

MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC TRANSIT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING

September 21, 2021 Naples, Florida,

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 Collier County Human Resources, Training Room, 3303 Tamiami Trail E, Naples, Florida with the following members present:

Chair: John DiMarco, III (ZOOM)
Vice-Chair: Arthur Dobberstein (Excused)
James Bennett (Excused)
Peter Berry (Excused)
Devon Browne (Excused)
James Caton (ZOOM)
Sonja Lee Samek (ZOOM)

ALSO PRESENT: Michelle Arnold, Director, Public Transit and Neighborhood Enhancement
Omar DeLeon, Public Transit Manager, Collier Area Transit
Tamarin Kirby, MV Transit Planner
Braian Morales, General Manger, MV Transportation
Trinity Scott, Deputy Department Head, GMD (ZOOM)
Alexander Showalter, PTNE Senior Planner

1. Call to Order

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

2. Roll Call

Roll call was taken, and a quorum was not established.

3. Approval of Agenda

Committee consensus to accept the Agenda was noted.

4. Approval of Minutes

a. June 15, 2021 and August 17, 2021 Minutes

The minutes of the June 15, 2021 and August 17, 2021 Public Transit Advisory Committee meetings will be added to the October 19, 2021 Agenda.

5. Committee Action

a. Election of Chair

Election of Officers to the Public Transit Advisory Committee was tabled to the October 19, 2021 meeting.

6. Reports and Presentations

a. Driver Shortage

Mr. DeLeon and Mr. Morales presented the Executive Summary “*Driver Shortage*” and provided the following update:

- The Pandemic has significantly impacted the labor force creating a national driver shortage for the Transportation Industry.
- The CAT (Collier Area Transit) system has struggled to engage drivers to cover the service area.
- The vendor identifies the routes they are unable to cover daily and posts notices to the public via the MyStop app and on the website. No routes have formally been closed.
- A prioritization process has been adopted for the Paratransit service emphasized for persons qualifying for this service.

The shortage is affecting the vendor’s ability to fully operate the service. Efforts taken by the vendor, MV Transportation Inc., to recruit new drivers include:

- Fixed Route Operators wage and sign-on bonus increases.
- Retaining a Recruiter and placing “Now Hiring” banners on the property.
- Elimination of a training wage.
- Establishment of a new work schedule for the drivers, reducing the number of operators required.

Despite the steps noted above, results have not produced new candidates to fill the current nine (9) vacant positions.

The Committee suggested the following:

- Increase the non-competitive hourly compensation. *Discussion with CAT to make the starting wage more attractive is in progress.*
- Approach trade schools in the area, such as Lorenzo Walker Technical College, to recruit graduates.
- Contacting CDL Training Schools. *CAT disadvantages include a lower starting wage and requirement to execute a five (5) year contract.*
- Create public awareness through advertisements and flyers.

b. Marco Island Transport Summit

Mr. Showalter presented Executive Summary “*Marco Island Transportation Summit*” stating the objective to implement a pilot trolley service for the weekend of December 4th to assess the demand for service on the island. He noted:

A Transportation Summit was held with local business owners, representatives of the Marco Island community, Blue Zones, Commute Connector, and CAT to discuss transportation issues among employers and workers that commute using the CAT system and other alternative Transportation services.

Attendees were split into focus groups and asked a series of questions regarding current service, their needs, and challenges faced by their business and employees. The PTNE (Public Transit & Neighborhood Enhancement) will utilize the information to look at potential alternatives to existing services to better serve this population.

As an option to relieve parking issues throughout Marco Island, an Island Trolley pilot was proposed to alleviate congestion and address the issue of limited parking on the island.

- The Blue Zone Project will fund a pilot Trolley service December 4th and 5th, a weekend of several planned events including the Christmas tree lighting.
- A MAP of the proposed route was distributed. The Trolley will provide stops at hotels, restaurants, and the shopping center.
- A parking agreement for the weekend will be drafted with the elementary school to accommodate self-drivers.
- The information gained will be used for future planning of Trolley service on Marco Island.

Ms. Arnold noted the well-attended summit offered general options for transportation.

- Commuter Services received a lot of referrals.
- Businesses will potentially sign up with Commuter Services to do “Van” pooling for employees, and coordinate employee hours.
- Establishments will attempt to work together to coordinate employee hours.
- The PTNE will coordinate with the Chamber of Commerce individuals and event organizers to ensure, as referenced on the MAP, efforts are focused on the appropriate destinations.

Committee discussion:

- Decorate the Trolley in a holiday theme.
- Consider a Trolley for the Fifth Avenue South *Christmas Tree Lighting* and Third Street South *Snow Fest* in Naples.

7. Member Comments

Recruitment Incentives

The Committee suggested funding for CDL training to incentivize individuals who express an interest in employment.

Mr. Morales noted:

- Currently, CAT subsidizes CDL training for interested individuals.
- With success training on smaller vehicles, individuals graduate to larger vehicle operation due to the elevated level of exposure/risk.
- CAT has an arrangement with the County to provide testing services gratis.

Advisory Committee Meeting Attendance

Chair DiMarco urged members to attend the October 2021 meeting to ensure a quorum and enable the Committee to conduct business in accordance with the ordinance.

8. Public Comments

None

9. Next Meeting Date

October 19, 2021 - Collier County Museum, Lecture Hall, 3331 Tamiami Trail East, Naples, FL.

There being no further business for the good of the County, the meeting was adjourned by order of the chair at 3:30 P.M.

Public Transit Advisory Committee




 John DiMarco III, Chairman

These minutes approved by the Board/Committee on _____ as presented _____ or as amended _____.