

MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC TRANSIT ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

January 15, 2019

LET IT BE REMEMBERED, the Public Transit Advisory Committee in and for the County of Collier, having conducted business herein, met on this date at 3:00 P.M. in REGULAR SESSION at Administrative Building “F”, Suite 501, Collier County Government Complex Naples, Florida with the following members present:

ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Chairman: Mr. John DiMarco
Vice-Chairman: Mr. John Jenkins
Mr. Arthur Dobberstein
Ms. Sonja Lee Samek

ALSO PRESENT:

Ms. Michelle Arnold, Director, Public Transit and Neighborhood Enhancement
Mr. Omar DeLeon, Senior Planner, Public Transit and Neighborhood Enhancement
Mr. Braian Morales, General Manager, MV Transportation, Inc.

I. Call to Order

Chairman DiMarco called the meeting to order at 3:00 P.M.

II. Roll Call

Roll call was taken and a quorum was established.

III. Approval of Agenda

Mr. Weeks entered a motion to approve the January 15, 2019 meeting agenda. Mr. Jenkins seconded the motion. All were in favor. The motion was carried.

IV. Approval of Minutes

a. December 18, 2018 Minutes

Mr. Weeks entered a motion to approve the December 18, 2018 meeting minutes. Mr. Jenkins seconded the motion. All were in favor. The motion was carried.

V. Committee Action

a. Election of Chairman

Mr. Dobberstein entered a motion to nominate Mr. DiMarco as Chairman of the Public Transit Advisory Committee. Mr. Jenkins seconded the motion. All members were in favor. The motion was carried.

b. Election of Vice-Chairman

Mr. Weeks entered a motion to nominate Mr. Jenkins as Vice-Chairman of the Public Transit Advisory Committee. Mr. Dobberstein seconded the motion. All members were in favor. The motion was carried.

VI. Reports and Presentations

a. Discuss preparation of February 2019 Transit Workshop: A revised version of an introductory video to be shown at the onset of the workshop was shared with the Advisory Committee. Mr. Dobberstein suggested that the benefits of a reduction in traffic congestion, increased safety, and benefits to commerce derived from the use of public transportation should be more clearly noted. Mr. DeLeon acknowledged having incorporated prior feedback from Committee members and the necessity to keep the video to three minutes; however, stated that each slide will be reviewed again to see if additional commentary may be incorporated into the final product.

Mr. DeLeon stated that following the video, the presentation would begin with the history of CAT; the services provided in the beginning and the levels of service now. Amenities and enhancements would be highlighted, including the all-accessible vehicles, driver customer service, etc. Ms. Arnold noted that Commissioner Solis had recently taken a CAT bus ride and had commented favorably on the overall experience. Mr. Solis was particularly impressed by the level of customer service shown by the driver, who often greeted riders by name.

Mr. Dobberstein suggested that while growth in routes was being shown for fixed routes, similar growth should be mentioned for Paratransit as well. Mention was also

suggested of the growth in infrastructure with the addition of the Transfer stations at the Government Center and on Radio Road, as well as the enhancements made to bus stop shelters and ADA compliance.

Mr. DeLeon stated that the benefits and cost savings achieved through privatization via contracting with outside vendors would be discussed; with the recent choice of MV Transportation, Inc., as the sole vendor. Mr. Dobberstein suggested clarification be given related to maintenance responsibilities, as well as contracted savings in fuel and vehicle costs. Ms. Arnold stated the Commissioners have some knowledge regarding efficiencies in purchasing, as Board approval of these contracts is required. Mr. Jenkins suggested that the information related to fiscal efficiency in maintenance costs and purchasing may be included as a supplement in the packet of information shared at the meeting.

The benefits of public transit as they relate to affordable housing issues, and a reduction in vehicles on the road and effect on air pollution will be touched upon. The benefits of the paratransit system will be highlighted, and its impact on accessibility and independence for the most vulnerable sector of the community.

The future of transit and public mobility will be discussed. Specifically, MV Transportation, Inc., is planned to speak about services offered on a nationwide basis, such as relationships with TNCs and the use of autonomous vehicles, and how some of these initiatives may work in the Collier County environment. MV Transportation, Inc., presently holds 11 contracts in the State of Florida, which will help to facilitate information sharing that may be of benefit in the discussion of new initiatives to extend mobility in Transit in Collier County. Examples include microtransit, a form of Demand Responsive Transit (DRT). This technology-enabled transit service offers door to door flexible routing and/or flexible scheduling of minibus vehicles, conceptually fitting between private individual transportation (cars or taxicabs) and public mass transit (bus).

An additional example to be discussed includes current TNC partnerships (Uber and Lyft) in other markets; existing models to study in order to learn strengths, as well as potential pitfalls. Ms. Arnold stated that this conversation is intended to explore potential innovations which make sense for Collier Transit in the future, outside of the conventional notion of public transportation. The Advisory Committee members were in general agreement to discuss concepts only, but to remove any direct references to other markets, which may cause confusion.

Levels of service to the community will be discussed in terms of addressing public needs/demands through technology, such as real time tracking for fixed route riders.

The implementation of real time tracking capability is also presently being considered for paratransit riders, as well as looking at ways to connect paratransit customers with fixed routes via possible TNC partnerships. Ms. Samek suggested that for purposes of flow of discussion, the previously discussed slides which reference other markets

utilizing these types of programs would be more effective if moved to follow this line of discussion, as an adjunct.

The use of technology with the integration of applications will be discussed, offering users a centralized online suite of mobile applications relative to the CAT system. Mr. DiMarco stated that an online application for visually impaired users would be of great benefit.

Specifics of route frequencies and fare box recovery for fixed routes will be discussed. The size of the County and total budget versus the portion received by Transit will be discussed and contrasted with similar intrastate markets. Budget constraints and methods used to counteract financial shortfall will be discussed; having previously utilized grant funding, and now having had to move capital funds to help cover operating expenses. In addition to the current \$600K+ shortfall experienced this year, the recent selection process to utilize a single vendor will result in a cost for the consolidated service of \$1.1M over the current two vendor system. Consolidation to a single vendor is sought for greater efficiency, with each bid received coming in at \$1M+ over the current budget. While vendor negotiation remains ongoing and final Board approval is pending, an overall Transit budget deficit of \$1.8M is forecasted.

Additional sources of potential revenue will be discussed, including marketing via bus wraps/ bus shelters, as well as possible private/public partnerships, such as with Red Coach and Greyhound, but which would require zoning change for additional uses of Transfer Stations. A Transit Impact Analysis will be conducted to determine the impact of future development in Collier County on Transit and to assist in identifying other potential advertising revenue sources.

The future of CAT will be examined, including potential growth in ridership through service and technology enhancements. Mr. Dobberstein remarked upon the desire for growth in ridership versus the national downward trend of public transit use, as detailed in a recent Washington Post article. A brief discussion ensued regarding issues with driver recruitment due to the current pay scale and licensing requirement, as well as the high cost of living in Collier County. Ms. Arnold replied that innovation in technological and service enhancements needs to be explored and implemented beyond the conventional system that has long been in place.

Ms. Arnold noted that an email invitation to attend the Transit Workshop on February 5, 2019 at 9:00 a.m. will be forwarded to Advisory Committee members, who were encouraged to attend and participate.

VII. Member Comments

No additional member comments were made.

VIII. Public Comments

No public comments were made.

IX. Next Meeting Date – February 19, 2019

X. Adjournment

There being no further business for the good of the County, the meeting was adjourned by order of the Chair.

Public Transit Advisory Committee

John DiMarco, Chairman

These minutes approved by the Committee on _____ as presented ____
or as amended_____.