



**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE  
MEETING AGENDA**

**July 12, 2023 – 10:30 a.m.**  
333 Chestnut Street  
Clearwater, FL 33756  
The Palm Room

**THE PLANNING COUNCIL AND METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION FOR PINELLAS COUNTY**

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1. **CALL TO ORDER**
  
2. **REVIEW OF EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ANNUAL PERFORMANCE EVALUATION RESULTS**
  
3. **RECOMMENDATION(S) TO BE MADE TO FULL BOARD**
  
4. **ADJOURNMENT**

*Public participation is solicited without regard to race, color, national origin, age, sex, religion, disability, or family status. Persons who require special accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act or persons who require translation services (free of charge) should contact the Office of Human Rights, 400 South Fort Harrison Avenue, Suite 300, Clearwater, Florida 33756; [(727) 464-4062 (V/TDD)] at least seven days prior to the meeting.*

*Appeals: Certain public meetings result in actions taken by the public board, commission or agency that may be appealed; in such case persons are advised that, if they decide to appeal any decision made at a public meeting/hearing, they will need a record of the proceedings, and, for such purposes, they may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based.*

**Q1 Please offer any comments regarding how you feel Mr. Blanton is performing in his role as Executive Director. (IE: How he is interacting with you, leading the agency, engaging with partners and/or staff, and seen in the region)**

Answered: 6 Skipped: 0

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Mr. Blanton sets the standard in communications with board members. He is constantly available for meetings or questions. Mr. Blanton is very proactive in reaching out to board members with upcoming agendas and foreseeing potential queries and developing issues. His demeanor is exceptional and he is very approachable. Regarding his leadership of the agency, my observations are that his staff are quite content under his leadership and he clearly cares for his team. More importantly, Mr. Blanton is dedicated to building and maintaining a solid and productive staff that keeps the mission of the agency in the forefront of every endeavor. I have the utmost confidence in Mr. Blanton and his abilities, and I commend him for a job well done this rating period!	5/25/2023 12:35 PM  Chris Burke
2	He is doing a fantastic job and is very helpful and always available to clarify questions. Whit has a passion for his job and strives to make Forward Pinellas a forerunner in the state.	5/24/2023 9:03 AM Patricia Reed
3	Whit is an outstanding leader, with heavy engagement in the community and a strong line of communication with board members.	5/22/2023 11:23 PM Gina Driscoll
4	I can't offer enough praise of Mr. Blanton. He works diligently to ensure the board is educated and comfortable, and he has the utmost expertise on the subjects we discuss. He is well networked in the areas of planning, land use, and transit, and he leverages those connections to bring innovative and responsible ideas to the board.	5/18/2023 5:40 PM Richie Floyd
5	While I am relatively new to the Forward Pinellas Board, I have interacted with Whit Blanton for several years serving on Forward Pinellas subcommittee boards such as the LCB and CAC. Whit is knowledgeable, professional, and makes himself available to board members at all levels to answer questions, review agendas, and provide his perspective. Forward Pinellas staffing is stable, not experiencing high turnover, are well prepared to discuss projects, and are knowledgeable, and professional. Regionally, the agency is well respected and has very good interactions with other supporting or complementing agencies such as FDOT, and MPO's from Hillsborough and Pasco, which is important as discussions on forming a regional MPO are ongoing. I have received comments from residents suggesting Forward Pinellas could improve communication to neighborhoods, HOA's, etc. on significant projects that will affect traffic flow and/or capacity in their communities.	5/16/2023 4:28 PM  Brian Scott
6	I have been fortunate enough to work with Whit as a new member of Forward Pinellas, and I must say that he has been nothing short of exceptional. His wealth of knowledge and expertise in his role has been invaluable in accelerating my learning curve and helping me better understand my responsibilities as a board member. He has been instrumental in steering us towards a brighter future for our region and I am grateful for his guidance and leadership.	5/15/2023 7:13 AM Jarrod Buchman



**Forward Pinellas  
Annual Performance Evaluation for  
Whit Blanton, Executive Director**

**SUMMARY OF RESULTS**

**EVALUATION PERIOD: July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023**

<b>Performance Level Scale:</b>		
<b>4</b>	Excellent (Outstanding)	Consistently exceeds performance expectations
<b>3</b>	Commendable (Above Average)	Frequently exceeds performance expectations
<b>2</b>	Satisfactory (Average)	Meets performance expectations
<b>1</b>	Marginal (Below Average)	Usually does not meet performance expectations
<b>N/A</b>	Not applicable or unobservable	

**Scoring Summary: Overall and Section Scores Over Time**

<b>Section</b>	<b>2017 Average Score</b>	<b>2018 Average Score</b>	<b>2019 Average Score</b>	<b>2020 Average Score</b>	<b>2021 Average Score</b>	<b>2022 N/A</b>	<b>2023 Average Score</b>
Partnerships	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.7		3.5
External Communications	3.7	3.6	3.8	3.6	3.7		3.6
Leadership Effectiveness	3.7	3.5	3.6	3.6	3.7		3.5
Fiscal Management	3.6	3.5	3.6	3.7	3.7		3.5
Internal Communications & Reporting	3.7	3.5	3.8	3.4	3.6		3.5
<b>Overall Score</b>	<b>3.6</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>3.7</b>	<b>3.6</b>	<b>3.7</b>		<b>3.5</b>

## Overall Scores

<b>Evaluator</b>	<b>Raw Score</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Score to Scale</b>
Councilmember David Allbritton	118/148	79.7%	3.2
Mayor Julie Ward Bujalski	141/148	95.0%	3.8
Commissioner Janet C. Long	115/148	77.7%	3.2
Commissioner Michael A. Smith	148/148	100.0%	4.0
<b>Average</b>	<b>131/148</b>	<b>88.5%</b>	<b>3.6</b>

## Scoring Details and Averages

### PARTNERSHIPS

**Average  
Rating**

**3.75**

\_\_\_\_\_ A. Coordinates work with staff from other agencies or County departments in a collaborative manner in order to accomplish goals

**3.5**

\_\_\_\_\_ B. Effectively builds and leverages relationships with the local governments

**3.25**

\_\_\_\_\_ C. Effectively builds and leverages relationships within the private sector

**3.5**

\_\_\_\_\_ D. Maintains awareness of developments and plans potentially affecting the vision for Pinellas County and the region

**3.5**

\_\_\_\_\_ E. Willingly participates with other governmental entities in sharing resources

**3.75**

\_\_\_\_\_ F. Initiates and collaborates with other regional, state and federal government agencies

**Overall Section Average: 3.5**

**Comments related to this section:**

Whit has continued his strong ability to work with other local governments & agencies. He puts himself out there on the behalf of the Forward Pinellas Board goals & objectives.

– Julie Ward Bujalski

There is no question that Whit has terrific relationships with other governmental agencies as well as within the State and Federal governments.

– Janet C. Long

Largo staff have the upmost respect for Whit and the whole staff of Forward Pinellas. This makes government truly work for the residents.

– Michael A. Smith

## EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS/MESSAGING

### *Average Rating*

**3.5**

—— A. Answers the issues presented and is able to communicate opinions precisely

**3.5**

—— B. In written communications (including strategic planning documents), has proper organization, clarity, conciseness, precision and grammar

**3.25**

—— C. In oral communication, has the ability to speak clearly, concisely and persuasively

**3.75**

—— D. Makes a positive impression on citizens and is respected within Pinellas County

**3.75**

—— E. Is willing to meet with members of the community and discuss areas of concern

**3.75**

—— F. Has appropriate visibility in the community

**3.75**

—— G. Maintains a positive image of Forward Pinellas representing professionalism while enhancing the identity of the organization

**Overall Section Average: 3.6**

**Comments related to this section:**

Whit does an excellent job through written & oral communications & social media expressing our collective vision & goals.

– Julie Ward Bujalski

Whit works very hard to make sure that Forward Pinellas is present and a relevant agency when anyone is talking about the issue of transportation, planning and zoning.

– Janet C. Long



## LEADERSHIP EFFECTIVENESS

### *Average Rating*

**3.5**  
\_\_\_\_\_ A. Works effectively with Forward Pinellas Board Members, agency heads, staff, and the public

**3.25**  
\_\_\_\_\_ B. Is flexible in day-to-day duties

**3.5**  
\_\_\_\_\_ C. Is dependable and volunteers to do more on own initiative

**3.25**  
\_\_\_\_\_ D. Follows up to ensure decisions are implemented

**4.0**  
\_\_\_\_\_ E. Has strong work ethic and desire for professional excellence

**3.5**  
\_\_\_\_\_ F. Demonstrates forward thinking and strategic planning ability

**3.25**  
\_\_\_\_\_ G. Performs executive duties in a timely fashion to permit the Forward Pinellas Board and staff to meet established deadlines

**3.5**  
\_\_\_\_\_ H. Professionally and competently implements Forward Pinellas Board decisions

**3.5**  
\_\_\_\_\_ I. Maintains an organization that is efficient, helpful and courteous to the public and its employees

**3.5**  
\_\_\_\_\_ J. Creates a quality workforce in a positive, supportive organization

**3.75**  
\_\_\_\_\_ K. Demonstrates understanding and maintains compliance with statutory requirements

**3.25**  
\_\_\_\_\_ L. Able to build consensus amongst board members and other key stakeholders

**Overall Section Average: 3.5**

**Comments related to this section:**

Whit continues to be willing to consider new initiatives from various sources. He's fair & listens to all opinions.

– Julie Ward Bujalski

Whit is among the most collaborative leaders I have had the pleasure to work with - he understands the urgency and importance of the work and the issues.

– Janet C. Long

Whit has always been very flexible with schedule to meet with me to talk about the upcoming agenda. Whenever I or Largo staff have asked for more information, FP has gotten to it quickly.

– Michael A. Smith

## **FISCAL MANAGEMENT**

### ***Average Rating***

**3.5**

\_\_\_\_\_ A. Prepares a balanced budget to carry out the initiatives and projects at a level intended by the board with consideration for a reasonable planning period

**3.5**

\_\_\_\_\_ B. Presents the budget and budgetary recommendations in an intelligent and accessible format

**3.5**

\_\_\_\_\_ C. Expends funds within budgeted amounts and takes appropriate corrective action when unexpected budget issues develop

**3.5**

\_\_\_\_\_ D. Creates a working environment that encourages responsibility, decision-making, and fiscal accountability within the agency

**3.5**

\_\_\_\_\_ E. Monitors and manages fiscal activities of the organization appropriately

**Overall section average: 3.5**

## **FISCAL MANAGEMENT**

### **Comments related to this section:**

I'm confident in Whit's fiscal & organizational management.

– Julie Ward Bujalski

## INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS AND REPORTING

### *Average Rating*

**3.5**  
—— A. Provides regular information and reports to the board concerning matters of importance (including potential opportunities and threats facing the organization)

**3.75**  
—— B. Keeps the Forward Pinellas Board and staff apprised of administrative decisions affecting the agency and its environment

**3.5**  
—— C. Helps the board understand policy and legislative initiatives and their impacts to the agency's work programs

**3.5**  
—— D. Disseminates complete and accurate information equally to all members in a timely manner

**3.5**  
—— E. Responds in a timely manner to requests from the board for information or special reports

**3.5**  
—— F. Takes the initiative to provide information, advice, and recommendations to the board on matters that are non-routine and not administrative in nature

**3.5**  
—— G. Produces reports that are accurate and comprehensive

**Overall section average: 3.5**

## INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS AND REPORTING

### Comments related to this section:

Whit continues to be a great communicator.

– Julie Ward Bujalski

## NARRATIVE EVALUATION

**What would you identify as the Executive Director's greatest strength(s), expressed in terms of the principal accomplishments during this rating period?**

Understanding how MPO's work and how to be successful in getting grant money.

– David Allbritton

Thinking outside of the box, thinking of the future, and how to get there.

– Julie Ward Bujalski

Whit's understanding of the different transportation buckets for funding is particularly helpful as well as his attention to detail and regional thinking.

– Janet C. Long

Whit's greatest strength has been his openness to explain why something is being done and when needed - will leverage his connections with others for more knowledge or to get the item added faster.

– Michael A. Smith

## NARRATIVE EVALUATION

**What constructive suggestions or recommendations can you offer the Executive Director to enhance performance?**

Keep elected officials in municipalities apprised of future work coming up.

– David Allbritton

Find new ways to work with the county on issues & improve collaborations that are beneficial to all.

– Julie Ward Bujalski

It would extremely beneficial if Whit had a greater sense of urgency as it relates to the moving pieces to enable regional transportation successes forward especially as it relates to the timing available to pull down the federal dollars.

– Janet C. Long

N/A

– Michael A. Smith

## NARRATIVE EVALUATION

**Overall, how do you feel about the performance of the Executive Director this rating period as compared to the last?**

He works hard as he did before.

– David Allbritton

Great! But I will say that several government agencies seem to not understand the how important proper transportation planning is to the county. Therefore, new approaches need to be taken to help they & others to get there.

– Julie Ward Bujalski

Whit consistently does a very commendable job performing his duties and his ability to maintain relationships and respect among other agencies and boards is exemplary.

– Janet C. Long

The same as last time, no negative views.

– Michael A. Smith

## NARRATIVE EVALUATION

**What comments do you have for the Executive Director (e.g., priorities, expectations, goals, or objectives) for the next rating period?**

Fix- some elected officials doubt his credibility.

– David Allbritton

- Focus on funding options for better transit in the county (sales tax, gas tax, or other means) - Focus on how we can improve transit county-wide but especially tourist transit (Finalize Waterbourne Transportation Plan, Work towards better transit from the airport as well as expanded Trolley) - Finalize Housing Plan & Industrial Lands Plan - Follow up on county-wide bridges - Ensure that all Pinellas County communities will still have a voice should an MPO merge occur.

– Julie Ward Bujalski

My comments have already been conveyed to Whit and do no real service by repeating them here.

– Janet C. Long





## Individual Evaluator Scores 2021 & 2023\*

	2021 scores	2023 scores
Vice Mayor David Allbritton	3.2	3.2
Mayor Julie Ward Bujalski	4.0	3.8
Commissioner Janet C. Long	3.5	3.2
Commissioner Michael A. Smith	4.0	4
<b>Overall Average</b>	<b>3.7**</b>	<b>3.6</b>

\*Survey not done in 2022 in lieu of Community Stakeholder survey

\*\*Reflects surveys completed by all Board members

Prepared by  
Maria Roberts, HRBP  
Pinellas County Human Resources

## Forward Pinellas Annual Assessment

Whit Blanton, FAICP, Executive Director

July 2023

This year continued significant progress on key Forward Pinellas goals and objectives amid a strong economic recovery, major transition of multiple board members, and continuing regional pressures. Key accomplishments this period:

### Management

- Maintained work efficiencies and continuity of operations through remote work for staff that included equipment upgrades, increased communications, social activities, and employee surveys to gauge comfort level, work/life balance, productivity, etc.
- Reached agreement with Pinellas County to provide agency support for the Emergency Operations Center and emergency management activities as needed.
- Maintained fiscal responsibility and accountability by adapting to change; clean audits for both agencies and a favorable certification review by FDOT. Recognized staffing deficiency in the finance/accounting function, and increased staff capacity.
- Secured a millage increase for the Pinellas Planning Council in FY23 to provide adequate local revenue to match increased demand for services from its 25 local government partners.
- Supported the recruitment and onboarding of five new staff members to replace those who have left the agency through other job opportunities or retirement.

### Leadership

- Drafted a Memorandum of Understanding to create a regional MPO for the Tampa-St. Petersburg urbanized area and began building consensus among the three existing MPOs and local governments in Pinellas, Pasco and Hillsborough Counties.
- Oversaw the application and award of \$560,000 in federal discretionary funds for the [Safe Streets Pinellas Action Plan](#) through the Safe Streets for All program.
- Guided approval of the Target Employment & Industrial Lands Study (TEILS) update in 2023, a major policy initiative for redevelopment tied to a key SPOTlight emphasis area.
- Worked in concert with Pinellas County on the successful Homes for Pinellas housing summit in April 2023 that unveiled the Housing Action Plan, integrating that work into the Advantage Pinellas framework of redevelopment, transportation and equitable economic opportunity. Forward Pinellas is designated as the countywide convener and facilitator for implementation of the Action Plan.
- Continued advocacy with a focus on outcomes for FDOT funding commitments for Drew Street, US 19, 34<sup>th</sup> Street South, and other transformative projects. Continued to reinforce strong partnerships with FDOT, PSTA, and our local governments.
- Continued efforts to plan and fund waterborne transportation, involving extensive collaboration with partners through the Waterborne Transportation Committee.
- Served as Chair of the USF Master of Urban and Regional Planning (MURP) Program Advisory Board for 2022-23, and sustained Forward Pinellas' business partnership with the USF College of Social Sciences for an internship position.
- Began serving as President of the American Planning Association (APA) Florida Chapter, representing 3,000 planners, with the role of serving on the national Chapter Presidents Council for the APA.
- In partnership with the [Florida Association of Counties](#), Whit recorded a 4-hour Transportation Planning 101 training course for newly elected county commissioners. The course is now part of the FAC training curriculum.