



Minutes of the Gulf Coast Rail District Board Meeting – June 13, 2023

A meeting of the Gulf Coast Rail District Board of Directors was held on Tuesday, June 13, 2023 at Houston TranStar and via video conference. In attendance at the meeting were Directors Angelique Bartholomew, Ronald A. Beeson, Robert A. Fry, Jr., Stephen Gilbreath, Veronica Chapa Gorczynski, Jon Keeney, Robert Maldonado, Jr., Bruce Mann, Jean Mann, and Allen Owen. Absent were Directors Kendric Jones, Christopher Lane, Carol Abel Lewis, Tina Arias Peterman, and Jeff E. Ross. Written notices of the meeting including the date, hour, place and agenda for the meeting were posted with Harris County, with the Secretary of State, and at the Gulf Coast Rail District office located at Houston TranStar in accordance with the Texas Open Meetings Act. The inaudible portions of the recording were removed from these minutes.

Co-Chair Ron Beeson: Well, let's go ahead and get started then. And then anything requiring action from the board, we'll postpone to the end. I'm Ron Beeson, the presiding officer of the Gulf Coast Rail District. I'm going to call the meeting of the Gulf Coast Rail District to order at 2:02 p.m. on June 13th, 2023. Today's meeting is being conducted with options to participate in person or by video conference. The public meeting location is Houston TranStar, 6922 Katy Road, Houston Texas, Conference Center Room 120A. The video conference is conducted through Microsoft Teams, and that link can be found in the meeting invites, agenda, and the public postings. The meeting is open to the public. The public will have an opportunity to address the board during the public comments agenda item with a limit of three minutes per speaker. If you wish to address the board, please approach the podium in the room or raise your hand online during the public comments period. Board members may participate by video conference in accordance with the provisions of Section 551.127 of the Texas Government Code applicable to a government body that extends into three or more counties. Based on the Open Meeting Act requirements, the Gulf Coast Rail District board members participating in Microsoft Teams will need to be seen and heard throughout the meeting for attendance and record voting. Therefore, members calling in via telephone will not count for the quorum or voting. As required, I'm physically present for the board meeting and ask that the secretary conduct the roll call. Please audible when your name is called.

Director Jon Keeney: Chairman Beeson?

Co-Chair Ron Beeson: I am present.

Director Jon Keeney: Robert Maldonado.

Director Robert Maldonado: Here.

Director Jon Keeney: Thank you. Veronica Chapa Gorczynski

Director Veronica Chapa Gorczynski: Present. Good afternoon.

Director Jon Keeney: Thank you. Stephen Gilbreath?
Stephen Gilbreath: Present.

Director Jon Keeney: Thank you. Jeff E. Ross? Tina Arias Peterman? Carol Lewis? Myself.
Hopefully I'm here. Commissioner Mann?

Director Bruce Mann: Here.
Director Jon Keeney: Thank you.
Director Bruce Mann: Well, Bruce Mann. We have two.
Director Jon Keeney: Director Bruce Mann. Yes, you're here.

Director Jon Keeney: Angelique Bartholomew?
Director Angelique Bartholomew: I'm here.
Ms. Katherine Parker: She's present.

Director Jon Keeney: Alright, thank you. Allen Owen? Allen Owen?
Director Allen Owen: Yes, we're hear. Yes, I'm here. Jean Mann is here. We're on the video.

Director Jon Keeney: Oh, Jean Mann is there. Good. I'll call Jean's name.
Director Allen Owen: Well, no. She's on the... No, no, no.
Ms. Katherine Parker: She's on the phone.
Director Allen Owen: She's on the video, and I'm on the video. There's nobody else on the link.

Director Jon Keeney: Okay. Kendrick Jones?

Ms. Katherine Parker: Okay. Lisa, can you resend?

Director Jon Keeney: Christopher Lane...

Director Allen Owen: Jean and I both signed on the link that you sent.
Ms. Katherine Parker: Okay.
Director Allen Owen: I'm looking at her. And we've been talking. But there's nobody else on the video link.
Ms. Katherine Parker: Okay.
Mr. Steve Crumley: Was there an updated link provided?
Ms. Lisa Patke: No.
Director Jon Keeney: Well, technically we don't...
Director Allen Owen: I'm looking at the one that's on the agenda.
Director Jon Keeney: ...with their picture.
Ms. Katherine Parker: Right, so let me forward the latest link.
Director Jon Keeney: To those two.
Co-Chair Ron Beeson: Okay. Executive Director Parker is going to send a link.
Ms. Lisa Patke: I just sent it to them.
Ms. Katherine Parker: Okay, Lisa just sent you...
Director Allen Owen: You just sent a link? Is that another one?
Ms. Katherine Parker: Yes.
Co-Chair Ron Beeson: While they do that, let's finish with the roll call. Mayor Keeney?
Director Jon Keeney: I actually went through the whole roll.
Co-Chair Ron Beeson: Okay. Did you...?

Director Jon Keeney: If these guys come on screen, we'll have a quorum. Otherwise, we do not. There's Director Jean Mann. We have a quorum.

Co-Chair Ron Beeson: Director Mann, can you... are you audibly on as well? We see you.

Director Jean Mann: Yes, I'm on.

Co-Chair Ron Beeson: Thank you. Excellent.

Director Jon Keeney: Great. We have a quorum.

Co-Chair Ron Beeson: Did you click on the link, or did you just try again?

Director Jean Mann: Well, I just got an email like five seconds ago at 2:07 from Lisa.

Director Jean Mann: And I clicked on that link.

Co-Chair Ron Beeson: Alright.

Ms. Katherine Parker: Okay.

Director Jean Mann: I was on another link from last week, and that one wasn't working. And then Director Allen and I got off, and he was going to phone in. Then I got this email.

Ms. Katherine Parker: But we should be able to proceed with seven...

Director Jon Keeney: We can proceed. We do have a quorum.

Ms. Katherine Parker: Then he can just do the call in.

Director Allen Owen: Alright, hang on.

Ms. Katherine Parker: Oh, there he is.

Director Jon Keeney: There he is.

Director Allen Owen: I'm going to hang up and should be there.

Ms. Katherine Parker: Yes, sir.

Director Jon Keeney: You are here. So, we do have a quorum.

Director Jean Mann: Yay.

Co-Chair Ron Beeson: Alright. Excellent.

Ms. Katherine Parker: Thank you.

Co-Chair Ron Beeson: Alright. On to agenda item three. I'm wanting to confirm meeting posting compliance with the Open Meetings Act.

Ms. Lisa Patke: Yes.

Co-Chair Ron Beeson: Yes, okay. Agenda item four is for discussion of possible action on Resolution 23-13, recognizing the Fort Bend County commissioners court appointment of Angelique Bartholomew to position number ten of the Gulf Coast Rail District Board of Directors.

Director Jon Keeney: Move to approve.

Director Bruce Mann: Second.

Co-Chair Ron Beeson: All in favor?

Board: Aye.

Co-Chair Ron Beeson: Okay. Resolution is approved.

Co-Chair Ron Beeson: Okay. Agenda item number five, discussion and possible action on minutes for the May 9th, 2023, meeting. Director Keeney?

Director Jon Keeney: Yes. Are there any additions or corrections to the minutes? Hearing none, I need a motion to approve.

Director Jean Mann: Moved.

Director Stephen Gilbreath: Motion to approve.

Director Jon Keeney: Thank you. I have a second?

Director Bruce Mann: Second.

Director Jon Keeney: Okay. We have a motion and a second. All those in favor?

Board: Aye.

Director Jon Keeney: Any opposed?

Co-Chair Ron Beeson: The motion was... Did you get those, Lisa?

Ms. Lisa Patke: It was Jean Mann followed by Stephen Gilbreath.

Co-Chair Ron Beeson: Okay, thank you.

Director Jon Keeney: Any opposed? Then it's unanimous. Thank you.

Co-Chair Ron Beeson: Okay. Minutes are approved.

Co-Chair Ron Beeson: Agenda item number six is a report from the treasurer, Mayor Owen.

Director Allen Owen: Mr. Chairman, is Chris there? I got on late and don't know if Chris Palis is there or not. Is he there?

Mr. Chris Palis: I am here.

Director Allen Owen: Alright, Chris. I'm going to let you do the report.

Mr. Chris Palis: Alright. Good afternoon, everybody. You should have a copy of the bookkeepers report in your packet, dated for June 13th, 2023. If you to turn page two, this is a listing of your cashflow report. So, you see the starting balance in your checking account of \$131,000 with total disbursements for the month totaling \$4,299, leaving a balance in the checking account of \$127,140. Page number three is a listing of the District's account balances for the CDs and money market accounts. So, you can see here the grand total \$1.4 million. Pages four and five are your actual vs. budget for the month of May. So, you can see here total revenues totaling \$4,300 and with total expenses of close to \$2,200. And then page five just shows the pro bono items from the City of Houston with the expenses there. And of course the last couple pages—six, seven, eight, and nine, these are just the grant status report. But there hasn't been any new grant activity since 2019, so nothing has changed on these pages since the last month's report. And that concludes the bookkeeper's report.

Director Allen Owen: Very good. Are there any questions from anyone?

Director Bruce Mann: I have a question really quick.

Co-Chair Ron Beeson: Okay. Director Mann has a question.

Director Bruce Mann: It's probably more for Katherine, maybe. But the West Belt project on that money, have we figured out the transaction with the City and how that's all going to work yet?

Ms. Katherine Parker: Not the details of it, but Chris and I have been in conversations about each of the bills basically we will be reimbursed. So, we don't actually hold that money in an account, but the agreements would have to be reworked, I'm sure, so that... Versus TxDOT to GRCD, it

would be TxDOT to the City of Houston. So, those conversations will be happening actually pretty soon, probably in the next two weeks.

Director Bruce Mann: Okay. Alright. Thank you.

Director Robert Maldonado: Yes, I got a question here. The remaining grant dollars, \$3,934,000, will that be used for the current project that the government just allocated for the West Belt project?

Ms. Katherine Parker: Yes, sir. It will be for preliminary engineering and design. So, that piece that's there and also probably the remainder of the money that HBT has allocated to this project will go to that as well. So, the contracts currently are between Gulf Coast Rail District and TxDOT. So, now since the City is the sponsor of this project and the recipient of the grant award, which... So, yes, those will come off of our books...

Co-Chair Ron Beeson: Okay. Any further questions?

Director Allen Owen: Any other questions? If not, I'll entertain a motion to approve Resolution 23-14 ratifying our payments.

Director Jon Keeney: So moved.

Director Allen Owen: Is there a motion?

Director Jon Keeney: So moved.

Director Allen Owen: Is that a motion? Second.

Co-Chair Ron Beeson: Director Kenney has motioned.

Director Allen Owen: Got a motion. And a second?

Co-Chair Ron Beeson: Director Beeson will second.

Director Allen Owen: All approved?

Board: Aye.

Director Allen Owen: Thank you.

Co-Chair Ron Beeson: I believe that was unanimous. Alright. Thank you. Okay, on to agenda item number eight. We will open it up for public comments. Would anybody like to make public comments? Okay. Alright, no public comments today.

Co-Chair Ron Beeson: Okay. We are going to move on to agenda item nine, which is an update on the strategic plan by Director Kenney.

Director Jon Keeney: Thank you, sir. Several months ago when I joined this organization, I became aware that we did not actually have a strategic plan. And I'm accustomed to working out of a strategic plan because it focuses an organization, and you can CREATE a great deal of alignment. So, I suggested to Dr. Carol and Katherine that we in fact pull one together. Well, I came up with the first draft of this, but that was a couple months ago. And in the interim period, we have had at least three opportunities to have input from Dr. Carol, Katherine, Bruce Mann, and myself. And I'm sorry you don't have one in your packet, but we will forward this to you.

Basically what I've done is pulled together the background and the strategic intent of this organization, developed a mission, which is to convene and lead the region's stakeholders to transform the transportation network. With a vision being acts as a catalyst by continuing to build an efficient, equitable, and sustainable network to move people and freight throughout the

Gulf Coast region. And Bruce was very insistent that we have some values, and we came up with some values. I put them in an order where they sort of spells PATS. It's people, accountability, transparency, trust, and safety. We pulled together what we consider our core values. I won't read all this to you because I would really like for each one of you to read this and give some feedback. If you will give some feedback to myself and Bruce primarily, we'll pull the thoughts together for Katherine and Dr. Carol. The intent is for us to be more cohesive in terms of what we're doing and how we're doing it.

We know there are some omissions in the draft that you will see. Bruce Mann has already pointed out that we need to make some distinctions to clarify the roles between this actual board and our project HART. We actually listened to a presentation from our friends from Chicago yesterday, and it was outstanding information. I know we all gained some insight and had a lot of questions, and they answered anything that we could throw at them. I think Bruce summarized it pretty well. We're further down the path than they were when they started their project, which is a blessing for us. But conversely, we want to make the distinctions between this strategic plan and whatever planning process we need to initiate for HART. And we want to make sure that we define the boundaries, because each of us are involved in various committees, the committees in terms of their functionality relative to this plan and also to the HART project. And so that's two things that need to be done. And feel free to be very direct and specific about your comments to us. I won't wordsmith this with you online. I just absolutely despise doing that. But I'm more than willing to listen and read everything that you have to say. Bruce, you want to add?

Director Bruce Mann: No, everything you said and... I just sent a draft to everybody just now, so you might have it in your email. But yes, I agree with everything you said.

Director Jon Keeney: Thank you, sir. And that's really all I wanted to accomplish today was to increase the awareness and actually thank Katherine for pulling this thing and making it legible, readable, and presentable.

Co-Chair Ron Beeson: Alright. Thank you, Mayor Keeney. Okay, we will move on to action item number ten. I want to make sure... Were there any comments that anyone wanted to make on the strategic plan?

Director Veronica Chapa Gorczynski: I just want to say thank you.

Co-Chair Ron Beeson: Otherwise we'll...

Director Veronica Chapa Gorczynski: Pardon. It's Director Chapa Gorczynski. I just want to say thank you to the people who spent time on this. It's needed and thoughtful, and I always appreciate it when folks take the time to frame it up. So, thank you.

Director Jon Keeney: Quite welcome.

Director Bruce Mann: You will see there's a pretty significant change to the mission and the vision of the Rail District, so you might want to just take a minute and look at it.

Co-Chair Ron Beeson: Okay. I think we'll reconvene on this topic and have some discussion, I'm sure, where it's approved and put in writing.

Director Bruce Mann: Absolutely.

Co-Chair Ron Beeson: So, we'll stay tuned on that. But now that everybody is aware and everybody, please take the time to look at the draft and provide feedback. Okay, agenda item number ten is a report from Executive Director Katherine Parker.

Ms. Katherine Parker: Thank you so much, Director Beeson. Let me start with our new director. I wanted to introduce her to the board. Dr. Lewis normally would do this, but we know she is on a much-needed vacation. But I wanted to introduce Angelique Bartholomew. She is the lead principal and business development ambassador at Intuitive Global Consulting. Angelique holds a JD and multiple certifications in mediation and community leadership development.

Ms. Katherine Parker: Is it still on your screen? [Overhead projector powered off.]

Ms. Lisa Patke: It's still up on my screen.

Ms. Katherine Parker: Okay. So, they can see... Can you see...?

Co-Chair Ron Beeson: Speak a little bit louder.

Ms. Katherine Parker: Okay. Can you all still hear us?

Director Angelique Bartholomew: It just powered down.

Ms. Lisa Patke: They said yes. We just can't see them.

Ms. Katherine Parker: Okay. Okay. We have passed all of my...

Ms. Katherine Parker: Well, we passed all our voting pieces, so we're good. Alright. Ms. Bartholomew has focused her career in the practice areas of policy, research, and program design. She serves on numerous local boards in Houston and Fort Bend County and has been appointed to serve on federal councils, commissions, and panels including the U.S. Department of Commerce and Trade, Finance Advisory Council, the National Academy of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, Transportation Research Board, and the U.S. Global Leadership Coalition... For each of the directors, though, her resume and information is in your packets, but we want to thank Fort Bend, Judge George for appointing a new appointee for Fort Bend. And we specifically asked that he give us an attorney, and he did just that. We welcome you to the board, and Dr. Lewis, when she comes, of course, she'll give a more official welcome. But thank you so much for joining with us. We look forward to you working with us on some of our old projects that we'll talk about today and some of the new that we look forward to taking on. Any thoughts? Of course you all can have a conversation.

Director Angelique Bartholomew: I just wanted to say thank you. I'm really excited to have an opportunity to work with each of you. I definitely went through the website to get some perspective of who's at the table, and I'm very excited about being a part of the experience that resides in this organization. So, I look forward to working with you.

Co-Chair Ron Beeson: Thank you so much, and welcome aboard.

Director Stephen Gilbreath: Does this fill vacancies now for the board, or do we have any more?

Ms. Katherine Parker: I think we have ex officio, and I think that's it.

Director Stephen Gilbreath: Okay.

Ms. Katherine Parker: I think that's it. Yes, so appointed and serving. I'm still working on one to serve, but he's still in that spot currently. So, yes, that puts us at 14 directors and 3 ex officio.

Ms. Katherine Parker: Next on my list is the HART update. As many of you all know, the City of Houston and GCRD participated in a press conference last week, June 7th, at 3:00 p.m. The FRA administrator came to award us 36.9 million dollars for the West Belt project phase one, which has been on the Rail District's books since 2012. I want to thank Director Gilbreath, Director Mann, Director Veronica Chapa Gorczynski for being in the place on that day. Director Mann and I'm sure Gorczynski were representing their individual organizations, but they are also part of GCRD.

Dr. Lewis was a speaker, as one of six speakers for that press conference, and had the opportunity to talk about the history of the Gulf Coast Rail District with this project and also HART, which is our new committee Houston Area Rail Transformation. She had an opportunity to speak on that as a part of the press conference. If you go to the Rail District's website, we have the press conference, a link there for it and also the press release as well and some pictures from that day. So, we're trying to kind of build our portfolio as we have these wins so people can go in and see exactly what's going on currently with the Rail District. For those you who are new, the West Belt project is a series of grade separations at Commerce/Navigation and York/Sampson. We say phase one. We originally started with a 14,600-foot-long project. This particular project includes just 9,000 feet, so that's why it's phase one. Hopefully, we'll be able to continue to phase two, and we believe it will improve quality of life, air quality, reduction of delays at some of these crossings, and just overall like I said quality of life for the people on the east end. And so I said, this is one of hopefully many projects that we will be able to continue. It's just one that's taken quite a while, so we were quite happy to be able to be a recipient of these moneys. As Director...

Director Jon Keeney: Keeney.

Ms. Katherine Parker: Keeney said yesterday, we had a conversation with CREATE. They are basically the consultant for CREATE. They maintain their website, and they also have members that are part of their consulting team that have been a part of that project from its inception. So, I met Becky Wingate at the FRA Summit that I spoke about HART. We had a conversation. That's how this began. So, they took about an hour of their time to explain to us how CREATE began, some of the challenges that they had, and how it relates to what we are doing for HART. So, just as we'll send the strategic plan, I'll send that slide deck that they sent to me as well from that presentation so you can see what we talked about as well. And I'm pretty sure that we will have another presentation from them. Hopefully I can get them to come during a board meeting. If not, it's our plan in August that we would have our workshop. And usually the workshop with the new board members is a little longer timeframe. We break out in our committees. We talk about plans for the upcoming year. And so that's the plan is that August will be that timeframe. So, we may be able to see if they will come and present to talk specifically maybe about the HART portion of the Rail District. But I will send those slide decks to each of you so you can

see it. And if you have any questions, just let me know, and I will do my best to get them answered for you, either from the HART standpoint or from CREATE's side of the equation.

Director Angelique Bartholomew: I'm sorry, who is CREATE Consulting?

Ms. Katherine Parker: CREATE is the Chicago equivalent of HART, which is Houston Area Rail Transformation. So, basically, we are modeled after their program.

Director Angelique Bartholomew: Okay.

Ms. Katherine Parker: They started back in I think 2003. And they have a total of 70 to 75 projects that they developed... well, now over 20 years ago. They are about 50% complete. But it has been a major collaboration of all of the Class I railroads, county... Well, ours is TxDOT. In their case, it's Chicago DOT. They come together and have... And they're successful in acquiring federal funds for the completion of rail related projects. So, there's grade separations, rail capacity, improvements, even to the point of if you go to their website, you can see that they have where communities have the opportunity to do business with CREATE. So, in that sense, we are not necessarily in the infancy stage, but there are a lot of parallel things that we wanted to kind of ask questions of them of some of the roads that they traveled that maybe we will do differently because of Houston. But a lot of the same rail challenges exist, so that's kind of the common draw. Any other questions? You two were on with me, so if there's something that I missed, you can definitely add that in.

Director Jon Keeney: I just think it was extremely value added. And as we progress through this process ourselves, it's great to have a sounding board. And all the presenters are all professionals in this whole transportation arena. And so it's good to get another group's context, and they're very open and perfectly willing to share.

Ms. Katherine Parker: And last...

Director Veronica Chapa Gorczynski: Director Parker? It's Veronica.

Ms. Katherine Parker: Yes.

Director Veronica Chapa Gorczynski: With regards to the press conference on the grade separations, I just wanted to say thank you for everybody who supported the effort and got to the press conference. I got hugs from two residents who were there. They could not believe that this event was happening in their neighborhood. And I had someone else text me that they were dancing in their house with the Houston Chronicle article. And so I share that with you because we forget that there's an impact sometimes on people. It's not just about goods. But you have a lot of residents who have been with you since 2012 and were just over the moon and excited, and there were tears of joy and excitement and all sorts of things that I wish you all could have experienced. But I just want to say thank you and share that story with you.

Ms. Katherine Parker: Yes, I think her name is Lindsey Williams. She's normally on with us. Yes, she actually wrote a thank you note to the Rail District for the time and effort. So, she is definitely I know one of those residents who is excited about...

Director Jon Keeney: I know from feedback from Dr. Carol that Katherine organized a lot of that event herself.

Ms. Katherine Parker: Yes.

Director Jon Keeney: And so she deserves a great deal of credit for the effectiveness of that event per say and the good press. And those of you who read the article in the Chronicle, it was a very positive article. And it's always good for this organization to get that kind of upbeat review.

Ms. Katherine Parker: Yes, it was a great collaboration between the FRA, their staff on the ground, and then the DC component. Also I want to say thank you to HBT, UP. We sent an email and said, "Hey, can we use your right of way?" And they, kind of last minute, pulled it together and allowed us to come. The administrator... we had a tour before the press conference, so he was with us for an hour before we met at UP's facility in their conference room and walked to York/Sampson and then came together at the press conference. So, really a lot of things, a lot of moving parts, but it came together really well on that day. So, we were happy to be able to accommodate him being here. And he knows Houston. Every time we saw him, we made sure that he remembered, "We want you to come back. We really would like for you to have a big check with the dollar amount on it, but if you give us positive news we'll like as well." So, he did that. So, that was a plus for us.

Director Bruce Mann: I think... I want to make sure we don't leave this without really acknowledging the Rail District because that project would not have happened...

Ms. Katherine Parker: Exactly.

Director Bruce Mann: ...the way it did as quickly as it did without all of the work that the Rail District has done on this. The design work, preliminary design work that's gotten done, the initial grants to be able to turn this into a 120-million-dollar project. So, big kudos to you and to Dr. Lewis because I know you both spent a lot of time behind the scenes trying to corral this thing and find what was a shortfall of around five million dollars and turn this into the project that we have. So, I want to make sure that publicly you guys are acknowledged for a lot of behind the scenes work that you all did.

Ms. Katherine Parker: Thanks. Appreciate it.

Director Bruce Mann: So, congratulations for that. And really like you said, the administrator heard it from a lot of people, "Hey, you need to come back with more checks." And the role of HART and the Rail District in kind of the path forward. So, I think this is really just the beginning. This isn't... We're going to celebrate the win, and we'll spike the football, but we still got three, four, five, six, eight more games to go. We're just getting started.

Director Stephen Gilbreath: I did have a question and/or a comment. Somebody I talked to, they were really excited about the project, and then the next breath was, "How long is it going to take?" And I said, "I have no idea." And Bruce, you had mentioned that some preliminary work had been done. What are the...? It's in the City's court now to implement the project. Are they going to have to go through a whole environmental process? And of course then design and all that. Where do things stand, I guess with the City? What's their next steps? Do we know?

Director Bruce Mann: I'm going to defer to Katherine.

Ms. Katherine Parker: Those are the details that we're working through now. And one of the issues is our construction money is through FHWA, but the FRA is the one who administered this. So, we have the opportunity to roll that and have the FRA be the administrator. But we're looking at the pros and cons of all of it. Both of those locations had their CEs when we went into this, so that kind of was one of the indicators that this could be one of the projects that was more shovel ready for lack of... than others. But I'm pretty sure because of the timeframe... It's been ten years, so there are some things that will be reviewed. Land use has changed. And so that's all a part of the preliminary engineering that they're taking on to get us to that point. And those tweaks that will be needed. Of course, there can't be any major changes because it has to be as the application. But we tried our best to acknowledge that we know there have been changes since the time we began this process. But that is one of the conversations we're having about what would be best as far as moving the project forward, which agency to administer it, or is it split, or what are the best options.

Director Stephen Gilbreath: Well, and the other question, too, is how far can the 36 million dollars extend in today's market.

Ms. Katherine Parker: Exactly.

Director Stephen Gilbreath: That doesn't go as far as it used to four or five years ago. Okay, yes. So, we at least have our finger on the pulse of what are the next steps in the project.

Ms. Katherine Parker: Right. Right. So, this initial monies, that fills the gap. So, we had construction money on the books. The CMAC funds has been on the books for years. And so that was one of the other initial things that it was like, "We got to get this moving forward, or we'll lose this money." These issues still exist, but we have this gap. And if you don't know the history, we started with the railroads in order to provide real estate and cash. Okay, so one piece of that didn't happen. So, then after that the City of Houston was always going to provide the local share. But when that fell apart then they took it out of their CIP. So, then that pushed us from \$4 million to \$14 million gap. So, as Dr. Lewis a lot of times says, we kind of had our hats in our hand, talking to each group, "Can you put in a million?" And so when this opportunity came up, we were a little bit closer I think than other entities as far as being able to apply. Knowing that there's still quite a bit of work to do, but we feel like it still is a viable project, and that the community would benefit most from it. And so hopefully this project will be a springboard not just for the Houston area but for the region, especially for the Rail District. There are other... some of our counties that would like to have grade separations or just really upgrades to their crossings. Maybe not a grade separation but lights and gates or something that would help in their area. And in that case, it may just be one crossing as opposed to what we have now. Usually those stretches of corridors are 13 or 14 crossings.

Co-Chair Ron Beeson: Alright, thank you, Executive Director Parker. I would like to share and echo comments from Chairwomen Lewis that were shared with me to present today, and that is from her, "I express great appreciation to Katherine Parker for her incredible contribution to our being granted the award by FRA. You all know how many years we've discussed the grade separation at Commerce and Navigation. This allocation has York/Sampson that was also on our list of sealed corridors. We were pursuing one at a time but are grateful that the application filed by the City on behalf of the region included both. Katherine provided much of the logistics work

and enabled the ceremony to proceed without a single hitch. So, I thank Katherine profusely for her contributions to the application process and for the ceremony that occurred last Wednesday.” So, thank you so much.

Ms. Katherine Parker: Thank you so much. I appreciate that.

Co-Chair Ron Beeson: You deserve it. Okay. Any further comments regarding HART? If not, we’re going to move on to agenda item number 11. The only item I would like to update on is that regarding US 90A transit corridor study. On May 9th, there was a request for a proposal that was posted. And the request for proposals are due by June 22nd at noon. And the steering committee met on May 23rd. So, that is work in progress, but that is the update regarding US 90A. Our next meeting will be Tuesday, July 11th, 2023.

Co-Chair Ron Beeson: And with that, I would entertain a motion to adjourn.

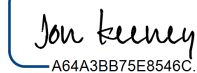
Director Jon Keeney: So moved.

Director Bruce Mann: And second.

Co-Chair Ron Beeson: Alright. Mayor Keeney and Mr. Mann. Thank you so much. You all have a good day. (Adjourned at 2:44 p.m.)

ATTEST:

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Jon Keeney, Secretary
Gulf Coast Rail District

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