

Roads and Highways Advisory Board Meeting

April 24th, 2018 9:00AM – 4:00PM

Fairbanks McKinley Building

Minutes

Meeting called to order by Chair, Dan Hall at 9:00 a.m.

Safety Minute: Scott Eickholt – Knowing the exits of an unfamiliar building.

PARTICIPANTS:

Board Members: *all in attendance.* Scott Eickholt, Donna Gardino, Daniel Hall, Anton Johansen, Harry McDonald, Howard Thies, John Baker

DOT&PF: Commissioner Marc Luiken, Amanda Holland

Public: Clark Milne, David Miller, and Don Galligan

Telephone Participants: *No telephone participants made themselves known*

Agenda: Motion: Donna Gardino moved to accept agenda, Tony Johansen second.

Approval of Minutes: Motion: Harry McDonald moved to accept minutes, Howard Thies second.

Public Comments: No public comments were made by the public participants. Board discussed a public comment that was received via email. The public Comment was submitted by Ben Millstein, and was decided that is a comment for the Department of Transportation & Public Facilities (DOT&PF) to respond to. The comment will be submitted to DOT&PF for a response.

Chair's Remarks: Thanked the members for all of their help, and thanked the public for the submitted comments. Chair Hall stated that he is looking forward to the Board's results.

Board Discussion

- The board discussed the 'Buy America Act' - Tustumena Ferry. Capital funding is needed for the Alaskan Marine Highways. One board member voiced concerns regarding Maine Highways, and making sure that they do not receive capital money from Roads and Highways.
- The board discussed how not having a Capital Budget set in time, affects federal funding, and projects for DOT&PF. Governor Walker had recommended at developing a bi-annual budget for future state budgets. A bi-annual budget would provide stability and continuity needed by DOT&PF. The board decided to write a letter to the legislatures to encourage them to complete a capital budget in a timely manner, and to consider Governor Walker's recommendation on a bi-annual budget.

- The board discussed the possibility of raising the Motor Fuel tax in Alaska. Alaska's motor fuel tax rate has not changed in the past 47 years. Since the legislative session is near the end, the board has motioned to table this subject until the fall.
- Acting Deputy Commissioner Holland discussed a public comment that was received by the Advisory Board, regarding the Taylor Highway and maintenance stations in northern Alaska. Due to the budget cuts, DOT&PF had to swap/replace some of those reductions with other fund sources. When the department uses other fund sources, they come with strings. Which means DOT&PF can only use the money for certain activities.

DOT&PF looked at each region to see what the budget cut looks like for the Southcoast, Central, and Northern Region. (The department is not uniformed across the three different regions). Since the three regions are different, the department had to prioritize in how they address those budget reductions across DOT&PF.

In the last three years, DOT&PF has closed 4 maintenance stations in the Northern Region, and kept one open part time. Across DOT&PF as a whole, they had to eliminate 63 equipment operating positions. DOT&PF now has smaller staff that are qualified personnel to go out and manage their road systems, to preserve and operate them.

The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for August 8th, via telephone conference.

Meeting adjourned at 2:23 p.m.