

**Florida MPO Advisory Council
Meeting of the Executive Committee
February 24, 2021
Bradenton, Florida
Draft Meeting Minutes**

Executive Committee Members in Attendance:

MPOAC Chair, Commissioner Nick Maddox, Capital Region TPA
MPOAC Vice Chair, Commissioner Robert Weinroth, Palm Beach TPA
Commissioner Vanessa Baugh, Sarasota/Manatee MPO
Mr. Don Scott, Chair of the Staff Directors' Advisory Committee, Lee County MPO
Mr. David Hutchinson, Vice Chair of the Staff Directors' Advisory Committee, Sarasota/Manatee MPO

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Carl Mikyska, MPOAC
Paul Gougelman, MPOAC General Counsel

• CALL TO ORDER

MPOAC Chair, Commissioner Nick Maddox, Capital Region TPA, called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m. The Chair welcomed those in attendance. A quorum was established in the meeting room. Mr. Paul Gougelman stated that due to the extraordinary circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic, the two virtual attendees could be allowed to participate in the meeting with full capacity upon a vote of the quorum present. Motion made by David Hutchinson, seconded by Commissioner Baugh to allow members attending virtually to participate in the meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

• APPOINTMENT OF INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF MPOAC

Commissioner Maddox suggested that Jeff Kramer be appointed Interim Executive Director of MPOAC. Commissioner Weinroth compared the changes within MPOAC brought about by the pending resignation of Mr. Mikyska with the experience that the Palm Beach TPA went through a few years ago when the TPA became independent of the county administration. Carl Mikyska shared that Jeff Kramer was aware that he was going to be considered as Interim Executive Director and he is also interested in becoming the full time Executive Director. Mr. Mikyska further shared that Mr. Kramer was not attending the meeting, not due to a lack of interest in the interim position, but as a matter of not hindering the committee from freely discussing him as a potential candidate for the position of Executive Director of MPOAC. Mr. Hutchinson

shared that Jeff had been offered the position of Executive Director when MPOAC recruited a new Executive Director in early 2015. Mr. Mikyska shared further details of that hiring process and reasons why Mr. Kramer did not accept take the position at that time. The Committee members discussed that Mr. Mark Reichert would also be interested in pursuing the position of Executive Director. Mr. Mikyska pointed out that this was good news for the Executive Committee, who would be responsible for hiring a new Executive Director, as both candidates would be excellent choices.

The Executive Committee directed that Mr. Kramer be placed on a contract to act in the role of Interim Executive Director until November or December of 2021. This was agreed upon so that time would be given to conduct a search for a new permanent Executive Director. The members also agreed that the decision on how to move forward should be brought before the full MPOAC Governing Board at their April 28th meeting, rather than having the 5 member Executive Committee make hiring decisions without the input of the full Governing Board. Having an Interim Executive Director will allow the Executive Committee and Governing Board to make a careful decision and not rush into a selection.

Discussion moved to the section of Florida Statute (339.175 (11)) which creates MPOAC, provides the agency with purpose and authority, and outlines the administrative structure of the agency. The specific statutory language that pertains to the agency administrative structure states that the MPOAC shall “Employ an executive director and such other staff as necessary to perform adequately the functions of the council, within budgetary limitations. The executive director and staff are exempt from part II of chapter 110 and serve at the direction and control of the council. The council is assigned to the Office of the Secretary of the Department of Transportation for fiscal and accountability purposes, but it shall otherwise function independently of the control and direction of the department.” Member discussion then centered on whether the language should be altered in the future to provide the option for MPOAC to be hosted by either an MPO or the Florida DOT.

The Executive Committee concluded the discussion by directing that Mr. Carl Mikyska and Mr. Paul Gougelman work to complete the task of bringing Mr. Kramer on as Interim Executive Director through a contractual arrangement with the Center for Urban Transportation Research (CUTR) at the University of South Florida (USF). Mr. Mikyska and Mr. Gougelman were given authority to take action to complete this task and to work to add within state statutes the ability to allow a Florida MPO to host MPOAC if the MPOAC Governing Board determines that is in the best interests of the agency. Chair Maddox directed Mr. Gougelman to craft language which could be brought forward in the legislature this year to allow this option. The directives were made into a motion by Commissioner Weinroth, seconded by Commissioner Baugh and carried unanimously.

- NEXT STEPS FOR MPOAC AND THE ROLE OF THE OUTGOING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Mr. Mikyska offered his services to the Executive Committee, and MPOAC, if desired, after his departure for free in order to assist the organization with continuing operations and creating a smooth transition. Specially, Mr. Mikyska offered to take a vacation day from his future position and lead the April 28th quarterly meetings of the MPOAC. The committee agreed that this may hinder the incoming Interim Executive Director to show his potential to ultimately take the role of Executive Director permanently. Mr. Mikyska was asked to attend the April MPOAC Quarterly meetings in his capacity as the Pasco County MPO Executive Director for the Staff Directors' Advisory Committee Meeting and as a participant and resource to Chair Maddox during the MPOAC Governing Board Meeting. Mr. Mikyska was directed to allow Mr. Kramer to organize and lead the April meeting and demonstrate his ability to perform without outside assistance from Mr. Mikyska. The question of the MPOAC Governing Board directed workshop on transportation revenues was brought up by Mr. Mikyska and what role, if any, he should play in organizing and leading this workshop. The committee directed that Mr. Kramer should take on this task as well once he is under contract.

Mr. Mikyska brought up the MPOAC Legislative Newsletter which he publishes on Saturday mornings. This effort is conducted on personal time and has largely been handled as a volunteer activity outside of normal MPOAC work. Mr. Mikyska explained that the creation of the newsletter requires a lot of background knowledge which Mr. Kramer would not have and that since the newsletter has been carried out as a volunteer activity, it would be unfair to ask Mr. Kramer to pick up this effort at this time. Mr. Mikyska asked if the committee would give him permission to use the distribution list and continue to publish the newsletter for the remainder of the 2021 Florida Legislative Session from an email address that is not associated with MPOAC and on letterhead that is clearly not related to MPOAC. Commissioner Weinroth made a motion to allow Mr. Mikyska to continue the newsletter as he described, Commissioner Baugh seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

• **OTHER BUSINESS**

Commissioner Weinroth asked Mr. Mikyska if the arrangement of MPOAC being hosted by Florida DOT was the reason for his departure from MPOAC or if there were other reasons? Mr. Mikyska answered that the reason for his departure was due to the lack of salary increases. Mr. Mikyska further explained that as a hosted organization with state government, salary increases could only be realized if the legislature approves a salary increase. Mr. Mikyska shared that his salary had increased 3.5% during his nearly 6 years of service to MPOAC and he recognized that working for an organization with annual salary increases would be financially beneficial to his retirement and finances. It was noted that the legislature has not offered state employees salary increases and, recognizing the COVID-19 impacts to the state budget, that it is expected that salary increases are not likely to be offered by the state legislature for the foreseeable future. Mr. Mikyska stated that he greatly enjoyed the work and the people, leaving the position was solely due to the lack of salary increases.

Mr. Mikyska asked the committee to make every effort to keep the existing team in place as they consider how to approach the hiring of a new Executive Director and any changes to the structure of the MPOAC going forward. Mr. Mikyska specifically pointed to Mr. John Waldron, Mr. Jeff Kramer and Mr. Paul Gougelman. He stated that his success in the position of Executive Director was due to having the support of the team and that they are assets to MPOAC.

The Executive Committee discussed further their options for the future of MPOAC and agreed that the new Interim Executive Director should be allowed to help define the future role of the Executive Director position at MPOAC. The members discussed options for advertising and recruiting potential candidates. It was agreed that this should be an agenda item on the April MPOAC Governing Board agenda and that the full MPOAC Governing Board should provide input to the decision-making process.

• ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 11:52 a.m.