

**HERNANDO COUNTY
TRANSPORTATION DISADVANTAGED
LOCAL COORDINATING BOARD REGULAR MEETING
Wednesday, November 18, 2020 – 10:00 A.M.**

MINUTES

The Hernando County Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board (TDLCB) held a regular meeting on Wednesday, November 18, 2020, beginning at 10:04 a.m. at the Hernando County Building Division Training Facility, 1661 Blaise Drive, Brooksville, Florida. The meeting was advertised in the Tampa Bay Times and the agenda was available on the MPO Website.

MEMBERS PRESENT IN PERSON

John Allocco, TDLCB Chairman
Kevin Bargerstock, Florida Department of Education, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
Tony Graham, Hernando County Veterans Services
Gretchen Samter, Public Transit User
Tracy Noyes, FDOT
Kathleen Winters, Local Representative Medical Community
Denise Clark, Hernando County School Board – Transportation
Benita Dixon, Private For-Profit Transportation

MEMBERS ABSENT

Emily Hughart, ACHA
Ian Martin, ACHA (Alternate)
John Eberle, Regional Workforce Development Board
Elizabeth Watson, Persons with Disabilities Agency
Robert Bradburn, Florida Department of Children & Family Services -- Access Florida

OTHERS PRESENT

Steve Diez, MPO Executive Director
Carlene Riecsc, Transportation Planner III
Terri Saenz, Administrative Assistant III
Miranda Maldonado, MidFlorida Community Services/Trans Hernando

A. CALL TO ORDER

Commissioner Allocco called the regular meeting of the TDLCB to order at 10:04 a.m.

B. REVIEW/APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion: A motion was made to approve the November 18, 2020, regular meeting agenda. The motion was seconded, and the carried unanimously. (the recording was unclear as to the motion makers; however, it was a unanimous approval)

C. REVIEW/APPROVAL OF MINUTES – August 19, 2020

Motion: Denise Clark made a motion to approve the August 19, 2020 minutes. Gretchen Samter seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

D. CORRESPONDENCE/INFORMATION ITEMS

1. Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged (CTD) 10/28 Business meeting

Mr. Diez reported the CTD's October 28, 2020 business meeting addressed several issues which may be of interest to the LCB. A copy of the agenda is attached, and the full packet can be found at: https://ctd.fdot.gov/docs/MeetingPackages/2020Meetings/20201028_CTDAgendapkg.pdf

- Trip and Equipment Grants

The Commission conducted a study to explore changes to the Trip and Equipment Grant funding allocation methodology. The Commission approved the final report of the study on August 26, 2020, which included recommendations for the Commission to adopt changes within rule to implement a new funding methodology, effective July 1, 2021. The CTD staff has been working on amendments to the formula in an effort to promote year-over-year stability while incentivizing cost effective deliver of trip and equipment grant funded services.

The proposed language amends the current allocation methodology to include four variables to the methodology: TD eligible population, centerline miles, trip and equipment grant services and base funding.

The proposed changes are not anticipated to negatively impact the Hernando TD program.

Ms. Riecss clarified that the Community Transportation Coordinator (Mid Florida Community Services) applies for the grants.

- Quorum Requirements for Local Coordinating Boards

LCB meetings are required to have a minimum number of board members physically present in the same location to establish a quorum. On March 20, 2020, Governor Ron DeSantis issued Executive Order 20-69 in response to the COVID-19 public health emergency, which suspended the requirements for local government bodies to

hold in-person meetings. This allowed local government bodies, including LCBs, to hold meetings through virtual or telephonic means. The executive order expired November 1, 2020.

Ms. Riecse stated that an in person quorum is required. statutorily and via the TDLCB bylaws. We would like to offer virtual/via telephone to our more vulnerable population, but we may not have enough members in physical attendance to conduct meetings.

Chairman Allocco indicated that in person meetings are preferable because often people do not actively participate in meetings when they are conducted virtually.

Ms. Riecse voiced another concern was that a lot of state agencies were not allowed to travel to attend meetings in person.

Chairman Allocco questioned if we could amend the bylaws.

Ms. Riecse suggested that the bylaws scheduled later in the agenda could be modified to lower the physical quorum which would allow the option of ZOOM.

Ms. Samter stated state agencies should have to be in attendance.

Chairman Allocco stated Ms. Samter is a good example of why ZOOM should be offered. He further stated we need consistency among state agencies attending in person meetings

2. Annual CTD Training Conference

Ms. Riecse stated she attended the conference via ZOOM and there was a segment on human trafficking that was of interest on public transportation being used with the exploitation. There was discussion about developing a standard protocol to train transit operators to recognize signs associated with trafficking situations.

Chairman Allocco mentioned that it is important to have standard processes for reporting potential issues without feeling threatened.

3. 2020 Legislative Policy Positions – State Transportation Trust Fund

Mr. Diez stated that current law for the State Transportation Trust (TD) Fund does not earmark funds to make sure they go to the trust fund and not somewhere else. A proposal to make FDOT and Transportation Disadvantaged Trust Fund (TDTF) grants more flexible was put forth by the FPTA:

- extend TDTF grants for each county to the next year,
- allow TDTF to be used for meal, grocery and prescription deliveries,
- at a minimum earmark, the TDTF dollars to ensure the funds go back to the TD trust fund and not elsewhere,
- allow other FDOT grants to be used on transit improvement and operating funds.

Chairman Allocco expressed concern over the monies going towards services such as Uber Eats.

Ms. Samter intervened that delivery services have provided a safety barrier to her and her family during the current COVID-19 situation. She noted that grocery delivery services are very expensive. Although she understood concerns regarding Uber Eats, she thought consideration needed to be afforded to those people who cannot prepare their own meals at home and now have a safety risk with being able to leave their residence. On the surface you may not want money going towards Uber Eats but for those people who cannot safely get food, it may be something that should be considered.

Chairman Allocco was concerned about the potential for fraud to occur and worried that if the legislators act too quickly, there could be negative consequences to people in need.

Mr. Diez mentioned that he will find out more about this.

Chairman Allocco asked if there was additional discussion,

Ms. Noyes advised they held a workshop last month to discuss the checks and balances that need to be followed.

Ms. Maldonado voiced that possibly CTC's can look into this further because Mid Florida has senior services which provides Meals on Wheels.

Chairman Allocco stated you would need background checks, liability insurance etc.

With regards to virtual meetings, Commissioner Allocco noted that they will affect the airline industry as well as the hotel industry because it is more economical to participate in virtual meetings without incurring additional expenses.

4. TDLCB Vacancies

Mr. Diez revealed that Ms. Kurtz, Hernando County resident representing the disabled whose term expired on October 31, 2020 and has declined to serve an additional term. This means we have 5 current vacancies on this board.

Discussion ensued that the membership of the TDLCB is established by Statutes. Mr. Diez noted that we have historically had difficulty filling several of the state agency positions.

Chairman Allocco suggested we need to be reaching out to our representative and senators to make sure they are aware the state is not providing members to serve on the TD Boards.

Chairman Allocco asked that Mr. Diez prepare a letter and he will sign it.

Ms. Winters offered to reach out to the Department of Elder Affairs

Ms. Samter commented that she is currently considered the citizen transportation user but since she is disabled, it may be beneficial for her to switch her role to make it easier to fill the other member position.

Ms. Maldonado offered to post flyers on their busses to recruit members.

Ms. Riecss advised Ms. Samter that her term expires in 2021, and if she were willing to serve again, she could apply for the disabled citizen position if it is vacant.

Ms. Clark inquired about the local representative Children at Risk position, if the liaison for the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, Shanika Figueroa Rodriguez might be a likely candidate.

Chairman Allocco believed so because she deals with children at risk which is very broad along with Transportation Disadvantaged.

5. 2021 Meeting Calendar

Chairman Allocco mentioned it was only for information only. It was to be approved at the MPO meeting on November 12th, that was cancelled due to thought of possible hurricane.

Ms. Riecss advised that the calendar was presented to Admin to verify any conflicts with his calendar.

No comments or questions.

6. Voting Conflict

Mr. Diez mentioned that no appointed public officer shall participate in any matter which would inure to the officer's special private gain or loss. Per the Statutes, the term "public officer" includes any person elected or appointed to hold office in any agency including any person serving on an advisory board.

Chairman Allocco commented that the definition of "personal gain" is broad but in the court system as a county commissioner it means that you are actually having some sort of a "financial gain." If you gain a new travel opportunity, that is not personal gain because it does not improve your status in society.

No comments or questions.

7. Medicare Open Enrollment Period

Chairman Allocco referenced we are still in open enrollment for those dealing with clients in Medicare. He thought that this was originally addressed because of challenges with participants getting to their local office.

Ms. Riecss stated there were problems with recipients getting to their local Social Security Offices which are in Pasco County because TD services cannot cross the county lines. She did call social security offices and local providers and was advised they are encouraging online applications and conference calls to limit office visits.

Ms. Maldonado communicated that with their new connector service they are able to get clients to the border point of the county using “The Bus” to meet the bus system in Pasco County in order to get to the two offices.

Mr. Diez stated that TBARTA received the grant they applied for with UZURV to provide intercounty service.

Ms. Samter voiced that it takes her 2.5 hours one-way by using TheBus to travel from the Spring Hill (Pasco-Hernando State College) campus to the West campus which by car is a half hour drive.

Ms. Samter asked Mr. Diez how she could find out more about the UZURV (cross county) program

Ms. Maldonado stated the services begins December 1st and she will send brochures/early materials to Mr. Diez. It costs \$6.00 each way.

E. ACTION ITEM

1. Annual Operating Report (AOR)

Mr. Diez explained that the AOR is an annual requirement that is submitted to the Commission to the Transportation Disadvantaged (CTD).

There was no comments or questions.

Motion: Tony Graham made a motion to approve that the annual AOR. Benita Dixon seconded, and it carried unanimously.

2. TDLCB Annual Bylaws Approval

Mr. Diez stated the annual TDLCB Bylaws, are required to be reviewed and submitted annually pursuant to Rule 41-2.012(5)(a) F.A.C. Minor edits were made to the formatting of the bylaws, but none involved content.

Discussion ensued regarding whether or not the quorum requirement should be lowered. It was noted there are 18 statutorily required member positions and 14 are currently filled. A physical quorum of seven (7) members is required for the TDLCB to conduct business.

The Board discussed options to include:

- Lowering the quorum to five (5)
- Establishing the quorum as a percentage of positions that are actually filled.
- Lower the physical quorum while establishing a minimum to attend via ZOOM or teleconference

For now, it was decided to leave as is until the problem arises again.

Motion: Kathleen Winters made a motion to approve the bylaws as presented. Tony Graham seconded, and it carried unanimously.

F. MID FLORIDA COMMUNITY SERVICES – Miranda Maldonado

Ms. Maldonado stated their trips have increased from 1,000 in October to 1,200 in November. It is much lower than it was last year around this time.

G. VETERANS SERVICES – Tony Graham

Mr. Graham reported that Mid Florida took over the veteran's local transportation. This will reduce their reliance on James A. Haley, VA Hospital in Tampa, FL which provides their vans and volunteer drivers.

The Pinebrook Facility was recently transferred to the Veterans Administration and was approved, giving them approximately 40,000 square feet of office space. This will tremendously help with Citrus and Hernando County veterans and possibly parts of eastern Pasco and Sumter Counties. By reducing travel to Gainesville or Tampa.

Ms. Maldonado stated they continue to provide free trips for the veterans to the local Pinebrook VA.

H. COMMITTEE MEMBER PRESENTATION

Kathleen Winters from Alzheimer's Family Organization stated they have had a lot of changes due to COVID-19. Financially 90 percent of their income is from in person fund raising and they have had to cancel four events. In March, they had their big walk in the Villages but then the office closed down. They are in a financial hardship and closed their office in Spring Hill. They have lost 2 staff members which leaves 4 staff members, including herself to service 8 counties. They have tried a virtual fundraiser but only had two participants so right now they are literally hanging on by a thread. The upside is that they are still around to provide services the best they can. A lot of their clients cannot be served because they are in adult living facilities or do not want people in their homes. A lot of their services are being provided via telephone.

I. CLOSING COMMENTS

Commissioner Allocco asked for another volunteer to speak about their organization. Ms. Dixon volunteered to do so at the February 10, 2021 meeting. We look forward to hearing from her along with Joe DeGeorge who is on vacation.

ADJOURNMENT AND NEXT MEETING

Chairman Allocco advised that the next MPO Meeting is on February 10, 2021 here in Hernando County, Building Department Training Room, Brooksville.

There being no further business, Chairman Allocco adjourned the meeting at 11:21 am.