

**MINUTES  
SPECIAL BOARD MEETING  
JACKSONVILLE TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY  
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 2024**

The regular Board meeting of the Jacksonville Transportation Authority (JTA) was held on Wednesday, November 13, 2024.

**BOARD MEMBERS**

Deborah Buckland, Chair  
Aundra Wallace, Secretary  
Patricia Sams, Treasurer  
Arezou Jolly, Immediate Past Chair

**JTA EXECUTIVE STAFF**

Nathaniel P. Ford Sr., CEO  
Cleveland Ferguson, EVP Administration  
Raj Srinath, SVP Finance and Technology  
Jeffery Smith, SVP Operations

**BOARD MEMBERS NOT PRESENT**

G. Ray Driver, Vice Chair  
Megan Hayward, Board Member  
Greg Evans, FDOT

**OTHERS PRESENT**

Katie Smith, Board Administrator  
Richard Milian, General Counsel (Virtual)

A. **CALL TO ORDER** – Chair Buckland called the meeting to order at 1:46 p.m. and thanked the Board for adjusting their schedules for the special meeting.

Director Jolly led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mrs. Smith completed a roll call.

Chair Buckland then provided the safety message for the month of November. “Safety Minded, Security Grounded.”

B. **COMMENTS FROM COUNCIL LIAISON** – Councilman Johnson was not in attendance.

C. **COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC**: There were no public comments.

D. **LONG RANGE PLANNING AND SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT** (Driver, Committee Chair)

Chair Buckland turned the floor over to Mr. Ford.

Mr. Ford stated that the JTA reaches another milestone not only in the life of the Ultimate Urban Circulator Program (U<sup>2</sup>C) but also in showcasing the innovation and collaboration with transit partners and the productive policy prescriptions set forth by the state of Florida for Autonomous Vehicle (AV) technology. He recognized that the Authority would not be where it is had the State of Florida not created the environment that allows public transportation to pursue safer, technologically advanced mobility options in the AV sector. That has set the framework for Jacksonville, in partnership with the state and JAXUSA, to land Florida’s first AV manufacturer, which will export purpose-built shuttles across the United States and around the world using JAXPort’s facilities.

Mr. Ford then provided a little history on how the U<sup>2</sup>C program was created and it is due to Jacksonville stakeholders uniting with the JTA, the Mayor, City Council and the Chamber in 1976 to revitalize downtown, and the skyway was built. Fast-forward to 2015, when the one-of-a-kind trains were reaching obsolescence. The JTA convened a community conversation around the question of what to do with the Skyway. That advisory group and the public strongly urged, and the Board's skyway advisory committee unanimously recommended that JTA Keep, Modernize, and Expand the Skyway. In 2016, the U<sup>2</sup>C was born.

He acknowledged that along the way, there has been a lot of federal, state and local support to help bring this program to fruition. Throughout this journey, the JTA used its outside the box mentality to look for ways that AVs can further enhance the community, from an educational standpoint, workforce development, economic growth, and more. That brings us to today.

Mr. Ford stated that Florida Public Transportation Association (FPTA) has once again partnered with the JTA to develop a statewide Request for Procurement (RFP) that allows any public transportation provider to select the qualified AV provider that meets the needs of their particular community after conducting their own due diligence. This milestone is also made possible because of the unwavering support of the JTA Board of Directors. Your policy direction and stamina to see this through was critical to not repeating the changes in position that have been the epitaphs of many projects and programs in this city.

He thanked the Board of Directors for their vision to invest in and develop a dedicated test and learn facility. The Board's commitment advanced the technical comprehension of AVs, leading to innovations such as a 3-D crosswalk for AVs, the Golden 20 (the gold standard for public transit mobility and accessibility requirements) and the public-private partnership with Goodyear. The hours spent asking the tough questions, doing the research, engaging the community and the industry, and ultimately empowering staff to work with like-minded partners such as the members of the FPTA to bring something as monumental as this to fruition speaks to the Board's leadership in shaping this industry well into the future, something that the Board and staff can take pride in.

He then turned the floor over to Mr. Ferguson to deliver staff's recommendation for the contract award.

### **ACTION ITEMS**

**1. APPROVAL OF CONTRACT AWARD FOR STATE OF FLORIDA AUTOMATED TRANSIT VEHICLES (P-24-019):** Mr. Ferguson provided a presentation to the Board and stated that the JTA was designated as the lead agency for the solicitation on behalf of transit agencies within the state of Florida for acquisition of autonomous transit vehicles rolling

stock. As a part of JTA's goals to have autonomous connected electric, shared, and accessible transit system, the JTA has developed this RFP to identify qualified vendors to provide autonomous transit vehicles. With the deployment of AVs, agencies can build a more connected, accessible Florida. Automation development and deployment will grow economies throughout the state and allow continued mobility for citizens whether they need access to jobs, health care, education, and employment centers.

He stated that as Mr. Ford articulated, JTA partnered with the FPTA and its finance corporation to develop and release this AV RFP. The RFP was designed to be used by other transit agencies and governmental entities in the state to deploy AVs for pilots and permanent deployments. This procurement follows the pattern of a statewide bus contract that the JTA has administered on behalf of the FPTA for at least the last two cycles. This AV RFP is another milestone in JTA's culture of innovation and one that will bear fruit for industry colleagues around the state.

Mr. Ferguson then shared details on the procurement process for technical advisors from around the country to work with JTA to create the procurement and the elements that needed to be included. One key element of the procurement was that proposals were required to show that vehicles would have the capability of operating at a level four autonomy. Proposers were allowed to submit multiple vehicle platforms for consideration. The goal was to allow for multiple vehicle platforms to be able to be contracted by state entities. Proposers were to demonstrate that AVs would operate in mixed traffic, varying speeds, inclement weather, and be able to navigate obstacles in the real-world driving environments. The RFP focused on a performance-based approach to AVs that will support many operational design domain capabilities ensuring adaptability to JTA's environments, as well as environments throughout the state. There were also high standards set for safety, reliability, and efficiency. He provided the Board with additional information and requirements that proposers had to include and adhere to, as well as the procurement timeline.

Mr. Ferguson stated that staff recommends the Board authorize the Chief Executive Officer to negotiate and execute contracts with the three responsive and responsible proposers to procure highly automated transit vehicle solutions that align with JTA's specific operational requirements and prioritize passenger safety and experience, and operational efficiency. The three proposers on the shortlist (in alphabetical order) are ADASTEC Corp, Beep Inc., and May Mobility

The contract term is for five years with no options to renew. Total Contract Value is for a to be determined amount based on future available funding from the JTA and/or from any eligible ordering agency for the procurement of automated transit vehicles that have Automated Driving

System capabilities in alignment with the JTA and other eligible ordering agency's current and future operational design domains and service model needs.

Director Jolly asked for confirmation that the recommendation for consideration by the Board is to authorize staff to negotiate with the three vendors and once a vendor is identified, staff will bring the contract back to the Board for approval. Mr. Ferguson confirmed that is accurate.

Director Sams asked if there could be more than one vendor. Mr. Ferguson responded that it is entirely possible that any combination of the vendors could be used based on the needs of the JTA, as well as any other agency's needs.

Mr. Ford provided a follow-up on how this procurement assists other agencies with time as they will not have to put a procurement on the street and avoids administrative costs. He then provided the Board with different scenarios due to the size and needs for the service that is being provided by the JTA or another agency.

The Board and staff then discussed the entire process for approval of a contract with a vendor. Director Wallace stated for the record that the Board is not signing a blank check with this approval, the approval is to allow staff to negotiate with the vendors and then bring the contract back to the Board for approval of the contract amount.

**MOTION** (Wallace/Jolly) to approve Contract Award for State of Florida Automated Transit Vehicles. Motion Approved (4-0).

Chair Buckland and Mr. Ford signed the letter to document the action taken by the JTA Board of Directors.

Lisa Bacot, Executive Director of FPTA thanked the JTA staff for all of the work. This is a first in the country. The FPTA appreciates the partnership with the JTA.

## **I. ADOPTION AGENDA**

**1. RESOLUTION 2024-19: CERTIFICATION OF ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS REQUIRED BY 2024-57, LAWS OF FLORIDA:** Mr. Ferguson stated that staff recommends the Board adopt Resolution 2024-19 certifying the JTA's general administrative costs are below the state average. Pursuant to Chapter 2024-57, Laws of Florida (LOF), each public transit provider must annually certify that its budgeted and actual general administrative costs are no greater than 20 percent above the state average administrative costs.

**2. RESOLUTION 2024-20: CERTIFICATION OF GIFTS REQUIRED BY 2024-57, LAWS OF FLORIDA:** Mr. Ferguson stated that staff recommends that the Board adopt Resolution 2024-20 certifying the JTA has accepted no gifts in exchange for contracts. Pursuant to Chapter 2024-57, Laws of Florida (LOF), each public transit provider must annually list the gifts it accepts in exchange for contracts.

**MOTION** (Sams/Wallace) to adopt Resolution 2024-19 Certification of administrative costs required by 2024-57 and Resolution 2024-20: Certification of Gifts required by 2024-57, Laws of Florida. Motion Approved (4-0).

**E. OLD BUSINESS**

There was no Old Business

**F. NEW BUSINESS**

Chair Buckland announced the members of the Nominating Committee, which are:

Ari Jolly, Committee Chair

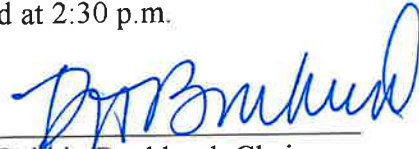
Debbie Buckland

Ray Driver

Aundra Wallace

The nominating committee will meet at time convenient for them prior to the next Board meeting, which is scheduled for December 11, 2024.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 2:30 p.m.

  
Debbie Buckland, Chair

  
Aundra Wallace, Secretary