounting Manager position. After that meeting, staff learned what we can about that position and has spent time learning the accounting system and where we are in the books. The TPO has since closed last fiscal year's books which

ended in June. On Monday, she worked with technical support through the Grants Management Systems (GMS) software to close last year and we are moving forward with setting up the current FY in GMS to start billing and invoicing with FDOT. Ms. Blankenship and Ms. Stewart have been involved in the payroll process; there have been a couple of minor issues but we have worked through those; we still face a challenge with not having someone in the Financial Manager role. We have a temporary financial assistant contracted through Robert Half for the day-to-day accounting functions such as paying bills, etc., but we have a need to fill the financial manager position as it has been a challenge.

Chairperson Wheeler asked what critical items are not being done other than bill paying and day-to-day operations and with Ms. Blankenship and Ms. Stewart handling payroll.

Ms. Nicoulin replied they are both working through payroll but that is taking a lot of their time; at the end of the year we will have W-2's, tax filings, and 1099's. The regular task of paying employees is being done but there are other components of payroll that require a financial background.

Chairperson Wheeler asked if there is a temporary service that can be used because when a new Executive Director comes in, they may have their own idea of what they want in that financial position.

Ms. Nicoulin replied there are companies that could cover the end of the year concerns regarding W-2's, 1099's, and the quarterly tax filings.

Members discussed the options regarding the financial position options.

Chairperson Wheeler noted that Ms. Nicoulin has the authority to hire a finance manager in her role as Interim Executive Director; she would like the Executive Committee to support her. She asked for member comments regarding allowing Ms. Nicoulin to move forward versus waiting until a new Executive Director is hired.

Council Member Girtman asked if staff already has someone in mind for this position or if it will take 90 days or more to hire someone.

Ms. Nicoulin replied we do not have an individual in mind but have worked with Robert Half who brought in the temporary employee; they also offer permanent placement and can work quickly to bring someone in. Their fee is 20% of the annual salary which for this position is between \$74,000 and \$91,000. The TPO has used them in the past and they were able to bring someone in within two weeks.

Councilwoman Power commented that the financial manager that came from Robert Half did not last long so perhaps we do need to go a different route this time. She noted that tax time is no joke and she does not think that we should expect the staff to piecemeal it together through that time period.

Mayor Partington commented that a 20% fee seems high but on the other hand we are looking at a crisis. He would like to see this problem solved by the end of the week with a temporary agency that can handle everything we need for six months versus trying to find someone immediately as there may not be anyone available; something must happen even if we go to the county or the cities for assistance. He agrees with Councilwoman Power that this needs to be dealt with immediately.

Chairperson Wheeler asked members if they are recommending a temporary financial person for the interim or to give Ms. Nicoulin the authority to hire someone permanently.

Mayor Partington replied he trusts Ms. Nicoulin to make the right decision and in the meantime, he would urge her to seek professional help from a private agency or TPO partner if needed.

Chairperson Wheeler agreed.

Council Member Girtman asked if Robert Half provided a temporary to permanent solution for this position; if they offer different levels of service to bridge the gap. Her concern is that we are already at the end of the year and in the last quarter; whoever is brought on will need to hit the ground running.

Discussion ensued on other potential consultants to contract the work out to.

Commissioner Cloudman commented he appreciated the sentiment last month of waiting on a new Executive Director to fill this position but he did not agree with it. Staff is already down to a skeleton crew and doing double duties of the other vacant positions that were not filled due to COVID-19. We need to do whatever we need to do to fix it now by allowing the position to be posted for a permanent solution. He asked if MetroPlan uses the same software.

Ms. Nicoulin replied yes, for grants management. She spoke to MetroPlan's Executive Director and Financial Manager and there is an opportunity for them to possibly provide some assistance. GMS has technical assistance as well.

Members continued to discuss the available options for the finance position.

Chairperson Wheeler stated the committee needs to give Ms. Nicoulin the support to do what needs to be done; she also did not agree with the consensus from last month's meeting. If everyone agrees, she now has the blessing to do what she needs to do. We do not need a vote because it is within her purview to do what she needs to do. She will contact the county staff to see what assistance they can provide for the end-of-year items.

Ms. Nicoulin identified the immediate need was to bring in assistance to handle the year end items and also indicated she will contact MetroPlan to see what assistance they can provide since they use the same software.

### **C. Discussion on Invoicing Procedures**

(Handout)

Ms. Nicoulin referred to the handout letter from FDOT; she commented over the last year there have been challenges with invoicing. She explained bills are received from vendors, the TPO pays them and then compiles an invoice package that is submitted to FDOT for reimbursement as FDOT manages the TPO's grants. There are requirements for submitting the invoice packages and being reimbursed. She explained the issues that have occurred in submitting invoice packages. FDOT has a responsibility during the joint certification review to identify issues with the invoicing; that certification is conducted in the spring. Since it has been identified now that there have been challenges over the past year, staff is working with FDOT staff and they have identified a proactive approach to address the issues prior to the certification in the spring. With that, the TPO is being placed on "specific conditions" status which allows the TPO an extra layer of technical support from FDOT so when the invoice packages are prepared, they will be submitted for a technical review and then request additional information if needed. The TPO began using this technical support for the last three invoices that have cleared; with the exception of the 90 days, there were no issues.

Chairperson Wheeler asked if prior to the last three months, if the problems were on the TPO's side or FDOT's.

Ms. Nicoulin replied both; there was some miscommunication. We had new staff and FDOT had new staff. The challenges were with drawing down the right grant; the way the invoicing was done previously now needs to be done differently. There were major challenges with drawing down the wrong grant and overdrawing grants; that has since been corrected.

Chairperson Wheeler asked Ms. Anna Taylor, FDOT, if the TPO is on the right path now.

Ms. Taylor replied yes; there were changes on FDOT's side and they are trying to communicate as quickly as they can. There was an audit conducted on another MPO within District 5 and FDOT was given strict instructions for things that needed to be addressed. FDOT conducted a training session in July that oversaw the changes that were put into place. This letter is to get ahead of any issues while we have the opportunity.

Chairperson Wheeler stated she appreciates the cooperation from FDOT.

Members discussed the invoicing issues and the steps taken to correct them.

Mayor Partington commented he feels okay with the invoicing with FDOT now providing technical assistance. He does not have a good feeling regarding the audit and staffing issues and would like to know where we are and if a progress report can be provided; he asked if the Executive Committee should start meeting weekly. He would like to have a trajectory of where we are.

Chairperson Wheeler agreed; she referred to the audit and commented we should have a conversation with James Moore & Company to see what they have found and if any corrections need to be made.

Mayor Partington replied he is fine with letting staff handle things as long as he knows things are being taken care of but he is not comfortable regarding the audit. He would like to have a decent report to the full TPO Board at the next meeting of what measures are in place.

Chairperson Wheeler stated that is a good recommendation; much has happened since Ms. Bollenback left the TPO and we are all trying to figure it out. She feels like James Moore & Company is worth looking into. FDOT has been helpful but she would like to know if there are other issues and she thinks it would be worth having the Executive Committee meet again prior to the next regularly scheduled meeting.

Members agreed to reconvene the Executive Committee on Wednesday, November 17, 2021 at 9:00 am.

**D. Update on TPO Annual Audit**

Ms. Nicoulin stated typically the audit is completed this time of the year but it is still underway. It is expected to be completed to present to the TPO Board in January. She will have more information at the November 17, 2021 Executive Committee meeting. Through her conversations with James Moore and Company, there is nothing alarming nor concerns but they are still in the process.

**E. Update on TPO Office Relocation**

Ms. Nicoulin stated staff is moving forward with the office relocation but the move has been pushed back until July 2022. Staff will be working with Root Company on the schedule of activities and responsibilities. Ms. Stewart is working on quotes for audio/visual equipment for the new location and working with other vendors such as the copier and phone service. The TPO's utilizes Volusia County's phone system and she is working with their staff on moving the phone system.

Mayor Partington commented he wants to be sure the TPO's attorney is reviewing any legal documents related to the move. He has not seen anything in writing yet and wants the attorney involved in the process to protect the organization.

Ms. Nicoulin replied that although there will be a new lease, the economics of the lease will not change. It is a larger space but the TPO will be paying the same amount we are now.

Chairperson Wheeler asked how long the lease is for.

Ms. Nicoulin replied there are still six and a half years left on the current lease but staff will look at whether it can be extended to the full ten years; that will be part of the negotiations the attorney will be included in.

**IV. Business Items**

**A. Review and Approval of October 6, 2021 Executive Committee Minutes**

**MOTION:** *A motion was made by Councilwoman Power to approve the October 6, 2021 Executive Committee minutes. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Cloudman and passed unanimously.*

**B. Review and Recommend Approval of Expenditure for the Flagler County Public Transit Block Grant Technical Assistance (\$TBD)**

Ms. Nicoulin stated the TPO provides planning assistance to Flagler County Public Transit (FCPT) to help them access funding. FCPT contacted staff earlier this year for assistance and the TPO will be utilizing one of its general planning consultants, Kittelson & Associates, who has brought in a sub-contractor that specializes in this type of planning. The amount of the expenditure is \$31,663 and will be paid from a Federal Transit Administration (FTA) grant that was received in September. The grant was amended into the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) and there are deliverables within it to provide technical assistance to the transit agencies.

**MOTION:** *A motion was made by Mayor Partington to recommend approval for the expenditure for the Flagler County Public Transit Block Grant Technical Assistance (\$31,663). The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Power and passed unanimously.*

**C. Review and Recommend Approval of Executive Director Timesheet Review Report**

**MOTION:** *A motion was made Mayor Partington to recommend approval of Executive Director Timesheet Review Reports for August 29, 2020 through September 25, 2021. The motion was seconded by Council Member Girtman and carried unanimously.*

**D. Review and Approval of Draft December 1, 2021 River to Sea TPO Board Agenda**

Ms. Nicoulin reviewed the draft December 1, 2021 TPO Board agenda; she referred to the Consent Agenda and stated the expenditure dollar amount for Item L will be added (\$31,663) as well as adding an item to cancel the December TPO Board meeting. She reviewed the Action Items which includes the priority project guiding resolutions and project applications.

Discussion regarding moving the Call for Projects from December to January ensued; the date remained at December 3, 2021.

Council Member Girtman commented she had previously asked about some Complete Streets safety projects in Deland and Orange City; she wants to know if they are on the list and how to get them moving forward.

Mr. Cheney replied he will fill out the application and coordinate with both cities.

Ms. Nicoulin continued reviewing the agenda and the Presentation Items; a presentation for a UPWP amendment will be added. The TPO adopts its annual safety targets each February with a presentation in January; the methodology used to develop the safety target has been an annual 2% reduction. She asked if members wanted to continue with that methodology.

Members discussed the 2% reduction and agreed to add a safety presentation from FDOT and discuss the safety targets with it.

**MOTION:** *A motion was made by Mayor Partington to approve the draft December 1, 2021 River to Sea TPO Board agenda as amended adding the dollar amount to the expenditure and the cancellation of the December TPO Board meeting to the Consent Agenda; adding a presentation on an amendment to the current Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP); and a FDOT safety presentation. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Ramos and passed unanimously.*

**V. Staff Comments**

Ms. Nicoulin stated she received the draft Executive Director position profile brochure yesterday and staff will schedule an Executive Director Search Committee (EDSC) meeting to review and approve it so the position can be advertised. It typically takes three months for a candidate to be recommended to the TPO Board after the position is advertised,

Members discussed a date for the next EDSC meeting and agreed to hold it Wednesday, November 17, 2021 at 9:30 am following the Executive Committee meeting. The draft position profile will be provided to members for review; the recruiter will also be providing a draft schedule of activities.

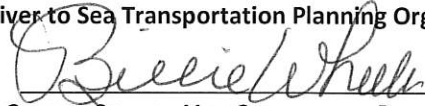
**VI. Executive Committee Member Comments**

There were no member comments.

**VIII. Adjournment**

The Executive Committee meeting adjourned at 10:14 a.m.


River to Sea Transportation Planning Organization



VOLUSIA COUNTY COUNCIL VICE CHAIRPERSON BILLIE WHEELER  
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 November 3, 2021 regular meeting of the Executive Committee approved and duly signed this 5<sup>th</sup> day of January 2022.



Debbie Stewart, Recording Secretary  
River to Sea Transportation Planning Organization