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PRESENTATION OF COMMEMORATIVE
GAVEL

FOR SERVICE AS CHAIRMAN

TO

RONALD A. BRISÉ

December 17, 2013

P R O C E E D I N G S

1
2 **CHAIRMAN BRISÉ:** Thank you, Commissioner
3 Balbis, for leading us in the pledge and prayer
4 invocation.

5 Commissioner Brown, how are you this morning?

6 **COMMISSIONER BROWN:** I'm doing okay. How are
7 you?

8 **CHAIRMAN BRISÉ:** Good. We're doing well.

9 Before we get into the business, I just wanted
10 to wish our Executive Director, Mr. Baez, a happy
11 birthday.

12 (Applause.)

13 All right. So we wish you all the best and
14 hope you enjoy today.

15 Commissioner Edgar.

16 **COMMISSIONER EDGAR:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
17 And you know, because we mentioned it last time, that
18 this is our last regularly scheduled Agenda Conference
19 of the year, and that means that this is your last
20 Agenda Conference sitting in that center chair serving
21 as our presiding officer, for the time being anyway. So
22 we have to make a few comments and we want to make a few
23 comments.

24 Of course, we all know and recognize and are
25 very grateful for the wonderful job that you have done

1 as our Chairman over these past two years, and I know
2 that it is not always as easy as you make it look. But
3 thank you for making it look so simple and easy, like
4 there's just nothing to it. We're all grateful for all
5 the work that you have done building on the prior work
6 of your predecessor and maybe even some of those that
7 have come before you in that role. You have done a
8 yeoman's work of uniting our agency, leveraging our
9 individual talents, and even our idiosyncrasies.

10 Chairman Brisé, as we all know, has been
11 steadfast and he has been heartfelt in his pursuit of
12 the public interest and of all of our decisions in all
13 of our proceedings. And even at times when everyone up
14 here and probably everyone in the room is maybe a little
15 tired and a little frustrated -- it does happen
16 sometimes occasionally -- you have kindly and gently
17 guided us, helping us to all take a deep breath, perhaps
18 me in particular, steered us away from those rocky
19 shoals, you've been our captain there in the center.
20 Chairman Brisé has been our rock in the midst of
21 turbulence when it arises. He is amazingly and
22 admirably slow to anger. But I can tell you, because
23 I've had the chance to sit this close for the last two
24 years, that every once in a while I see a little spark
25 there in his eyes, and then I just try to lay low and

1 hope that I was not the cause of it. Because, believe
2 me, you don't want to be.

3 You have always shown, as I said when I first
4 had the honor of nominating you to be our Chair, that
5 you have the heart of a public servant, and you have
6 been a wonderful leader for us, a great role model for
7 me, and I am so, so grateful and will forever be
8 grateful for your leadership.

9 You mentioned a couple of weeks ago at one of
10 our meetings as we were just gathering that you had
11 rarely used the gavel, and I told you that that was too
12 bad because that was one of the most fun things of the
13 job, to sit there, is to be able to bang the gavel. So
14 we want you to you keep practicing, so I have the honor
15 and the pleasure on behalf of the Commission, my
16 colleagues and our staff, of presenting you with the
17 honorary gavel. Please feel free to use it at the
18 dinner table, in your office, but please take it as a
19 token of our appreciation for your years of service.

20 **CHAIRMAN BRISÉ:** Thank you.

21 **COMMISSIONER EDGAR:** Thank you.

22 (Applause.)

23 **CHAIRMAN BRISÉ:** Commissioner Graham.

24 **COMMISSIONER GRAHAM:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

25 It's good that we're sitting here roasting you

1 at the beginning of your last meeting.

2 **CHAIRMAN BRISÉ:** Uh-oh.

3 **COMMISSIONER GRAHAM:** I thought I'd start off
4 by going over the comments I said when I seconded the
5 nomination two years ago. I said, "The best word to
6 describe you up here is the rock. You are the stable
7 guy, you are the support that we all lean against and
8 push against to move ourself forward."

9 As you go down through my comments, it says,
10 "I believe that the agency is stable now, and I think
11 it's time to move forward to get us back in a position
12 that the staff and the Commission has been for years and
13 years and years. I think you are the person to open
14 those doors and to steer the ship where we need to be."

15 I think those words all came true. Now I
16 understand that the Chairman that preceded you set the
17 bar pretty high. But I'm glad to report back here that
18 I thought you did a great job of moving us forward. And
19 as Commissioner Edgar said earlier, that you do a
20 phenomenal job of making it look easy. But you do have
21 a very unselfish style of leading. I know for you it's
22 all about moving the agency forward and not about moving
23 you forward. So one of the things that we say --
24 sometimes behind your back -- when we're in the NARUC
25 meetings, it's Team Florida, and you were the lead of

1 Team Florida.

2 Under your leadership we got ourself a person
3 that's second vice president at SEARUC, we got ourself
4 somebody that's first vice president in SEARUC. And one
5 of the things I can tell you, because I was in the room
6 when that happened, it was not a pretty process. But we
7 are now, the State of Florida is going to have a
8 president of SEARUC. And I'm glad that we all stood
9 together and strong and made that happen, and I am glad
10 that you were the leader to get us there, and I
11 appreciate all you've done for us.

12 **CHAIRMAN BRISÉ:** Thank you.

13 Commissioner Balbis.

14 **COMMISSIONER BALBIS:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

15 And I just wanted to make a few comments. I certainly
16 have --

17 **CHAIRMAN BRISÉ:** Uh-oh.

18 **COMMISSIONER BALBIS:** Just a few. I have
19 enjoyed your leadership as Chairman the past two years.
20 Looking back on these past two years definitely has --
21 it's been challenging. We've gone through some major
22 issues and major cases, and a lot of times it's been an
23 unusual process. And I think your leadership and
24 ability to guide us through, successfully through those
25 decisions and through changes in this agency has been

1 greatly appreciated. And I know that, that you will
2 continue to do a good job as a Commissioner, but I will
3 miss your leadership as Chairman. And I appreciate, as
4 Commissioner Graham said, your unselfishness, your
5 candidness, and your ability to lead us. So thank you.

6 **CHAIRMAN BRISÉ:** Thank you.

7 **COMMISSIONER BROWN:** Chairman?

8 **CHAIRMAN BRISÉ:** Commissioner Brown, we won't
9 forget you just in case you have something you wanted to
10 say. I'm in an odd position here; right?

11 Commissioner Brown.

12 **COMMISSIONER BROWN:** Thank you so much. For
13 my comments I want to thank you for allowing me the
14 opportunity to participate telephonically today. I
15 apologize to my colleagues and the parties for my
16 physical absence today. I had emergency surgery late
17 last week that prevents me today from being physically
18 present, but I really wanted to participate in today's
19 agenda and IA meeting. So thank you for bearing with me
20 today.

21 And instead of roasting our dear Chairman, I
22 prefer to toast Ronald Brisé. He has fine dedication
23 and work as Chairman of our agency. I think his
24 background as a legislator certainly served us well
25 while he was Chair. He really enhanced our

1 communications with the state Legislature through
2 regular newsletters, updates, and I think showed a big
3 presence throughout the Tallahassee community.

4 If you all noticed, he also volunteered for
5 participation in various local and state events, and he
6 took the Chairmanship by storm right when he got there.
7 So I've often described Ron as a man of diplomacy, and I
8 believe that also describes him well in his role as
9 Chairman. And while everyone said it well, we'll all
10 miss you as Chair in that role, but I look forward to
11 personally having you sitting next to me again. So
12 congratulations.

13 **CHAIRMAN BRISÉ:** Thank you, Commissioner
14 Brown.

15 I guess I have a few comments to make myself.
16 I put together some notes. My staff is not going to be
17 happy because I'm probably not going to go off the
18 notes, so now they're starting to be concerned.

19 But I want to first of all thank my wonderful
20 staff, Baldwyn English and Pamela Paultre, for their
21 support and their hard work. As it's been said, the
22 office of the Chairmanship is not an easy task. It's
23 juggling a lot of things a lot of the time, and my staff
24 has done a fantastic job of doing that and keeping me
25 where I need to be, thinking the way I should be

1 thinking and so forth. So I am thankful to both of you
2 for, for your hard work.

3 (Applause.)

4 I too pulled up the transcript or some notes
5 from, from what I stated two years ago, and there's
6 three things I think that we talked about when -- that I
7 talked about when I accepted to be Chairman. One is
8 that we would broaden and improve our ways of
9 interacting with our stakeholders overall, but most
10 importantly our consumers. And I want to thank the
11 Office of Consumer Outreach and so forth for helping us
12 organize a variety of events. I want to say that we've
13 had 143 events in the last two years reaching out to the
14 community, and every single Commissioner has played a
15 vital role, whether it's speaking at universities,
16 speaking at individual forums, and all sorts of things
17 to make sure that people understood that we're an entity
18 that is here not only to regulate rates and so forth,
19 but we want you to understand how we operate and why
20 we're here and how we can be of service to you outside
21 of the ratemaking process.

22 We also talked about addressing the issues of
23 efficiency within the agency. And so that's one of the
24 things that Commissioner Graham, when he was Chair, was
25 championing, and we decided to continue with, with that

1 process. And in that vein we looked at, with our
2 Executive Director, ensuring that our organization was
3 ready to deal with the challenges that were coming in
4 the future, recognizing that as the world that we
5 regulate becomes more efficient, then there becomes some
6 pressures, some financial pressures. And, and so with
7 that, we wanted to make sure that our staff was prepared
8 to deal with that in the future. And so we wanted to
9 make sure that everyone is cross-trained and so forth,
10 so we went through a reorganization process. At first
11 it was a little bumpy, but it seems that it's, it's sort
12 of found its stride and we are working through that as
13 we move forward.

14 The other thing has to do with collaboration
15 with, with those that, that we regulate and those who
16 are stakeholders and state entities and so forth. And
17 so we have partnered, and some of you are aware of the
18 helping hands that we have identified on a monthly
19 basis, and whether it's the Department of Children and
20 Families, Elder Affairs, the Office of Public Counsel --
21 and we can name up to 12, because that's the number that
22 we did this last year, of partner agencies that have
23 helped us get our message out, and we have helped them
24 understand how we operate and what this agency can do to
25 help the people who they serve in particular.

1 We have also worked to, to strengthen our
2 relationship with the Legislature frankly. And so I'm
3 thankful to Curt in his efforts in helping us do that,
4 shore up our relationship, because we recognize that we
5 are the implementing body of the Legislature. And
6 having a strong relationship of, of them understanding
7 what our role is and, and understanding our importance
8 and understanding that sometimes our decisions are not
9 going to be popular, but they are the right decisions.
10 And so that, that has helped us in the last two years as
11 we've moved along this process.

12 The other thing that I thought was important
13 for us to look at is modernizing how we do things a
14 little bit and moving further into the digital age. So
15 I'm thankful to, to our Clerk staff for ensuring that we
16 are well along in that process. Currently my staff
17 strictly works off, off of their iPads, and all of our
18 documents are primarily found on our iPads. And so
19 hopefully we will be able to get there as an agency very
20 soon, and these are things that I think will make us
21 better as an agency. Obviously all those stakeholders,
22 now you don't have to show up at the door and make sure
23 that you're here at 5:00. By the end of the day you
24 could go ahead and electronically file your documents
25 and so forth, which makes the process a whole lot

1 easier.

2 But each one of my fellow Commissioners have
3 played a vital role to me personally over the last two
4 years. So as you recall, when we started this process
5 and you all elected me, I gave -- we decided that we
6 would come up with these little folders so that you can
7 keep as, as a memento. And so I just thought of a
8 phrase that would capture a little bit of what, of what
9 you often say on the bench.

10 So with Commissioner Graham, so I figure it's
11 probably "I love it when everybody sings *Kumbaya*."
12 Right? So, Commissioner Graham, here's a little memento
13 that represents that.

14 Commissioner Brown, we know that you're always
15 interested in, in officers -- or D&O insurance, so we
16 have a little memento that recognizes that.

17 Commissioner Balbis, I know you always want to
18 know about O&M expenses, so we have a memento that
19 recognizes that as well.

20 And, Commissioner Edgar, we know you're always
21 prepared to do the motion, so we have a memento that
22 recognizes that you are always prepared to, to do the
23 motion.

24 I have really enjoyed my time as, as, as
25 Chair, and I thank you for the trust that you have in me

1 as you selected me as your Chair. This has been one of
2 the two most rewarding years of my professional
3 experience. I've had a great time working with our
4 Executive Director. I feel like, you know, you are an
5 extended member of my personal staff. And, Curt, I felt
6 like you were an extended member of my, my personal
7 staff as well. And I have grown to know both of you and
8 I have gained a very, very solid appreciation and great
9 appreciation for the work that you do.

10 But my colleagues, once again, we have gone
11 through some, some interesting times over the last two
12 years. You know, four major, major rate cases, and I
13 think we have handled them admirably. And I know J.R.
14 is out there and sometimes we, we are on opposite sides
15 of things, but J.R. is an excellent partner for us here.
16 And I thank J.R. for, for his service as well, as he
17 represents the ratepayers of the State of Florida.

18 With that, that ends my comments. And I'm
19 thankful to all of you for the opportunity to have
20 served as your Chair.

21 (Applause.)

22 * * * * *

1 STATE OF FLORIDA)
2 COUNTY OF LEON)

CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER

3
4 I, LINDA BOLES, CRR, RPR, Official Commission
5 Reporter, do hereby certify that the foregoing
6 proceeding was heard at the time and place herein
7 stated.

8 IT IS FURTHER CERTIFIED that I
9 stenographically reported the said proceedings; that the
10 same has been transcribed under my direct supervision;
11 and that this transcript constitutes a true
12 transcription of my notes of said proceedings.

13 I FURTHER CERTIFY that I am not a relative,
14 employee, attorney or counsel of any of the parties, nor
15 am I a relative or employee of any of the parties'
16 attorney or counsel connected with the action, nor am I
17 financially interested in the action.

18 DATED THIS 19th day of December,
19 2013.

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