

**Local Coordinating Board (LCB) for the Transportation Disadvantaged
of the Collier Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)**

LCB REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

March 7, 2018

2:30 p.m.

Collier County Government Center
3299 Tamiami Trail East, Bldg. F, 3rd Floor
Board of County Commissioners Chambers
Naples, Florida 34112

1. Call to Order

A. Roll Call

Ms. Gonzalez called the roll and confirmed that a quorum was present.

Members Present

Donna Fiala, Board of County Commissioners (BCC), *Chairwoman*
Bonnie Zaino, Public Education (Alternate)
John Starling, Florida Department of Transportation
Joe Martinez, Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA)
Dylan Vogel, Citizens Advocate/User
Susan Corris, Southwest Florida Regional Workforce Development Board
Harold Kurzman, Elderly, *Vice-Chairman*

Members Absent

Ellie L. Roberts, Advocate/Non-User
Felix Soto, Florida Department of Children and Families
Robert Richards, Department of Education
Irene Johnson, Veteran Services
Cheryl Burnham, FL Association for Community Action
Rebecca MacKenzie, Area Agency on Aging
Emely Kafle, Representative for Children at Risk
Sherry Brenner, Disabled

MPO Staff:

Brandy Otero, Senior Planner
Gabrielle Gonzalez, Administrative Secretary

Others Present:

Michelle Arnold, Public Transit & Neighborhood Enhancement (PTNE) Division
Omar DeLeon, PTNE
Elena Ortiz, PTNE
Braian Morales, MV
Barry Bland, MTM
Randy Farwell, Tindale Oliver
John Jenkins, PTAC

B. Pledge of Allegiance

Commissioner Fiala led the Pledge of Allegiance during the Public Workshop, held right before the regular meeting.

2. Open to the Public for Comments on Items not on the Agenda

None.

3. Approval of the Agenda

Commissioner Fiala entertained a motion to approve the agenda.

Ms. Zaino: **I move to approve the agenda.**

Mr. Vogel: **I second the motion.**

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

4. Approval of Meeting Minutes

A. December 6, 2017 Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Fiala entertained a motion to approve the previous meeting's minutes.

Ms. Corris: **I move to approve.**

Ms. Zaino: **I second the motion.**

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

5. Board Action

A. Election of Vice-Chair

Commissioner Fiala entertained a motion for election of Vice-Chair.

Mr. Martinez: **I nominate Mr. Harold Kurzman.**

Ms. Zaino: **I second the motion.**

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

B. Approval of Proposed Rate Model

Ms. Arnold stated that they are required to submit a rate model annually. She stated that the rate model is formula based and used to determine the reimbursement rate for the Trip and Equipment grant. Ms. Arnold stated that as part of the acceptance process the Local Coordinating Board (LCB) is required to approve the information provided in the rate model. She stated that the rate model has already been submitted to the Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged (TD) and they're reviewing it simultaneously. Ms. Arnold stated that if there were any changes requested by the TD Commission this item would be brought back as information for the Board.

Commissioner Fiala asked if there were any further questions and entertained a motion for approval of this item.

Mr. Kurzman asked if this model was used throughout the state. Ms. Arnold replied that it is.

Mr. Kurzman: I move to approve.

Mr. Martinez: I second the motion.

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

C. Review and Endorsement of Collier County Fare Study Recommendations

Mr. Randy Farwell, with Tindale Oliver, gave a presentation covering an overview of the fare study. Mr. Farwell covered the Fare Study's objectives, listed below:

- Analyze potential fixed-route and paratransit fare changes
- Assess potential ridership and revenue impacts
- Identify fare policy recommendations
- Minimize impacts to low income and minority persons as required by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA)

Mr. Farwell also covered the existing fare structure for Fixed Route and Paratransit services, ridership for each as well as revenue trends for each. He then covered conceptual fare alternatives for each service and recommendations. The recommendations for Fixed Route services are as follows:

- Implement Scenario D
 - Enhances value of passes to minimize ridership loss (estimated -66,000 to 54,000 annually)
 - \$68,000—\$209,000 in potential additional revenue estimated
- Smartcard fee
 - Eliminate \$2 charge
 - If fee retained, reduce number of transactions by combining smartcard fee with pass price

Recommendations for Paratransit services are as follows:

- Implement Scenario 14
 - No fare change to ADA or lowest-income TD fares (paying \$1, \$3, or \$4)
 - Reduce the number of income-based TD fare categories to streamline collection and administration (Riders now paying \$5 and \$7 will pay \$4)

- No estimated ridership impacts; minimal revenue impacts (-\$6k annually)
- Postpone fare increase to within next two years
 - Last fare increase in 2012 was only for paratransit
 - Provides time to prepare for fare increase
 - Tie future ADA fare increases to base fixed-route fare increases
 - Explore unlimited paratransit pass or reduced cost trip booklets to minimize financial impacts for frequent riders

Mr. Farwell also covered other policy recommendations in his presentation which include exploring the sale of passes at third party vendors, exploring the use of smartphones to purchase passes/fares, including college students and military personnel as eligible for reduced fares, and implementing a free transit day to attract new riders. Mr. Farwell discussed the next steps with the Board as part of his presentation. The next steps for completion of the Fare Study are to prepare a draft report including the LCB's recommendations and presenting a draft report to the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) advisory committees in April, the MPO Board in May, and the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) in June. Mr. Farwell concluded his presentation and opened the floor for questions and comments from Board members. Mr. Farwell's presentation was included in the Board members packets and can be provided to anyone who requests it.

There was one public speaker on this item. His comments are summarized below:

Mr. John Jenkins, representing the Public Transit Advisory Committee (PTAC) stated that there were good comparisons made to all the other counties in Florida that were looked at as part of the Fare Study. He stated that Collier County is one of the most expensive places to live in Florida and to equate the cost of transit services in other counties to that of Collier is not realistic. Mr. Jenkins stated that most Collier County workers lived outside of the County because they simply cannot afford to live here. Mr. Jenkins asked how counties with significantly lower transit rates are able to manage their systems when Collier County is at raising fares to \$4. He asked if those counties were being subsidized.

Mr. Farwell stated that other areas may be receiving a local subsidy or they may be providing significantly less service to their riders. He stated that Collier County does not want to lose the level of service they're currently providing because that's what is really needed. Mr. Farewell stated that the Fare Study is looking at ways to increase revenues to maintain level of service while also reducing impacts to ridership and attract more riders.

Mr. Jenkins stated that Collier County is one of the wealthiest and beautiful places to live in Florida. He stated that he believes the local government should provide a subsidy so that fares are not increased for riders that fall under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and TD riders. Mr. Jenkins stated that Collier County should step up and do better for persons with disabilities.

Mr. Arnold stated that the recommendation is to consolidate the Paratransit fares, not raise them. Mr. Farewell stated that there would be no increase to ADA or TD fares. He stated that the top 2 fare categories would end up paying a little less.

Mr. Jenkins stated that he was concerned that some riders currently at a lower rate may be pushed into a higher rate. Mr. Farewell stated that there would be no changes to income brackets.

Mr. Kurzman noted that this County is also rather large and average trip time tends to be longer than that of other counties.

Mr. Jenkins stated that his other area of concern was the recommendation to tie Paratransit increases to Fixed Route increases. He stated that it did not seem appropriate to do this without further consideration.

Commissioner Fiala thanked Mr. Jenkins for being conscientious of those that are disadvantaged. She asked Mr. Farewell how many people have attended the public meetings held as part of the study. Mr. Otero stated that there was a meeting held at the transfer station on site where staff received many comments and another meeting in Immokalee where a few people came out and provided comments. Commissioner Fiala commended staff for going out to reach the public.

Mr. Farwell stated that the open house at the transfer center was a great idea and very useful because people came in to wait to transfer buses and staff was able to talk to them. He stated that there were about 60-75 completed surveys.

Ms. Arnold stated that this would ultimately go to the BCC for final approval.

Mr. Jenkins stated that his only remaining concern was the approval of tying any Paratransit increases to future Fixed Route increases. Ms. Arnold stated that nothing is automatic and anything that is studied in the future will come back before the PTAC, the LCB, and the BCC.

Commissioner Fiala entertained a motion for endorsement of the Fare Study.

Mr. Kurzman: I move to endorse.

Mr. Starling: I second the motion.

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

D. Review and Endorsement of the 2018/19 Shirley Conroy Grant Application

Ms. Arnold stated that this was an after the fact item as the deadline for submittal had already passed. She stated that they were unsuccessful in attaining this grant last year however, they have resubmitted this year and are asking the Board for approval. She stated that Commissioner Fiala's signature would be required at the end of the meeting. Ms. Arnold stated that the application was for one 12-passenger Paratransit vehicle.

Mr. Kurzman asked what other options were available if the application was not approved this year. Ms. Arnold stated that they could apply for other grants. She stated that vehicle maintenance staff has been excellent in maintaining vehicles until they can be replaced.

Commissioner Fiala entertained a motion for approval of this item.

Mr. Vogel: I move to approve.

Mr. Zaino: I second the motion.

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

6. Reports and Presentations (May Require Board Action)

A. Community Transportation Coordinator (CTC) Quarterly Report

Ms. Arnold stated that this report was for the months of October through December. She stated that in the month of September ridership decreased significantly, due to the Hurricane. Ms. Arnold stated that ridership was back up in October, which is typically a higher month. She stated that the ridership didn't completely recover from

the hurricane and then there was a dip in ridership in November and December. Ms. Arnold stated that revenues followed the ridership trends and that passengers per hour stayed stable during the 3 months. She stated that on time performance reduced, with the best month being October at 91%, and lowering to 88% in November and 87% in December. Ms. Arnold also stated that there was an increase in cancellations in the month of December, this being the highest for cancellations they've seen. She stated that there were also significant no-shows during the 3-month period. Ms. Arnold stated that at the last meeting members of the public expressed concerns with the fact that there were a lot of late services which causes folks to miss their appointments. Ms. Arnold stated that the significant increase in no-shows may be attributable to this factor.

Commissioner Fiala asked what can be done when there is heavy traffic and drivers are running late. Ms. Arnold stated that there isn't much that can be done about the traffic congestion however, there should be better communication between drivers and dispatch to alert riders of the lateness.

Ms. Arnold continued with her report stating that suspensions were also unusually high during the quarter and that this would be looked into further. She stated that ticket sales and collections were normal for the quarter and that complaint numbers had gone down. Ms. Arnold stated that complaints are being handled differently in order to more effectively address customer complaints.

B. Paratransit Services Performance Improvement Measures

Ms. Arnold stated that she has been looking at the contract for the vendors, more specifically the operating vendor. She stated that an amendment was taken to the BCC that would strengthen their performance measures and liquidated penalties associated with things that are negatively impacting the system. The amendment added a liquidated damage for failing to escort ADA passengers as that is a requirement, an added penalty for excessive late trips and defined what an excessive late trip is. Ms. Arnold stated that in order to be fair to the vendor circumstances that are beyond their control, such as heavy traffic, are considered. Ms. Arnold stated that they have found that some drivers are getting to a location and arriving and performing at the same time, which is skewing the data provided. She stated that a penalty has been added for drivers not documenting properly. Ms. Arnold added that penalties have also been added for missed trips and closed runs. She stated that they are trying to get the vendor to schedule drivers based on demand. If they are closing runs, meaning not increasing the run because they don't have sufficient drivers, they will be penalized for that.

Mr. Martinez asked for clarification on the meaning of missed trips and closed runs. Ms. Arnold stated that a missed trip is one that did not happen. She stated that a closed run is a trip that requires an added vehicle and driver and isn't accommodated. Ms. Arnold stated that there need to be enough drivers to meet the demand or number of trips in the service.

Mr. Martinez asked if quarterly reports can be provided from the vendors. Ms. Arnold stated that this could be requested, but she is hoping there won't be any violations to the new terms. Mr. Martinez stated that he believed statistical data was necessary to address the concerns of riders that have come before the Board in the past.

Ms. Arnold stated that they have also modified the training requirements to fit the services being provided. She also stated that they will also be installing tablets in the vendors vehicle in order to have the same technology that is currently present on the County vehicles. This would provide more accuracy in terms of reporting. Ms. Arnold stated that they are also in the process of introducing negotiated trips timing which would provide for passengers to negotiate when they need to get to a location. She stated that this requires a lot of training but would provide a higher level of efficiency.

Mr. Morales, General Manager for MV Transportation, stated that he has updated the ad for recruiting and included a \$500 sign on bonus to increase recruiting efforts. He stated that they are also doing a cost of living study to make sure the wages are competitive.

Mr. Martinez asked if MTM was still one of the vendors on contract. Ms. Arnold stated that they are and introduced their new General Manager, Barry Bland.

Mr. Bland stated that there were a lot of moving parts in all of this. He stated a lot of things that were done in the past created wasted time in the Paratransit program. Mr. Bland stated that the system must get more efficient because ridership is growing and they are working towards that.

Ms. Arnold stated that they were looking at a new request for proposal (RFP). She stated that the current system is using two vendors to provide service, however, they were going back to the old model of having one contractor provide all services.

Mr. Kurzman asked when the new contractor would come on Board. Ms. Arnold stated that the RFP should be out for proposals in May and the likelihood is a January start date for a new contractor.

Commissioner Fiala commended Michelle on her work and the report provided.

C. Presentation of Transportation Disadvantaged LCB Training

Ms. Otero gave a Power Point presentation covering the LCB Annual training. The presentation covered the definition of an MPO and what the MPO's responsibilities are, the composition of Collier MPO, the MPO's funding, LCB funding, and the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). She also covered the LCB's operating guidelines, the composition of the LCB, their duties, and grant requirements. Ms. Otero also covered an overview of Paratransit services, the definition of TD, TD eligibility, and trip prioritization. Lastly, she covered some of the LCB's procedures and processed to include the grievance process. Ms. Otero concluded her presentation and opened the floor for comments and questions from Board members. There were no questions. The presentation was included in the Board members agenda packets and can be provided to anyone who requests it.

7. Other Business

Ms. Otero introduced John Starling, representing FDOT. She stated that he would be representing them for a short period of time until they hire someone to replace Pam Barr. Mr. Starling stated that the department would have 2 new hires soon and a new representative should be present at the next meeting.

8. Distribution Items (no presentation)

9. Board Member Comments

None.

10. Next Meeting Date:

May 2, 2018 at 2:30 p.m.

11. Adjournment

With no further business to discuss, Commissioner Fiala adjourned the meeting at approximately 4:33pm.