

**TRANSPORTATION DISADVANTAGED LOCAL COORDINATING BOARD
MINUTES FOR AUGUST 27, 2020**

A meeting of the Indian River County (IRC) Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board (TDLCB) was held at 10:00 AM on Thursday, August 27, 2020, conducted through Zoom, and hosted in the County Administration Building "B", Room B1-501, 1800 27th Street, Vero Beach, Florida for those unable to attend virtually.

*Note: Audio and video recordings of the meeting can be found at
<http://www.ircgov.com/Boards/TDLCB/2020.html>.*

Present were: Vice Chairman **William Lundy Parden**, Disabled Representative; **Bob McPartlan**, Florida Department of Children and Family Services (FDCFS) Representative; **Marie Dorismond**, Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) Representative; **Shelisha Coleman**, Florida Agency for Health Care Administration (FAHCA) Representative; **Milory Senat**, Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD) Representative, **Cathy Viggiano**, Senior Community Advocate, **Danielle Jones**, Florida Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (FDVR) Representative; **Joel Herman** Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs Representative; **Dalia Dillon**, Area Agency on Aging of Palm Beach/Treasure Coast Representative; **Wendy Grow**, Florida Association for Community Action (FACA) / Economic Opportunities Council (EOC) Representative; **Nancy Yarnall**, Area Agency on Aging of Palm Beach/Treasure Coast Representative and **Jennifer Idlette**, Public Education Representative; **Darlene Silverstein**, Medical Community Representative; **Bob McPartlan**, Florida Department of Children and Family Services (FDCFS) Representative, and **Charles E. McGinness**, Advocate & User.

Absent were: Chairman **Bob Solari**, Commissioner, District 5, **Jennifer Sideregts**, Career Source Resource Center Representative; and **Dr. Harry Hurst**, Citizen Advocate Representative.

Present were IRC staff: **Brian Freeman**, Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Staff Director; Jim Mann, MPO Senior Planner; **Patti Johnson**, MPO Staff Assistant, and **Kim Moirano**, Recording Secretary. Also present were **Karen Deigl**, Executive Director, Senior Resource Association, and **Chris Stephenson**, Transportation Director, Senior Resource Association.

TWO VACANCIES: Advocate and User and Children at Risk Representatives.

Call to Order

Vice Chairman **William Lundy Parden** called the TDLCB meeting to order at 10:04 a.m. at which time it was determined there was a quorum present.

Roll Call of the Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board Committee (TDLCB) Members.

Kim Moirano performed a roll call of the committee members with those present responding. The alternates acknowledged their presence and stated their representation.

Approval of Minutes of the May 28, 2020 – Action Required

Vice Chairman William Lundy Parden asked if there were any additions or corrections to the TDLCB Meeting minutes of May 28, 2020. There were none.

ON MOTION by Ms. Cathy Viggiano, SECONDED by Ms. Wendy Grow, the Board voted unanimously (13-0) to approve the minutes of May 28, 2020, as amended.

TDLCB Chairman's Report

Mr. Brian Freeman stated there was a family matter that has kept Commissioner Solari from being able to attend the meeting. He is retiring from the Board of County Commissioners in November so this was one of his last meetings. He had been the Chair of the Committee for the last 12 years and has been a strong advocate for the transit system during that time. The Board definitely appreciated everything he had contributed to the transportation system and the community. A new Chairman will be appointed.

Planning Status Report – No Action Required

Mr. Brian Freeman provided a brief overview of the MPO since the last meeting. The MPO has continued to operate with virtual meetings and has continued with all of their regular activities that they needed to accomplish. The State Commission had approved the planning contract for another year so the Board will continue as they have. He stated that on the staff level they are working in the office but are practicing social distancing. The office is generally closed to the public but there is some limited availability for making appointments. As far as the conduct of these meetings, the Board has followed the guidance that had come from both the Governor's Office and the State Commission.

Community Transportation Coordinator Status Report – No Action Required

Mr. Chris Stephenson, Transportation Director, Senior Resource Association presented an overview of the 3rd Quarter Transportation Report, a copy of which is on file in the Commission Office.

Mr. Stephenson indicated that the Community Coach ridership had a pretty substantial decrease in April, May and June as compared to the same time last year. This was expected because of all of the social distancing requirements that SRA had put in place. They had a 48 percent drop from last year to this year on the total trips. Of the total trips, 41 percent were ADA trips and 60 percent Transportation Disadvantaged trips. Mr. Stephenson indicated he was happy to say that in July and August they had seen those numbers bounce back up and they're almost back to normal. In April, May and June they saw the decreases due to people taking the social distancing seriously and they were happy that a lot of people weren't venturing out. Of those 8,278 trips, 5,057 of those trips were medical appointments, 3,209 were shopping trips and about 12 were to the Adult Daycare Facility in either Vero Beach or Sebastian. The Community Coach on-time performance was at 95.48 percent. The GoLine ridership ran for 76 days. Routes 11 and 15 were suspended because the ridership was so minimal because of COVID. The routes were from Sebastian to Vero Beach route and the other route was the one that goes into Fort Pierce to the college. When the college shut down, it shut all of the ridership on that route. There was a 34 percent decrease on GoLine ridership compared to the same time last year. They attributed the loss to COVID. The numbers bounced back in July and August so their GoLine numbers are almost back to where they were at this time last year. They had 206,690 people ride the GoLine. The geographical breakdown showed that 26 percent of the riders are on State Road 60, US 1 corridor, 23 percent were in Gifford, 15 percent were in the North County of Sebastian and Fellsmere, 16 percent were in the South County and 13 percent were either far west or far east and 7 percent were traveling in between Sebastian and Vero. The GoLine on time performance was 95.33 percent so about 2.37 percent they were late and 2.37 percent they were early. They are always keeping track of those numbers and always trying to get that as close to 100 percent if possible. There were less road calls this year compared to last year.

They had one accident that was considered a chargeable accident. They had a vehicle that was hit pretty hard by another vehicle. The bus operator was not at fault but they do have to list it as a chargeable accident because it was more than \$1,000 worth of damage done. Their most recent phase of the GoLine shelter project has been completed. The two newest bus shelters are in front of Target and Bob Evans which are located on State Road 60. Those were the last two shelters that got completed. They are in the planning stage for the next phase of bus shelters and Simme-Seats. The Simme-Seats attach to the bus stop and they're little benches that people can sit at when they're waiting for the bus. They listed some possible locations where they would like to put either a shelter or a Simme-Seat here in the near future as their shelter program just keeps moving along. Transit ridership nationwide is down over all the country. They had shut Saturday service down for a couple of weeks. At the present time, the buses have been limited. They have allowed only a certain amount of riders on each bus at a time. All riders are required to wear masks. In June, they sent out a letter to all of their Community Coach clients to let them know the measures that they had used to keep their passengers and drivers safe. July and August numbers had gone up. They're going to speak with EOC and the MPO staff about these things. All of their vehicles are still being detailed or fogged every night with a disinfectant. The

vehicles are being cleaned twice a day and their vehicles are being wiped down every single hour. If there is a GoLine bus with the rear door, then the rear door is being used to unload the passengers. The seating area right behind the driver has been roped off and they have put barriers up to prevent their drivers from being exposed to the public.

Mr. McPartlan questioned whether because the ridership was down all these months due to COVID whether that's going to hurt us next year in any kind of budgeting or any grant money they received. Ms. Deigl responded that SRA is very concerned about the funding situation. As everyone may or may not know, SRA received CARES Act dollars to a tune of \$6.3 million dollars during this past year from FTA. This was a number that was given to all transit systems depending on their formula, the size of their system and everything. Statewide they are in conversation through the Florida Public Transportation Association and they have let their Legislations know that it is a concern of theirs in the future as to how this is going to go for all transit systems. For SRA, they are doing okay because of those dollars. The County did decrease their funding by 56 percent next budget year because of the fact that they received those dollars. Those dollars did put them in a much better position, and also because of the fact that they do not have fare boxes, like, a lot of other systems in the State of Florida. Those fare boxes were shut down during this time because of COVID. So, the dollars that they received from FTA for those systems obviously helped cover that loss. They didn't experience that kind of loss. Ms. Deigl is not concerned about this year or maybe even next year but she is concerned about the year 3-4 where they might be asking because of the significant decrease this year. She wanted to stay on top of it with the Commissioners and make sure that they understand they're going to need to bring it up back up again in year 3 and 4 to where they were going into this year.

Ms. Viggiano asked whether the CARES Act helped reduce their concerns for the future in terms of funding. Ms. Deigl indicated it does reduce it. In other words, they're going to be fine financially for the next couple of years but after that is her concern. The County reduced half of the funding that they get for this year and next year from the County on a regular basis because SRA had received the CARES Act money. They will have discussions for the third and fourth year. The County themselves are looking at some big cut backs because of sales tax and a lot of revenues will be decreased in the next couple of years because of COVID. So, CARES Act is helping them out now hoping that they realize that and will be able to help them out in another couple of years. At the State level, they are concerned about gas tax and all the different funding sources that the SRA gets from the State and the Federal Level which are going to be decreased.

Mr. Freeman indicated that the CARES Act was a tremendous lifeline from the Feds to transit systems across the country. That 6.3 million dollars that Indian River County had received was without any match requirement. To get a grant and not have to have a local match is almost unheard of. As we get to years three, four and beyond, a lot is really going to depend on the economic picture. As Ms. Deigl mentioned, the gas tax is already a declining source of revenue and that's the main source that the United States relies upon for funding transportation improvements albeit for public

transportation, also highway and other modes. There was a decrease in travel overall. Earlier this year when we saw our transit ridership down, most people noticed that the number of cars out on the street were a little bit down. The one thing that was up was the number of people who were walking around or riding on their bikes. It's definitely something that we're aware of and will be looking at as we go through the next couple of years.

Mr. Bob McPartlan indicated that the Board couldn't have a stronger advocate than Commissioner Solari. He questioned whether we had an idea who the next Commissioner will be on the Board because in the coming years, the Board is really going to need their support when they go before the Commission. Mr. Freeman indicated that that's an excellent point that the State guidelines call for the local coordinating board to be chaired by a local elected official. Mr. Freeman believed that Bob Solari was a tireless advocate for the transit system in general. At this point, we don't know yet who is going to be his successor as the Chair of this Board.

Review of Progress Report and Reimbursement Invoice #4 for the 2019/20 Planning Grant – *No Action Required*

Mr. Brian Freeman explained that this is reimbursement for the staff's activities in supporting the TD program and staffing this committee for the quarter that ended on June 30th. Because of the State deadlines, the staff had to submit it back in July so the MPO could be reimbursed. At this point, the staff is just reporting on that invoice that was submitted.

Review of the Actual Expenditures Report for FY 2019/20– *Action Required*

Mr. Brian Freeman explained that this is the shortest report that the Board does. It is reported each year which is the amount of local funding that was expended on the TD System and the number of trips that were provided with that. Basically, the money that is reported here, which is \$45,018.72, is the local match for the TD Trip Grant that SRA received. Last year it was 15,400 trips that were provided with the grant.

ON MOTION by Mr. Bob McPartlan, SECONDED by Mr. Joel Herman, the Board voted unanimously (14-0) to approve the Community Transportation Coordinator Annual Evaluation Report for FY 2019/2.

Assign Community Transportation Coordinator (CTC) Evaluation Subcommittee – *Action Required*

Mr. Brian Freeman indicated that this is something we do every year and it is one of the required tasks of the Local Coordinating Board. He advised that the Board

needed four to five volunteers that would serve on the subcommittee and the subcommittee would conduct a meeting that is typically done after one of the regular quarterly LCB meetings. The meeting will be held in November. He anticipated that that may be another Zoom meeting and if so, they will just do the subcommittee evaluation meeting via Zoom after that. The final approval of the evaluation would be in February for the TDLCB and then in the spring for the MPO. There were several members that served on the Evaluation Subcommittee last year. Cathy Viggiano, Amber Young (by Danielle Jones), Shelisha Coleman, Chuck McGinness, and Dalia Dillon indicated that they could all serve. The subcommittee meeting will be held after the regular TDLCB meeting on November 19th. Last year's schedule put the Board finishing up just before the deadline and so they're trying to move it up a little bit this year so that we have a little bit more of a buffer in the schedule. Mr. Freeman indicated that Dr. Hurst typically likes to serve on the Evaluation Subcommittee so the Board will reserve a space for him.

Consideration of the 2020 Transit Development Plan Annual – No Action Required

Mr. Brian Freeman indicated that every five years, the Board has to do a major update to the Transit Development Plan. On the intervening years, the Board does a progress report or an annual update where they look at how we are doing. The Transit Development Plan guides the growth and development of the transit system and is a required component for one of the major funding sources for the transit service which is the State Block Grant which has provided over \$500,000 a year recently. This is definitely something that we want to keep doing so we can keep receiving that resource and it's a very useful document in itself. For a major update the Board brings in an outside consulting team, transit experts and there is a local public involvement with surveys of transit riders and all non-users and they have public meetings. A comparison is done of peer systems and they have identified goals and objectives and policies for that which leads to a needs plan and a ten-year implementation plan which also has a financial component for that. For the annual update the staff puts together how we did and implemented the recommendations of the TDP.

Mr. Brian Freeman indicated that through the end of February before COVID appeared, Go Line ridership was at an all-time high through the first five months of the fiscal year. Last year marked the 15th consecutive year of increasing ridership on GoLine and that is against what they had seen as a state and national trend whereas in the last few years, transit systems have seen a somewhat declining ridership. For the most recent completed year, there was over 1.2 million passengers on the GoLine. Since we have dealt with COVID since the spring, ridership did decrease. For the month of July, ridership had recovered somewhat and was at 18 percent down compared to last year and it sounds, like, it has recovered even further into the month of August. Mr. Stephenson stated that in August they had seen a 3 percent increase compared to the same time last year. Mr. Freeman showed the GoLine Route Map. There is a change where the shelters were put in on State Road 60 and there are now two routes that provide service to those shopping centers at Target and Bob Evans. Mr.

Freeman showed a table which showed the year to year change in ridership. It was up a little bit compared to the previous year. These are the two highest years on record for the system. The routes that they have seen the biggest increases are three of the routes that meet at the Intergenerational Center. Those routes are Routes 4 and 6 and also the route that provides service to the college in Ft. Pierce. Mr. Freeman noted because the college has not been conducting classes at the main campus they have had to temporarily stop that route because there wasn't a demand for it.

Mr. Freeman stated that the service improvements were all things recommended by previous transit development plans. There was the expansion of their weekday hours to the current service period that they have of 6 a.m. to 7 p.m. which was done in 2013. Back in 2016, they were able to expand also Saturday hours so where they are now 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Those were things that were in the 2013 TDP major update. Also, the regional service to Fort Pierce they were able to improve that to be an hourly through Route 15. Mr. Freeman gave a thanks to the Florida Department of Transportation for providing the funding to run that intercounty route that they offered.

Looking at some of the accomplishments in the last year, they were able to maintain the existing weekday and Saturday service as recommended by the Transit Development Plan. Mr. Stephenson has discussed some of the service modifications that had to be implemented because of COVID. With the vehicle replacement program, they were no vehicles that had to be acquired in the last year but they do have some that are up for replacement in the next year. There are a bunch of new bus shelters that were installed over the course of the year with the most recent ones being the ones at Target and Bob Evans. They are going to be continuing that bus shelter program still going forward. The recommendation of the Transit Development Plan is to maintain existing route service for weekdays and Saturdays with the acknowledgment that two of the routes are currently affected because of COVID with Routes 11 and 15 and as the conditions ease on that, that those routes could be reintroduced to service. On the capital program they do have some buses that are scheduled for replacement in the next year and also some bus shelter locations that are being identified for the next phase of those improvements. There were some unfunded needs that were identified in the Transit Development Plan and at this point those are still things that they acknowledge as needs but really don't see the funding in place yet to implement those service improvements because there are costs associated with those. As discussed earlier, there is some uncertainty with the funding picture for the transit system as we get beyond the next year or two.

The North Country Transit Hub which is what is currently in place. This is on the west side of County 510 near where the Space Coast Credit Union is just north of the high school. We will see construction beginning in about four or five years with widening that to a four lane divided roadway that's going to have sidewalks on both sides and seven foot buffered bike lanes on both sides. They have been able to work with the Florida Department of Transportation who is managing that project to accommodate a permanent home for the North Country Transit Hub

The concept for the permanent home for the North County Transit Hub which will be building a facility around one of the drainage ponds that is going to be put in place near the current location but a little bit further south. There would be a permanent hub that would have some bus bays. The FDOT staff is working on being able to accommodate this in the design.

The Transit Development Plan will be presented to the MPO in September for its approval.

Other New Business – *No Action Required*

No new business.

Mr. Freeman stated he appreciated everyone continuing to assist with TDLCB. He noted that things have not quite been the easiest this year. He stated that if there was anything that staff can help them with to feel free to reach out to them.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:42 a.m.

The next meeting of the Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board will be held on **November 19, 2020 at 10:00 a.m.**