



**REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION**

*Metropolitan Planning • Public Transportation & Operations • Engineering & Construction*

Metropolitan Planning Organization of Washoe County, Nevada

**MEETING DATE:** July 16, 2021

**AGENDA ITEM 6.2**

From: Bill Thomas, AICP Executive Director

---

**RECOMMENDED ACTION**

Review Executive Director Bill Thomas' performance as it pertains to the proper duties of the position and accomplishments of Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 Goals and adjust compensation accordingly.

**BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION**

In accordance with the Executive Director's employment agreement, the Commission shall review and rate performance near the end of the RTC's fiscal year. A satisfactory or better performance shall make the Executive Director eligible for an annual salary increase. The Commission may also award a performance bonus of 0 to 5.0 percent of the Executive Director's current base salary that will not be an addition to base pay. Said bonus shall be determined on or about July 1<sup>st</sup> of each year and shall be based on the Executive Director's past year's performance of goals and objectives. The Commission has the sole right to determine performance subject to a standard of reasonableness. The effective date of said salary increase and/or bonus is retroactive to July 1, 2021.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

Funding for this item is included in the FY 2022 budget.

**PREVIOUS BOARD ACTION**

The Commissioners approved FY 2021 Executive Director goals on August 20, 2020. The Commissioners approved the Executive Director's employment agreement on March 20, 2020.

**ATTACHMENT(S)**

- A. Summary of Executive Director FY 2021 Goals and Accomplishments
- B. RTC Executive Director Fiscal Year 2021 Performance Review Feedback

NAME	DEPARTMENT	STATUS	FY21
Continue succession planning throughout the organization	Administrative Services	Complete	A position has been identified to begin recruitment in July 2021 in order to cross train prior to retirement. Employee Career and Development Plan form has been distributed to all staff and interested participants have return form.
Publish dashboard with customer-relevant data visualization	Administrative Services	Complete	Dashboard with customer-relevant data visualizations have been published.
Review and revise Personnel Rules and all Management Policies to ensure effective and efficient Agency operations	Administrative Services	Complete	Personnel Rules and all Management Policies have been reviewed and revised to ensure effective and efficient Agency operations.
Review organization health insurance for alignment with best practices	Administrative Services	Complete	The Finance Director reviewed the option offered from Washoe County and provided her recommendation.
Implement a capital project debrief process to identify opportunities for improvement	Engineering	Complete	A I previously informal process has been formalized per request from NDOT and will be implemented upon the completion of various projects.
Create internal technology team to identify and address new technology opportunities to allow the Agency to best meet the community needs with resources available	Executive	Complete	Internal technology team created.
Create organizational key performance indicators to track effectiveness of operational strategies	Executive	Complete	The Board approved organizational key performance indicators are their November 2020 meeting.
Evaluate and implement grant management strategies to improve the value of grants applied for and received	Executive	Complete	The Finance Director attended grants training. As grant opportunities are received, they continue to be vetted thoroughly through management.
Strategically adjust goals as needed throughout the year to respond to Board direction in a prompt manner	Executive	Complete	Adjustment of goals occurs based on Board direction as needed.
Focused review of procurement practices to develop process changes which enhance Agency procurements	Finance	Complete	Follow-up actions from the Procurement Process Analysis are all complete, including defined roles and responsibilities and updated procurement manual.
Guide Legal Services Efficiency Project through transition	Legal Services	Complete	At the September 2020 Board meeting, the Legal Services Director took on the role of primary provider of legal services to the Board.

NAME	DEPARTMENT	STATUS	FY21
Promote stronger regional alignment between TMRPA and the Regional MPO efforts of RTC	Planning	Complete	The Administrative Services Department completed a desk audit of the Planning Division, including alignment between RTC and TMRPA tasks. Recommendations will be implemented in FY22. The Board approved the FY22 Shared Work Program with TMRPA at their May 2021 meeting.
Support Federal Priorities as identified by the Board	Planning	Complete	Board approved updated federal priorities in January 2021. Approved for Community Project Funding request through Congressman Amodei's office for Arlington Bridges and Hydrogen Fuel Cell Infrastructure.



**REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION**

*Metropolitan Planning • Public Transportation & Operations • Engineering & Construction*

Metropolitan Planning Organization of Washoe County, Nevada

## **RTC Executive Director Fiscal Year 2021 Performance Review Feedback**

RTC team that reports to the Executive Director comments related to the RTC and Mr. Thomas in the following areas:

1. **Leadership:** *Creating a climate of trust and mutual respect; supports shared leadership principles and distribution of decision-making, increasing the potential for employees to be productive and to feel welcome, valued, and motivated.*
  - Had a challenge of starting under Covid-19 regulations but still found a way to talk personally to every employee. Allowed all employees to feel heard and be part of learning who Mr. Thomas is and his plans coming to the RTC.
  - A very difficult time to take the highest leadership role as COVID restrictions provided an entirely different work environment.
  - Articulates common goals and promotes a collaborative environment for staff to work together effectively.
  - One of his strongest skills.
  - Does a good job creating a climate of trust and mutual respect.
  - Offers opportunities for staff (including entry-level, managers, and directors) to grow skills.
  - Consistently leads by example.
  - Places great trust in staff expertise and allows them to make decisions as appropriate.
  - His respect for staff is visible in his willingness to make decisions collaboratively and sharing feedback on how staff input has been taken into account.
  - Consistent in leadership, messaging, respect for others, and openness to feedback and constructive dialogue.
  - Focused on leadership training for managers and directors and held multiple discussions about leadership and agency culture.
  - Clear in his expectations of staff and the Director team.
  - Improvements are being implemented to create mission clarity, accurate reporting, and continued fiscal responsibility.
  - Regularly recognizes agency and staff achievements and encourages all to continue to work at peak levels.

### **Areas for Improvement**

- Staff are often confused about direction and sometimes feel uncomfortable taking initiative outside of their defined "lane."
- Everyone is still learning from each other. Communication for change has been challenging and building trust is a slow process.

2. **Relationship Management:** *Ability to represent organizational values within every relationship at work and to cultivate and maintain positive relationships with individuals, staff, board, and partner organizations.*

- Coming from a major partner agency and having direct working relationships with many of the RTC Board members allowed Mr. Thomas to hit the ground running with a leg up on maintaining and improving RTC's relationships.
- Made this a priority through staff conversations to determine what RTC's culture is today and what it aspires to be. This culminated in a new Mission Statement and Statement of Culture. As a result, RTC's important relationships with government stakeholders are improving and growing.
- Always professional in representing the RTC and cultivates relationships in a positive manner.
- Places an emphasis on relationships between individuals in the organization, different levels of the organization (e.g. board, director team, supervisors, staff), and RTC and other public and private entities and the individuals that represent those entities.
- Regularly represents organization values in every work relationship.
- Maintains positive relationships with staff. Fair and impartial in his interactions with staff and the Board.

**Areas for Improvement**

- Relationships with Federal Agencies at all levels is important to understand and learn so that agency success can be achieved. As one of three MPOs in NV, a relationship with NDOT needs to be understood and fostered so that the goals of the region can be reached. As with any relationship, it takes an investment of time to build and maintain.
- Relationships with key agency partners need to be nurtured and well managed.

3. **Communication:** *Facilitates open and transparent communication. Listens and responds to individuals, staff, board and partner organizations.*

- Already had good relationships and used his solid communication style to understand the wants and wishes of the community.
- Works at getting to a yes answer with a can do attitude.
- Encouraged staff to meet with him 1:1 to share concerns and ideas.
- Encourages communication at all levels of the organization. Makes time to listen to staff input, asks questions, and uses this information to create plans to advance the organization.
- Very open to different opinions and lively debate to ensure that impacts are understood.
- His contacts throughout our region are invaluable to achieving communications with stakeholders and partner organizations.
- Having an open door provides good access.
- Often facilitates open and transparent communication.
- Regularly makes himself available to meet with staff to listen and respond to important matters.
- Regularly meets individually and as a group with the Director team.

Areas for Improvement

- The chain of command provides essential support to the agencies communication structure and should be respected to ensure transparent and clear expectations.
- Learning the business of the RTC has put pressure on Mr. Thomas and sometimes decisions could be vetted more before implementing.
- Imprecise communication can lead to staff unsure about expectations and confusion about the work assignments.
- Use of individual or small group meetings regarding project issues has resulted in staff having conflicting or incomplete information, causing confusion & lack of cohesive agency response in some instances.

4. **What are the most significant strengths as a leader?**

- Communication style and listening ability with a goal of getting a positive outcome that everyone can share in the success.
- Seeks discussion to understand issues and uses technical tools to track deliverables
- Accountability, strategic planning, and staff empowerment.
- Great vision, business perspective, and commitment, which have allowed RTC to stretch in providing optimal service to tax payers through sound decisions.
- His example has allowed staff to ask more questions, identify change opportunities, and grow in their roles.
- RTC's relationship with stakeholders has improved and become clearer.
- Committed to continuous organizational improvement and necessary change.
- Demonstrated an ability to make difficult decisions.
- Places a consistent emphasis on responsibility and accountability for himself and others.
- Wants to understand job assignments and accountability for assignments.
- Wants to know the "why's" of processes and procedures ensuring the RTC is an efficient agency.
- Active listening skills, fostering teamwork, frequent and clear communication of expectations and other information needed for good job performance.
- Leadership by example, positive role model, confidence in staff's abilities, address problems timely, encourage strategic thinking, innovation, and action.

5. **What are the most significant development needs as a leader?**

- Leadership skills are solid. His work and focus on improvement has been in learning the core businesses of RTC.
- Continue to improve on ensuring feedback is understood by all collaborators. Feedback is occurring, due to the pandemic and remote work, at times these communications can be improved through face-to-face discussion or written follow-up of decisions made.
- RTC's unique business (MPO, delivery of regional transportation projects, and operation of the transit system) can be challenging at times. Continue to learn how the top leader of one of the three MPOs in the State has a great deal of influence for the region's transportation systems.
- Communicating with staff in a way that makes them feel trusted and valued.
- More patience at times.

6. **Are there any steps that he can take to increase his impact as a leader?**

- It takes time to learn the core businesses, the why things are done a certain way, evaluation after understanding the past practices and making strategic improvements to these practices is the continued steps to increase his impact as a leader at the RTC.
- Continue to learn about federal transportation requirements, including NEPA, Uniform Relocation Act, & planning requirements.
- Continue to mentor staff and encourage the organization that honest communication, questions, and hard conversations are parts of a deliberation process and will help RTC become a better organization for our community.
- Continue to encourage accountability for all staff and that their actions are very important to continued success.
- Specialty experts provide input and understand details of which the Mr. Thomas will need to continue to build trust. By building the trust and maintaining respect, he will be able to provide more time educating the regional partners of RTC's mission, resources, and limitations.
- Regional transportation strategies can be explored, developed, and implemented under his leadership.
- Continue to be an advocate of Board Direction to ensure RTC meets it's goals.
- None to add at this time.

7. **Delivering Results – Status of FY21 Goals and other achievement.**

- The Board rating and the agency achievements during a very difficult years shows his ability to deliver results.
- Agency delivered on FY 21 goals.
- Mr. Thomas and staff all deserve great praise for their accomplishments this year!
- Moving goals forward with databased decision-making were constant in the director team's conversations over FY21 and contributed greatly to making sure these goals were achieved.
- Seeks input from all levels of the organization and has repeatedly asked staff to approach him with any input.
- Staff are one of the best in the region and love the community in which they live and work. They own their assigned projects and work with passion. With their energy, expertise, and support, Mr. Thomas will be able to set a vision and lead the RTC to success on every front.

8. **Additional Comments**

- RTC and its staff have excelled with Mr. Thomas as Executive Director. He never shies away from a challenge and I look forward to seeing how the Agency continues to grow under his distinguished leadership.