NEW MEXICO STATE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
MEETING

Jal Community Center
109 West Panther Avenue
Jal, New Mexico 88252
October 17, 2019

The New Mexico State Transportation Commission (STC or Commission) held a regular meeting on October 17, 2019, at The Jal Community Center, Jal, New Mexico. Chairman Adams called the meeting to order at 8:34 a.m. He asked for a roll call to establish a quorum. Jennifer Martinez, Office of the Secretary, NMDOT, proceeded to call the roll. Commissioners Jennifer Sandoval, Bruce Ellis, Walter G. Adams, and Keith Mortensen were present.

Chairman Adams asked for a moment of silence for Henry Morales, who recently passed away. He was the father of The Honorable Howie Morales, Lieutenant Governor, State of New Mexico.

Approval of the STC Meeting Agenda

Chairman Adams asked for a motion to approve the STC meeting agenda; Commissioner Ellis made a motion to so approve; Commissioner Sandoval seconded; motion carried unanimously.
Approval of the STC Minutes

Chairman Adams asked for a motion to approve the September 26, 2019 STC Regular Meeting minutes; Commissioner Ellis made a motion to so approve; Commissioner Sandoval seconded; motion carried unanimously.

Introductions

Michael Sandoval, Cabinet Secretary, NMDOT, thanked everyone in attendance at the STC meeting, and the City of Jal for its hospitality. He introduced the elected officials at the meeting, and asked NMDOT staff to introduce themselves. He also introduced former State Representative George Dodge, as NMDOT’s new Director of Local Government Relations, and David Quintana as NMDOT’s new Chief Engineer.

Elected Officials and Delegations:

The Honorable Marilyn J. Burns, Mayor, Town of Tatum
Michael Walker, Undersheriff, Lea County
The Honorable Steven Aldridge, Mayor, City of Jal
Corey Helton, Sheriff, Lea County
Mauricio Valeriano, Chief of Police, City of Jal
The Honorable Gay G. Kernan, New Mexico State Senator, District 42
Don Jones, Commissioner, District 5, Lea County
The Honorable Gregg Fulfer, New Mexico State Senator, District 41
Mike Orr, City Councilor, City of Jal

State Transportation Commissioners Present:

Jennifer Sandoval, Vice-Chair, District One
Bruce Ellis, Commissioner, District Two
Keith Mortensen, Commissioner, District Three
Walter G. Adams, Chairman, District Four
Vacant, District Five
Charles Lundstrom, Secretary, District Six (absent with notice)
NMDOT Staff Present:

Michael Sandoval, Cabinet Secretary
Justin Reese, Deputy Secretary
Kenneth B. Baca, General Counsel
NMDOT Staff

Welcoming Remarks

On behalf of the STC and NMDOT staff, Chairman Adams thanked the City of Jal for hosting the meeting and for its hospitality.

Public Comment

Michael Clark, CMT Chair, Permian Strategic Partnership (PSP), commented briefly regarding the PSP. He explained that PSP is a coalition of 19 leading Permian Basin energy companies that joined together to work in partnership with leaders across the region’s communities to address current and future challenges to the responsible development of the vast oil and natural gas resources of the Permian Basin. He also thanked the STC for holding its meeting in the heart of the Permian Basin.

Secretary Sandoval thanked PSP for its recent collaboration on a grant application for $25 million for roads in the southeastern part of the state. The grant results are expected in November 2019.

Michael Mattison, Senior Land Manager, Conoco Phillips, expressed his appreciation to the STC and NMDOT for collaborating to make the roads safer in southeast New Mexico.

Ashley Pennington, Administrator, West Texas Oilfield Traffic Update, discussed traffic in the West Texas Oilfield area. She is concerned about the serious traffic issues in the area and
the number of fatalities that have occurred. She looks forward to partnering with legislators, NMDOT and law enforcement agencies to help make the roads safer.

The Honorable Gregg Fulfer, New Mexico State Senator, District 41, expressed his appreciation to the STC for holding its meeting in Jal. He stated one of the largest issues in the area is road safety. Numerous lives have been lost in accidents on NM 128. The Honorable Carroll Leavell, former New Mexico State Senator, District 41, helped to get the road upgraded 8-10 years ago. The local newspaper recently conducted a poll about a possible bypass around Jal. 83% of those who responded, indicated they would like to see a bypass built, or in the alternative, possibly four-laning NM 128. The main point of the poll was to determine how to resolve the issues on NM 128. District legislators are working very hard to get the funding needed for road improvements.

The Honorable Gay Kernan, New Mexico State Senator, District 42, expressed her appreciation to Secretary Sandoval and Timothy Parker, P.E., District Two Engineer, NMDOT, for their work during the 2019 legislative session. A bill was passed that will fund an additional 1% of Motor Vehicle Excise Tax. She hopes the funding will continue and will help improve the roads in New Mexico. She understands there are needs in all areas of the State, and appreciates the recognition of the great need in southeast New Mexico.

**District Two Presentation and Employee Recognition**

Timothy Parker, P.E., District Two Engineer, NMDOT, introduced the District Two staff members in attendance at the STC meeting. He followed with a presentation regarding District
Two activities, during which he discussed the District’s various projects and maintenance accomplishments. He also reported on the District’s Employee Recognition Program and acknowledged recent award winners.

Mr. Parker presented the District Two Best Practice Award to the Ft. Sumner Patrol for its oil loading dock. A video was shown to demonstrate the use of the dock. He introduced Tom Melendez, Equipment Manager, District Two, NMDOT, who commented regarding funding for equipment. Mr. Melendez thanked the STC and NMDOT for the funding provided to the District for equipment repair and replacement. He asked the STC to look into increasing mechanics’ salaries because of the difficulty the District has retaining high level technicians.

Secretary Sandoval commented that because of revenue from the oil and gas industry, NMDOT had a surplus of money, and, therefore, was able to allocate additional funding to the districts for equipment this year. He also mentioned that NMDOT is in the process of conducting a study regarding mechanics’ salaries. He explained that mechanics are the employees in charge of the equipment that keeps the State’s roads safe and he is aware they earn low salaries.

Mr. Parker discussed a press release dated October 16, 2019, concerning making NM 128 a safety corridor. It is one of the deadliest highways in the State of New Mexico and is the backbone for the State’s revenue due to the oil and gas industry. A goal is to also create a safety port of entry in the area. Mr. Parker introduced Major Romero and Captain Bateman, of the New Mexico State Police, and invited them to comment regarding the safety issues in southeast New Mexico. He explained that the District Two office works hand in hand with them on road issues. Major Romero and other New Mexico State Police employees will be advocating for more staff positions during the 2020 legislative session in order to increase the number of officers patrolling in the southeast part of the State.
Franklin Garcia, Modal Director, NMDOT, gave a brief presentation regarding the NMDOT Traffic Safety Division. The presentation included information regarding ENDWI; funding for law enforcement; the BKLUP program; STEP statistics; 100 days and nights of summer statistics; enforcement funding for District Two; dust storm safety; media campaigns; and a Southeast New Mexico safety campaign.

Staff Briefings

Secretary Report

Michael Sandoval, Cabinet Secretary, NMDOT, introduced Jaqueline Miller of U.S. Representative Xochitl Torres Small’s office. He also introduced Stephen Aldridge, Mayor, City of Jal, and invited him to show a short video depicting the traffic issues on NM 128. Secretary Sandoval reported that NMDOT has received funding for area projects, but it is going to take approximately 2-4 years to begin work on a project because NMDOT is starting from scratch. There are no existing studies or designs for NM 31 or NM 128 projects. NMDOT will also need to work with rail companies on certain projects. US 285 from mile marker 0 to 22 to the Texas state line, fully funded, is a $130 million project. Work is scheduled to start in summer 2020. The project will include a new port of entry. House Bill 6, passed in the 2019 Legislative Session, raised the excise tax on motor vehicles from 3% to 4%, which means if a car is purchased it will amount to $6 - $8 dollars more per month. That is reasonable for the amount of money it will generate. Through the work of Senators Fulfer and Kernan, for the first two years that money will go to the southeastern part of the State. It will amount to approximately $110 million. Secretary Sandoval also mentioned that NMDOT has approximately $60 million available from vacancy savings that
can be used anywhere in the state. The Governor requested that these funds be used for improvements to NM 128. He also briefly discussed NM 18. In closing, he mentioned that NMDOT’s employee clothing and tool allowances will be increasing, and thanked the individuals who helped arrange the tour of the WIPP facility.

**WIPP Route Update**

Rick Padilla, P.E., State Maintenance Engineer, NMDOT, provided an update regarding New Mexico WIPP routes. NMDOT’s main focus is to provide the safest routes possible within its jurisdiction. In 1997, NMDOT received a 15-year, $300 million grant from the Department of Energy (DOE) for the development of WIPP corridors for the purpose of transporting WIPP shipments through New Mexico from DOE installations around the United States. The STC has the sole authority for designating WIPP routes within NMDOT’s jurisdiction. In 2014, the DOE requested a temporary WIPP route due to the condition of US 285. It is the JAI temporary access route. A resolution will be presented to the STC at its November 21, 2019, meeting to propose either a new route or to request an extension on the current temporary route.

**Finance Reports**

**NMDOT Monthly Financial Report**

Mallery Manzanares, Budget Director and Acting ASD Director, NMDOT, presented the NMDOT operating budget and financial report as of October 1, 2019. Current program vacancy rates are as follows: District One, 11.9%; District Two, 18.7%; District Three, 20.3%; District Four, 20.7%; District Five, 12.6%; District Six, 12%; Highway Operations, 24.0%; Project Design and Construction, 24.8%; Business Support, 17.3%; and Modal, 14.4%. The current budget for Project Design and Construction is $557.5 million, with a remaining balance of $377.4 million;
Highway Operations, $251.5 million, with a remaining balance of $167.8 million; Business Support, $43.6 million, with a remaining balance of $27.2 million; and Modal, $67.6 million, with a remaining balance of $38 million. Mrs. Manzanares also discussed NMDOT cash balances and restricted fund balances.

**Approval of Budget Adjustment Request FY 20 (BAR) No. 13 - P565 - Modal**

Kevin Olinger, Transit Bureau Chief, NMDOT, presented and requested approval of FY 20 BAR No. 13 - P565 - Modal. The BAR is required to increase budget authority for the Transit Bureau. It will increase grants to organizations (Category 400) in the amount of $1 million for a year-long pilot effort to expand public transportation in rural areas. The funds will be used for projects that provide reliable transportation to hospitals, health clinics and substance abuse treatment centers for the elderly, children, veterans and others who live in remote areas with limited access to health care and other services. The BAR will be supported by State Road Fund balance.

Chairman Adams asked for a motion to approve BAR No. 13 - P565 - Modal; Commissioner Mortensen made a motion to so approve; Commissioner Ellis seconded; motion carried unanimously.

**Adjournment**

Chairman Adams asked for a motion to adjourn the regular meeting at 10:33 a.m.; Commissioner Mortensen made a motion to so adjourn the meeting; Commissioner Sandoval seconded. Motion carried unanimously.
Chairman

Walter Adams

Secretary

Charles Lundstrom