

# Scott forced to slow review of agency heads by fellow Republicans on Cabinet

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COMMENTS **1**



*Gov. Scott opens Cabinet meeting at Florida State Fair*

Rick Scott and the Cabinet tentatively approved a process for reviewing state agencies Thursday — but beat back an attempt by the governor to move more swiftly and

consider firing three top officials as early as next month.

Instead, pushed by Chief Financial Officer Jeff Atwater, Scott and the Cabinet agreed to a more detailed approach to hirings and firings. New performance goals will be set for state agencies — with heads of these departments reviewed in coming months on how they meet these standards.

“We’re moving toward a good place,” said Agriculture Commissioner Adam Putnam toward the end of debate on the new protocol.

Florida’s top Republican leaders were clearly looking to repivot Thursday following weeks of controversy and criticism stemming from Scott’s ouster of longtime Florida Department of Law Enforcement chief Gerald Bailey.

Scott is accused of single-handedly pushing Bailey out without the knowledge of the independently elected Cabinet, to whom the FDLE also reports.

Scott followed that with a demand that the future of Insurance Commissioner Kevin McCarty, Office of Financial Regulation Commissioner Drew Breakspear and Department of Revenue executive director Marshall Stranburg also come up for immediate review.

But any attempts to fire these officials was paused with the plan endorsed Thursday.

Those three officials will be the first up for review by Scott and the Cabinet. But whether they stay or go will be hinged on performance goals to be set and agreed to next month when the state leaders next meet.

Scott went along with the slowdown, several times repeating that he wanted to “have the same expectations you have in business.” But Atwater urged the three officials first up to “keep their head down, looking forward, working,” and not assume they were about to be canned.

Scott and the Cabinet met in Tampa at an equestrian center at the Florida State Fair. The sometimes tense exchanges between the state's top officials belied the atmospherics just outside — where a nearby midway contained the usual crush of funnel cake stands, whirl-a-rides and corn dog emporiums