

MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC TRANSIT ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

October 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”, Third Floor, Collier County Government Complex Naples, Florida with the following members present:

ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Chairman: Mr. John DiMarco
Vice-Chairman: Mr. Arthur Dobberstein
Mr. Cliff Donenfeld
Mr. Harold Weeks

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Mr. James Caton - Excused
Ms. Sonja Lee Samek - Excused

ALSO PRESENT:

Mr. Omar DeLeon, Public Transit Manager, PTNE
Mr. Braian Morales, General Manager, MV Transportation, Inc.
Ms. Elena Ortiz-Rosado, Events, Sales, and Marketing Coordinator, PTNE

I. Call to Order

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

II. Roll Call

Roll call was taken, and a quorum established.

III. Approval of Agenda

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

IV. Approval of Minutes

a. August 20, 2019

Mr. Weeks entered a motion to approve the August 20, 2019 meeting minutes. Mr. Dobberstein seconded the motion. All were in favor. The motion was carried.

V. Committee Action

There were no Committee Actions for consideration.

VI. Reports and Presentations

a. CAT Performance Measures

Mr. DeLeon presented the CAT Annual Performance Measures report, which provides a summary of key performance indicators, including ridership, on-time performance, safety performance/preventable and non-preventable accidents, and customer service. Ridership was at 800K+ passengers at year end, noting a 7% decrease last year and 4% this year. Despite some stabilization, ridership is still not at the desired level. Mr. Donnenfeld questioned why ridership was not significantly increased during the seasonal, high tourist months and suggested a need for increased public awareness of the system, particularly for visitors. Mr. DeLeon noted marketing initiatives to address this, most notably the beach bus service, as well as targeting larger employers who may offer the service to employees, particularly during tourist season when more employees are brought on. Mr. Dobberstein suggested solicitation of assistance in marketing the CAT system, such as via the 311 program or other County agencies, and in presentation to large gated communities. Mr. Donnenfeld suggested targeting over-55 communities as well. Mr. DeLeon concurred and stated that the marketing department is currently working with other County marketing/events coordinators to cross-promote the bus service, such as libraries, museums, Parks and Recreation, etc.

Regarding customer service, Mr. Dobberstein inquired as to whether the Advisory Committee may be apprised of more serious complaints received from riders. Mr. DeLeon stated that a general summary of the types of complaints received may be shared. Mr. Dobberstein also inquired if dropping the Commercial Driver's License (CDL) requirement had negatively impacted the operation in terms of preventable accident occurrences.

Mr. DeLeon stated that the Cat Connect service stats would need to be reviewed, however noted no impact upon the fixed route service. Paratransit stats will be included in future reports.

Mr. Dobberstein requested clarification as to when the budgetary changes previously discussed would be implemented, i.e., delays in new vehicle purchase, new initiatives which were unable to be budgeted due to lack of funding, as well as the \$1M+ contract for driver salaries. Mr. DeLeon stated FY20 began on October 1, 2019. Funding for the \$1M+ contract was derived from grants, as well as local match.

b. CAT Safety Initiatives

The various measures taken to promote safety to drivers were highlighted, including a “safety blitz”, which promotes a culture of safety awareness and commitment. Acronyms for safety reminders are utilized, for instance, LLLC, which stands for “Look around, leave room, look ahead, and communicate.” Customer service is emphasized, which includes driver appearance, friendliness, and offers of assistance in securing passengers and their belongings to ensure a safe ride. Drivers are required to wear yellow vests in order to be seen and to represent caution and safety. Further, drivers are committed to reporting anything out of the ordinary, utilizing the onboard radio system, which is recorded. A “see something, say something” message is available on some fixed route buses to encourage rider participation as well. All buses have backup cameras and alarms, as well as “Mobileye,” which prevents drivers from following another vehicle too closely. Drive-cam clips are utilized for training purposes, capturing driving behaviors which may require re-training, in order to possibly circumvent a future accident. Staff also offers special recognition of an excellent attitude and service record with nomination for the Katherine McClary Operator the Year Award, as well as certificates of recognition for successful completion of the “30 Day Safety” challenge. A teambuilding barbeque is given for all drivers when no preventable accidents occur within a 14-day timespan, as well as participation in a regional karaoke competition. As an example of exemplary service and safety, a driver was recognized by Mr. DiMarco for locating and extinguishing a fire burning in the mulch at the Government Center Terminal.

The annual Florida Public Transportation Association (FPTA) Bus Safety and Security Excellence Awards recognizes FPTA bus transportation systems that have implemented programs or projects that have achieved documented success in addressing specific safety and security program areas. The award recipients should include practices and procedural changes that have led to safety and/or security improvements and reflect a safe and secure culture. The recipient should also represent exemplary standards in development and implementation of educational, training and supportive programs that sustain this culture within the workplace and result in exceptional service for the public and communities served. In this regard, MV Transportation/CAT was the 2019 recipient of the First Place Award for Safety in the State of Florida, as well as second place for marketing initiatives.

c. Beach Bus

The third year of the beach bus route was deemed a success, with a plan to continue the program this year. The southern route will be discontinued however, with only 800 of the 6600 total riders utilizing the southern route last year. Attempts to partner with local businesses for car parking along the southern route had been unsuccessful. The southern route ran from Creekside, south on US 41 to Vanderbilt Beach Road, right to the beach, and circling back. The remaining northern route will travel from Creekside to Wiggins Pass, and stopping inside Connors Park. The beach bus route will operate from November 29, 2019 through April 27, 2020. The beach bus is equipped to accommodate riders with beach chairs, boards, etc. The suggestion was made to inform riders of red tide conditions, which was noted to adversely affect ridership last year.

Transit Staff will be working in coordination with the Tourist Development Council for the development of marketing strategies to promote the beach bus. The beach bus will also be marketed via social media and on the bus schedules. Mr. Donnenfeld inquired whether the parking lot at United Church of Christ on Seagate had been identified as a park-and-ride location. Mr. DeLeon noted that the Seagate location would be slightly out of the way in terms of the current northern route, which will service the Vanderbilt beach area. Also, the inability to utilize the church parking lot on Sunday is problematic, as Sunday was noted to have higher ridership and was the busier weekend day. Mr. DeLeon clarified that route 26 does currently travel along Pine Ridge Road, with stops on Seagate, as well as at Clam Pass.

d. Mobility Week

Mobility Week is a cooperative effort between the Florida Department of Transportation and its partner agencies to promote, safe, multimodal transportation choices to the public. This year, Mobility Week will take place from October 25th through November 1, 2019. Collier Area Transit has partnered with the Blue Zones Project of Southwest Florida for a celebration to be held on Friday, November 1, 2019, promoting three modes of transportation; walking, bicycling, and utilizing the transit system. Free fixed route rides will be available to the public on November 1, as well as encouraging the public to engage in the three noted alternate modes of transportation. Celebrations will be held that day at the Government Center and Radio Road Transfer Stations, as well as at the future site of the newest Transfer Center in Immokalee. Refreshments and promotional items will be shared with the public, as well as booklets of the new seasonal schedule. Collier residents who engage in alternative modes of transportation during Mobility Week are encouraged to upload photos to social media, tagging the Blue Zones Project, with donated prizes available. A proclamation was received on October 2, 2019 from the City of Naples, presented by Mayor Barnett, as well as a proclamation which will be issued at the October 22, 2019 Board of County Commissioner's meeting.

Mobility Week is a concept which originated in Europe in 2002, with participation last year of 2700 cities in 54 countries. The first initiative in Florida was in 2016, with 2019 being the second year of participation by the Collier Transit Division.

Collier Transit has also participated in a “Stuff the Bus” initiative, sponsored by The United Way of Collier County. Buses were parked at area Publix locations, where food items were able to be donated. Over 10K+ pounds of food were donated from the community and subsequently distributed to over 40 food banks.

Mr. Dobberstein stated that groups, such as the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts can arrange for a bus tour, learn about riding the bus, as well as safety and environmental issues. It was noted that Transit Marketing conducts “travel training,” visiting schools throughout the county, teaching special needs children, VPK, middle and high school age students, as well as summer campers how to ride the bus, safety, paying fares, and what the bus shelters and stops look like, in order to educate children on how to utilize transit to get to after school jobs, sports, and activities.

Upcoming Veterans events in November were discussed, with details to be forwarded by Committee members to Marketing for potential participation.

VII. Member Comments

+Mr. Donnenfeld announced his resignation from the Public Transit Advisory Committee due to his candidacy for a County Commissioner seat. Mr. Donnenfeld expressed his thanks for the opportunity to serve on the PTAC and stated his interest in furthering Public Transit efforts if elected to the Board of County Commissioners.

+Mr. DiMarco noted that Google Plus is now offering the opportunity to purchase bus fares online. Mr. DeLeon stated that an update will be shared with the Advisory Committee at the November 2019 meeting regarding the status of the Mobile Application program, which will allow for ticket purchases via a smartphone.

VIII. Public Comments

There were no comments by members of the public.

IX. Next Meeting Date – November 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___.