

**SOUTHERN HIGH-SPEED RAIL COMMISSION
FULL COMMISSION MEETING
Anniston City Center
Anniston, Alabama
June 3, 2011**

Meeting was called to order by Vice Chairman Robert Lake at approximately 2:00 p.m. followed by a welcome from Mayor Gene Robinson and the posting of the colors presented by the Anniston High School's ROTC program. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mayor Robinson.. Vice Chairman Lake welcomed all SHSRC Commissioners and asked each commissioner and guest to introduce themselves around the room. Roll was called by Christopher Miller, Assistant Executive Director, of South Alabama Regional Planning Commission (SARPC) and a quorum was confirmed.

ALABAMA

Robert Lake
Billy McFarland
Greg White
Toby Bennington

LOUISIANA

Gary Devall – Proxy to Martin Bruno
Martin Bruno
Colonel Phil Jones

MISSISSIPPI

Charles Ozier – Proxy to Charles Carr
Kay Kell – Proxy to Charles Carr
Representative Tommy Woods – proxy to Charles Carr
Charles Carr - MDOT

SARPC

Chris Miller
Grace Crawford

GUEST

Jarrold Simmons, City of Anniston
Gene Robinson, City of Anniston
Bill Curtis, East Alabama RPDC
Paul Waidhas, BKI
Todd Stennis, Amtrak
Laura Camper, The Anniston Star

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Vice Chairman Robert Lake asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the February 18, 2011 Executive Committee Meeting. It was motioned by Commissioner Martin Bruno to approve the minutes and seconded by Toby Bennington. A motion from Commission Phil Jones to approve the minutes of the Full Commission and seconded by Commission Martin Bruno. The motions carried unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS

Update: Status of outstanding dues payment from Mississippi and Alabama.

Alabama: On March 31 a meeting was held with John Cooper, ALDOT summarizing the history and activities of the Southern High Speed Rail Commission requesting payment for annual dues; designate a representative to actively participate; completion of corridor plan from Meridian to Atlanta; and designate the Commission as coordinating entity for the corridor plan between Birmingham and Atlanta. A follow-up letter was sent on April 5th advocating efforts for high speed rail service.

Commissioner Billy McFarland sent a letter on April 14th to Honorable Chuck Malone, Chief of Staff to the Governor of Alabama requesting support of the dues.

Mississippi: A letter was sent to Dick Hall, MDOT, on March 1, 2011. A check for \$70,000 has been received by Mississippi.

Outstanding FRA payments to BKI (2010)

The final invoice and project close out has been submitted to FRA and awaiting payment to BKI.

NEW BUSINESS

Consideration of Engagement letter for Audit services for FY 2009/2010

An approval was given via email from the Executive Committee per the approved budget by Hartmann, Blackmon & Kilgore to perform audit services. A motion was made by Martin Bruno and second by Greg White.

Future Rail Commission actions and Operations

Commissioner Toby Bennington handed out a report on the first stakeholder meeting for the **GDOT Corridor Feasibility Study** – Birmingham to Atlanta. He reiterated the SHSRC full support for the feasibility study. A status report will be furnished after three stakeholder meetings. Commissioner Lake suggested a resolution for SHSRC support for corridor studies in order to be qualified for federal funds. Commissioner Greg White would like to expand the study from Birmingham to Meridian. Commissioner Toby Bennington will furnish the contact information to Chris Miller to draft the resolutions. A motion was made by Greg White and seconded by Toby Bennington. The motion carried unanimously.

Discussions have been to hold expenses down, focus on the next several months to visit Governors, DOT offices, etc. for funding or make a reduction in state funding. Each state needs to target contacts. Commissioner Martin Bruno made a request to resend letters to the states of Georgia and Texas for joining the commission.

Todd Stennis, Director of Government Affairs, Amtrak in New Orleans reported an increase in ridership – Alabama is up 20k although the rail is not supported. Mr. Stennis stated that the support needs to begin with each state legislature and the commissioners need to: 1) educate

them on the operation aspect, i.e., take on site visit, 2) the high speed rail is 80-110 MPH, and 3) Comprehensive Rail Plan. Each state needs one - Alabama has none, Mississippi and Louisiana are working on a plan. (He urged the commissioners to look at the North Carolina Rail Plan as an example.)

Amtrak has the Gulf Coast Report which can be located on Amtrak.com website. It states that once funding from Congress is in the budget then service will be reinstated.

A 40th Anniversary train will be running and suggested checking schedule.

City of Anniston, Alabama proposed Multi-modal Transportation Facility Tour

Commissioner Toby Bennington and Mayor Gene Robinson invited everyone to join them for a tour of the multi-modal transportation facility after the meeting adjourned.

FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

The Chairman asked Mr. Miller to give a detailed Financial and Administration report and Accounts Payable report. After the report the Chairman asked for a motion to approve the report and payment on the invoice submitted in the report by SARPC. Martin Bruno motioned to approve and Toby Bennington seconded. The \$12,000 invoice from States For Passenger Rail dues was tabled until clarification of each state's responsibility can be determined. Commissioner Phil Jones motioned to approve and Toby Bennington second. The motions carried unanimously.

Future Meeting Dates

Louisiana will host the September 23rd meeting and need to check any conflicts in Baton Rouge for the next quarterly meeting. Commissioner Phil Jones will contact area facilities and send recommendation to Grace Crawford to complete plans.

Adjourned