

PENNSYLVANIA STATE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION  
SUMMARY MINUTES  
SCRANTON, PENNSYLVANIA  
MAY 23, 2013

**CALL TO ORDER:**

Chairman Barry J. Schoch, P.E., convened a quarterly business meeting of the Pennsylvania State Transportation Commission (STC) at 10:15 a.m. on Thursday, May 23, 2013, in Ballroom One of the Radisson Hotel at Lackawanna Station, Scranton, PA.

**ROLL CALL:**

**Commissioners Present:**

Honorable Barry J. Schoch, P.E., Chairman  
Honorable Frederic M. Wentz, Esq., Vice Chairman  
Honorable Robert B. Pease, P.E., Secretary  
Honorable Cristina G. Cavalieri, via phone  
Honorable Edward J. Cernic, Sr.  
Honorable Ronald J. Drnevich  
Honorable George M. Khoury, III, P.E.  
Honorable Sharon L. Knoll, via phone  
Honorable Charles H. Martin  
Honorable Frank E. Paczewski  
Mr. Gregory Grasa, Alternate for Honorable Dick L. Hess  
Mr. Josh Myers, Alternate for Honorable John N. Wozniak  
Mr. Eric Nelson, Alternate for Honorable Michael P. McGeehan

**Commissioners Not Present:**

Honorable John C. Rafferty, Jr.

**MINUTES:**

**ON A MOTION** by Commissioner Wentz, seconded by Commissioner Cernic, and unanimously approved, the minutes of the February 14, 2013, STC quarterly business meeting were accepted as presented.

**SECRETARY'S OPENING REMARKS:**

- Secretary Schoch commented on the tour hosted by District 4-0 prior to the meeting and thanked Stan Strelish of the Luzerne County Transportation Authority for providing the bus. He thanked District Executive George Roberts for acting as tour guide, and the District 4-0 and Central Office staff in their coordinated efforts in pulling the tour together.
- District Executive George Roberts commented on the projects seen on the District 4-0 tour, including two rare capacity-adding projects in Luzerne County.

- Secretary Schoch discussed the local bridge bundling pilot program. Bridges in a region are grouped together to reduce design and construction costs with a 60% savings on design and 30% on construction.

Secretary Schoch briefly addressed the Transportation Finance Plan, originating from the Governor's Budget Address. He thanked the four chairs, Representative Hess, Representative McGeehan, Senator Rafferty, and Senator Wozniak of the House and Senate Transportation Committees for their leadership in getting a bill introduced into the Senate with bipartisan support. The bill passed committee and its next step would go to the entire Senate by early June. The bill's features include:

- \$2.5 billion proposal for Transportation Funding (the Governor's proposal was \$1.8 billion),
- The ramp-up period for funding would be three years as opposed to five years,
- The \$1.8 billion proposal is considered the floor for dialogue, the Governor is adamant that anything less than \$1.8 billion will not address the problem of transportation funding. \$2.5 billion is the ceiling, using already existing revenue sources.

Secretary Schoch thanked the four transportation chairs of the House and Senate Transportation Committees for the leadership they have shown and recognized the efforts of the Office of Planning in the creation of the Decade of Investment website.

Gregory Grasa commented that the transportation-funding package is a "heavy lift in a short window of time." After the bill passes the Senate there will be about three weeks for the House of Representatives to negotiate a transportation-funding bill.

Secretary Schoch made a note to make sure that the appropriate Commissioners are notified when any press events around the state occur on transportation funding during the month of June, so that the Commissioners can participate.

Secretary Schoch made note of the Pennsylvania Highway Statistics 2011 Highway Data book that was provided to each of the Commissioners and commented on the useful data the document contains.

Commissioner George Khoury asked about two issues that he hoped the Secretary could address:

- The tanker truck accident and fire of May 9, 2013, on the ramp from I-81 northbound to Route 22/322 westbound and its impacts,
- Responses to the Transportation Performance Report presented at the February 14, 2013, STC Quarterly Meeting held in Harrisburg, PA.

Secretary Schoch said that the accident of May 9, 2013, was at the worst possible spot for an incident to occur within the I-81/Route 22/322 interchange. Secretary Schoch described the interchange at the location and noted that the accident occurred on the second level of the three level interchange in the middle of the bridge structures. The fire immediately affected the deck on the I-81 Northbound ramp to Route 22/322 westbound and the heat of the fire caused PennDOT to have to remove two spans of the Route 22/322 eastbound bridge above it.

PennDOT has constructed a crossover and turned the outbound (westbound) bridge into one lane for each direction. The Secretary said that this was functioning and believes the traffic inbound on Route 22/322 should not be a significant problem as it is already entering a signalized corridor.

Secretary Schoch stated that the full extent of what the repairs would be to the I-81 northbound to Route 22/322 westbound ramp is not yet known. The deck will need to be replaced and testing of the steel superstructure of the ramp bridge is underway. The interchange may be out of service for a couple months or longer. The next step will be to bid the replacement of the overhead spans. The Secretary stated that he was inclined to do a regular construction with a disincentive for the construction company if the Route 22/322 eastbound bridge is not finished by January 1, 2014. The cost is \$10 million or more with some Federal funding participation in addition to whatever insurance the trucking company has.

In regards to the Transportation Performance Report, Secretary Schoch stated that he uses the report in his dialogue with the legislature and it has been distributed to the members of both houses of the Assembly. Secretary Schoch said that the report is another good piece related to the topic of funding and educates all the members to the performance of the transportation system.

Mr. Khoury commented that the Transportation Performance Report is an excellent effort and is a valuable tool. Gregory Grasa said that the Transportation Performance Report is a critical document that he uses in his conversations educating the newer members of the House of Representatives and that it has proven to be useful.

### **TWELVE YEAR TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM:**

#### **2013 Highway and Bridge Program Adjustments/Major Project Adjustments Presented by Deputy Secretary for Planning James D. Ritzman, P.E.**

Deputy Secretary Ritzman presented the 2013 Highway and Bridge Twelve Year Program (TYP) adjustments for consideration. There were 1,074 adjustments from January 19, 2013 through April 26, 2013, with an approximate \$137 million change to the program.

Mr. Ritzman highlighted a few programming actions that were considered key changes in the Major Project Adjustments Report:

- The NEPA (Northeastern Pennsylvania Alliance) had a drop of \$49 million and Wayne County had an addition of \$53 million. Deputy Secretary Ritzman discussed that due to the passage of MAP-21 and the 2010 Census, NEPA had become an MPO and Wayne County has become an independent county and this explains the drastic change in dollars in the NEPA MPO.
- The Highway and Bridge Line items had a change of \$46 million, the Intermodal modes had a change of \$83 million, the Interstate program change was \$5.9 million, and Other had a change of \$1.4 million.
- DVRPC had a \$31 million increase in the intermodal modes for the Coatesville Station rehab for \$20 million and the Ardmore Transit Center, Phase 1, for \$12.7 million.

- Deputy Secretary Ritzman noted that the \$7.5 million in changes in Highway/Bridge were earmarks but the balance of the \$46 million in changes in Highway and Bridge occurred from deobligating old projects. The funds then are added into the region where they were deobligated. This year to date, \$139 million in deobligations from previous Transportation Improvement Programs (TIPs) have taken place and that we are right on track.
- In the Scranton/Wilkes-Barre MPO the program is \$713 million, with a change of \$1.9 million. Hwy/Bridge reduction was \$1.8 million, with no changes in intermodal or interstate. Other was \$3.7 million, reflecting a reduction of \$3.7 million in the safety and mobility project column and an increase of \$7.5 million in the special federal project column, which reflects the Federal earmarks for the South Valley Parkway project toured by the STC.

**ON A MOTION** by Commissioner Wentz, seconded by Commissioner Pease, and unanimously approved, the 2013 Highway and Bridge TYP Adjustments/Major Project Adjustments were accepted as presented.

Copies of the single line listing of projects by phase and programmed cost changes were distributed to Members of the Commission.

### **PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROCESS:**

#### **Modernization of Public Involvement Presented by Ms. Leanne Doran, McCormick Taylor**

Secretary Schoch introduced Leanne Doran of McCormick Taylor to present the Modernization of Public Involvement. The STC Action Plan status was discussed:

- Transportation Performance Report- completed and adopted.
- Investment Strategies
- Rate Recommendations
- Summary of Public Input
- Recommendations for the Future/Revisit STC Bylaws- completed.

Secretary Schoch discussed reaching out to the public while satisfying the statutory requirement to meet with the public and indicated that Ms. Leanne Doran, McCormick Taylor and Ms. Jessica Clark, PennDOT, had completed research and reached out to several Commissioners and PennDOT Executive staff to begin the modernization of public involvement process.

Ms. Doran began the presentation by thanking Commissioners Cernic, Khoury, and Knoll for their input into the modernization of the Public Involvement process. The presentation began with examining the goals for the public involvement process:

- Extend the range of public involvement
- Increase input from the general public
- Offer modernized tools and techniques

- Strengthen the existing link between the STC public input effort and the existing Metropolitan Planning Organization/Rural Planning Organization (MPO/RPO) public input effort to make them more complimentary.

The Consultant team examined a number of states. Washington State and its state transportation commission stood out. The Voice of Washington State website was highlighted as part of the presentation. Features on the website such as the online discussion forums and surveys were demonstrated. Information such as votes and comments on issues remains live on the website for the length of time that the issue is open.

The commissioner interviews indicated:

- Traditional hearings are not effective anymore but some type of face-to-face public involvement process that are more convenient to the public is needed (evening, more geographically dispersed).
- The public needs an incentive to participate as they may feel they are not getting a return on their invested time.
- The business community needs to be directly engaged.
- The focus should change to issues with an opportunity to offer private feedback if desired.

Ms. Doran highlighted the Transportation Performance Report as a way to drive discussion about issues within a framework.

The MPO/RPO interviews indicated:

- The STC should focus on investment needs as opposed to projects. In addition, a hotline could be set up to receive input.
- The STC's outreach is not necessarily coordinated with TIP development.
- STC members should spend more time getting to know each region of the state.
- A lack of face-to-face hearings would affect some of the MPOs and RPOs who count on the STC hearings to coordinate and satisfy their public involvement obligations and efforts.

PennDOT Executive staff interviews indicated:

- The public needs multiple opportunities to provide feedback including web-based, written, a telephone hotline and public comment at each STC Quarterly meeting.
- STC Members should attend the existing MPO/RPO meetings.
- The STC should focus on policies with an option for people to discuss projects, using the Transportation Performance Report as a framework.

Modernization of the website and its features include:

- A stand-alone website would be used for the STC,
- Online Survey with reporting feature,
- Social media integration,
- Promotion for the STC with user-friendly features.

No objections were raised to modernizing the website and Commissioners Pease, Cavalieri, and Drnevich commented that the proposal was excellent.

Online survey features for the public comment period would be policy focused.

- The MetroQuest tool and its user-friendly features were discussed.
- A hardcopy survey would also be made available.
- A Reverse-automated telephone hotline would be set up.

Commissioner Khoury raised a question about how the proposed survey methods were based on the model similar to Washington State's survey panels. Ms. Doran answered that Pennsylvania probably would not take that method and the hotline is economical. MetroQuest is a private survey and survey results would not be open to the public. Secretary Schoch indicated that PA would do a low-cost survey, and more investment could happen in the future if the survey is successful.

Secretary Schoch mentioned the Associated Pennsylvania Constructors (APC) website, Reconnect PA (<http://www.reconnectpa.org>) that solicited projects from the public.

No objections were raised to the online survey proposals.

The Pre-TIP Public Comment Period would be opened with a statewide webcast public meeting hosted by the Secretary.

- The meeting would feature a 15-minute presentation that would highlight the Transportation Performance Report and a 45-minute question and answer session.
- The event would be recorded for future viewing.

Commissioner Drnevich commented that the public wants to know that action is being taken on their input. Ms. Doran indicated that the survey results would be part of regularly scheduled STC Quarterly meetings. Feedback would be forwarded to the MPOs and RPOs and the presentation of survey results per quarter would be an agenda item.

The enhanced promotion items would include:

- Press Office launch with the webcast.
- Advance articles to targeted publications.
- A focused effort to the business community with the Pennsylvania Chamber of Commerce.
- Existing social media outlets such as blogs and interest groups.
- Innovative items such as QR Codes.

Commissioner Cernic indicated that the local media ought to be more involved as the Chambers of Commerce have moderate influence. Ms. Doran said that the Press Office would take the lead in contacting local media.

**ON A MOTION** by Commissioner Pease, seconded by Commissioner Khoury, and unanimously approved, the modernized public outreach options were accepted as presented.

## **PRESENTATION:**

### **Geographical Information Systems (GIS) Advancements Presented by Deputy Secretary for Planning James D. Ritzman, P.E.**

Deputy Secretary Ritzman demonstrated the Department's GIS advancements that aid in planning and are available to the public.

- The Decade of Investment website was demonstrated live and current projects within the Scranton/Wilkes-Barre MPO were viewed as an example of the site's capabilities.
- MPMS-IQ was demonstrated. As an example, ride quality data for Juniata County were viewed. MPMS-IQ is also tied to the existing TIP, along with environmental resources such as class-A trout streams. The site has many parameters.
- A pilot program for MPMS-IQ allows users to have visual reports sent to their various devices (phones, GPS, tablets, laptops). This allows large GIS stations to be repurposed for other uses.

Mr. Ritzman also indicated that a collaborative effort is underway across several agencies such as DEP and DCED that would link their long-range plans with PennDOT's long-range plans for better coordination between agencies.

Secretary Schoch stated that the websites would be of great use to the utility companies who have their own capital investment plans, so that better coordination between construction projects can occur. Secretary Schoch also stated that the Decade of Investment site would also contain project descriptions, construction dates, costs and contact information on each project so any member of the public can contact the agency.

Mr. Ritzman said that the MPMS-IQ is available for the public and Secretary Schoch said the Decade of Investment website would be available by late May/early June.

Commissioner Cernic requested an update on US 219 South and Secretary Schoch stated that the project was ready to let and that it will be 100% federally funded.

## **REPORTS:**

### **Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC)**

TAC Chairman Lou Schultz provided an update on the forthcoming Driver Education Study, due in August.

Chairman Schultz noted that there are ten months remaining in the existing TAC open agreement and a balance of approximately \$190,000 remains on the contract. Chairman Schultz proposed two studies that would utilize the remaining time and funds:

- An enhanced after-action review for the *Transportation Performance Report* that would fill in any data-collection gaps.

- Safe Quick Clearance of incidents on roadways, proposed by Bryan Kendro, PennDOT Policy Director

Chairman Schultz said that the proposal on pedestrian safety and walkable communities by Commissioner Pease had garnered considerable interest from the TAC membership and would be a strong future study topic. Commissioner Cernic's proposal on the feasibility of international trade zones is part of the Commonwealth Freight Movement Plan currently under development.

### **Administrative/Budget**

Executive Deputy Secretary Brad Mallory provided a summary of activities on Administrative/Budget.

Major facility projects under construction were highlighted. Coordination with the Department of General Services was indicated to be slow, however an updated coordination process is underway.

Adjusted compensation for 25% of management was initiated affecting only engineering classifications. The second tier (approximately 30% of employees) has not received a response from the Governor's Office of Administration. Alternate Work Schedule is well received and a 40-hour workweek for management is planned for the next budget year.

Mr. Mallory highlighted the initiatives and activities of the Safe and Accident Free Environment Taskforce (SAFE-T), indicating that a Department wide safety team monitors and reviews every safety-related incident Commonwealth wide.

Disadvantaged Business Enterprise goals were exceeded for the first two quarters of FFY 2013.

The Department launched its first mobile application for the use of posting, bonding, and inspecting roads, which is used with an iPad. Mobile applications for rural transit and non-CDL drivers licensing are under development and should be available by the summer of 2013. PennDOT will issue mail, and process ATV renewals on behalf of DCNR, enabling that agency to free up employees for other duties beginning in 2013.

Secretary Schoch commented on the management pay issue, indicating that if the transportation-funding package is successful the private sector will hire expert employees from the Department due to the freeze on management pay. Adjusting compensation for management will enable the Department to retain quality talent and remain competitive as an employer in the transportation market.

### **Safety Administration**

Ms. Janet Dolan delivered the Safety Administration Report on behalf of Deputy Secretary Kurt Myers, highlighting the Motorcycle Safety Program, programs for veterans, the commercial drivers program, and photo drivers licensing co-location.



The Motorcycle Safety campaign launched on May 19, 2013. The motorcycle safety course is available free of charge, and helmets and bikes are provided for the training program. The funding for the program originates from a restricted account funded by the sale of motorcycle driver's licenses.

Recent legislation signed by the Governor related to veterans is taking effect. A veteran's license plate is available for anyone interested in supporting veterans. The license plate is also available to non-veterans interested in supporting the Veterans Trust Fund. Proceeds from the sale of these license plates will benefit both PennDOT and veterans. By November 26, 2013, individuals can donate \$3.00 to the Veteran's Trust Fund, similar to the Organ and Tissue Donation Awareness Trust Fund. Additionally, driver's licenses will be clearly marked to show the veteran designation by June 2014, and the program will be user-friendly.

Changes to the Commercial Drivers program require commercial drivers to keep their medical certificates up to date. PennDOT has tied this into the licensing process.

The Upper Darby Photo License Center will be co-located with the American Automotive Association (AAA) location. The initiative is part of the Department's NextGen modernization/cost-savings initiatives, and there is potential for fourteen more co-locations of Department-owned Photo License Centers. The relocation of the Upper Darby center will save the Department \$42,000 annually and AAA is providing the facility at no additional cost. AAA will benefit from the additional customer traffic.

Commissioner Drnevich praised the Motorcycle Safety Course as he attended the course. Secretary Schoch commented briefly on the co-location of photo licensing facilities stating that PennDOT would conduct more but the requirements for Voter ID have caused the department to curtail some proposed co-locations.

### **Highway and Bridge Program**

Deputy Secretary Scott Christie was not in attendance and his report stood as written.

Commissioner Khoury requested that the Highway and Bridge Program report track the number of closed bridges on a regular basis. Secretary Schoch suggested that weight-restricted bridges be tracked in the report as well.

### **Local and Area Transportation, Aviation and Rail Freight**

Deputy Secretary Toby Fauver was not in attendance and his report stood as written. Secretary Schoch indicated the 2012 Aviation and Rail Freight Annual Report was available and commented on the new multimodal Deputate and additional funding in Senate Bill 1.

Gregory Grasa requested a status update on the Rail Transportation Assistance Program (RTAP) program. Secretary Schoch said he would check on the status of the program.

## **Planning**

Deputy Secretary Jim Ritzman provided a brief update on the Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery Grants (TIGER) program. The application submission period closes on June 3, 2013.

## **Public-Private Transportation Partnership (P3) Board**

Mr. Dale Witmer provided an update on the Public-Private Transportation Partnership Board on behalf of Policy Director Bryan Kendro, highlighting ongoing projects (Traffic and Traveler Information and an RFP for Marketing) and possible solicited projects. The unsolicited project submission period opened on May 1, 2013. Two engineering firms (CDM Smith and URS) will aid in the review of P3 proposals. The next P3 Board meetings are anticipated for July.

Commissioner Pease said the Department should work on enhancing the ridership for the Pittsburgh-Harrisburg-New York Amtrak line. Secretary Schoch stated a deal was made with Amtrak to keep the Pennsylvanian line open, commented on how Norfolk Southern owns the trackage and indicated an ongoing study on the Pittsburgh to Harrisburg rail corridor is close to completion.

Gregory Grasa asked about the number of unsolicited projects received by the P3 Board. Mr. Witmer stated that two have been received and more were expected by the deadline. Secretary Schoch said that private sector companies were waiting to see if a transportation funding package would pass the legislature.

### **NEXT MEETING:**

The next STC quarterly business meeting is scheduled on Thursday, August 22, 2013, in Erie, PA.

### **ADJOURNMENT:**

**ON A MOTION** by Commissioner Pease, seconded by Commissioner Cernic, and unanimously approved, the STC quarterly business meeting was adjourned at 12:15 p.m.