**SOUTHERN RAIL COMMISSION**

**FULL COMMISSION MEETING**

**Hampton Inn, New Orleans, Louisiana**

**December 14, 2012**

**3:30 pm**

The meeting was called to order by Vice Chairman Knox Ross at approximately 3:45 p.m. waiting for Billy McFarland to have a quorum. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Vice Chairman Ross. The Commissioners’ Roll was called by Chris Miller and a quorum was confirmed.

**ALABAMA MISSISSIPPI**

Billy McFarland Charles Ozier

Greg White Knox Ross

Larry Watt (Toby Bennington proxy) Kay Kell (Knox Ross proxy)

Rep. Tommy Woods (Charles Ozier proxy)

**LOUISIANA**

Colonel Phil Jones

Michael Jackson

Rep. Walt Leger (Michael Jackson proxy)

**GUEST**

Paul Waidhas, BKI

Todd Stennis, Amtrak
Mike Hearsh

SARPC

Chris Miller
Grace Crawford

Vice Chairman Knox Ross asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the September 14, 2012 Full Commission Meeting and the November 5, 2012 Executive Committee Teleconference. Commissioner Greg White made a motion to approve the minutes and Michael Jackson seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

**OLD BUSINESS**

*Report: Adams and Reese Government Relations Report*

The Ad-hoc committee (Toby Bennington) will schedule a conference call with Jeff Brooks to make a formal request to Amtrak for participation. A coalition needs to be established to put together a strategy to lobby Amtrak, etc.

*Report: Gulf Coast Rail Summit, Mobile, Alabama*

Chris Miller reported that the next Mayor Summit meeting for Mayor Jones working with the Mayor of Biloxi will be in the spring to have study completed with Amtrak. One problem noted was restoring service for passenger rail service on the freight routes that CSX is using and getting their support/involvement to restore the service. Col. Jones suggested that we need to support the railroads, such as, improve the crossings, as the “carrot” to get them on board for Class 1 railroads – what can we do to help? Todd Stennis suggested that we needed to address what the railroad needs and go to the legislature to amend the Amtrak operating budget for the New Orleans to Orlando route for contractual authority. A decision was made for the commission to be involved with the upcoming Mayor’s Summit to have a formal request/letter for a specific scope of work to Amtrak update their numbers. SRC needs to look at additional rail crossing safety money as a way to show that the SRC is benefitting the state’s DOT. Chairman Ross asked Colonel Jones and Michael Jackson to please let the commission know if there was anything the SRC can do for the support of the New Orleans to Baton Rouge project. It was planned for our next meeting to coincide with the Gulf Coast Rail Summit meeting in March.

A report from Adams and Reese was passed out.

*Vacancies on Commission*

Commissioner McFarland noted that it was a waste of time for discussion.

*Ratification:
Travel Policy for reimbursed expenses*

 *B. General, 2. Pre-approved commission travel includes regularly scheduled Southern Rail Commission meetings and SRC Executive Committee meetings. In the event of regularly scheduled Commission meetings only one day of lodging and parking expenses will be reimbursed.*

**NEW BUSINESS**

*Resolution 2012-3 – Honoring the Service of Mr. Martin Bruno of Louisiana*

*Resolution 2012-4 – Honoring the Service of Mr. J.W. McFarland, Jr.*

Administrative Services

(Discussion held in closed session.)