

Tampa-Hillsborough County Expressway Authority  
Minutes of the August 26, 2024, Board Meeting  
1104 E. Twiggs Street  
Tampa, FL 33602

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The Tampa-Hillsborough County Expressway Authority held a public meeting at 1:30 p.m. on August 26, 2024, at THEA Headquarters, 1104 E. Twiggs Street in Tampa Florida. The following were present:

**BOARD:**

Vincent Cassidy, Chairman  
Bennett Barrow, Vice Chairman  
John Weatherford, Secretary  
FDOT District 7 Secretary David Gwynn, Member  
Mayor Jane Castor, Member  
Commissioner Donna Cameron-Cepeda

**STAFF:**

Greg Slater	Chaketa Mister
Amy Lettelleir	Pedro Leon
Bob Frey	Emma Antolinez
Brian Pickard	Frederick Pekala
Jeff Seward	Gary Holland
Keisha Boyd	Brian Ramirez
Tim Garrett	Anna Quinones
Shari Callahan	Felipe Velasco
Charlene Varian	Tiana Hill

**OTHERS:**

Josue Mazariegos	Scarlett, Sharpe, WSP
Sally Dee, Playbook	Kunjan Shukla, Kiewit
Jim Drapp, HNTB	John Generalli, Wells Fargo
Matthew Sansbury, RBC	Frank Leto, JP Morgan
Brent Wilder, PFM	David Hubbard, Wey Engineering
Scott Armstrong, Parsons	Chris Jadick, WSP
Xiao Li, PFM	Stephanie McQueen, HDR
Sarah Lesch, Playbook	
Christina Matthews, WSP	

**I. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance**

Chairman Cassidy called the meeting to order at 1:30 pm, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

## **II. Public Input/Public Presentations**

There was no public comment.

## **III. Consent Agenda**

### **A. Approval of Minutes from the June 24, 2024, Board Meeting**

### **B. Approval of the Proposed 2025 Meeting Schedule**

### **C. Approval of Potential Board Member Travel**

- a. TEAMFL Quarterly Board Meeting – October 16-17 in Ft. Myers**  
Estimate: \$2,800 – (two attendees)

*Chairman Cassidy requested a motion to approve. Mr. Weatherford moved approval, seconded by Mr. Barrow.*

*The motion passed unanimously.*

## **IV. Discussion/Action Items**

### **A. Planning and Innovation – John Weatherford, Committee Chair – Bob Frey, Director**

#### **1. Emerging Tech - Metric Engineering**

Mr. Frey explained that during the February 26, 2024, board meeting the board approved the evaluation committee's recommendation to approve the top five ranked firms from the Emerging Tech procurement. THEA was unable to come to terms during negotiations with one of the top five ranked firms.

Mr. Frey requested the Board to approve Metric Engineering, the next highest-ranking firm, as a provider for emerging tech services and to authorize and direct staff to negotiate and execute a contract with Metric Engineering. Contract execution is subject to the final review and approval of THEA General Counsel.

*Chairman Cassidy requested a motion to approve. Mr. Weatherford moved approval, seconded by Mr. Barrow.*

*The motion passed unanimously.*

#### **2. 12<sup>th</sup> Street Park 30% Design Plans**

Mr. Frey presented an item to move forward with the 30% Design Plans for the proposed 12<sup>th</sup> Street Park. He noted that in response to the growth Downtown Tampa is experiencing, THEA has identified the 12<sup>th</sup> Street Park in the Selmon Greenway Master Plan as a location to develop a dual-use facility that combines increased/enhanced drainage with mobility facilities. The Selmon Greenway Master Plan includes concept plans that complement the existing Kotfila Memorial Dog Park and provide mobility to the new Ybor developments being built to the north. Staff recommends approval of the 12<sup>th</sup>

Street Park 30% design plans, which utilize the space under the expressway, remaining consistent with the Selmon Greenway Master Plan.

Mr. Frey requested the Board to approve the work for the 12<sup>th</sup> Street 30% Design Plans by WSP, and to authorize the Executive Director to issue a task order in the amount not to exceed \$226,000 from the capital budget.

***Chairman Cassidy requested a motion to approve. Mr. Weatherford moved approval, seconded by Mr. Barrow.***

***The motion passed unanimously.***

**B. Operations and Engineering, Bennett Barrow, Committee Chair – Brian Pickard, P.E., Director**

**1. Asset Landscape Maintenance**

Mr. Pickard presented an item to approve the selection of A-Stellar Property Maintenance & Landscaping, Inc. to provide landscape, hardscape, and aesthetic lighting maintenance services at THEA Headquarters, Brandon Parkway Gateway, Meridian Avenue Gateway, Kotfila Dog Park, and Selmon West Extension. The contract duration is three years with two optional one-year renewals.

Funding for the project will come from the Operations & Maintenance Budget as follows:

Year 1	\$ 720,019
Year 2	\$ 744,354
<u>Year 3</u>	<u>\$ 769,494</u>
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$2,233,867</b>

The requested action is for the Board to:

- a. Approve the selection of A-Stellar Property Maintenance & Landscaping, Inc. to provide landscape, hardscape, and aesthetic lighting maintenance services at THEA Headquarters, Brandon Parkway Gateway, Meridian Avenue Gateway, Kotfila Dog Park, and Selmon West Extension.
- b. Authorize and direct staff to negotiate a contract with A-Stellar Property Maintenance & Landscaping, Inc. up to the total of the 3-year value. The contract is subject to review and approval of THEA General Counsel.

***Chairman Cassidy requested a motion to approve. Mr. Weatherford moved approval, seconded by Mr. Barrow.***

The Chairman requested clarification on whether this is a one-year contract or a three-year contract. Ms. Lettelleir noted it is a three-year contract with two optional one-year renewals.

***The motion passed unanimously.***

**2. Consultant Engineering and Inspection (CEI) for Fiber to Dynamic Message Signs (DMS) Communications Improvement/Wrong-Way-Driving Countermeasures**

Mr. Pickard presented a request to utilize CEI services for the DMS Communications Improvement/Wrong-Way-Driving Countermeasures construction project necessary to upgrade communications to DMS signs along the Reversible Elevated Lanes (REL) and to construct Wrong-Way-Driving Countermeasures at all exits east of Kennedy Boulevard.

He requested the Board to authorize and direct staff to negotiate and execute a contract with HDR Construction Control Corp. at a cost not to exceed \$1,461,412, from the capital budget, to undertake CEI Services for the construction of the DMS Communications Improvement/Wrong-Way-Driving Countermeasures Construction project. The contract is subject to review and approval of THEA General Counsel.

*Chairman Cassidy requested a motion to approve. Mr. Weatherford moved approval, seconded by Mr. Barrow.*

*The motion passed unanimously.*

**3. Straddle Bent Sealing – Contractor Selection**

Mr. Pickard presented the contractor selection for the Straddle Bent Sealing project. The contractor will provide all the labor, materials, equipment, and incidentals necessary to clean, crack seal, and waterproof the 13 straddle bents supporting parts of the REL.

He noted that THEA was unable to come to terms during the negotiations with Razorback, LLC, previously approved by the Board during its April 22, 2024, meeting.

Request the Board to:

- a. Approve the selection of M&J Construction, the second lowest bid of \$773,753, for cleaning, crack sealing, and waterproofing the 13 straddle bents supporting portions of the REL.
- b. Authorize and direct staff to negotiate a contract with M&J Construction. The contract is subject to review and approval of THEA General Counsel.

*Chairman Cassidy requested a motion to approve. Mr. Weatherford moved approval, seconded by Mr. Barrow.*

*The motion passed unanimously.*

**4. Reimburse Frontier Communications Parent, Inc for the Design and Relocation efforts for all privately owned utility conduits attached to the Hillsborough River Bridge – not to exceed \$585,250**

Mr. Pickard noted that before commencing the upcoming South Selmon Capacity Project, the existing private utility owned conduits attached to the Hillsborough River Bridge, which enclose communications fiber, will need to be relocated.

Frontier Communications Inc. has agreed to design and construct the relocation of the conduits on behalf of all affected utilities. Utilizing Frontier Communications Inc. to complete the design and construction work saves THEA time and money through efficiencies and ensures that the relocation occurs ahead of any procurements related to the project.

He requested the Board to authorize the Executive Director to execute an agreement with Frontier Communications Parent, Inc, and a purchase order to reimburse for the design and construction of the relocation of all privately owned utilities attached to the Hillsborough River Bridge for a not to exceed amount of \$585,250 from the capital budget.

The Chairman asked for clarification on whether the utilities are publicly owned or privately owned. Mr. Pickard confirmed they are privately-owned utilities.

*Chairman Cassidy requested a motion to approve. Mr. Weatherford moved approval, seconded by Mr. Barrow.*

*The motion passed unanimously.*

**C. Budget & Finance – Jeff Seward, Director**

**1. Financial Advisory Services**

Mr. Seward presented the financial advisory services bid rankings. The successful firm will provide financial advisory services related to financial planning, debt issuance, and special services.

He requested the Board to:

- a. Approve the ranking per the Evaluation Selection Committee.

Firm	Ranking
PFM Financial Advisors LLC	1
Public Resource Advisory Group, Inc.	2

- b. Authorize and direct staff to negotiate a contract with the highest-ranked firm, PFM Financial Advisors. Contract execution is subject to final review and approval of THEA General Counsel.

*Chairman Cassidy requested a motion to approve. Mr. Weatherford moved approval, seconded by Mr. Barrow.*

*The motion passed unanimously.*

**D. General Counsel – Amy Lettelleir, Esquire**

**1. Title Searches for South Selmon Expressway**

Ms. Lettelleir presented an item to utilize the GEC (HNTB) to assist THEA staff in obtaining title searches for all THEA parcels on the South Selmon Expressway from Gandy Blvd. to the Hillsborough River and input these updates into the THEA ArcGIS system.

The requested action is for the Board to authorize the Executive Director to execute a task order with HNTB for \$415,000 from the capital budget to obtain the title searches for the South Selmon Expressway parcels and input data into THEA ArcGIS.

*Chairman Cassidy requested a motion to approve. Mr. Weatherford moved approval, seconded by Mr. Barrow.*

*The motion passed unanimously.*

**2. Flagler County Tax Collector Interlocal Agreement**

Ms. Lettelleir provided an update on the ILAs that are currently in place, noting that THEA is currently live with Pinellas, Pasco, and Charlotte counties, with Pinellas averaging 152 customers each week – about \$9,500 in revenue. Pasco has had an average of 887 customers each week with a weekly average of \$5,482, and Charlotte has averaged nine customers each week with an average of \$425.

Ms. Lettelleir reported that training and testing is complete for Hernando, Indian River, Citrus, Walton, and all went live last week. The Hillsborough County Tax Collector’s Office averages 255 payments each week for an average of \$25,000.

She requested the Board to authorize THEA’s Chairman to execute an Interlocal Agreement with the Flagler County Tax Collector’s Office to allow customers to pay THEA tolls to the Flagler County Tax Collector’s office for the release of registration holds and to provide the procedures for remittance and reporting between the parties.

*Chairman Cassidy requested a motion to approve. Mr. Weatherford moved approval, seconded by Mr. Barrow.*

*The motion passed unanimously.*

## **V. Chairman – Vince Cassidy**

### **A. Acceptance of Board Member Executive Evaluations**

*Chairman Cassidy requested a motion to approve. Mr. Weatherford moved approval, seconded by Mr. Barrow.*

*The motion passed unanimously.*

## **VI. Team Reports**

### **A. Strategy, Communications & Community Engagement– Keisha Boyd, Director**

Ms. Boyd provided an update on THEA's media and digital footprint, noting about eight hits in July, reaching about 1.9 million with a publicity value of about \$74,000. About 80,000 accounts were reached, which far exceeds last year's numbers. She added that THEA's social media gained over 100 new followers, with about 35,000 following all our accounts.

She also announced that Mr. Slater is a 2024 Apogee Award's finalist, and we will celebrate him on September 18. She will send the event information to Board members. She added that she is honored to represent THEA in the Tampa Bay Chamber's Leadership Class of 2025, and that Judith Villegas was chosen for FTBA's Emerging Leaders Academy.

Finally, she noted that next week THEA is hosting the FAV Summit. If anyone needs information or has any questions, please let her know.

Mr. Weatherford requested adding all the social media platforms to future reports.

Ms. Boyd continued with an update on the US 301 pre-PD&E outreach efforts and strategy. Phase I is outreach and Phase II will include active collaborations and work with our HOA, civic groups, chambers, and others. Phase II is the PD&E, and Phase IV we will target people who will be directly affected down through the US 301 corridor and adjacent.

Execution of the survey included hyper targeted e-mail blasts and social media ads. We had a very targeted list as I stated before of about 120,000 e-mail addresses of current Selmon Expressway SunPass users.

Everyone who has answered the survey so far is right on the US 301 corridor and we have seen a 100% completion rate.

### **B. Planning & Innovation – Bob Frey, Director**

Mr. Frey reviewed the survey results. Total responses are 6411, with a 26.8% open rate.

He then reviewed the responses to the questions. Highlights include;

- Question one: What best describes where you live in proximity to US 301 and southeast Hillsborough County.

Most live within a mile of 301.

- Question two: what best describes how frequently you travel on US 301 in southeast Hillsborough County.

Most use US301 five or more times a week.

- Question three: If you are employed, what best describes where you most often travel?

Most work in southeast Hillsborough County, but really what we are seeing a lot of is elsewhere in Hillsborough County.

- Question four: what best describes the traffic congestion you are experiencing?

We are seeing very heavy delays on both weekdays and weekends with heavy congestion during the rush hours only.

- Question five: How has traffic congestion on US 301 impacted your daily life?

The top three answers are: People are less likely to go shopping or go to a business on 301. Traffic congestion is frustrating; and travelers actively plan to avoid US 301.

- Question six: Are you supportive of the explorer and alternatives to ease congestion on US 301?

Ninety-four point seven of respondents were supportive - an extraordinarily high number.

Chairman Cassidy noted that this question does not define what alternatives could mean.

Mr. Frey agreed, noting that is by design. We must investigate what alternatives the community wants, including the no build and then go forward.

- Question seven: What destinations are most important for you and most frequent when using 301?

Downtown Tampa and Tampa International Airport were at the top of the list, followed by MacDill Air Force Base, University of South Florida, and the beaches of Pinellas County.

Finally, Mr. Frey gave an update on agency coordination, noting the FDOT Efficient Transportation Decision-making Process is complete; the Environmental Technical Advisory Team Review is also complete. With Hillsborough County/Planning Commission collaboration on outreach events is ongoing, and we will keep the Board informed on our progress.

Chairman Cassidy noted that he has seen social media responses saying that this is a bad use of taxpayer money, and he asked how we educate people that these are not taxpayer dollars. Ms. Boyd explained that social media comments are monitored and when presented with the opportunity to educate, we do.

**C. Toll Operations – *Tim Garrett, Interim Director***

Mr. Garrett presented the toll numbers for the month of July. THEA saw a 3.4% growth year to year for the month of July.

Mr. Slater added that we are starting to see the growth level not as aggressive as it was in 2019, 2020 and 2021.

Mr. Garrett continued with statistics about weekday travel, noting that we continue to see the year-over-year to be high compared to last year due to the slip ramps. Looking at the East Main Line we are still seeing free free flow traffic on the REL.

In July we saw a slight decrease of .7%, at the East Mainline Plaza on weekdays, but the overall traffic moving from the east has increased. Traffic on the Selmon West Extension has reduced slightly, but within the standard deviation so the traffic has basically remained constant.

We are at about an average overall growth of 2%, for average weekday transactions, which could have been one less Rays game in July this year versus last year.

Finally, prepaid accounts with SunPass EPass and other interoperable transponders, is about 67% and our toll-by-plate is about 33% for the month of July.

Mr. Weatherford asked a question about growth projections. Mr. Garrett deferred to Mr. Seward who explained that 2.3% gross in transaction counts is projected for next year. He will provide an update to the Board next month which will include what the T&R showed and where we are performance-wise.

**D. IT & Security – *Shari Callahan, Director***

Ms. Callahan gave an update on Business Continuity efforts currently underway. She noted that over the past year it has been THEA's goal to collaborate with staff and consultants to update, formalize and enhance our business continuity plan for all THEA networks. We have worked this plan from every angle to ensure that after any incident, the top priorities of business functions resume full functionality as soon as possible.

THEA's incident response plans are being enhanced for all the networks and we are ensuring detailed plans for every type of disaster, weather related fire, flood, ransomware, and any type of cyber-attacks. Each type of incident requires a specific response, and the team is refining those specific plans this year and the plan is to review and test annually.

The Tolls network has enhanced its established disaster recovery site at a THEA-owned facility to ensure that tolling operations can continue seamlessly in the event of any emergency.

Disaster recovery has functioned for the past 10 years from a separate THEA-owned facility and now plans to place new equipment in a data center environment further inland. The equipment will be a complete replication of the enhanced network infrastructure here at headquarters, and within the next few months we will be ready to do a complete failover test of the new disaster recovery system.

The networks will be designed as a hybrid setup with a physical data center and cloud solutions. This hybrid design will provide greater scalability, reduce dependency on THEA-owned physical infrastructure, as well as offer enhanced data protection and redundancy.

Mr. Slater added that the incident response plan and comprehensive cyber approach is quickly becoming a big focus for the financial markets. Rating agencies are now asking about documented plans. Greg noted that the rating agencies are beginning to see that vulnerability, adding that Moody's just did a comprehensive survey for all the tolling authorities across the country and discovered that the large toll authorities had comprehensive plans, but the smaller authorities, while they all had plans, they were not as comprehensive.

## **VII. Executive Reports**

### **A. Executive Director – *Greg Slater, Executive Director***

#### **1. Contract Renewals and Expirations**

Mr. Slater noted there are three contract expirations and two renewals. The three contract expirations are Kapsch TrafficCom for access control system support and the one with Kimmins for the railroad track removal, and Nelson Mullins for Bond Counsel services.

We have two contract extensions, the first one-year renewal for a law enforcement system for online security services and then the second one-year renewal for Corcoran Partners for government relations services.

#### **2. Director's Report**

Mr. Slater reported that THEA has been hard at work on the South Selmon Capacity project. We are currently on track to hold an industry forum, and then have the project hit the street.

He moved on to an update on the Real Estate efforts that are underway, noting that THEA has distilled all the work from the board workshop and are moving forward on our real estate efforts into an RFI stage, and we are focused on community connectivity.

Mr. Slater reported that he spent an afternoon at the USF Graphic Design Center where they do a lot of public art, and this could be a good board discussion in the coming months relative to THEA's public art policy and how that could play a role in our Greenway enhancements.

Finally, Mr. Slater introduced Pedro Leon, THEA's new IT Manager. Pedro comes to us after serving 20 years in the Navy. He and his family were stationed in Tampa and loved it so much they came back.

He also recognized Judith Villegas for her five-year anniversary with THEA and he congratulated her on being accepted into the FTBA Emerging Leaders program.

**3. Upcoming Meetings**

- Board Workshop – September 9, 2024 - *Canceled*
- Board Meeting – September 23, 2024

**B. General Counsel – *Amy Lettelleir***

**1. Board Elections**

Ms. Lettelleir opened the floor for nominations. Secretary Gwynn nominated the current slate of officers, seconded by Mayor Castor.

With no other nominations, and by a unanimous roll call vote, the following

- Chairman – Vince Cassidy
- Vice-Chairman – Bennett Barrow
- Secretary – John Weatherford

**VII. Old Business**


No old business.

**VIII. New Business**

No new business.

**IX. Adjournment**

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 2:13 p.m.

APPROVED:  ATTEST:   
Chairman: Vince Cassidy Secretary: Bennett Barrow

**DATED THIS 23RD DAY OF SEPTEMBER 2024.**