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NTTA director Bob Shepard steps down, was governor's appointee since 2006

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3:50 PM on Fri., Jan. 20, 2012 | [Permalink](#)

Note *This post was updated at 4:46 p.m. -ml*

Bob Shepard has resigned his position on the NTTA board of directors, the authority announced moments ago.

Shepard, an [American Airlines](#) pilot, has been on the board since his appointment by Gov. Rick Perry in 2006. Perry appoints one member to the nine-member board. The other eight members are appointed two each by commissioners' court in Denton, Tarrant, Dallas and Collin counties.

Shepard's departure was expected, said board member and former chairman Victor Vandergriff. "I got the sense a few months ago that he was looking to move on," Vandergriff. "This doesn't have anything to do with the recent board decisions. Bob is a great guy, one of those really great guys."

Still, the move comes at a pivotal time. The board has been locked in a years-long tussle over the future direction NTTA ought to head, with tensions over its relationships with its longest-serving contracts providing most of the spark.

Shepard has typically been aligned with board members who most strongly support the legacy contractors who have served NTTA for decades. It was his motion, for instance, that carried the day in August, 2010 when NTTA voted 5-4 to keep all five legacy contractors in place until at least 2013.

Local officials who have brought pressure on NTTA to reform have gained power on the NTTA board, in part by placing new members who are seen as more sympathetic to reform efforts even as they have kept up pressure on chairman Kenneth Barr to embrace changes like this week's passage of a tough new ethics policy.

Now, those same officials, who include Dallas County judge Clay Jenkins, will have a new opportunity to win leverage through a new appointment. This time, they will have to make their case to Gov. Perry to appoint a like-minded board member.

Whether or not he will agree is not clear. But Shepard's abrupt resignation could be an indication that he will.

In announcing his decision to send Perry a letter of resignation, Shepard said he had enjoyed his time as NTTA board member.

"As I consider other opportunities to serve the State of Texas, I leave the NTTA Board of Directors during a time of exponential growth and accomplishment," said Shepard. "It has been particularly gratifying to work with my fellow board members during my tenure as we worked to deliver mobility solutions such as the Chisholm Trail Parkway (NTTA's first project in [Tarrant County](#)), [Sam Rayburn Tollway](#), [Lewisville Lake Toll Bridge](#) and [President George Bush Turnpike Eastern Extension](#) to the citizens of the North Texas region."

Barr, whose own re-appointment to the NTTA board by Tarrant County commissioners is pending, praised Shepard's service.

"Bob has been a solid, stable, valuable member of the NTTA Board of Directors," he said. "It has been an honor and privilege to have served with him and I thank him for his leadership on behalf of the NTTA and the entire North Texas region."