

T H E C A B I N E T
S T A T E O F F L O R I D A

SPECIAL MEETING OF THE
GOVERNOR AND CABINET

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 22, 2011
12:00 P.M. - 12:10 p.m.

CABINET MEETING ROOM
LL-03, THE CAPITOL
TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA

Reported by:
JO LANGSTON
Registered Professional Reporter
Notary Public

ACCURATE STENOGRAPHY REPORTERS, INC.
2894 REMINGTON GREEN LANE
TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA 32308
(850) 878-2221

APPEARANCES:

Representing the Florida Cabinet:

RICK SCOTT (Appearing via teleconference)
Governor

ADAM H. PUTNAM
Commissioner of Agriculture

PAM BONDI (Appearing via teleconference)
Attorney General

JEFF ATWATER (Appearing via teleconference)
Chief Financial Officer

* * *

P R O C E E D I N G S

* * *

1
2
3 GOVERNOR SCOTT: First off, thanks everybody
4 for doing this. Good afternoon to everybody.
5 Thanks for being available today. As you know, I
6 have nominated Mike Prendergast.

7 And, by the way, before we -- we all ought to
8 be celebrating. If you saw, the unemployment
9 numbers dropped for the fifth straight month, and we
10 generated more jobs last month, 28,000, than the
11 rest of the country put together. The rest of the
12 country only did 26,000. We did 28- by ourselves in
13 Florida. So what we're -- the four of us are doing
14 is -- we're doing the right things.

15 ATTORNEY GENERAL BONDI: Thanks for all your
16 hard work, Governor.

17 GOVERNOR SCOTT: As you know, I have nominated
18 Mike Prendergast to be the executive director of the
19 Department of Veterans' Affairs. Mike retired from
20 the United States Navy (sic) as a colonel, after 31
21 years of honorable service. I always give him
22 trouble that it must have been hard to get into the
23 Navy at that point in time. The Army is a good
24 second choice.

25 His active duty included multiple combat

1 deployments in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as
2 assignments in Africa, Europe and Asia, where he
3 served in leadership positions.

4 His education includes master's degrees in
5 international relations, public administration and
6 strategic studies.

7 Just as our veterans have given us their best,
8 we need to do the same for them. I am confident
9 that Mike is the best person to lead this agency and
10 advocate on behalf of our veterans.

11 Is there a motion to confirm my appointment of
12 Mike Prendergast as the executive director of the
13 Department of Veterans' Affairs at his current
14 salary?

15 COMMISSIONER PUTNAM: Governor, this is
16 Commissioner Putnam. And I can't think of a better
17 fighter for our returning men and women coming home
18 to Florida. And with our strong military presence
19 in this state, we have more than our fair share of
20 veterans coming back home to Florida. And Mike is
21 going to be the leader to be there for them and make
22 sure that they're able to avail themselves of all
23 the benefits that they have so richly earned and
24 sacrificed so much to receive.

25 So I move that Mike Prendergast be the

1 executive director of the Florida Department of
2 Veterans' Affairs.

3 GOVERNOR SCOTT: Thank you, Commissioner. Is
4 there a second?

5 ATTORNEY GENERAL BONDI: Governor, I strongly
6 second that motion. I know Colonel Prendergast from
7 Tampa. And, Governor, I can assure the entire state
8 no one has higher ethics than Colonel Prendergast,
9 and I think we would all be very well served to have
10 him in that position, and I thank him for his
11 service to our state and our country.

12 GOVERNOR SCOTT: Thank you very much.

13 CFO ATWATER: Governor.

14 GOVERNOR SCOTT: Go ahead.

15 CFO ATWATER: I guess I could -- any chance I
16 could third --

17 GOVERNOR SCOTT: Absolutely.

18 CFO ATWATER: -- the motion? I have known the
19 colonel, and we are -- Florida is very fortunate
20 that he is willing to say yes to this opportunity to
21 serve us in this capacity and serve our veterans.
22 We are actually very, very fortunate. So the big
23 winner today, though I'm sure he is grateful, is the
24 people of Florida and our veterans. So I'm happy to
25 third the nomination.

1 GOVERNOR SCOTT: Thank you very much, CFO
2 Atwater. So all in favor, I guess we don't have to
3 say aye since we all did that. Any opposed?

4 (No response)

5 GOVERNOR SCOTT: The motion is approved by
6 unanimous consent, or unanimous vote.
7 Congratulations, Mike. Effective immediately you
8 are the new executive director of Veterans' Affairs.
9 Would you like to say a few words?

10 MR. PRENDERGAST: Yes, Governor, I would.
11 Thank you very much. Before I begin my comments,
12 I'd like to thank our great firefighters from our
13 Division of Forestry here in the state of Florida.
14 We lost two brave men today, or this week, I'm
15 sorry, who were fighting valiantly to protect life
16 and property. And it's an unfortunate circumstance
17 that these brave men did die while they were in the
18 line of duty supporting our state.

19 It is a very dangerous time right now across
20 our state, Commissioner Putnam. And we cannot do
21 enough to thank those brave men and women who help
22 protect us when wildfires hit our state. And it's
23 going to be -- until we get some more rainfall, it's
24 going to continue to plague our state with some
25 challenges. So my -- on behalf of my wife and I and

1 our family, our hearts do go out to those
2 firefighters' families, and I thank them for their
3 brave service to the state.

4 Governor Scott, General Bondi, Commissioner
5 Putnam and CFO Atwater, thank you for scheduling
6 today's hearing so expeditiously. I'm deeply
7 honored by your endorsement to serve as the
8 executive director of the Florida Department of
9 Veterans' Affairs, and I deeply appreciate the
10 confidence of this Cabinet, and I remain fully
11 committed to this challenging task of serving the
12 people of the great state of Florida.

13 With your support, I am confident we will
14 succeed in delivering the world class support that
15 our brave men and women who have served from World
16 War II to the present conflicts so richly deserve
17 and have earned on the fields of battle, protecting
18 our nation, the greatest nation on the face of
19 Earth.

20 Thank you for the support. Thank you for
21 allowing me this opportunity to continue my service
22 to the State of Florida. God bless all of you
23 members of the Cabinet. God bless those
24 firefighters' families who gave their life in the
25 line of duty this week. God bless the great state

1 of Florida, and God bless the United States of
2 America. Thank you.

3 GOVERNOR SCOTT: Thank you very much, Colonel
4 Prendergast. Congratulations. And I think all of
5 us would say the same thing. Commissioner Putnam's
6 team at Forestry has done an unbelievable job taking
7 care of our wildfires, and it's horrible that we've
8 lost two individuals this week. And this goes along
9 with the six law enforcement officers we've lost
10 this year.

11 So it -- when you talk to the families, there's
12 not much you can say other than you -- your prayers
13 go out with them, are with them. It's tough.

14 So is there any other business to discuss
15 today?

16 ATTORNEY GENERAL BONDI: No, Governor.

17 GOVERNOR SCOTT: All right. Thank everybody
18 for calling in. I look forward to seeing you
19 hopefully this week or next week. And we are
20 adjourned. Have a great day.

21 (Whereupon, the meeting was concluded at 12:10
22 p.m.)

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER

STATE OF FLORIDA)
COUNTY OF LEON)

I, Jo Langston, Registered Professional Reporter,
do hereby certify that the foregoing pages 3 through 8, both
inclusive, comprise a true and correct transcript of the
proceeding; that said proceeding was taken by me
stenographically and transcribed by me as it now appears;
that I am not a relative or employee or attorney or counsel
of the parties, or a relative or employee of such attorney
or counsel, nor am I interested in this proceeding or its
outcome.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand
this 9th day of July 2011.

JO LANGSTON
Registered Professional Reporter