



# Board of Directors – Operations Committee

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## Meeting Details

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**Date:** July 20, 2023

**Time:** 9:30 AM

**Location:** Webinar & NCDOT Board Room –  
Room 150  
1 S. Wilmington St.  
Raleigh, NC 27601

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## Attendance

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**Members Present**

Montell Irvin

**Members Present Virtually**

Pamela Senegal, Charles Travis, Sam Hunt

**Members Absent**

## Welcome/Introductions, Call to Order & Declaration of Quorum

### Montell Irvin, Chair

### Discussion Summary

Chairman Montell Irvin called the July 20, 2023, North Carolina Turnpike Authority Operations Committee meeting to order and welcomed those in attendance. Mr. Irvin called roll and declared a quorum.

Chairman Irvin thanked everyone for attending and the staff for all of the good work that continues at Turnpike.

### Actions Taken

Information only/no action required.

# Approval of April 20, 2023, Meeting Minutes

## Montell Irvin, Chair

### Discussion Summary

Mr. Irvin noted everyone received a copy of the meeting minutes prior to the meeting and announced he would accept a motion to approve the April 20, 2023, meeting minutes as written.

### Actions Taken

The April 20, 2023, Operations Committee meeting minutes were unanimously approved upon a motion by Mayor Chuck Travis and second by Dr. Pamela Senegal.

## Opening Comments

### J.J. Eden, Executive Director

#### Discussion Summary

Mr. J. J. Eden began by welcoming everyone to the meeting. He notified the Committee Members about a recent tornado touch down which occurred about five miles away from the NC Quick Pass Rocky Mount office. Ms. Angela Queenland, Customer Service Manager, informed the group that there were no staff injuries and no damage to facilities. Ms. Queenland was in close contact with the Rocky Mount Manager, Ms. Karen Bowley, throughout the event timeframe. Ms. Bowley and Ms. Wanika Tolbert made the decision to take the staff and shelter in place as the storm moved through the area. Ms. Queenland noted that although none of the Quick Pass employees were directly affected by the Level 3 tornado, Rocky Mount was a close-knit community experiencing a scary situation. Mr. Irvin noted how thankful everyone was that NCTA wasn't directly affected, and thanked Ms. Queenland and her staff for their quick response and forward thinking during such an event. Mr. Eden noted that people and staff safety were always the most important thing. Mr. Eden also thanked GC Services (the staffing contractor – now called Intelogix) for helping to put all of the safety plans in place. Mr. Eden offered prayers to the two people in the town of Rocky Mount who had been critically injured in the storm.

Mr. Eden then noted that it had been busy at Turnpike. Listed below are several of the matters that Mr. Eden spoke about during the Discussion Summary section:

Mr. Eden shared that the NC Turnpike Authority had added several new employees:

- Mr. Scott Hardison - Triangle Expressway Maintenance Supervisor
- Ms. Beth Neely - System Analyst II. She is focused on quality control and is now solely working with NCTA and comes from NCDOT Governance.

- Mr. Dramel Rounds and Mr. Nathan Spicer – Tech I positions at the CSC working with Mr. Jerry Eakes. They work through a new contractor, Apex Systems.
- Mr. Bala (Balamurugan) Vetrivel – Technology Professional is working with Mr. Manish Chourey. He is with Transcore.

Mr. Eden said that the new BOS2 System (Back Office System) was working pretty well. The new NC Quick Pass App was up and running and he encouraged everyone to use it and to give it a good rating. He mentioned that there had been approximately 80,000 downloads of the App itself. Mr. Irvin noted that he, too, had used the App, and enjoyed it. Mr. Eden continued to say that the P3s (Public-Private-Partnerships) were still being worked on for Cape Fear and 77 South and more would be shared regarding these topics, as things moved forward.

Mr. Eden said that in regard to facilities, being out of the NCDOT Highway Building (due to construction closures) had been impacting the department. A recent ice cream social to thank employees had been quite beneficial as it brought the department together. Therefore, he was hoping to schedule regular get-togethers within the department to foster important cross-connections.

Mr. Eden shared as well that he was excited about the upcoming presentations by the interns. This being the third year of the NCTA Internship Program, he appreciated the support of the Board and promised that the Board Members would also be excited after learning about the amazing projects completed by this year's group. He said that this was a top tier group of interns. The presentations shared during the NCTA Finance Committee the previous day had been 'phenomenal' according to Mr. Eden. He stated that he knew that today's presentations would also be astounding. He continued to say that if this was an example of youth today, that 'we were in good hands.' He thanked Mr. Travis Feltes, and his firm, HNTB, for all of the hard work done to find, interview, and manage the interns throughout the program.

Mr. Irvin thanked Mr. Eden for all of the work done to foster the Internship program and stated that he looked forward to seeing how it succeeded in future years.

### **Actions Taken**

Information only/no action required.

## **Toll Technology Update**

### **Manish Chourey, Chief Technology Officer**

#### **Discussion Summary**

Mr. Manish Chourey provided updates and information regarding the Statewide Roadside Toll Collection System Procurement Contract Overview (RFP – Request for Proposal), Timeline, and Scope of Work. He finished his presentation with graphs showing the Traffic Increase information for the Triangle Expressway and Monroe Expressway road systems.

Mr. Montell Irvin noted that Mr. Chourey had mentioned that they expected eight vendors at the initial RFP meeting. He asked if the group expected eight or more submittals. Mr. Chourey answered that it could not be more than eight, as all submittal firms were required to attend the initial meeting. Mr. Irvin also wanted to know how it was decided how many firms would present proposals. Mr. Chourey said that he was hoping it was more than one who matched the requirements of the RFP. Mr. Irvin clarified that this contract would

allow for the application of the new system in line with all of the projects as needed - including the opening of 485. Mr. Chourey said that this was correct.

#### **Actions Taken**

Information only/no action required.

## **Customer Service Center Update**

### **Angela Queensland, Manager of Customer Service**

#### **Discussion Summary**

Ms. Angela Queensland provided the Committee Members with statistics and trends data for the Call Center. The charts she presented illustrated the number of customers helped per day at the Walk-In and Call Centers. Ms. Queensland also showed data regarding the Average Speed to Answer Calls and Average Call Handle Time. Ms. Queensland then shared pictures and details regarding the recent HBCU Intern and Fellow NC Quick Pass Operations Tour.

When Ms. Queensland was discussing the differences in calls handled automatically versus those handled by Customer Service Representatives, Mr. Irvin asked if the outgoing message for callers was changed when the new system was put in place. Mr. Queensland explained that there were a few changes to the system, with the verbiage and the order of choice offerings being adjusted. Mr. Irvin stressed that it was preferable for there to be more automated service. Ms. Queensland explained that it was a goal of the team to optimize automated service to the customers.

#### **Actions Taken**

Information only/no action required.

## **Marketing & Communications Update**

### **Logen Hodges, Marketing & Communications Manager**

#### **Discussion Summary**

Mr. Logen Hodges updated the Board Members with the status of the Communications Schedule for the Backoffice Systems Transition (BOS2 Update). It included information about the NC Quick Pass APP Launch Schedule, a recent Customer Email Campaign, NC Quick Pass App Statistics for Apple App Store and Google Play.

Mayor Chuck Travis said that he loved the App, and thanked Mr. Hodges and team for creating a good tool. Mr. Irvin agreed that the focus was about pleasing the customers by making the App easy to use.

#### **Actions Taken**

Information only/no action required.

## **Chief Engineer Update**

# Complete 540 Phase 1 Update

## Complete 540 Phase 2 Update

**Dennis Jernigan, P.E., Interim Chief Engineer**

### **Discussion Summary**

Mr. Dennis Jernigan presented information to the Committee Members regarding a recent NCDOT HBCU Program and NCTA Intern Tours of Complete 540, Photographs of Complete 540 Phase 1 progress, Charts with data regarding the Bridge & Culvert Construction completion status, and Complete 540 Openings schedules to this point. After taking questions regarding Phase 1, Mr. Jernigan shared Completion Details for Complete 540 Phase 2, Activities Underway, and Activities Completed.

Mr. Irvin noted that it appeared that a lot of progress was being made (including the turbine section), and he asked if contractors or NCDOT were giving him any indication about scheduling or problems. Mr. Jernigan noted that at this point the project was approximately mid-70's to mid-80's (range) for the percentage complete. He added that the 'B' job was the furthest along (the middle job). The current substantial completion for that job was April 17, 2024. The current substantial completion date for the other two jobs is July 3rd. The 'A' Project and the 2828 Project showed an estimated target date of June 1, 2024. These last two jobs were being closely monitored, and there were ongoing conversations with the contractor about ways to complete these sections earlier. These dates were achievable, according to Mr. Jernigan, if the weather allowed for progress to be made. He continued to say that the contractors had been able to gain some time on their schedules as noted in their last few estimates. He said that they believed that it was possible to bring the schedule shown 'to the left' and that 2828 was the most challenging in regard to scheduling, but the estimated date was achievable.

Mr. Irvin responded that it was not a typical DOT project and that the Turnpike Board Members needed to know if there were any issues or problems. They would need to know well in advance about it being brought to the attention of the Board. Mr. Jernigan said he would continue to keep the Board updated on this schedule.

Mr. J. J. Eden noted that there were some challenges. Mr. Jernigan agreed with his statement.

Mr. Sam Hunt noted that the sound walls looked very nice. Mr. Jernigan noted that in addition to the visually pleasing aspects of the types of walls built, these brick walls would require less maintenance over time and would last longer than painted concrete walls. Mr. Eden added that both sides of the walls are made of brick, meaning that the community members (residents) would have the benefit of looking at the brick walls as well.

Mr. Eden summarized the complexities involved with coordination between the different entities (NCTA, NCDOT, The Federal Government, Departments within NCTA). The whole team was working to make all processes work smoothly together, and Mr. Eden said that he would work to keep the Board Members updated, as the integration aspects improved.

### **Actions Taken**

Information only/no action required.

## 2023 Intern Presentations

### Travis Feltes, P.E., Project Engineer

#### Discussion Summary

Mr. Travis Feltes introduced the 2023 Summer Interns. He said that 2023 was the third year for NCTA to sponsor an internship program. He noted that the quality of the student experience in addition to the valued participation by each department was of importance. The variety and quality of the projects was improving each year, per Mr. Feltes, and the interns were meeting each challenge and really stepping up to the plate with impressive work. Mr. Feltes stressed that he was looking forward to working with Dr. Pamela Senegal to improve and expand the internship search, programs, and the student experiences for next year. Mr. Feltes mentioned that there had been three presentations at the Finance Committee Meeting, and there would be four intern presentations during this meeting. He then introduced four interns. Each gave a presentation about his or her own individual internship experience.

Technology Intern: Mr. Benjamin Scott. Mr. Scott will be graduating from East Carolina University with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Information & Computer Technology at the end of his internship. Mr. Scott presented a report to the Committee Members about the project he took on for the benefit of NCTA this summer. He explained how he was able to extract, transfer, and load process with data using AWS products. His problem to solve this summer was to unify data submitted by various vendors so that it was consistent in formats and layouts, thereby allowing for efficient analysis on NCTA owned systems. Mr. Scott shared a diagram that showed how raw data was now received, transformed, modified, saved, and sent back for storage within the system.

Mayor Chuck Travis noted that the presentation by Mr. Scott had been well done. Dr. Senegal agreed and asked about the quality of the data that the system held, and if there had been a lot of errors. Mr. Scott stated that there weren't any errors, but stated the fact that there were different fields that had to be recategorized or defined. He explained that moving data between types of storage necessitated the changes in processing that he was able to make. Dr. Senegal told Mr. Scott Congratulation on his graduation.

Technology Intern: Nicholas Clark. Mr. Clark is a rising Senior at Clemson University. He will be receiving a Bachelor of Science Degree in Information & Computer Technology in the Spring of 2024. Mr. Clark completed a project designed to optimize, debug, and refactor the Image Audit Tool. He explained to the Committee Members that NCTA utilized an Image Audit Automation Tool. He continued to say that although it was a great tool, there was still a requirement that five percent of all transactions be visually scanned and checked by staff members. Each CSR's (Customer Service Representative) job was to audit the automation tool. Mr. Clark's job this summer was to make the automation tool work better, faster, and more easily for accurate CSR use. Addressing 300 images an hour, the previously formatted Transaction Confirmation image, for instance, added more steps to the system and required the CSRs to make more mouse clicks between transactions. He also worked with the team to debug issues by reducing slowdowns, transaction skipping, login failures, and new version updates. He explained how his close proximity to the CSR team facilitated fast corrections for programming issues. The last item he discussed was the Image Audit Tool Refactoring. Mr. Clark shared details about an overhaul of the header values and how they were

transmitted to the backend of the system. This one change made a big difference in the amount of data processed with each transaction, thus providing faster processing and more CSR productivity.

Mr. Clark said that as he would continue his internship through August, he hoped to be able to finish a few more projects, which he looked forward to. Mayor Chuck Travis commented by saying, "wow." He told Mr. Clark that his presentation was really well done, and that Mr. Eden should hold on to Mr. Clark for as long as possible. Mr. Montell Irvin asked how the projects had been conceived by the team. Mr. Manish Chourey explained to Mr. Irvin that when the team saw certain problems, he shared the details of the problems with Mr. Clark, and then Mr. Clark would look at the issues in the system, speak to the people experiencing the challenges/problems, and would present a solution to Mr. Chourey. They would then talk through the challenges and ideas for solving the problems together. Mr. Chourey stressed that this type of problem solving was really what was needed in real life, and a real-life problem would then be solved by the interns.

Mr. Feltes asked Mr. Clark to explain why he was staying longer to work on the internship program. Mr. Clark told the Board Members that he would be participating in a Study Abroad program in Japan for six months during the coming school year. There was a discussion by Mr. Eden and Mr. Irvin about the practical applications of this internship, in particular, and in its benefit to provide a service normally contracted out to a company working in another state. Mr. Clark stressed the importance of, and the satisfaction derived from, the communication and the problem solving allowed within his internship. Mr. Chourey shared that he received emails from the CSRs that use these new tools which expressed their appreciation of the changes. He stated that this has been a good learning experience for all involved.

Communications Intern: Meah Osborne. Ms. Osborne is a Senior at North Carolina State University. She will be receiving her Bachelor of Arts degree in Communications and Public Relations with a minor in Business Administration this coming December. Ms. Osborne shared a presentation with the Committee Members that illustrated the details of the projects she worked on with the NCTA Communications & Marketing Department. Included was information regarding the Creative and Internal Trainings she completed for Graphic Design, Technical Writing, Presenting, and Workplace Best Practices. Other areas of focus were for Complete 540 Project planning, a Sizzle Reel to be utilized by Mr. Dennis Jernigan, the Social Media Calendar, and the NC Quick Pass App Ad Campaign. Ms. Osborne shared details about the very important new NC Quick Pass App roll out, testing, and refinement.

Mr. Montell Irvin noted that there was a wide variety of work done during Ms. Osborne's internship. Mr. Eden shared that the Sizzle Reel had been a dream of Mr. Jernigan's for a long time. The Communications Interns, Ms. Osborne and Ms. Tracey McClary, then worked to find new free software solutions for video editing and created two different Sizzle Reels for Mr. Jernigan to use in his community outreach efforts. This was in addition to their full schedule of training and projects. Mr. Eden was very impressed. Mayor Travis complimented Ms. Osborne on her presentation skills.

Construction Engineering Intern: Thomas Smith. Mr. Smith is a rising Junior at North Carolina State University. He is a Civil Engineering Major. Spending his internship working with the Complete 540 crews, he focused his energies on the project technicalities of Drainage, Soil, Concrete, Lighting, Structures, and a Leaning Tower. Mr. Smith shared that learning how to read the plans and specification requirements on the job sites was key to all aspects of what he learned and worked on during his internship. They (he and Mr.

Cal Madden, the other NCTA Construction intern) included a focus on safety in every protocol they tackled. Working with drainage, according to Mr. Smith, was a good way for them to get used to dealing with inspectors, crewmen, foremen, and supervisors to ensure that every part of the construction process went smoothly. He also shared that he learned how to deal with problems when they came up during the construction process. High Quality protocols and products being the goal.

Mr. Montell Irvin thanked Mr. Smith for his presentation. He shared that he and all of the interns would greatly benefit from their internship experiences. Being in the field and dealing with contractors was a great opportunity that many Civil Engineers never got an opportunity to experience, but that this was invaluable knowledge for an engineer's career success.

Mr. Montell Irvin said that he always enjoyed meeting the interns and hearing presentations about their internships and that the future of our industry was bright. Dr. Senegal and Mayor Travis said that Mr. Smith had done a great job.

Mr. J. J. Eden thanked the Board for continuing to support this program. He discussed not only the benefits for the students, but also the unexpected work product quality and quantity received by NCTA. Mr. Eden noted that there were five generations represented in the workforce at NCTA, and there was much to be learned by all. Mr. Irvin shared that his firm experienced reluctance by some to train and work with interns, but the benefits of 'paying it forward' were substantial. Dr. Senegal noted that in her profession, the benefits of a program like this helped to marry theory with practice, and she enjoyed being able to witness it every day. She stated how incredibly proud she was of what she had seen today.

## **Adjourn**

### **Montell Irvin, Chair**

#### **Discussion Summary**

Mr. Montell Irvin opened the floor for questions or comments.

Mr. Irvin called for a motion to adjourn the July 20, 2023, North Carolina Turnpike Authority Finance Committee meeting.

#### **Actions Taken**

A motion to adjourn the July 20, 2023, Operations Committee meeting was approved upon a call for motion from Dr. Pamela Senegal, and a second by Mr. Sam Hunt.