

MINUTES FOR THE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION MEETING

MAY 2, 2022

MINUTES OF THE COMMISSION MEETING OF THE OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION, WAS HELD MAY 2, 2022 IN THE COMMISSION MEETING ROOM OF THE OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION, 200 NE 21ST STREET, OKLAHOMA CITY, OK 73105

Notice of the schedule of regular meetings of the Oklahoma Department of Transportation for the calendar year 2022 having been given in writing to the Oklahoma Secretary of State, and public notice and agenda having been posted in a prominent public view on the website of the Oklahoma Department of Transportation, www.ok.gov/odot, and on the glass doors on the north side of the ODOT Building twenty-four (24) hours prior to this meeting, excluding Saturdays, Sundays and legal holidays, in accordance with Oklahoma Open Meeting Act, 25 O.S. Section 311.

ITEMS PRESENTED BY COMMISSION CHAIRMAN

CALL TO ORDER: Mr. Peterson called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m.

ROLL CALL:

Present:	Bob Peterson	Vice Chairman
	Bob Coburn	Member
	James Grimsley	Member
	Don Freymiller	Member
	David Dyson	Member
	Bobby Alexander	Member
	Steve LaForge	Member
Absent:	Gene McKown	
Presiding:	Bob Peterson	

The following items were presented and approved as written at the Transportation Commission meeting May 2, 2022. For those items amended, deferred, or rejected, those notations were also made. Action taken by the Commission is noted here on these sheets.

Commissioner Peterson thanked everyone for coming and introduced Special Guests: Bobby Stem, Executive Director of the Association of Oklahoma General Contractors, Larry Patrick, Director of Oklahoma Asphalt Pavement Association and Mike Patterson, former Secretary of Transportation. We really do appreciate everybody coming and participating in our Commission Meeting. He then recognized Secretary Gatz for some announcements.

Secretary Gatz stated we pride ourselves in delivering quality work; and we always work closely and carefully with our Contracting Community to make sure that happens. We are very fortunate in Oklahoma to have good partners in contracting and engineering that can deliver really stellar services. I want to recognize Larry Patrick from OAPA, who is here to present ODOT with three 1st place awards for projects in Districts 5 & 6. These award-winning projects were announced during their 50th Annual Awards Ceremony in February.

Mr. Patrick announced the 3 ODOT highway projects in Northwestern Oklahoma that recently earned top awards for quality construction by the Oklahoma Asphalt Pavement Association were:

- US-183/US-270 four-lane expansion between Woodward and Seiling, District 6;
- US-412 four-lane resurfacing between Woodward and Mooreland in Woodward County, District 6;
- SH-33/SH-3 resurfacing near Watonga in Blaine County, District 5.

NOTE: Commissioner Alexander commended everyone on the great work they have done in his district; and the community has expressed their gratitude also.

ITEM PRESENTED BY THE SECRETARY TO THE COMMISSION

55. Approval of the Minutes of the Transportation Commission Meeting of April 4, 2022

ACTION: Grimsley moved and Coburn seconded that the Minutes be approved as presented.
MOTION: Carried by the following vote:
AYES: Coburn, Grimsley, Freymiller, Dyson, Alexander and Peterson
ABSTAIN: LaForge
ABSENT: McKown

ITEM PRESENTED BY THE GENERAL COUNSEL – Ms. Penn

56. Election of New Transportation Commission Secretary

Secretary

ACTION: Peterson moved and LaForge seconded that James Grimsley be elected as the Secretary.
MOTION: Carried by the following vote:
AYES: Coburn, Freymiller, Dyson, Alexander, LaForge and Peterson
NAYES: None
ABSTAIN: Grimsley
ABSENT: McKown

James Grimsley, District II was elected Secretary of the Transportation Commission

CONSENT DOCKET PRESENTED BY COMMISSION CHAIRMAN

57. Land Sales – Mr. Phillips

- a) Adair County – District 1 – located along the northerly side of US-59, between Second Street and Third Street in the Town of Watts, OK - \$1000.00
- b) Caddo County – District 7 – located along the east side of US-277, at the intersection with North 1st Street in Cyril, OK - \$2,700.00
- c) Tulsa County - District 8 – located on the north side of I-444, at the northeast corner of South Main Street in the City of Tulsa, OK - \$162,000.00

58. Certification of County Road Mileages – Mr. Planteen

Statewide – All Districts – Title 69, O.S. Section 316, requires that the Transportation Commission annually certify to the Tax Commission the county road mileage of each county in Oklahoma as it existed on the first day of January each year.

ACTION: Grimsley moved and Freymiller seconded that the Consent Docket be approved as presented;
MOTION: Carried by the following vote:
AYES: Coburn, Grimsley, Freymiller, Dyson, Alexander, LaForge and Peterson
NAYES: None
ABSENT: McKown

END OF CONSENT DOCKET

ITEMS PRESENTED BY DIRECTOR OF ENGINEERING – Mr. Tegeler

59. Engineering Contracts

Statewide – All Districts – On-Demand Relocation Plans

CI-2369A	Meshek & Associates, LLC
CI-2369B	Pinnacle Consulting Management Group, Inc.
CI-2369C	Universal Field Services, Inc.

Total Aggregate Not to Exceed Amount for these three (3) contracts is \$300,000.00

ACTION: Dyson moved and Alexander seconded that the Item be approved as presented.
MOTION: Carried by the following vote:
AYES: Coburn, Grimsley, Freymiller, Dyson, Alexander, LaForge and Peterson
NAYES: None
ABSENT: McKown

60. Engineering Contract Supplements

a) Statewide – All Districts – On-Demand Bridge Rehabilitation 8 Year CWP

CI-2247A	Supplement 1	CEC Corporation
CI-2247B	Supplement 1	EST, Inc.
CI-2247C	Supplement 1	MacArthur Associated Consultants, LLC
CI-2247D	Supplement 1	NEO Design, LLC
CI-2247F	Supplement 1	Walter P. Moore & Associates, Inc.

The total aggregate increase for these Contract supplements is \$1,250,000.00

b) Statewide – All Districts – On-Demand Engineering for ADA Improvements

CI-2301A	Supplement 3	Atkins North America, Inc.
CI-2301B	Supplement 1	Cowan Group Engineering, LLC
CI-2301C	Supplement 1	Kimley-Horn & Associates, Inc.
CI-2301D	Supplement 1	Parkhill, Smith & Cooper, Inc.
CI-2301E	Supplement 1	R.L. Shears Company, PC
CI-2301F	Supplement 1	Smith Roberts Baldischwiler, LLC

The total aggregate increase for these Contract supplements is \$1,500,000.00

c) Wagoner County – District I - this supplement is for additional engineering to develop final construction plans for SH-51: beginning 0.43 miles east of Midway Road, extending northeast to Muskogee Turnpike

CI-2197	Supplement 1	Poe & Associates	\$1,730,077.00
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ACTION: Coburn moved and Freymiller seconded that the Item be approved as presented.
MOTION: Carried by the following vote:
AYES: Coburn, Grimsley, Freymiller, Dyson, Alexander, LaForge and Peterson
NAYES: None
ABSENT: McKown

ITEMS PRESENTED BY CONSTRUCTION DIVISION ENGINEER – Mr. Leonard

61. Change Orders with Cumulative Total of \$75,000.00 or Less – Information Only

- a) Caddo County - US-62 - STP-CRRS(003)PM / 35290(04), \$26,029.69, 1.90%
- b) Carter County - SH-53 - STP-210C(085)PM / 29598(04), \$12,969.73, -0.05% Underrun
- c) Cotton County - I-44 - SSR-4400(086)SR / 35183(04), \$20,424.35, 3.01%
- d) Ellis County - County Road - STP-223C(019)CI / 31125(04), #2, \$3,566.94, -0.42% Underrun
- e) Ellis County - County Road - STP-223C(019)CI / 31125(04), #3, \$11,974.11, 1.42%
- f) Garvin County - SH-19 - NHPP-225N(095)AD / 33475(04), \$3,960.00, 0.70%
- g) Johnston County - SH-22 - SSR-235C(058)(059)SR / 29806(04), \$74,084.58, 3.04%
- h) Kay County - US-77 - STP-236B(054)SS / 26368(04), \$19,536.00, -0.48% Underrun
- i) Kingfisher County - US-81 - NHPP-237N(088)PM / 30450(04), \$8,094.77, 0.56%
- j) McIntosh County - SH-52 - STP-246C(042)PM / 28973(04), \$2.40, -0.00% Underrun
- k) Murray County - County Road - CIRB-250D(032)RB / 27855(04), \$41,862.23, 0.51%
- l) Nowata County - SH-10 - SBR-253C(059)SB / 31072(04), \$17,187.94, 1.77%
- m) Oklahoma County - City Street - STPG-255F(481)AG / 33347(04), \$78,011.00, -8.97% Underrun
- n) Oklahoma County - City Street - STP-255N(539)AG / 34170(04), \$11,354.48, 1.37%
- o) Osage County - US-60 - SBR-257N(087)SB / 33936(04), \$6,494.55, 0.42%
- p) Pawnee County - SH-99 - SSP-259B(056)SS / 27983(04), \$55,250.00, 0.35%
- q) Pittsburg County - US-69 - STP-261F(106)3B / 35285(04), \$9,425.00, -2.04% Underrun
- r) Pontotoc County - SH-99 - STP-162B(207)SS / 23286(10), \$30,680.00, 0.50%
- s) Pontotoc County - County Road - STP-262C(043)CI / 28571(08), \$36,087.00, 3.24%
- t) Pontotoc County - SH-48 - MC-262C(063)MD / 33755(04), \$1,761.34, 0.38%
- u) Pontotoc County - SH-48 - STP-262C(055)3P / 33756(04), \$10,250.00, 1.50%
- v) Pontotoc County - SH-3W - SSR-262B(070)(069)SR / 34288(04), \$0.00, 0.00%
- w) Pushmataha County - US-271 - STP-264B(081)PM / 29696(04), \$448.50, -0.01% Underrun
- x) Rogers County - SH-20 - HSIPG-266B(068)PM / 33817(04), \$39,742.50, 3.94%
- y) Seminole County - US-77 - HSIPG-267F(057)TR / HSIPG-235C(032)TR / 32798(04), \$1,819.77, 1.27%
- z) Tulsa County - City Street - TAP-272F(339)IG / 33038(04), \$455.00, -0.38% Underrun
- aa) Tulsa County - I-244 - STP-272F(271)PM / 33820(04), \$4,000.00, 0.06%
- bb) Woods County - County Road - CIRB-176C(151)RB / 25493(04), \$299.27, 0.01%

62. Change Orders with Cumulative Total Greater than \$75,000.00

- a) Beckham County - I-40B - STP-205B(076)PM / ACNHPPPI-4000(061)PM / 30998(04), \$69,157.75, 0.24%
- b) Beckham County - I-40 - NHPPI-4000-(098)PM / 31001(04), #2, \$29,328.15, 0.39%
- c) Beckham County - I-40 - NHPPI-4000-(098)PM / 31001(04), #5, \$11,474.16, 0.15%
- d) Blaine County - County Road - CIRB-206C(036)RB / 28704(04), \$186,336.15, 2.70%
- e) Blaine County - SH-58 - STP-206C(061)PM / 29512(04), \$8,000.00, 0.35%
- f) Bryan County - County Road - CIRB-207D(099)(100)RB / 32887(04), \$16,639.28, 0.42%
- g) Bryan County - US-69 - NHPP-CRRS(022)(21)PM / 35084(04), \$62,523.58, 1.16%
- h) Caddo County - SH-19 - SBR-208C(071)SB / 30381(04), \$44,358.34, 3.22%
- i) Cherokee County - SH-52 - SSR-211N(045)SR / 33832(04), \$90,400.00, 5.47%
- j) Choctaw County - County Road - STP-112D(078)CI / 24821(04), \$8,108.10, 0.15%
- k) Creek County - SH-48 - STP-219B(054)SS / 27925(04), \$91,706.32, 1.06%
- l) Johnston County - County Road - CIRB-135C(020)RB / 17543(04), #4, \$41,524.52, 1.62%
- m) Johnston County - County Road - CIRB-135C(020)RB / 17543(04), #5, \$18,901.12, 0.74%
- n) Johnston County - SH-22 - STP-235C(038)PM / 31841(04), \$1,082,894.19, 16.00%
- o) Kingfisher County - US-81 - NHPP-237N(041)SS / 29842(04), \$5,649.59, 0.16%
- p) Love County - SH-32 - STP-243C(032)PM / 29576(04), \$76,196.21, 1.16%
- q) McClain County - I-35 - NHPPI-0035(297)SS / 23283(04), \$7,144.61, 0.15%
- r) McClain County - County Road - STP-244D(071)CI / 33067(04), \$96,541.94, 12.60%

- s) Muskogee County - SH-72 - SBR-251C(096)SB / 32723(04), \$25.79, 0.00%
- t) Nowata County - US-169A - STP-CRRS(004)PM / 33780(04), \$85,287.14, 36.62%
- u) Okfuskee County - I-40 - NHPPI-4000-(077)PM / 21007(06), \$56,068.16, 0.30%
- v) Okfuskee County - I-40 - NHPPI-4000-(100)PM / 21007(09), \$176,814.53, 1.00%
- w) Oklahoma County - SH-74 - STP-155C(569)SS / 14964(08), \$226,685.69, -1.08% Underrun
- x) Oklahoma County - I-40 - NHPPI-0040-5(394)129SS / NHPPI-4000-(095)PM / 23310(04), #14, \$2,411.33, 0.00%
- y) Oklahoma County - I-40 - NHPPI-0040-5(394)129SS / NHPPI-4000-(095)PM / 23310(04), #15, \$20,721.23, 0.03%
- z) Oklahoma County - I-40 - NHPPI-0040-5(394)129SS / NHPPI-4000-(095)PM / 23310(04), #17, \$18,955.36, 0.03%
- aa) Oklahoma County - I-40 - NHPPI-0040-5(394)129SS / NHPPI-4000-(095)PM / 23310(04), #18, \$8,541.78, 0.01%
- bb) Oklahoma County - I-44 - NHPPI-4400-(037)(039)(040)(041)(042)(043)PM / 31006(04), \$298,476.57, -1.09% Underrun
- cc) Oklahoma County - City Street - STP-255E(354)AG / 31504(04), \$55,600.00, 2.59%
- dd) Okmulgee County - I-40 - HSIPG-4000(148)TR / 35408(04), \$149,902.66, 6.41%
- ee) Pushmataha County - County Road - CIRB-264D(068)(069)RB / 28631(04), \$122,174.13, 2.27%
- ff) Sequoyah County - I-40 - NHPPI-4000-(076)(075)PM / SBR-4000(080)SB / 28988(04), #6, \$8,774.94, 0.02%
- gg) Sequoyah County - I-40 - NHPPI-4000-(076)(075)PM / SBR-4000(080)SB / 28988(04), #7, \$418,454.44, -1.15% Underrun
- hh) Tulsa County - City Street - STP-272B(297)IG / 33958(04), \$114,730.00, 6.57%

ACTION: LaForge moved and Alexander seconded that the Item be approved as presented.
MOTION: Carried by the following vote:
AYES: Coburn, Grimsley, Freymiller, Dyson, Alexander, LaForge and Peterson
NAYES: None
ABSENT: McKown

ITEMS PRESENTED BY THE COMPTROLLER DIVISION

63. Proposed Bid Openings – Mr. Hackney, Project Funding Manager

- a) Final July, 2022 Proposed Bid Opening
- b) Tentative August, 2022 Proposed Bid Opening
- c) Tentative September, 2022 Proposed Bid Opening

ACTION: Grimsley moved and Dyson seconded that the Item be approved as presented.
MOTION: Carried by the following vote:
AYES: Coburn, Grimsley, Freymiller, Dyson, Alexander, LaForge and Peterson
NAYES: None
ABSENT: McKown

ITEMS PRESENTED ON BEHALF OF THE DIRECTOR’S OFFICE – Mr. Surret

64. Additions to the Industrial Access Road Program

a) Commission District VIII – Creek County

The Creek County Board of Commissioners are requesting approval for an industrial access project for the Jones Memorial Airport. The airport is investing more than \$1,400,000 to construct a new hangar and fueling station that will create up to ten new full-time jobs.

The proposed project begins at the intersection of State Highway 48 and West 241st Street South and extends west approximately 2.0 miles to South 385th West Avenue, then south for approximately 1.0 mile, then east on West 251st Street South for approximately 2.0 miles to State Highway 48. The County will be responsible for the initiation, construction and completion of all work associated with the project. The total cost of the project is approximately \$1,400,000. The Creek Nation will contribute \$650,000 and the County will contribute \$100,000. The Department's participation in the project shall not exceed \$650,000.

b) Commission District I – Muskogee County

The Muskogee City-County Port Authority is requesting approval for an industrial access project for the Griffin Industrial Park. Core Industries and YZY Capital are investing more than \$1,200,000,000 to construct a new data center and are creating more than 60 new full-time jobs.

The proposed project begins at Dal Tile Road and Smith Ferry Road and extends West on Smith Ferry Road approximately 0.5 miles to South 24th Street West, then South on South 24th Street West for approximately 0.5 miles. The Port Authority will be responsible for the initiation, construction and completion of all work associated with the project. The total cost of the project is approximately \$2,700,000. The Department's participation in the project shall not exceed \$1,600,000.

c) Commission District I – Muskogee County

The Muskogee County Commissioners are requesting approval for an industrial access project near Oktaha, Oklahoma. YZY Capital is investing more than \$80,000,000 to construct new data center and creating more than 40 new full-time jobs.

The proposed project begins on West 133rd Street South at Oktaha Road and extends west for approximately 0.80 miles to South 104th Street South, then turns north on South 104th Street South and extends north for approximately 0.50 miles. The County will be responsible for the initiation, construction, and completion of all work associated with the project. The Department's participation shall not exceed \$280,000.

ACTION: Coburn moved and LaForge seconded that the Item be approved as presented.
MOTION: Carried by the following vote:
AYES: Coburn, Grimsley, Freymiller, Dyson, Alexander, LaForge and Peterson
NAYES: None
ABSENT: McKown

NOTE: Commissioner Peterson commented kudos to Muskogee County; I did a double take on the \$1.2 billion these companies are investing.

ITEM PRESENTED BY THE DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS – Mr. Davis

65. Declaration of Emergency Bridge Repair Project

Caddo County - District VII – US-281 Bridge over Creek - \$250,000.00

Information Only: No Commission action required.

ITEM PRESENTED BY THE OFFICE ENGINEER – Mr. Delce

66. Awards

- a) Deferral from March 17, 2022 – Regular Bid Opening
- b) April 14, 2022 – Emergency Bid Opening (Information Only)
- c) April 14, 2022 – Regular Bid Opening

ACTION: LaForge moved and Alexander seconded that the Item be approved as presented.
MOTION: Carried by the following vote:
AYES: Coburn, Grimsley, Freymiller, Dyson, Alexander, LaForge and Peterson
NAYES: None
ABSENT: McKown

ITEM PRESENTED BY THE DIRECTOR – Mr. Gatz

67. Director's Report

Secretary Gatz thanked the Commissioners for awarding a more than \$11 million contract in Love County to widen I-35 from four to six lanes between US-77 North (MM 1) and Rogers Rd./Winstar Blvd. (MM 3) just north of the Texas State Line near Thackerville. Two lanes of I-35 will remain open in each direction during construction, which is expected to take about 6 months to complete. This widening project will connect with an upcoming partnership project by the Texas Department of Transportation, the Chickasaw Nation and ODOT to widen I-35 from Gainesville across the Red River into Oklahoma. He said that Texas is in the final phases of widening I-35 to eight lanes from Dallas north to the Red River, which tells us what's coming in terms of traffic growth along that corridor. So, we have to get I-35 widened to six lanes in Southern Oklahoma and must have solutions in place to provide reliever routes to help manage that increased traffic coming through the Oklahoma City metro area. We are in conversations with the City of Oklahoma City right now to make I-235 connecting to I-35 & I-40 at the Dallas Junction to work better from an operational perspective because it is carrying about 150,000 cars a day. Other problem areas are south of I-240 where you begin to encounter some of the explosive demographic growth in south Oklahoma County, Cleveland County, McClain County and Grady County. Even all the way to Purcell is beginning to grow as part of the OKC Metropolitan Area. There are approximately 5 accidents a day in the corridor between Purcell and I-40. So, this is a major, long term transportation problem that we are going to have to solve. ODOT and OTA are in discussion about what tools we might have in the toolbox to help manage the condition that we know is coming. The traffic volumes that we are experiencing are not going to decrease; so, we have got to start thinking about how we are going to manage that traffic for the future. The types of reliever routes in our ACCESS Oklahoma partnership with OTA can help us manage the traffic in that corridor.

NOTE: *Commissioner Peterson asked if the federal government could offer us any assistance.*

Secretary Gatz answered, if you look at the Infrastructure Investment Jobs Act (IIJA Bill) there is some additional assistance there. Now, there's certainly a debate going on right now as how much of that will actually be. But I think the recognition is, with consideration of all the resources the Department of Transportation has available to us, it's not enough. We're going to talk a little bit more about that this morning in a presentation. The improvements we need, whether it's safety, whether it's capacity, whether it's the ability to support development that's happening; those needs are across the entire state. But I wanted to focus this morning particularly on the I-35 corridor, because it's an area that I am deeply concerned about when you look into the future about what's going to happen there.

Secretary Gatz informed the Commissioners that the Oklahoma Capital Improvement Authority (OCIA) is expected to consider approval of a Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA) loan this week with the U.S. Department of Transportation for a low-interest federal loan benefitting ODOT's Rural 2-lane Advancement and Management Program. If approved, the loan from USDOT will allow more projects to be built now and paid off during the next 20 years. With construction costs expected to continue to rapidly increase, RAAMP will help deliver the safety benefits of added paved shoulders on rural 2-lane highways quicker and at a lower cost to taxpayers. The Department is also in the process of pursuing another TIFIA loan that will be invested back into some additional 2-lane rural roads; because that's a big focus area for us since that's where a large percentage of our fatalities happen.

At last month's Transportation Commission Meeting, Commissioner Grimsley asked us to talk about how "safety" factors into project selection; with a focus in particular on rural safety; because rural safety is very important to us. Obviously, it's a performance metric for us, and I want to call your attention that we currently rank 45th in the country in fatalities. We want to be better than 45th, but we have got to make the right investments to do so. Commissioner Grimsley also asked, how does the Department factor those type of metrics into our funding formula; and what type of consideration goes into it. So, I prepared a PowerPoint to detail the methodology that the Department utilizes for project selection and funding. This will exemplify the importance that the safety of the traveling public plays in this process.

"Secretary Gatz presented a very lengthy presentation on "Overview of ODOT Construction Programs and Funding Allocations".

NOTE: *Commissioner Peterson asked what was the difference between a centerline mile and a mainline mile.*

Secretary Gatz explained, so a centerline mile, if you went out on the yellow line and you stretched a tape measure, that's a centerline mile. So, 1 mile equals 1 mile; a lane mile is in that same mile, if that's a 4-lane highway, there are 4-lane miles to that 1 mile.

Commissioner Peterson said the presentation was extremely thorough and helpful to him. He thanked Commissioner Grimsley for coming up with that question and inspiring that very helpful PowerPoint.

Commissioner Grimsley commented that the statute that empowers us, says that we are to make decisions that work to the advantage and benefit of the Citizens of the state. And so that is a pretty heavy obligation, duty, and expectation that we really have. But the reality is we don't have the resources to meet the needs. I come from a field of aviation, where I spent 30 something years in that field; the public does not tolerate safety problems. We're in the safest era we've ever been, and yet we have 47,000 deaths a year. If we have 47,000 deaths a year in aviation, aviation would be shut down. If you think about it that means over 100 people/families a day are getting that devastating call from the hospital or law enforcement. And looking out on the future, how are we going to sustain this? That's what drives me in my day job, because I'm working on alternatives to all of this. But how do we sustain this in a way that benefits society? This a heavy responsibility; I do want to commend you; this presentation was excellent. I also want to commend you on the improved date that we have been getting. I think ODOT is doing a lot in terms of reforming our reporting internally. It's starting to help us understand just how difficult this is; and it's going to continue to be.

Secretary Gatz said you are right; I think for 20 years or longer the fatalities had been going down; it was just recently within the last several years that it stopped and continued to get worse. We saw that begin to trend up just in advance of COVID, and of all things, when we dealt with COVID, we saw traffic volumes come down and fatalities go up. And that seems counterintuitive; but there are a lot of things that factor into that. And Commissioner Grimsley, to put an exclamation point on what you just said, we are not resourced at a level to address every problem that we have out there on the transportation system. Prioritization becomes hugely important, because what can we do to move the needle? I think that's reflected in adding shoulders on real 2-lane highways. That should be a priority in the State of Oklahoma, because we know that we have a lot of accidents on those not just rural 2 lanes, but the ones that don't have safety shoulders. So, we're making those investments, we've made that a priority, but at the same time we've got more than 5,000 miles of it and only about 1,000 of it's covered. So, we've got lots of work ahead of us, it's going to take a long-term commitment, and we're not resourced at the level we would like to be, to really make a difference. But I think it's our decision-making process that we're trying to really make sure that you gentlemen are comfortable with. And again, I appreciate the opportunity to go through that, I appreciate your patience, because that was a 30 plus slide presentation, and it took me a minute to get through it. But it was really important; and I expect this dialogue to continue as we go through rebalance.

Commissioner Peterson asked if the Legislative has any influence on how the money is allocated.

Secretary Gatz said I would never tell you that a Legislator and their representation of their constituency is not important in our world. So, my expectation of our Legislature is that they bring problems forward. Many times, they have brought problems forward because they heard something from one of their constituents that's out there traveling. The value of having that input is critical; so, I can't separate the Legislature from our prioritization and our decision-making process, because they are a big factor of it. Now do they try to influence our decision making; that's very limited. They are entrusting the professionals in our engineering environment and the work that those professionals do to help us make sure our priorities are right. What we have to get better at is illustrating the needs that we have out there on the system and showing in a better way how we're addressing those needs.

Commissioner Peterson said, yeah, I'm not sure enough noise has been made about adding the safety shoulders. That was new to me when it first came up; and a lot of people in downtown Tulsa don't understand the importance of that.

Secretary Gatz said we are going to continue to bring that message forward and talk about it, because it's got to be a priority for us! The other thing, and Commissioner Grimsley, even though we're not resourced at the level we'd like to be, the one thing I want to give the Legislature credit for, and certainly the Governor's credit for, is that we are not nearly as bad off as we would have been, had they not begun to invest in transportation in Oklahoma with tools like the Roads Fund. That has been absolutely a savior for our transportation infrastructure; and having those additional resources available has been a big deal for us. And that's why we have been able to save a lot more lives out there than we would have otherwise. That's why we've been able to make progress on structurally deficient bridges. So, the Legislative engagement has been to try to help support us with the resources to try to get at these problems as best we could. And I certainly would be remiss if I didn't recognize that fact.

Secretary Gatz acknowledged the National Work Zone Safety Awareness effort in April and the need for extra caution and complete attention in highway work zones. He also noted to Commissioners that the first weekend of May saw 9 separate fatality crashes on Oklahoma highways and turnpikes. To bring traffic fatality numbers down, he stressed that driver behavior must change and emphasized wearing seat belts, putting aside distractions behind the wheel, pay attention to what is in front of you and observe the posted speed limits! So please be careful out there and it's going to take all of us working together to make a difference; because Commissioner Grimsley, it is inexcusable that we will accept 47,000 fatality accidents across this country. We have to do something about it; and part of that is continuing to invest in the infrastructure.

I appreciate the Commission's indulgence this morning; I know I was a little bit long winded; but there was lots of important subject matters that we talked about.

Information Only: No Commission action required.

ITEM PRESENTED BY COMMISSION CHAIRMAN

68. Adjournment Motion

ACTION: Dyson moved and Alexander seconded that the Meeting be adjourned.
MOTION: Carried by the following vote:
AYES: Coburn, Grimsley, Freymiller, Dyson, Alexander, LaForge and Peterson
NAYES: None
ABSENT: McKown

Meeting adjourned at 12:18 p.m.

Approval of the Minutes of the Transportation Commission Meeting May 2, 2022.

Bob Peterson – Vice Chairman

Bobby Alexander - Member