

DECEMBER 15, 2011 – SPECIAL MEETING

The Board of County Commissioners, Walton County, Florida held a Special Meeting on December 15, 2011, at 4:00 p.m. at the Walton County Courthouse Annex in Santa Rosa Beach, Florida to discuss the U.S. Highway 331 Widening Project.

The following Board members were present: Commissioner Scott Brannon, Chairman; Commissioner Kenneth Pridgen, Vice-Chairman; Commissioner Larry Jones; Commissioner Cecilia Jones; and Commissioner Sara Comander. Mr. Gregory Kisela, County Administrator; and Attorney Lynn Hoshihara, County Attorney; were also present.

Commissioner Comander led the invocation followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag. Chairman Brannon called the meeting to order.

Ms. Dawn Moliterno, TDC Executive Director, gave a brief update on the State and Federal lobbying efforts regarding the funding of the Highway 331 Project. She reported that grant applications have been submitted. She stated that a study conducted among prospective visitors showed that the tourism industry would be drastically impacted should the widening of U.S. Hwy. 331 not progress.

Mr. Tommy Barfield, District 3 Secretary Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), discussed the five year plan proposed by the FDOT. He said that the State would provide \$177 million for the construction of a new parallel bridge with a \$75 million County match. He stated that the State's plan is to implement a \$2.00 toll on the new bridge that would continue through the life of the bonds sold to cover the County match. The toll would be removed at the end of the 30 year bond period. Commissioner C. Jones voiced concern regarding the implementation of a toll. She asked if other options had been considered. Secretary Barfield stated that they would accept any repayment method. Commissioner Comander stated that the goal was to four-lane all

the way to Interstate 10, and asked Secretary Barfield to discuss the reason for the match. Secretary Barfield stated that other funding opportunities would be reviewed, and said that the state of the economy requires that the County aid the project through matching funds. Chairman Brannon asked that the project segments be explained. Secretary Barfield briefly described the segments and the funding needed for each. Commissioner L. Jones asked if once the bridge is in place will the funding to complete the project to Interstate 10 be easily available. Secretary Barfield said that it will put the project in a better position to compete for funding.

Secretary Ananth Prasad, P.E., Florida Department of Transportation Secretary, discussed possible funding sources for the Highway 331 Widening Project. He also discussed the reason for implementing tolls citing that the increase of hybrid vehicles has reduced the gas tax monies delegated for roadways. His goal is to have Highway 331 four-laned to Interstate 10 within the next five years.

Commissioner Comander voiced concern regarding a possible toll, and asked Ms. Moliterno what other options could be considered to fund this project. Mr. Moliterno stated that there were limited options; a local match and no toll, or a \$2.00 toll. Ms. Moliterno then asked Secretary Barfield what would happen to the funding if the match could not be raised and a toll is not supported. Secretary Barfield stated that the funding would go to another community project in Florida.

Mr. Bill Imfeld, County Finance Manager, discussed the options for funding, including use of a general obligation bond, and an additional penny sales tax. He reported that an additional one penny sales tax would generate \$12 million dollars per year. A referendum would be required to implement the additional sales tax. Mr. Imfeld reported that over 50% of sales tax is paid by tourists. Discussion continued on the funding options.

Ms. Moliterno recommended that a task force be created to review the funding options, whether to toll the bridge or an additional one cent sales tax, and present their recommendations at the January 24, 2012 meeting. She also recommended that the individuals be appointed during this meeting. She requested that in keeping with the Sunshine Law that Ms. Dede Hinote, Administrative Services Coordinator, be available to administrate the meetings.

Motion by Commissioner Comander, second by Commissioner C. Jones, to create a task force to look at possible funding options. Ayes 5, Nays 0. L. Jones Aye, Brannon Aye, Pridgen Aye, C. Jones Aye, Comander Aye.

Motion by Commissioner L. Jones, second by Commissioner Pridgen, to appoint the following individuals to the task force. Ayes 5, Nays 0. L. Jones Aye, Brannon Aye, Pridgen Aye, C. Jones Aye, Comander Aye.

1. Sheriff Mike Adkinson
2. Ms. Kitty Whitney, Chamber of Commerce
3. Ms. Bonnie McQuiston, Walton County Tax Payers Association
4. Mr. Wayne Bodie, Florida Transformer
5. Mr. Lee Grantham, Chelco

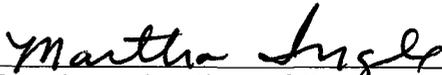
Ms. Moliterno stated that should the task force recommend a referendum, a financial advisor would be needed for the bonding process, and requested an RFP be advertised.

Motion by Commissioner L. Jones, second by Commissioner Pridgen, to advertise an RFP for a financial advisor. Ayes 5, Nays 0. L. Jones Aye, Brannon Aye, Pridgen Aye, C. Jones Aye, Comander Aye.

Ms. Moliterno thanked Ms. Kelly Horton, State Lobbyist, for the work that she has put into this project. She also thanked Secretaries Prasad and Barfield for their commitment to this project. Ms. Moliterno briefly summarized the actions taken.

Commissioner C. Jones stated that public workshops will be held to aid the task force in determining which option should be chosen.

There being no further items to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 4:43 p.m.



Martha Ingle, Clerk of Courts



Scott Brannon, Chair