



MEETING NOTICE

TO: North East Texas Regional Mobility Authority Board Members  
FROM: Linda Thomas, Chair  
DATE: Tuesday, April 13, 2021  
SUBJECT: **April Board Meeting**

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The next meeting of the NET RMA is scheduled as follows:

**DATE:** Tuesday, April 13, 2021  
**TIME:** 1:30 PM  
**PLACE:** Videoconference accessible at [www.netrma.org](http://www.netrma.org)

Enclosed please find the agenda and other pertinent information for your review prior to the meeting. Should you have any questions, please call Bianca Felux at 903.630.7894.

**NORTH EAST TEXAS REGIONAL MOBILITY AUTHORITY (NET RMA)**  
**BOARD OF DIRECTORS REGULAR MEETING**  
Tuesday, April 13, 2021, 1:30 P.M.

**NOTICE TO MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC:** Pursuant to the suspension of certain open meetings laws by Governor Greg Abbott, this meeting will be held by video and teleconference in order to advance the public health goal of limiting face-to-face meetings to slow the spread of COVID-19. Some staff and Board Members may be present in the NET RMA offices while others may attend the meeting via telephonic and/or videoconference. In order to maintain safe social distancing, members of the public will not be permitted to attend in person. Instead, we ask that you access the Board Meeting online via our website at [www.netrma.org](http://www.netrma.org). Members of the public that wish to join the telephonic and/or videoconference to provide comments during the Board Meeting must register by 1:00 P.M. on Tuesday, April 13, 2021 by submitting a witness registration form at [www.netrma.org](http://www.netrma.org) or by contacting the NET RMA at (903) 630-7894.

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**1. CALL TO ORDER AND DECLARATION OF QUORUM.**

*Notice of this meeting was posted with the Secretary of State's Office and on the NET RMA website and office on Friday, April 9, 2021.*

Meeting began 1:31 PM

**2. INVOCATION.**

**3. WELCOME & INTRODUCTION OF BOARD MEMBERS.**

Present: Jason Ray, Keith Honey, Dave Spurrier, Gary Halbrooks, Bill Bala, Dr. James Harris, Dan Droege, Andrea Williams-McCoy, Nathan Priefert, Ben Hamilton, Brian Whatley, Larry Morse, Robert Messer

**4. OPEN PUBLIC FORUM/COMMENT PERIOD.**

No comments.

**5. DISCUSSION, CONSIDERATION AND APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FOR THE FEBRUARY 9, 2021 REGULAR BOARD MEETING.** **Action Item**

Motion to approve: Robert Messer. 2<sup>nd</sup>: Bill Bala. Unanimously approved.

**6. CHAIR'S REPORT.**

**Linda Thomas**

Linda Thomas congratulated Glenn on his 3<sup>rd</sup> grandchild. She welcomed all to the newly enhanced virtual board meeting and stated that the staff has been working hard on making it work best for everyone. There has also been an update on committees due to new board members. She thanked all for their continued service and passion for transportation. The city of Lindale chamber president stated that the town has experienced a lot of economic growth in part, thanks to Toll 49. Several small businesses have opened up. Economic development follows proper infrastructure.

**7. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**A. Community Relations Committee**

**Andrea Williams McCoy**

Andrea Williams-McCoy thanked the board for the opportunity to provide the update. She stated that they have been working with Hahn Communications with putting together a driver's safety campaign. Maintaining a safe road is number one for the NET RMA. They found that people's perceptions drive their habits and they wanted to make sure that the public has ...Focusing on driver behavior is where the needle can be moved. It's an interesting piece to look at in terms of finding out what driver's think versus the actual statistics. One of the challenges was to turn the mirror on the driver to make sure that they are using safe driving practices. Sam with Hahn Public provided an additional presentation and stated that the focus is primarily around distracted driving. The public perception regarding road safety conditions has been impacted by some media coverage. To start the campaign, they had a small survey to get the public perception of the toll. The survey was 23 questions and they received 200 completes. They asked survey participants how Toll 49 compares to other roads per 3 categories based on convenience, safety,

and quality. Overall, 45% seem to believe Toll 49 is more convenient than other roads; however, only 28% believed it was safer. They dove into that safety perception. 62% of the survey participants stated that most safety issues come from other drivers. The takeaway based on the research indicated that the perception is that drivers are the leading cause for accidents. The campaign focus was how to educate the public and increase driver safety. There are 2 objectives that work with the public and media as well as the creative advertising campaign. Safe driving is a very serious topic and there is a fine line between shaming drivers vs. educating. They instead focused on keeping a lighter tone with a little bit of humor on a very serious topic. They landed on a concept called, "Eyes on the road, ya'll". She then provided images they are utilizing as concepts for ads featuring exaggerated individuals distracted while driving accompanied by a phrase to drive home the need to keep eyes on the road. She stated they like these concepts because they can easily be applied via most media outlets whether radio, tv, billboards, etc. They also started a teen safety college scholarship which will ask high school seniors to write an essay related to the importance of safe driving to focus on young drivers. They expect this campaign to launch early this coming summer. She also stated that they are currently running some social media posts and media spots for national distracted driving awareness month. She wanted to highlight just one of those spots for the board members. She then showed a silent video of a cartoon man driving the length of a football field. Andrea Williams-McCoy then stated that the focus is to make perception match reality and the reality is that Toll 49 is a safe road. Focusing on driver behaviors is where they believe they can move the needle. Linda Thomas stated that Andrea and Sam did a great job.

**B. Member Outreach Committee**

**John Cloutier**

Glenn Green stated that John Cloutier was unable to join today so Glenn provided a brief overview. He stated that notifications for priority project submittals would be going out very soon. The committee will be getting together before long.

**C. East Texas Hourglass Committee**

**Dave Spurrier**

Dave Spurrier stated that they will be holding the next meeting very soon. There will be updates on the status of Segment 6 and talks on Segment 7 and 8. Glenn Green stated that the committee would be meeting to discuss different opportunities at each segment. They would like to look at other opportunities occurring that may influence the viability of one of the segments. They wanted to get input from the committee on potential future projects. Dave Spurrier stated that they were going to try to get this scheduled within the next 30 days.

**8. REVIEW AND ACCEPTANCE OF NET RMA FINANCIAL STATEMENTS.**

Dianne Johnston stated that the financial statement slides will only provide highlights; however, the full set of the detailed financials are on pages 20-23 on the board book. The highlights provided are what they felt was most meaningful to the board and assured all that she reviews everything closely so if there was anything that popped out, she would let them know. To start, electronic/ net toll revenue is below budget by 6%. This section does have an estimate in it due to TxTag back office conversion earlier this year. They hope that true transactions will be reconciled sometime this week which she hopes will mean more funds will be coming their way. Net video revenue is over budget by 5%. Total operating revenue is underbudget by 2%. Total operating expenses are under budget by 16%. Toll 49 operating expenses are underbudget 14%. Other income expense are underbudget 5%. Net income shows a deficit by 18%.

Motion to approve: Gary Halbrooks. 2<sup>nd</sup>: Andrea Williams-McCoy. Unanimously approved.

**9. REPORT ON TOLL 49 TOLLING TRANSACTIONS AND REVENUE.**

**A. Comprehensive Transaction Report by CDM Smith**

Dianne Johnston stated that the January average is below where they were in December but that is a pretty typical pattern. February's average is much lower largely due to it being a short month and the ice storm. March is the highest it's been since June 2019. They had a record day of an all time high of 51k transactions. The presentation was then sent to Christopher Mwalwanda for a deeper look. He stated that as vaccinations continue to grow, trends are showing an upward trend in transactions across the country. There is stabilization in economic growth. Employment trends are also stabilizing. Overall things are normalizing. Smith County fared fairly well comparatively. Mobility is still not where it once was; however, normal trends are slowly beginning to return. Toll 49 is outpacing state and national trends towards a positive uptick. Transactions are beginning to overcome 2019's numbers which is great news. Trucks continue to perform

well and continue to trend in a positive direction and more than 2019. Daily total transactions are also steadily increasing which is a very positive trend and as a result of that, revenue is showing a steady incline. Compared to other facilities, Toll 49 has recovered a lot faster than other facilities. To summarize, employment trends are stabilizing, COVID trends are dipping as vaccines continue to grow and transactions are growing. Andrea Williams-McCoy asked if there are any indications of what might be seen 6 months out. Chris stated they are certain looking into that. They are tracking variances that may be in place. Overall, everything they are studying suggests that things are continuing to improve. They are also tracking the return to work. It may be a little early to predict long-term but they are seeing that there is some flexibility in work places where employees are continuing to work from home or only partially returning to the office. Andrea Williams-McCoy stated that she found it interesting that they're already seeing increases even though not everyone has gone back to the office. So if they're seeing traffic increases when people aren't going to work like they were previously; what's driving the increase? Chris stated that the lifting of restrictions could contribute to that. People are driving more recreationally. They'll be tracking to see if those increases are not just a function of people wanting to travel. There's a combination of both local elements and a recreational travel surge. Trucks are continuing to grow and showing good numbers which is not related to recreation. That's just another thing they'll continue to track as well.

**10. UPDATE ON KAUFMAN COUNTY PRIORITY PROJECT.**

**Kaufman County Judge Hal Richards**

Judge Hal Richards provided the presentation. He thanked the NET RMA for their support. He has enjoyed listening to Robert Messer. He's been a great advocate for the NET RMA. He wanted to speak on the Kaufman County project and stated that Kaufman County may be the fastest county in the NET RMA. It may be the 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> fastest growing county in the US. TxDOT is also doing a great job on maintaining state roads like 243. The turn lanes that NET RMA has helped build through priority projects has been a great help. He hoped that 243 project is just a beginning step for continued partnership with the NET RMA. Linda Thomas thanked him for joining and looks forward to a bright future ahead.

**11. DISCUSSION, CONSIDERATION AND POSSIBLE ACTION TO APPROVE THE ISSUANCE OF A REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FOR TOLL DEBT COLLECTION SERVICES.**

**(RESOLUTION 21-05)**

**Action Item**

Ron Fagan stated the current contract they have was made in 2019 with SWC. That was to allow debt collection from the previous collection agency. That agreement expires this year. They would like the board's permission to receive an RFP. Anticipated timeline would be to send out the request this month, proposal due by may and in June, have a recommendation. They would like the new contract to begin once the current one ends in September.

Motion to approve: Dan Droege. 2<sup>nd</sup>: Keith Honey. Unanimously approved.

**12. DISCUSSION, CONSIDERATION AND POSSIBLE ACTION TO APPROVE A WORK AUTHORIZATION WITH HNTB FOR PROJECT DEVELOPMENT SERVICES.**

**(RESOLUTION 21-06)**

**Action Item**

This will come from the general revenue portion of the budget. With this, they will still come in or at budget within the general funds.

Motion to approve: Andrea Williams-McCoy. 2<sup>nd</sup>: Dave Spurrier. Unanimously approved.

**13. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT.**

**A. Report on NET RMA Office Communication Enhancements**

Glenn stated they have been investing a lot of time and effort on the audio and visual software they are utilizing right now. He stated he doesn't believe it will be limited to just the board meetings and can be used for any other virtual meetings that may occur. It has been enhanced in a meaningful way. It'll also provide a mechanism in the future for board members that may not be able to attend.

## **B. Utilization of Board Committees**

He commended Andrea and her help with the media outreach campaign and agrees with her points. He intends to use the committees to give the board members a better opportunity to be more engaged and it's also a way to enhance his communication with the members. He is proposing to use the Executive Committee more and thinking that on the months they don't have a board meeting, they may want to use the Executive Committee for feedback on minor actions that do not need board approval. It's a continued effort to keep the board informed. Some members of the Executive Committee have expressed hesitation due to a fear that it may exclude other board members but this is just to serve as a quicker way to pass on information.

## **C. Report on Federal Infrastructure Plan**

There is an opportunity with the infrastructure plan. They are positioning themselves in anticipation of taking advantage of those. Linda Thomas and he had the opportunity to visit with Representative Gomert. They hope to have another opportunity soon.

## **D. Report on Human Resources Consulting Services Agreement**

He stated he brought a human resources professional on board. They are fortunate to have found her. She has a great level of experience and background. Katherine Hartvickson will provide HR support to the employees, implementation of performance reviews and expectations. She will also develop policies and procedures as well as online training. The importance of these trainings is that there are a few that everyone needs to have. Katherine Hartvickson thanked all for inviting her. She started her business in 2010 and has had multiple teams around the world. She is a certified professional coach and works with leadership teams through assessments that help play to their strengths. She has written 2 books with one being specifically related to HR. She also does leadership speaking as well and stated she is looking forward to working with Glenn and the team to provide counseling and coaching. Glenn stated that she has already been a wonderful asset.

## **E. Report on Automated Human Resources Information System**

Glenn Green stated that Katherine has been helping with this item. It is an automated system to help employees input information themselves to keep track of various items.

## **F. Update on Facility Maintenance Activity**

Glenn Green stated that their image is important to them. The facility needs to look good and maintained. There is some ware on the bridges, nothing structural, but it is mold and mildew. So maintenance work has been conducted to clean up those areas. Mark McClanahan is handling it through the maintenance budget and it is a minor amount of money. There is also some work on enhancing pavement in order to provide a better ride in places. They are also in the process of developing a 10yr pavement plan. It will be practical and allow the agency to implement it over time. It will extend the life of pavement. He will be coming back to the board to ask for approval of a plan for segments in most need. It's not an urgent need, but it is a need in order to prevent getting behind. The Texas Transportation Institute has been up here to help find what's best for Toll 49.

## **G. Update on Toll 49 Seal Coat Work**

Seal coat project is coming the weekend of May 1<sup>st</sup>. It is an application that utilizes hot asphalt and rock which the public can sometimes dislike. It is a great way to keep the road maintained and driving well. Mark McClanahan and his team will be out and monitoring back-ups and traffic. There will be delays. Messages will be on the message boards and Colleen will be head of the media outlets to try and reduce impact. It's an effort that is planned to be completed in 2-3 days. It is necessary to complete in the day. They evaluated potential for night work but seal coat is one of those items that cannot be done at night due to night's cooler temperatures. This project was approved some months ago by the board. They will also be bringing in local legal counsel to take charge on some of the other areas. Locke Lord has been appraised of this and kept in the loop.

#### 14. ADJOURNMENT.

Linda Thomas stated there are so many new things opening up to the NET RMA. She thanked the board members for their continued support.

Adjourned 3:00 PM

#### **EXECUTIVE SESSION - PURSUANT TO CHAPTER 551, SUBCHAPTER D, TEXAS GOVERNMENT CODE, IF ANY**

- **At any time during the meeting of the NET RMA Board of Directors, the Board may meet in executive session for consultation concerning matters under Chapter 551 of the Texas Government Code, including:**
  - A. Section 551.071. Consultation with Attorney—Consultation with and advice from legal counsel concerning pending/contemplated litigation, settlement offers and negotiations, ongoing disputes and potential disputes, and other legal issues.**
  - B. Section 551.072. Deliberation Regarding Real Property—Discussion of real property purchase, exchange, lease, license, gift, donation, and/or negotiated settlement, including property to be acquired for right-of-way.**
  - C. Section 551.074. Personnel Matters—Deliberation concerning the appointment, employment, reassignment, evaluation, duties, discipline, and/or dismissal of personnel.**

#### **OPEN COMMENT PERIOD**

The Board will allow an open comment period, **not to exceed one hour**, to receive public comment on any other matter that is under the jurisdiction of the Board, including an item listed on the agenda. Public comment that does not relate to a specific agenda item must be made during the open comment period. You must be recognized by the Chair.

Each speaker will be allowed a **maximum of three (3) minutes**. For subjects that are not otherwise part of the agenda for the meeting, Board members may neither comment nor question speakers during the open comment period, but may request the Chair, or a recognized committee, to investigate the subject further. No action will be taken on matters that are not part of the agenda for the meeting.

#### **NOTE**

Enumerated agenda items are assigned for ease of reference only, and will not necessarily be considered by the Board in that particular order. The Chair may rearrange the order in which agenda items are considered.

Presenters with audiovisual needs are requested to contact NET RMA at 903.630.7894 at least two working days prior to the meeting.

#### **ACCESSIBILITY STATEMENT FOR DISABLED PERSONS**

If any special assistance or accommodations are needed in order to access this RMA meeting, please contact NET RMA at 903.630.7894 at least two working days prior to the meeting so that appropriate arrangements can be made.