



**MEETING MINUTES**  
**SASHTO Board of Directors**  
**February 2, 2024**

A meeting of the Southern Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (SASHTO) Board of Directors (BOD) was held on Friday, February 2, 2024, at 8:00 a.m., at the Oaklawn Racing Casino Resort in Hot Springs, Arkansas.

**CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL/STATES PRESENT:**

Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia (virtual), Kentucky, Louisiana, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, West Virginia, Puerto Rico (virtual) and AASHTO.

**CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES**

Minutes from the November 16, 2023 SASHTO meeting in Indianapolis, IN were presented and approved.

**OLD BUSINESS** – none

**NEW BUSINESS**

Task Force to review SASHTO constitution and recommend updates if needed.

SASHTO President Lorie Tudor (Arkansas) appointed Kevin Thornton, Chief of Administration (Arkansas) as SASHTO Secretary, and directed him to form a task force to review the SASHTO Constitution and provide recommendations at the next SASHTO BOD meeting, which will be held during the Annual Meeting in Rogers, AR.

## AASHTO Vice President Nomination

Tudor provided a brief history on the regional associations' nomination process for AASHTO Vice President. In keeping with tradition, the 2025 AASHTO Vice President will fall to a SASHTO state. Russell McMurry (Georgia) asked for the Board's support in nominating him to serve in that capacity.

At the AASHTO Annual Meeting in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania October 28 - October 31, 2024:

- SASHTO BOD will vote on their VP nomination.
- SASHTO BOD will then present its VP nomination to AASHTO BOD for a vote.

## **AASHTO UPDATE**

Jim Tymon, AASHTO Executive Director provided an update on policy issues, upcoming meetings and other federal program updates. Tymon noted that at the Washington Briefing, scheduled for February 5 – 8, 2024, members of Congress would update state DOTs on the FAA reauthorization bill, currently underway. Tymon spoke on the upcoming reauthorization of the IIJA. AASHTO will kick-off this effort and will work through AASHTO Committees. AASHTO wants state DOTs to look at the technical aspects of the federal code and identify areas to take to Capitol Hill. White papers will be developed to support and explain AASHTO's position. The goal is to have this effort completed one year before the IIJA expires. Additionally, Tymon spoke regarding discretionary grants. He noted that discretionary grants funds move much slower than formula funds. Tymon requested that projects selected for this type of funding be closer to construction than the ones previously selected.

## **SASHTO Annual Meetings**

The following ideas were brought forward for discussion:

### Future Meetings

- One Host Night Event in lieu of the Opening and Closing Receptions (Tudor – Arkansas)
- Rearrange the schedule so that the BOD events are grouped closer together (Tudor)
- Move away from a weekend start date as to not cross over into personal time (Williams – Texas).
- Consider forming a task force to investigate the future model for the Annual Meeting. Arkansas is already committed to the current model so will refrain from serving on this task force (Tudor).

### Other Considerations:

- The business aspect to the conference is important since sponsorships help to provide the funds for scholarships. CEOs need to attend the BOD Reception to show appreciation to firms for their sponsorship (McMurry – Georgia).

## TET (The Eastern Transportation) Coalition

- Ed Austin (Alabama) explained the reasoning behind their inclusion on the agenda for the 2023 meeting in Mobile.
- Not all SASHTO states are members of this Coalition and the option to add to the agenda will be left to the discretion of the host state.
- Tudor stated in Arkansas they could reserve a room to meet during the 2024 SASHTO Annual meeting but would not be included on the agenda.

## Annual Report Videos

- Tudor polled the Board to see if member states felt it added value to the opening session.
- Member states agree that it is beneficial to see what other states are doing and to continue this practice.

## **SASHTO ANNUAL MEETING UPDATE**

**SASHTO 2024 Update** – Lorie Tudor provided an update to the 2024 Meeting in Rogers, AR, on August 17 – 21. Events include the Board of Director's dinner at The Preacher's Son in Bentonville, Opening Reception at Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, golf tournament and sporting clay tournament, and the Closing Reception at the Momentary. At the time of this meeting, over 400 delegates were registered.

**SASHTO 2025 Update** – Kentucky Secretary Jim Ballinger reported an update on the 2025 Annual Meeting in Lexington on August 1 – 6, 2025.

**SASHTO 2026 Update** – South Carolina will be hosting the 2026 Annual Meeting and are in the final stages of site selection in Greenville. An announcement will be made at the 2024 Annual Meeting in Rogers.

## **GREENHOUSE GAS RULE**

- Jared Perdue (Florida) led the discussion on the Greenhouse Gas (GHG) rule. Perdue connected the carbon reduction program and GHG and believes the GHG requires actions that Florida does not agree with. Perdue also noted that if the State of Florida wants to improve GHG, it would not be assigned to the DOT and that GHG was a significant departure from historic transportation efforts.
- Marc Williams (Texas) also noted that they are opposing because it is outside of Congress' instructions on setting performance measures. Congress established key areas for performance measures, and this is clearly out of these areas.

- Joey Hopkins (North Carolina) reported that projections indicate they cannot reduce GHG due to growth and they will submit targets.
- Jimmy Wriston (West Virginia) stated this is another Federal effort by administration to bypass how we have historically accomplished projects and wants SASHTO to weigh in on this issue.

## REAUTHORIZATION

Marc Williams (Texas) led the discussion on the need for position resolutions and for SASHTO to develop these to support /state position related to eligibility of projects. Jim Tymon (AASHTO) expressed agreement in the need to be heard in response to other groups that are trying to change the historical structure. Williams noted concern that momentum would continue to move transportation bills to more control and funding to local agencies. Tymon stated that the House supports local control while the Senate is more supportive of state level control. Williams offered to develop a list of core principles of state DOTs. Lorie Tudor expressed that SASHTO needs to develop specific impacts of how IIJA changes have had a negative effect on the DOTs.

## AUGUST REDISTRIBUTION

Jimmy Wriston initiated this discussion, stating that West Virginia would not be able to continue as they have in the past. Other states commented on the impact of TIFIA unobligated funding. Jim Tymon offered a solution of giving four years to spend instead of three and believes all parties agree. This fix must be included in the 2024 appropriation bill and while it is not a good solution, it will prevent loss of funds by states through August redistributions.

## PEER EXCHANGE TOPICS

- Great North American Eclipse – impacted states (Arkansas, Texas and Kentucky) provided an update on traffic management efforts and managing expectations.
- Workforce Challenges
  - Arkansas – geographic differential pay, hazard pay and career path promotions are some efforts currently underway.
  - Florida – adjusted entry level pay, enhanced safety programs, partnering with higher education to develop qualified staff.
  - North Carolina – retention through pay increases, targeted hiring events, high school internships and reaching out to middle school students.
- Road Worker Safety
  - Arkansas – improved policies, new equipment, safety concerns reporting system, new employees wear green vests.

- Kentucky – safety committees established across the state, central office committee to address areas of improvement across the state, mobile light tripod for nightly work.
- Texas – pushing a culture change, issuing safety shirts and hats (new employees wear different color hats).

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting and it was seconded. The meeting was adjourned.