



**MISSOURI HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORTATION  
COMMISSION**

**Official Minutes**

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**MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORTATION  
COMMISSION MEETING HELD IN CAMDENTON, MISSOURI,  
TUESDAY, JULY 9, 2024**

A special meeting of the Missouri Highways and Transportation Commission was held on Tuesday July 9, 2024, at Old Kinderhook, Grand Ballroom A, 678 Old Kinderhook Drive, Camdenton, Missouri. W. Dustin Boatwright, P.E., Chairman, called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m. The following Commissioners were present: Gregg C Smith, Warren K. Erdman, Francis G. Slay, Daniel J. Hegeman, and Ann Marie Baker.

The meeting was called pursuant to Section 226.120 of the Revised Statutes of Missouri, as amended. The Secretary verified that notice of the meeting was posted in keeping with Section 610.020 of the Revised Statutes of Missouri, as amended.

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Patrick McKenna, Director of the Missouri Department of Transportation; Rich Tiemeyer, Chief Counsel for the Commission; and Pamela J. Harlan, Secretary to the Commission, were present on Tuesday, July 9, 2024.

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*“Department” or “MoDOT” herein refers to Missouri Department of Transportation.  
“Commission” or “MHTC” herein refers to Missouri Highways and Transportation Commission.*

**-- OPEN MEETING --**

**COMMISSION/DIRECTOR ITEMS**

**COMMISSION WORKSHOP – MHTC ORIENTATION**

The Commission held a workshop to learn more about MoDOT employees. Ashley Halford, Human Resources Director; Brandon Denkler, Assistant to the Chief Administrative Officer – Health and Wellness; and Brenda Morris, Chief Financial Officer, shared information about the recruitment, onboarding, training, and rewarding of employees; as well as benefits and services provided to employees; and a review of the insurance coverage provided through the department’s self-insurance plan.

Ms. Halford described the structure of the organization and the leadership of the key components of the department. She also shared the number of authorized employees for the state and the districts and central office. She described how those employees are distributed in maintenance, program delivery, and administrative support.

The department uses a “Join Our Team” flyer to assist with some of its recruitment. This flyer includes information about the total compensation for employees at MoDOT that includes salary, plus all of the many benefits. Additionally, it describes the department’s mission and values to attract individuals who also find value in making their communities a better place to live. Materials such as this highlight what sets MoDOT apart from other employers. Another document titled “Summary of Benefits for Salaried Employees”, is shared with every applicant so they can familiarize themselves with the extensive list of benefits afforded to MoDOT employees. Some of these benefits include annual leave, sick leave, parental leave, medical and life insurance, education assistance, and assistance with certifications and exams.

In an effort to ensure the compensation package is competitive, MoDOT performs annual analysis of the market. The department's midpoints appear to remain competitive with the overall market. Keeping in mind, not all employees are at or above midpoint, anyone below midpoint would not be considered "at market".

The direction from the Director and the executive leadership has shifted to fill all vacancies. MoDOT is able to use tools such as the compensation calculator to help with recruiting efforts to reduce vacancies. As a result, MoDOT currently has approximately 260 vacancies statewide, when compared to May 2023 when there were over 500 vacancies. In 2023 MoDOT hired 724 new employees, and year to date in 2024 the department hired 435 new employees.

Once new employees are hired and onboard, it is important to train and develop them. Not only for the job they were hired for but to be able to advance within the department as well. There are a wide variety of training programs available to employees. Some courses are required such as Gear Up, Core Workforce Values, and Safety Technical Training while other courses depend on the area of work and level of interest in advancement. Most of the training is taught by MoDOT instructors, but some courses are outsourced.

While it is important to hire and train top talent, it is also important to recognize employees for a job well done. There are several recognition programs offered including the Leadership Coin, Innovations Challenge, High Achiever, Noteworthy, and annual service awards.

Mr. Denkler described the two areas that the Health and Wellness Unit addresses. The first area is benefits which is responsible for the management and implementation of the medical and life insurance plans for employees and retirees of MoDOT and the Missouri State Highway Patrol, and MPERS. The other area is Fit for Duty, and they are responsible for the management of MoDOT's workers compensation program, the administration of the drug and alcohol testing programs, and the pre-employment/post offer physical programs.

Mr. Denkler provided a history of the benefits provided and how things have changed over time either through legislative or commission action. The medical plan is a self-insured health plan for both active employees and retirees, and their dependents. Over 27,000 lives are covered by this medical plan. The plan offers a Preferred Provider Organization Plan (PPO) and a High Deductible Health Plan (HDHP). Employees and retirees can choose each year which plan they want to be enrolled in. There is a medical board of trustees that oversee the plan. The board members include four active employee representatives from MoDOT and two from MSHP; and one retiree representative from MoDOT and one from MSHP.

The board's responsibilities include overall plan management, administrator selection, and premium recommendations. The medical board recommends Commission approval of selection for administrators for the medical, pharmacy, and life insurance plans. The Medical Board will bring recommendations every August to the Commission for required funding levels needed to keep the plan financially sound. This is done with the help of a plan actuary based on comparison of plan and national trends. The board's review of projected expected claims versus income for 2025 indicates if no changes were made to the rate structure for 2025, it would lead to a projected loss of about \$18.9 million.

Mr. Denkler then reviewed the retirement benefits for employees. The MoDOT and Patrol Employees' Retirement Plan (MPERS) was established in 1955. It offers retirement benefits, work related disability, long-term disability, and death benefits.

Ms. Morris then described how MoDOT is self-insured and manages general liability claims internally through established policies and procedures. Every claim is thoroughly investigated to determine if MoDOT is responsible for the damages. A claim must satisfy the provisions of state statute 537.600, RSMo. In part, it states, MoDOT is not liable for a dangerous condition unless MoDOT had actual or constructive notice of the dangerous condition in sufficient time prior to the incident to have taken measures to protect against the dangerous condition. MoDOT retains documentation for all claims paid that a dangerous condition existed, the loss was a direct result of the condition, and the condition

could reasonably cause the kind of loss endured. MoDOT's customer service call center responds to various concerns. All calls regarding a dangerous condition are electronically date and time stamped with details of the issue, and how the department resolved the concern. The recent trend indicates an increase in claims. In 2022, the department received 2,577 claims, then in 2023 the department received 3,640 claims, and just in the first half of 2024, the department received 3,588 claims. MoDOT pays an average of \$7 million per year for claims/lawsuits and pays roughly on about 25 to 30 percent of the claims received.

The Commission discussed with the department the importance of recruiting and retaining employees. They also thanked all of the presenters for the information and presentations.

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**-- CLOSED MEETING --**

**VOTE TO CLOSE MEETING**

The agenda of the closed meeting was posted in keeping with Sections 610.020 and 610.022, RSMo, including the following statutory citations allowing the meeting to be closed:

1. Section 610.021(1) – Legal actions and attorney-client privileged communications.
2. Section 610.021(3), (13) – Personnel administration regarding particular employees.
3. Section 610.021(11), (12) – Competitive bidding specs, sealed bids, or negotiated contracts.

Upon motion duly made and seconded to convene in closed session, the Chairman called for a voice vote of the members. The vote was as follows:

Commissioner Boatwright, Aye  
Commissioner Smith, Aye  
Commissioner Erdman, Aye  
Commissioner Slay, Aye  
Commissioner Hegeman, Aye  
Commissioner Baker, Aye

The Commission met in closed session on Tuesday, July 9, 2024, at 2:15 p.m. and adjourned at 4:15 p.m.

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By unanimous consensus of all members present, the meeting of the Commission adjourned.

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**The Mission of the Missouri Highways and Transportation Commission is to:**

- Represent the citizens of Missouri pursuant to the Constitution by providing independent and nonpartisan governance of the Missouri Department of Transportation; and
- Establish policies, exercise oversight, and ensure accountability in developing and maintaining a world class transportation system in Missouri which fosters safety and economic development.

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