

Roads and Highways Advisory Board Conference
Meeting Minutes
April 26, 2019

Meeting called to order by Chair, Dan Hall

PARTICIPANTS:

Board Members:

Present: Donna Gardino, Scott Eickholt, Daniel Hall, Harry McDonald, Howard Thies, Tony Johansen, Aves Thompson

Unexcused Absent: John Baker

DOT&PF: Deputy Commissioner Mary Siroky, Ben White, Jeff Currey

Telephone Participants: Jackson Fox, Don Galligan

Announcement: Dan Hall made an announcement of the board's newest member. Aves Thompson has 24 years of service with the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF). Retired in 2006 as Director of Measurement Standards Commercial Vehicle Enforcement (MSCVE). Since 2006, he has been the executive director of the trucking association. Mr. Thompson is pleased and honored to be on this board.

Approval of Agenda: Motion: Donna Gardino makes the motion to approve, Howard seconds.

Approval of Minutes: Motion: Howard moves to approve, Scott Eickholt seconds.

Public Comments: No public comment was made.

Chair Remarks: With everything going on with the current FY20 budget, the Chair would like to keep the bi-annual budget discussion on the table.

Board Discussion:

Roads and Highways Advisory Board in Statute

In a previous meeting, the board discussed putting the Roads and Highways Advisory Board in the Alaska Statutes. Board member Gardino has started a draft to get things moving, since the sun will set on the board in the year 2020. However, Commissioner MacKinnon would like to put this on hold, until the department sees how the ad hoc Transportation board works out. In an email written to the advisory board, Commissioner MacKinnon stated that he believes that there should be one composite board that looks at transportation as a whole, and not as three separate modes. Getting the Ad Hoc Board together has been delayed, due to the Governors proposed FY20 budget. The board has decided to table this discussion, until the next board meeting.

Traffic Control Program

Board member Scott Eickholt, brought up an issue that has been a concern for Laborers Local 942 and contractors. Their concern is how people receive their flagger certification. Currently, any person can take a 3-4 hour online course to receive their flagger certification. This causes the concern. An online course cannot provide hands on training, for those wishing to become flaggers. Mr. Eickholt stated that the skill of flagging has become more complex, and he believes that the training programs should be as well.

Currently, the American Traffic Safety Services Association (ATSSA) and the International Motor Sports Association (IMSA) are the only programs DOT&PF recognizes to certify flaggers. Those two companies have been selected because they are both nationally accepted as satisfying federal requirements for flagger training. The State of Alaska can consider other certification options, provided each could demonstrate their program satisfies federal training requirements. Any change would require Alaska Division FHWA approval of the training program, and approval of the changes in standard contract language in order to include one or more certifications.

Laborers Local 942 have been working on a program in the past 4-5 years, that they believe, satisfies the requirements that are needed to be certified. (The Great Northwest has been involved in this training program). Mr. Eickholt is wanting his program to be recognized and certified.

Project Bidding Delays and the Ability of the Department to Spend the Program Dollars

The board discussed the department's ability to use program dollars from the Advance construction Conversion (ACC) loans, to use on other projects, instead of paying back the full ACC back. The new director of Program Development DOT&PF Ben White, spoke with the board informing them that the department does have the ability to use that money on other projects. DOT&PF does need to, however, negotiate with the Federal Highways Administration (FHWA) on how much they use, and what to pay back each year.

Board member Gardino asked if the department will be able to put out a fair number of projects out for advertising, or if the department will use all of that project money to pay back the ACC. Mr. White responded that his team will be aiming to get out as many projects out as they can. Mr. White also told the board that he will be meeting with all 3 Regions, regarding projects, early May, 2019. (Meeting to be held on May 7, 2019).

Chair Dan Hall asked the question if there is potential for extra funding at the end of the Fiscal Year (FY) that DOT&PF have typically been able to capitalize on this year, based on the current situation? Mr. White responded that there might be a possibility, it depends on how much state match the department will get from the legislature. DOT&PF relies on the legislatures passing the capital budget each year, so they can receive federal funds for projects. Last fiscal year the board submitted a letter to the legislatures, informing them the importance of passing the capital budget on time. The board will again draft another letter to be sent out the legislatures, to encourage them to pass the capital budget on time this fiscal year.

State of Alaska Owned Material Sites

The board discussed how the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) manages their material sites. There were a lot of questions being asked, but the board received very few answers too. Since the board did not have a DNR representative at the meeting, (or DOT&PF representative) to speak on this topic, it made it hard for the board to be able to continue this discussion. There is concern from a board member that DNR is not managing their material sites well, and that DNR's charitable rates are not reasonable, because of how the material sites are being managed. The board would like to keep this item on their agenda for their next meeting, and have a DNR employee at the meeting to have a discussion on material

sites. The board would also like to discuss how multi-sector general permits are being managed (and their fees), and what value DRN adds to managing the material sites.

Reinstate the Alaska Exemption

Board member Gardino would like to reinstate the Alaska State Exemption. Doing so, would give the state more flexibility in distributing the Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) monies around the state. Commissioner MacKinnon responded to the board via email, regarding this topic. He believes if we reinstate the Alaska Exemption that it would create tension between urban, rural and tribal needs. Commissioner MacKinnon also believes that without sideboards provided in law, the money pot may get smaller for those who wish it to become bigger. Seeing that the Commissioner was unavailable to attend this meeting, the board has decided to table this topic, until the next meeting.

Board Comments

Donna Gardino: Would like to have the appropriate people at the meeting, to be able to have a full discussion on the topics the board presents. Ms. Gardino also welcomed the new board member, Aves Thompson.

Aves Thompson: Mr. Thompson said he is encouraged by DOT&PF's Program Developments Director Ben White. From what he has heard, he believes Mr. White is a good choice, and he looks forward to seeing good things come from Mr. White. Mr. Thompson is also looking forward to working with this advisory board.

Dan Hall: Mr. Hall would like to meet face to face for the board's next meeting, and he would also like to have FHWA meet with the board and discuss their handle of the federal aid programs, and the programs for next year.

Mr. Hall left the discussion open for the next meeting date and location. After discussion the board has agreed to meet on Friday, August 2, 2019 in Anchorage, AK.

Meeting adjourned