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PRESENTATION OF COMMEMORATIVE
GAVEL

FOR SERVICE AS CHAIRMAN

TO

ART GRAHAM

December 3, 2015

P R O C E E D I N G S

1
2 **CHAIRMAN GRAHAM:** Commissioner Brisé, thank
3 you very much for that, the prayer. As always, I thank
4 my colleagues for allowing us to do that before the
5 meetings. It definitely means a lot to me, and I
6 definitely think it helps me get through the day.

7 We have a robust agenda today.

8 **COMMISSIONER BRISÉ:** To say the least.

9 **CHAIRMAN GRAHAM:** To say the least. We have a
10 very robust agenda today, so we need to jump on this
11 thing as soon as we can, I guess.

12 Oh, I forgot to call us to order. See,
13 there's a reason why you have former chairmen on your
14 right and on your left because there's always times when
15 you get all wound up in things and you forget about the
16 small details. We need to call this meeting to order.
17 This is the Agenda Conference. It's -- let the record
18 show it is Thursday, December 3rd, and it is about 9:35.

19 Commissioner Edgar.

20 **COMMISSIONER EDGAR:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman,
21 and I appreciate you recognizing me. And, yes, we do
22 have a very robust agenda, lots of items, lots of
23 important items, and I look forward to discussing them
24 with each of you and with everyone here, but yet even so
25 we cannot let it go without recognizing the fact that I

1 believe this is the last Agenda Conference that you will
2 serve as our chairman for this two-year term, and it is
3 my honor to recognize that auspicious occasion, and I
4 would like to say a few words.

5 You have served us again. You've served us
6 twice as chair -- a unique opportunity, a unique
7 service -- and I thank you for your service. You have
8 been a leader among leaders. You have led us with
9 honor, with faith, with respect for public service, with
10 respect for each of us, for our staff, for every party
11 that has come before us. You have helped run our
12 meetings so that we can be thoughtful, so that
13 discussion is open and free flowing, that we are able to
14 reach consensus on most items, and if we don't, you have
15 recognized and respected that as well.

16 And just as importantly as all of that, and
17 every piece of that is important, you have shown us
18 fondness and appreciation and a respect for the role of
19 mutual respect and comradery. And your desire and
20 follow-through to increase comradery amongst the five of
21 us but also within our staff is a very special quality,
22 and I thank you for that.

23 So I know that you have a collection, I don't
24 even want to ask how many, but even so we want to give
25 you one more, so it is my pleasure to give you the

1 honorary gavel to recognize your term as chair, Chairman
2 Art Graham from January 2014 through December of 2015,
3 my chairman, the chair of the Public Service Commission,
4 Art Graham.

5 (Applause.)

6 Before you say anything, because I still have
7 the floor, Mr. Chairman, I would ask my friends and
8 colleagues here at the bench, even though we have a lot
9 of work to do, if they would like to share a few words.

10 **CHAIRMAN GRAHAM:** Commissioner Brisé.

11 **COMMISSIONER BRISÉ:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman,
12 and Madam President, Madam Chair. You know, every chair
13 brings -- every chairperson brings their own personality
14 and own approach to the position of the chairmanship,
15 and I want to say to you that, you know, the hallmarks
16 that I think with you are efficiency --

17 **COMMISSIONER PATRONIS:** Don't steal my words.

18 **COMMISSIONER BRISÉ:** I'm sorry. That's why
19 you're the freshman.

20 (Laughter.)

21 Efficiency, thoughtfulness, and you have shown
22 that you have a huge heart, and we as your colleagues
23 have greatly appreciated that expression of friendship
24 and comradery. And thinking about the agency, one of
25 the things that represents that hallmark is not only

1 efficiency in meetings but efficiency as an
2 organization, and that's one of the things that I think
3 we all have experienced through your chairmanship, and
4 this organization is a lot better as a result of your
5 leadership.

6 I appreciate your friendship, and now that
7 we're roommates, I certainly appreciate it even more.
8 Right? But the regulatory world in Florida is better
9 because you are serving in it. And so as an individual
10 Commissioner and as a resident of the State of Florida,
11 citizen of the State of Florida, I am grateful that you
12 are sitting and you've sat in that place and you will
13 continue to serve with us here in this state. Thank
14 you.

15 **CHAIRMAN GRAHAM:** Commissioner Brown.

16 **COMMISSIONER BROWN:** Thank you. Good words.

17 **CHAIRMAN GRAHAM:** I'm sorry. Chairman-Elect
18 Brown.

19 **COMMISSIONER BROWN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
20 When I first came to the Commission, Art was chairman
21 already. He had come, I guess, a few months before,
22 four months or so. And although I had not been there
23 prior to 2011, I know that you were instrumental in
24 really changing the demeanor, the tone, the collegiality
25 of the Commission. You made a positive change. Your

1 leadership skills -- you're a natural born leader.
2 You're also a visionary. You've done so many wonderful
3 things for the Commission, streamlining a lot of
4 processes that have been very outdated, because you are
5 an innovator, you're decisive, you're not afraid to
6 shake things up, you're not afraid to change things, you
7 are a true leader. It's also -- you've, as some others
8 have said, you've contributed a great deal here. I love
9 working with you.

10 On a side note, I really enjoy some of your
11 honey badger-like quips and your friendship, I enjoy
12 hanging out with you, and as a token of that I wanted to
13 give you a little present.

14 **CHAIRMAN GRAHAM:** I'm almost afraid to open
15 it. Those aren't reporters here, are there?

16 (Laughter.)

17 I don't know if you heard her as she was
18 talking. One of the things she labeled me with my first
19 time through being chairman was the honey badger because
20 I tend to charge into things -- I would say stupidly,
21 she would say fearlessly.

22 **COMMISSIONER BROWN:** I don't think he really
23 knows the reason why I call him.

24 (Laughter and applause.)

25 **CHAIRMAN GRAHAM:** Commissioner Patronis.

1 **COMMISSIONER PATRONIS:** Thank you, Chairman.

2 You know, I can't get over how -- as I go and I started
3 this application process to get in here and you find all
4 these people that are affiliate of the Public Service
5 Commission that want to give you advice or guidance to
6 the application process, and the one that probably
7 struck me the most is I'm a very vocal and rabid
8 Seminole, and one person that reached out to me that
9 said, look, he says, I really want you to meet Art
10 Graham, and I just -- he just, he couldn't say enough
11 things about your style, your friendship, how you handle
12 yourself, and of all things it came from a former
13 opponent, John Thrasher, you know. And he ran against
14 John Thrasher for office over in Jacksonville. And
15 there is nobody that, at least as I started learning,
16 that when this was something that Chairman Graham was
17 interested in doing, there was no bigger advocate to
18 help Chairman Graham get on the Public Service
19 Commission, at least what I'm picking up, than Senator
20 Thrasher. And, you know, when your opponents come out
21 and find admiration for you and want to help you succeed
22 and do better, I thought, wow, you know, that must be a
23 standup guy. So then I still hadn't met him.

24 So then I'm at other gatherings and events,
25 social events, holiday parties, and people hear about

1 it, and I've got folks grabbing their cell phone, "Look,
2 I want to call Art, I want you to meet Art right now,"
3 and they would call him right then. And he'd answer his
4 phone, and I had never met this guy but I've got people
5 passing me phones because you've just got a pretty cool
6 following, and so I had no idea what to expect other
7 than this fellow that I had met over the telephone. And
8 from my understanding, according to Commissioner Brisé,
9 since all the recommendations he's given you that you've
10 implemented, this is a better place. So anyhow --

11 (Laughter.)

12 **COMMISSIONER EDGAR:** I think those were mine
13 actually.

14 (Laughter.)

15 **COMMISSIONER PATRONIS:** But what Commissioner
16 Brisé alluded to is what I really want to -- that struck
17 me, you've been incredibly accessible to me. You've
18 given me a lot of guidance and advice. You've done it
19 by sharing both the good and the bad and the
20 consequences of some of the things that we deal with,
21 and I appreciate that.

22 But I've been -- over 20 years I've sat on
23 formerly meetings of Robert's Rules of Order governance,
24 whether it be chamber boards or bank boards or charity
25 boards or through the legislature or district boards,

1 and all of which, you know, have to be responsible and
2 accountable. I don't think I've met anybody who has
3 been more efficient, more indifferent, and more
4 respectful to the process of what a meeting should be
5 handled with than you have. And I said this to you last
6 night and I say it to you again in front of our peers,
7 your ability to move a meeting along and be respectful
8 of the job at hand, whether it have a positive outcome
9 or a negative outcome, I think the people that are
10 sitting out here respect how you handle it, and I admire
11 that. You don't feel like you've created a winner or
12 loser. You've made them walk away saying, you know
13 what, he treated me fair. And, you know, I just hope at
14 some point, you know, I can pick up the skills that
15 you've shown to be a more effective moderator of
16 concerns. But I appreciate all you've done to allow me
17 to be a part of this process, and thank you for your
18 leadership.

19 **CHAIRMAN GRAHAM:** Thank you, Commissioner
20 Patronis.

21 This has been a -- it has been an interesting
22 two years. First of all, I want to thank God, my Lord
23 Jesus Christ. I think through him all things are
24 possible. I want to thank the staff. I'm not going to
25 get into it all again because you guys have heard me.

1 I'm like a broken record. I said it earlier. You guys
2 are fantastic. You guys make all this happen.

3 I want to thank Braulio Baez, our Executive
4 Director. Braulio, you've done a great job at the helm
5 leading this ship, moving it forward. It has been a
6 pleasure working with you and taking care of the needs
7 for the State of Florida. You've been a great mentor.
8 You've pulled me off the ceiling sometimes when I need
9 to be pulled down and you've pushed me along through
10 different directions, and I do appreciate your
11 leadership and your help.

12 Charlie Beck. Charlie, thank you for coming
13 out of retirement. When we were at a point where our
14 General Counsel had retired and we needed someone to
15 fill that gap -- I knew you briefly when you were
16 working for J. R. at OPC, and I admired the work that
17 you did. I did my research and found out quite a few
18 other people admired the work that you did, and I
19 thought you would be a fantastic person to come in and
20 handle that position. And I do appreciate you doing
21 that and I do appreciate your wife allowing you to do
22 that.

23 I also wanted -- before I forget, my own
24 personal staff. Betty, who you guys have probably all
25 met, she's been here for a while. She actually was one

1 of those that retired and came back. She keeps the
2 office in line. You know, most of you probably think
3 that Jim runs the office. That's not true. Betty runs
4 the office.

5 But there is Jim. Jim has been my -- Jim has
6 been my right hand probably since 2002. He's been my
7 Robin. You can call me Batman, if you'd like. But he's
8 always been there. He was my political strategist for
9 years and years. And one of the things that Jim told me
10 a long time ago is what I refer to as the three-minute
11 rule. You know, because you're a politician running for
12 office and you have that microphone in your hand, you
13 want to get up there and talk forever. He says, "Art,
14 get it done in three minutes," he says, "because once
15 you get to about five minutes, people's eyes start to
16 glaze over and they stop listening." And so just so
17 most of you guys -- most people, I think, think that I'm
18 picking on them when I have opening statements locked
19 down to five minutes. There is a reason behind that.
20 If you can't get the point across just hitting the peaks
21 in five minutes, then go ahead and send me a memo, send
22 me a letter, or do something else because you're going
23 too far deep into the weeds. You need to move along.

24 It's funny, I went back through when I
25 interviewed for this job some of the questions that the

1 Nominating Council had asked me. And one of the members
2 on the Nominating Council asked me, he goes, "What do
3 you see as the thing that needs to be fixed right now on
4 the Public Service Commission?" And it's difficult
5 being on the outside trying to decide what you think
6 needs to be fixed. And I told him, I said, "From the
7 things that I've read, I think what needs to be fixed is
8 the Commissioners don't get along. It seems like
9 there's a lot of infighting. You know, I don't see how
10 you can be productive when you're spending all your time
11 trying to take the other person's leg out." And I said,
12 "I think you need to bring this back," and this goes
13 back to what Jimmy Patronis was saying, "and make it
14 into a collegial body." And I think the key to all that
15 is to spend time together. You need to understand the
16 person that you're dealing with. We all have our own
17 strengths, we all have our own different weaknesses, but
18 you have to respect that person well enough to once
19 again listen to that three- to five-minute talk. And
20 for you to get out, you know, what they're trying to
21 tell you and get that understanding because you know
22 that it's an intelligent person sitting next to you, you
23 know that they have a different point of view, but you
24 just need to take the time to understand it and to hear
25 it. And I think when you spend time together like that,

1 you get -- you grow that bond.

2 And we've grown past that bond. We're not
3 just colleagues here. We're friends. We enjoy spending
4 time together. As you've all heard me say before, we
5 are Team Florida. I think the Commission and all the
6 staff, you sit back and look at the things that we've
7 done, not just necessarily here in this building but in
8 the State of Florida and the United States as a whole,
9 and then with our just stepping down President of NARUC,
10 this has gone past just the United States and has gone
11 global. And so I do appreciate that.

12 And once again also, Team Florida, we have Ron
13 Brisé, who is now the President of SEARUC and we are
14 going to have the SEARUC function here in Florida. It's
15 going to be June? It's going to be June down in West
16 Palm, and so every single one of you, every single one
17 of you, we need to see you guys there so we can support
18 Florida as a whole because I think it's going to be a
19 great conference and I think you guys will learn a lot,
20 and we definitely need to have you there. And if you
21 hear this, that's my four-minute window, so I have a
22 minute to conclude.

23 But being chairman, running the meetings are
24 easy. That's something I've done for years. I was on
25 the Jacksonville City Council, I was floor leader three

1 of the seven years I was there. I don't think anybody
2 has ever done it twice. I don't know why I've done it.
3 But just running meetings is easy. The difficult thing
4 is all the stuff behind the scenes. The difficult thing
5 is you're always putting yourself last. You always need
6 to make sure that your colleagues are okay. You always
7 need to make sure that the staff got the things that
8 they need. And I've never been a parent, but from what
9 people tell me the way parents are, parents always put
10 their children first, always put themselves last. And
11 the difficult thing about being chairman is you're
12 always putting yourself last. I said last night at
13 dinner, I said, "If all I had to do was run the meeting,
14 I wouldn't mind being chairman forever." But after two
15 years, I'm telling you -- you know it may not seem like
16 before that I wanted to give the gavel away, but now ...

17 (Passing of the gavel.)

18 (Applause.)

19 **COMMISSIONER BROWN:** But you're still running
20 this meeting today.

21 **CHAIRMAN GRAHAM:** If we can put that first
22 picture up on the wall. See, I said we are truly
23 friends. This is us last night. We're enjoying dinner.

24 Now if you talk about the natural order of
25 things, if you look at that picture, and this is not

1 staged by any means, but if you look at that picture,
2 look where everybody is facing. Now let's look at the
3 next picture. There you go. You know it's time to pass
4 the gavel when you never get attention anymore. Thank
5 you all very much.

6 (Laughter and applause.)

7 (Matter concluded.)

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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 10th day of December, 2015.

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