

The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey
Board Meeting Transcripts
September 22, 2011

[Chair D. Samson] The Board Meeting of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey and its subsidiaries is now called to order. In addition, as part of today's proceedings, a special meeting of the Operations Committee will be held to consider certain matters on today's agenda. Prior to today's meeting, the Committees on Capital Programs/Agency Planning and Operations met in public session, the World Trade Center Redevelopment Subcommittee met in executive session, and the World Trade Center Redevelopment Subcommittee met in executive session on September 7, 2011, and the Audit Committee met in executive session on September 8, 2011. Their reports will be filed with the official minutes of today's Board Meeting. The commissioners also met in executive session prior to today's Board Meeting to discuss matters related to the purchase, sale, or lease of real property or securities where disclosure would affect the value thereof or the public interest and matters involving ongoing negotiations, reviews of contracts or proposals. In accordance with the Bylaws of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, Port Authority Trans-Hudson Corporation, Newark Legal and Communications Center Urban Renewal Corporation, and the New York and New Jersey Railroad Corporation, the Nominating Committee of the Board met in executive session prior to today's meeting in connection with the election of Officers. Commissioner Sartor, as Chair of the Nominating Committee, may we have your report?

[Comm. A. Sartor] Yes, Mr. Chairman. On behalf of the Nominating Committee for the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, Port Authority Trans-Hudson Corporation, Newark Legal and Communications Center Urban Renewal Corporation, and the New York and New Jersey Railroad Corporation, it is our report that at its meeting held earlier today, in accordance with the revisions of Article 7 of the Bylaws, the committee by unanimous action submits the nomination of Scott H. Rechler for the office of Vice-Chair.

[Chair D. Samson] Thank you. I'd like to move this nomination forward for approval.

[Comm. A. Sartor] Second.

[Chair D. Samson] May I have a second?

[multiple commissioners] Second.

[Chair D. Samson] All in favor?

[all] Aye.

[Chair D. Samson] So moved. Congratulations, Scott.

[Vice-Chair S. Rechler] Thank you.

[Chair D. Samson] Welcome aboard. I ought to say two things about this. Over the last several months in

working with Scott Rechler, I have come to appreciate his leadership and his expertise in the kinds of matters that the Board regularly deals with. Personally, it's a pleasure for me to deal with him, and professionally, I compliment him on behalf of the entire board. We all look forward to working with you. Thank you. I also want to make a comment today about the-- and we'll probably deal with it in more detail at a future Board Meeting-- on the resignation of Vice-Chairman Stanley Grayson. Stan was a sound and prudent voice for the Board. He gave us wise counsel. We all enjoyed working with him personally and professionally, and we all wish him good luck. We continue to wish him the best in his professional and personal life, and we all look forward to continuing to see him personally. But more on that at a future Board Meeting. Will the Port Authority Police Department World Trade Center Command please step forward. On behalf of the Board of Commissioners, I'd like to recognize members of the Port Authority Police Department World Trade Center Command, whose devotion to duty since the September 11 terrorist attacks has been a recurring source of pride and reassurance for our agency. The Port Authority lost 84 members of its family that terrible day ten years ago, 37 of them from our police department. Honoring their colleagues' memories, our Port Authority police force has remained dedicated to safeguarding the World Trade Center site as we rebuild. We salute them for their service in the past and for the future. The World Trade Center Command is accepting this recognition on behalf of the entire Port Authority Police Department. Our law enforcement officers' performance during the recent heightened security threat served as yet another reminder of their enduring professionalism and the continued vigilance we know we can expect from them in the future. Please join me in applauding them.

[applause]

[applause] Will Steve Plate please step forward. Steve. In October 2008 the Port Authority made a commitment to this region and to the world that upon the 10th anniversary of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, construction of the National September 11 Memorial Plaza would be completed. On September 11, 2011, the National September Memorial, "Reflecting Absence," was delivered. The memorial, which features two massive reflecting pools over the footprints of the original Twin Towers, with waterfalls cascading down their sides, the names of the 2,983 who perished on September 11, 2001, and February 26, 1993, at the World Trade Center inscribed around the edges of the memorial waterfalls, and 225 swamp oak trees planted around a 170,000 square foot plaza is now in place, signifying a proper memorial to the victims and an iconic symbol that we will never forget. In recognition of outstanding achievement in not only meeting but surpassing the expectations of this challenging schedule, it is with great pride on behalf of the entire Board of Commissioners that I ask Steve Plate, Deputy Chief of Capital Programs and Director of World Trade Center Construction, to accept this certificate of exceptional service to the World Trade Center construction team. It's because of the hard work and dedication of this extraordinary team that the family members and visitors from around the world now have a place of solace to reflect and pay tribute to those who were lost on September 11, 2001, and February 26, 1993. Steve?

[applause] Thanks, Steve. It's probably a good opportunity for me just to add some personal comments on behalf of the entire board about last week's September 11, 2001, 10-year anniversary. Both Steve Plate and his construction team, as well as the entire Port Authority management and all its employees, deserve enormous appreciation for a job well done. As I said in these remarks about the World Trade Center construction team, the entire staff, from Chris Ward and Bill Baroni all the way down, did a magnificent job in presenting a very challenging moment with absolute good taste, extraordinary security, and provided an experience for all of us that was very powerful and moving. So I thank you, Chris, I thank

you, Bill, your entire team. You did a great job. Thank you.

[applause] We will now provide an opportunity for members of the public to comment on other Port Authority matters not on today's agenda. This public comment period, which is limited to 30 minutes in total, provides an opportunity for members of the public to present their views directly to the Board but does not provide for a dialogue. Members of the public wishing to discuss a specific matter with the Port Authority staff are advised to contact our Public Affairs Department. Speakers are asked to comply with the fixed time limit of three minutes. The first speaker is Margaret Donovan of the Twin Towers Alliance.

[M. Donovan] Good afternoon. In September 2010 the Times quoted the PA's project manager, who insisted that commuters would never have to support One World Trade Center. Eleven months later, Chairman Samson tried to justify the unforeseen hikes on the grounds that they had to happen. He then gave the underlying reasons why they had to happen. But not one of those reasons had materially changed since ace business analyst Joe Nocera's column. There was no reason to suddenly discover that they had to happen and hurriedly vote on the hikes in the middle of August, unless it was to take advantage of the distractions of summer and brazenly ride the September 11th wave. The incompetence is staggering and so is the deception. No one is sadder than we are to watch a venerable institution deteriorate. But without credibility, the once proud PA is nothing but a shell. Why would anyone buy the bonds of an agency that either doesn't know what it is talking about or can't be trusted? And how can the federal government avoid a top to bottom audit of this agency, not just your books but the process that gave us the distressed project? The titanic spirit of Austin Tobin must be thundering in heaven over the incompetence and weeping over the deception. Why did you get 1,500 people out to wait their turn to make a comment with not a single commissioner present to look them in the eye, knowing that the comments would be reviewed but the hikes had to happen? And why wasn't our Freedom of Information request for the transcript of those comments sent to us after the 9/11 anniversary had passed? Why do you always behave as if you have something to hide? Those who would defend your performance need to first ask themselves why all the real decision making has been done in secret. If they are honest, they will come up with the only plausible answer, because the public would never have approved of what was going on. That is what makes it a swindle. If the public had been allowed to observe the process, we would not be looking at two unfinished towers with only two deeply subsidized tenants today, and I guarantee you Larry the freeholder would never have been given squatter's rights to the public's precious property. There is so much more to say, but you don't want to hear it or you wouldn't cling to the arbitrary three-minute limit. But the executive director of New York Department of State's highly regarded Committee on Open Government said it all when he recently copied you in on the advisory opinion we'd requested. It may be nonbinding, but his conclusion, which encouraged you and the LMDC and various city agencies to "reconsider your actions and transparency" carries a lot of weight. And it is great advice, because your chickens are certainly coming home to roost. But it's not too late to do the right thing. Thank you.

[Chair D. Samson] Thank you. The next speaker is Richard Hughes of the Twin Towers Alliance.

[R. Hughes] Good afternoon. At the last Board Meeting we heard the Port Authority claim that it is the engine of growth and prosperity for the New York metropolitan region. Of course, not only is this a direct contradiction of Economics 101, it was a particularly tone deaf thing to say since at the last meeting you rammed through the most punitive, confiscatory, and extortionate toll increase in your history. It's true that you're an engine of growth for your friends in the construction unions, but you are no engine of growth for the region. Far from it. In fact, you're a giant wet blanket over the economy of New York and

New Jersey. We are in the worst recession in more than 70 years, yet you raise tolls 50 percent. It now costs an exorbitant and extortionate \$12 to get into Manhattan, and yet you think people will pay that and keep paying that? No, of course not. They'll stay in New Jersey if they can, and your receipts will continue to decline. By raising truck tolls \$20, you've just increased the cost of virtually everything coming into New York City and added to the burdens of the average New Yorker during very tough times. Recently the Port Authority celebrated its 90th birthday. Ninety years is a long time--a long life for any organization. In fact, it makes you an old--a very old--agency. And indeed, you're really showing your years. I was thinking back the other night to when this agency had the vision and the audacity to build the Twin Towers. Those were your glory years. You were what? Forty-five, 50 years old? You were in the prime of life, and you knew what to do and how to do it. Now as an agency you're old and doddering and senile. You're drooling at the mouth. You're gaga. You're talking nonsense and, worse, doing foolish, irresponsible things. And like the elderly, who know they are losing it but refuse to accept the fact of their decline, you're doing everything in secret. You won't let the public see what's going on even as you spend the public's money. That's why the Port Authority needs to be sent to a nursing home for aging bureaucracies. This agency needs to be retired. It needs to be broken up, its assets sold, its bureaucrats sent packing. You no longer have what it takes. You have shown you are not competent to handle the public's money anymore, and the public needs to take charge of your affairs, which, by the way, are our affairs as well, and put them back in order before you make things even worse than they already are. Thank you.

[Chair D. Samson] Thank you. Our next speaker is Yvonne Moore.

[Y. Moore] Good afternoon. It's a pleasure to be before you today. My name is Yvonne Garrett Moore, and I have submitted and prepared a letter to Mr. Christopher Ward as well as to the Board regarding some concerns in Newark. I'll read the letter to you, if I may. Excuse my broken glasses. My name is Yvonne Garrett Moore, and I am a public relations and planning consultant living and working in Newark, New Jersey. I have proposed an economic and service redevelopment plan for Newark International Airport that I would like to formally propose to Port Authority of New York and New Jersey for consideration as a public-private initiative. This letter, and my presence here today, is to introduce myself and to request consideration for the redevelopment of a feasibility study for the proposed plan. The plan is simply called Airport City at Newark International Airport. Airport City would be designed as a new global welcome center with carefully planned amenities and services, expanding and upgrading a section of Newark International Airport's existing infrastructure to maximize serviceability and economic growth. Airport City would be distinguished by its high caliber, unique design as a mixed use commercial and residential facility which would attract and provide anticipated services for travelers, industry agents, and regional residents, ultimately providing a gratifying, quality service experience and harnessing the existing and future economic potential of Newark Liberty International Airport. My passion as a Newark resident and homeowner is to see the dormant and untapped creative potential and resources that exist in our citizens and in the infrastructure cultivated and realized. I had the good fortune to brush the elbow of the late Maynard Jackson, former mayor of Atlanta, Georgia. He imparted a few words to me, yet a valuable lesson. He said, "Yvonne, the airport," referring to growth and the vitality of Atlanta. We don't have to reinvent the wheel, just build on the successes. I see this proposed plan as a vital link contributing to the growth and stability of our great city, our region, as a new international destination. I know you will agree, without a vision the people perish. This vision and plan can contribute a practical solution to our region's economic growth need and sustainability, offering jobs, building services and business opportunities. It is my hope that the leadership of Port Authority recognize this

potential innovative plan and gives consideration to develop the requested feasibility study to prove the merit of this proposed initiative. Honoring this request will help to empower our collective ability to emerge, our region to flourish in these challenging times. I am a passionate resident of Newark. Newark is bleeding, Newark is hurting. We have so many people who need the help of innovation to help bring this city back to its glory. It has the potential and the infrastructure to continue to serve our world in a very special way. So we thank you for considering this. This innovation will help to stimulate great growth and potential for our city. And as a mother of a 12-year-old, raising a son in Newark, it's needed to provide the type of oversight to assure our success in the future. Thank you very much.

[Chair D. Samson] Thank you. Our next and last speaker is Murray Bodin.

[M. Bodin] Commissioner Steiner set the tone this morning at the first meeting. They proposed some project, and it would take three years to get it started. And he said, "We can't wait three years. We need it done now." "Go back and rethink it. Come up with another idea." It's a time of change. We can't do it the old way. For ten years I opposed the Tappan Zee Bridge replacement. About a month ago I looked at it again and I said, "In these circumstances, it's time we did something." I stood before you some months ago, and I questioned about Mr. Ward, and I now want to tell you I support Chris Ward. I've watched him very closely for the last couple of months. He deserves my support. Tuesday I was 40 minutes in front of a New Jersey judge. The New Jersey Turnpike Authority took me to court with a restraining order because I want to correct the lines on the Turnpike that have been wrong for some years. I also went to the Westchester County Airport the week before to pick up somebody for a funeral, and I saw the lines were wrong. I asked Westchester to work with me, and some traffic engineer came out, we reviewed them, he said, "You're right. We missed this." Not many of them, but they're going to be fixed. So here I am talking to you about change. About two weeks ago I went to the New Jersey Transit meeting. They're buying 380 new buses. The one thing you need to know when you're a bus driver is how fast the bus is going. That's a number. It's not an analog gauge which was connected to the transmission 50 years ago. Most of you have tachometers on the front of your car. Por que? Why? You've got an automatic transmission. The tachometer tells you zero. The inability of our society to stop putting tachometers on dashboards and to start putting a number as is on the Prius-- Every bus driver I talk to says, "The only thing I need to know when I look down is the number." At the New Jersey Transit meeting I demanded that those 380 new buses come in with the speed indicated as a number and not as an analog. This is about looking at what has to be done today differently. And symbolically, it's that number on a bus. Commissioner Steiner was right this morning. We have to look at things differently. It's about time. And I will stand up and tell you change is here. This is what's going on. My grandson and my granddaughter walk around with this in their hand, they get the information. I don't even have the iPad anymore. My emails come here, not there. With your permission, I'd like to read an email I got while I was waiting outside from a legislator in Westchester. "I'm glad to hear the Westchester experience is working in New Jersey "and that you are not in the slammer." "Remember Lincoln's words: 'Persuasion, kind unassuming persuasion, "should be adopted to influence the conduct of men."' Especially when you're dealing with a judge.

[Chair D. Samson] Thank you. May I have a motion to move the consent calendar for approval?

[unidentified commissioner] So moved.

[Chair D. Samson] Second?

[unidentified commissioner] Second.

[Chair D. Samson] All in favor?

[all] Aye.

[Chair D. Samson] So moved. There being no further business, I move to adjourn the meeting. May I have a second?

[Comm. A. Sartor] Second.

[Chair D. Samson] All in favor?

[all] Aye.

[Chair D. Samson] Thank you.