

Louisiana Transportation Authority
Meeting
Louisiana State Capitol
House Committee Room 1
Baton Rouge, LA
Thursday, July 18, 2012

MINUTES

I CALL TO ORDER

Rep. Karen St. Germain

II ROLL CALL

Board Members Present:

Rep. Karen St. Germain
Secretary Sherri LeBas
Ray Stockstill
Senator Norby Chabert for Senator John Alario
Rep. James Morris
Jackie Adcock

Board Members Absent:

Paul Sawyer
Senator Robert Adley

We have a quorum.

III READING AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF October 13, 2011

Secretary LeBas moved to approve the minutes without objection and accepted.

IV NEW BUSINESS

Brandon Brown: I have a presentation to present to the new members about the legal background and mission of the LTA.

SEE HANDOUT: LTA Board of Directors Orientation Presentation

I will now open it up to any questions you may have.

Rep. St. Germain: Being the new kid on the block for this particular committee, I thank you. I am sure we will be discussing other things that I did not know that the LTA had some authority and I am really hoping that we can utilize that authority for all the right reasons and maybe thinking outside of the box with the budget cuts we had, and the things we are going through right this moment.

Maybe we can have a chance to do something constructive and progressive together.

Mr. Bridges: DOTD Undersecretary. One thing I wanted to point out in this presentation in regards to the mobility fund revenue stream. There was a slide that talked about the motor vehicle sales tax that would go to the mobility fund but that has not happened because the trigger has not been pulled on it due to the decline in the state revenue. I think our best guess at this point is probably around FY 2016 or 2017 that it would get back to the level of 2008.

Rep. St. Germain: Has anyone talked about removing that trigger and actually how much money it would bring in right now. Do you have a general idea about how much yearly?

Mr. Bridges: No. There has been no discussion about removing the trigger.

Rep. St. Germain: OK. Do you have any idea about what that amount might be if we were able to do that?

Mr. Bridges: Vehicle sales tax that is being collected is around \$350 M.

Rep. St. Germain: It goes into the General Fund. We would just devastate it a little more if we did that which is probably not a great idea at this point. It is something we need to be vigilant in our mind of the day that we are able to positively able to remove the trigger when it doesn't hurt on the other side of that.

Mr. Bridges: Changes made to the LA 1 Toll Facility. There has been a cash lane added at LA 1 and I wanted to give you an update why that came about, what we are doing with it and continued efforts to make sure it works well.

SEE HANDOUT: Status Report Addition of LA 1 Cash Toll Lane

Sen. Chabert: I have few questions and I appreciate your patience with me because this is in my district and has become a major issue and I want to commend DOTD for achieving some fairly significant successes in a very short period of time given some pretty extenuating circumstances. I chuckle every time I hear low volume I question what a high volume is. Is that compared to the CCCD or other high volume toll areas across the country, because most certainly this is a high volume toll location. At the same time I commend you I have some questions. I sat on the authority a couple years back when we really came forward under the chairmanship of Senator McPherson we really started thinking about the issues that was going to affect the bonds as we all know the bonds have been downgraded because of the inability to make collections. I understand that we now have a cooperative endeavor agreement with Texas to deal with violators.

Mr. Bridges: That is correct and we are working on one with Mississippi.

Sen. Chabert: How far along are we with the Mississippi agreement?

Mr. Bridges: I'm not sure but I can get an answer to that. We have working with their Office of Motor Vehicles.

Sen. Chabert: I would be interested to know because I'm pretty sure the lion's share of out of state commuters come from Texas I applaud you for jumping on that. Dealing with the canopy looks like a September completion for that I can assume the reason why there was no canopy before the ATPM because you wanted to get the machine up and running and collecting revenue as quickly as possible.

Mr. Bridges: Exactly.

Sen. Chabert: My only concern with that is that you knew you were putting an electronic device in Leeville and with the inclement weather I feel sorry for those guys the ATPM has been offline a line reminiscent of the ineffectiveness of the kiosks that customer had to deal with in terms of trying to get the passes in the convenience stores and other locations. It seem like it was offline more than it was online. That seems to be the situation we are dealing with the ATPM is that those poor fellas are out there with an umbrellas and dealing with 99 degree heat and constant rain showers and I really feel bad for those state workers. The one day pass option has really been a point of major concern for me, Rep. Gisclair, the local elected officials and even the Port Commission who Mr. Desselle went and spoke to them at their meeting and gave them a similar update. Where are we on increasing the availability of that one day option?

Mr. Bridges: I have someone here with me today that can talk to you about that.

Mr. Glascock: Intelligent Transportation Systems Director for DOTD. This falls under my program. We are looking at supplementing a token for a single day trip as well as a bar code. The machine can read a bar code and it can also ready a magnetic card. We are looking at those different options and we are probably within a month of being able to identify what we want to go forward with. It is going to require some modification to the machine that the manufacturer is currently working on at present.

Sen. Chabert: Let me ask you this. How would the consumer go about getting the token?

Mr. Glascock: The way we are envisioning now is that would stop at the customer service center and be able to acquire a single day pass.

Sen. Chabert: Via window transaction?

Mr. Glascock: Something similar to that, yes.

Sen. Chabert: I whole heartedly agree that the elimination of bill use at the ATPM would shorten the line overnight. Why don't we just eliminate that option? If we could come up with some very low cost, kiosks if you will, to put into several convenience store locations, I'll be honest with you, that service station in Golden Meadow gets backed up and they do a fairly good job of processing it. They certainly provide a very valuable resource to those who have questions. It seems to me that any way we can increase the ease of use of the bridge ATPM would be great. I was paying attention to your presentation regarding the ineffectiveness of the kiosks, but I have spoken to business owners and restaurant and convenience store owners, you name it, wherever you put the kiosks, it was a problem with the kiosks. It was that people were not utilizing them it was that the kiosk was always broken. I think that was a failure of the technology as opposed to it not working, it that makes any sense. Certainly, this may be something that you guys know or do not know, there are a ton of immigrant that drive trucks that goes across that bridge and as we know we put a lot of information in Spanish and other languages for ease of use of the consumer but you know it is real easy for that guy working that yard in Corpus Christi, Texas, "hey look, I am not going to send you to this kiosk and we are not going to provide this, but you will have to stop at the local Chevron and pass \$5 through the machine and get your truck across." I feel that there was not a lot of practical thought on the front end of all this and put into the very diversified consumers that utilizes this bridge, whether it is a recreational fisherman, somebody that lives on Grand Isle, something running a hot shot truck out of Beaumont, you know, me, coming from Chauvin who wants to go fishing in Fourchon. Do we have an updated report on the actual success of the Geaux Pass reading those folks that were passing through? I know that we had some problems early on in the actual reading of the folks that had the Geaux Pass.

Mr. Glascock: That system is quite stable. We are able to read a very high percentage. We are upwards of 95% accuracy of being able to read the AVI transponder.

Sen. Chabert: How long has that been is such a high rate of return, so to speak?

Mr. Glascock: In the last 3-6 months we have improved the system and the software.

Sen. Chabert: That the answer I am looking for. The last 3-6 months we have gotten that number up to 95%. I think is something you guys can trumpet, that you have been able to improve the rate of return on that. I know that the system is difficult, given the remote location and it's relatively low volume of traffic, I do want to thank you guys for all the hard work you have done addressing all these concerns. As long as there is going to be a backup on the bridge that 5 years ago had no back but was a decripit bridge, we are still going to have to deal with these issues and problems and keep having you come back and tell that you are

working on it to make the system better. I appreciate it and look forward to working with you in the future. Thank you Madame Chair.

Rep. St. Germain: You are welcome Senator.

Mr. Bridges: We are always looking for recommendations and we will take what you gave to us today and work through some of those solutions. Rest assured that we want to make this as convenient for the customer and make their experience one that they will want to come back. We are working on all kinds of ideas as Steve as mentioned. So we will continue to get this straight. The goal being that we really have to capture every dollar that goes through the facility. So we have to weigh the inconvenience with the responsibility. So we will continue to work on that and will come back and reporting.

Rep. St. Germain: I think we have one more question.

Sen. Chabert: Another complaint that I didn't mention was the limiting of purchasing options via the internet and at the service station in Golden Meadow. I believe that the inability to do the one day pass purchase is something we have heard consistently and we have addressed that. So I believe the more one stop shop options that we can get will certainly help. The internet ability may prove a little difficult. I don't know how we can remedy that but that needs to be something to be looked at. Please keep that in mind.

Mr. Bridges: One of the options is the machine can read a bar code.

Sen. Chabert: So we are able to do that with these machines. I personally hadn't utilized the machine yet.

Mr. Bridges: We are working on that solution. The machine does have the capability to do that but we need to do some back office changes to the software and make sure that is implemented with the machines.

Sen. Chabert: The Geaux Pass gets you across the GNO. I think that is something that needs to be mentioned to the consumer. I think that if more people realized that not only can I get across the Leeville Bridge but I can get across the CCCD that you may see an even further uptake in the future of that toll.

Rep. St. Germain: I am happy to hear that the online issue is being addressed because you do it on airline tickets, etc. and all you have to do is print it out. For some people that is a lot more convenient and they can just go. Glad to get an update.

Mr. Bridges: The last item on the agenda is an update on the Toll Consultant update. Back in May of last year, URS was here and they presented their toll consultant report. They identified some problems we were having and talked

about the issue of coverage of that service from the toll revenue. There were 11 recommendations they made in their report and I wanted to give you an update on where we were on those recommendations. We will be coming back to you before the end of November with the final report of they were able to find and the final recommendations will be.

SEE HANDOUT: Status of LA 1 Toll Consultant Recommendations

Sen Chabert: Can you tell us what the new tolls will be in 2013?

Mr. Bridges: They are going to increase by 20%. Back in 2005 when the bonds were sold there was a toll schedule that was developed that had a periodic increase every 5 years. In 2013 this toll schedule is the same one that has been in the bond document in 2005. What we want to do is a communications piece as we get closer to that to let people know but we really need to get the report further along and get our debt restructuring discussions further along before we go out with that communications piece.

Sen. Chabert: Terrible time for a toll raise.

Mr. Bridges: It is but it is not something that we will have a choice it is already built into the bond documents.

Rep. St. Germain: Representative Morris....

Rep. Morris: Is there any way we can see the report prior to coming to that November meeting so that we can have the opportunity to review in our office before we get here.

Mr. Bridges: Absolutely. We intend on having a draft report that we will give to you at least a week or two beforehand. In fact, we might have a briefing on the report. We will have to watch out for having a quorum but we might be able to do it on a one to one basis to get your feedback. It is an important point in this Authority and LA 1 because there has been a lot of work on this and it will determine whether or not we will be able to meet our coverage requirements.

Rep. Morris: Thank you.

Rep. St. Germain: That is definitely is going to be a very important part of us being ready what is coming in the report and what we will have to do by next legislative session. Whatever we need to know ahead of time absolutely without a quorum but some information to give us an update and then we will be ready to have that committee meeting open to the public and have them come and ask some questions. I have a respect that this toll a newbie in that happen and we knew we were going to have some issues coming along. Highway 1 Coalition has been such a great supported in getting new and improved ways for them to travel there as much for business and the residents I have spoken to are absolutely enjoying the freedom of the bridge. In the long run when we are

stopping to pay money we are going to get some complaints. I am happy to know we are where we are with fixing and addressing the issues and whatever this group can do to help you to move that forward, please let us know. We are here for that. This is a test of what may be to come in the future, new projects, etc.

V OLD BUSINESS

Rep. St. Germain: Does anyone have any old business they would like to discuss today?

VI OTHER BUSINESS

Rep. St. Germain: Any other business?

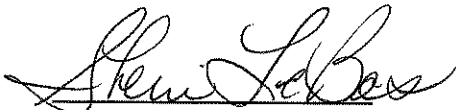
VII PUBLIC COMMENTS

Rep. St. Germain: Any public comments?

VIII ADJOURNED at 1:53 p.m.

Rep. Morris moved for the meeting to be adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,



Sherri LeBas
Secretary-Treasurer

DATE APPROVED 1/8/2013