

**CHARLOTTE COUNTY TRANSPORTATION DISADVANTAGED
LOCAL COORDINATING BOARD (LCB)
MEETING
January 4, 2024**

Minutes of a regular meeting held in a hybrid format on January 4, 2024, utilizing TEAMS remotely and in-person at the Transit Facility, 545 Theresa Boulevard in Port Charlotte, FL 33954.

MEMBERS PRESENT IN-PERSON

Commissioner Ken Doherty, *Charlotte County Commissioner (LCB Chair)*
M. Suzanne Roberts, *Virginia B. Andes Volunteer Community Clinic - Medical Community Representative (LCB Vice Chair)*
Lynda Faieta, *Public Education-School Transportation (alternate)*
Donna Fain, *Agency for Persons with Disabilities*
Pamela Jordan, *Representative for Elderly Interests*
Maricela Morado, *Area Agency on Aging-Florida Department of Elder Affairs*
Candice Monroy, *FDOT, District One Modal Development Office*
Maryjane Nickerson, *Goodwill, Economically Disadvantaged Representative (alternate)*
Joseph Sabatino, *Citizen Advocate*

MEMBERS PRESENT REMOTELY

Leigh Ann Bellamy, *Division of Blind Services*
Jocene Henderson, *Veterans Affairs*
Carmen Henry, *Regional Workforce Development*
Tabitha Larrauri, *Department of Children & Families*

ABSENT MEMBERS

Vacant, *Disabled Interests Representative*
Vacant, *Local Private-for-Profit Transportation Industry Representative*
Lynn Dohler, *Children-at-Risk Representative - excused*
Dottie Fulton, *Citizen Advocate-User – excused (technical issues)*
Michael Stahler, *Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA) - excused*

STAFF AND OTHERS PRESENT IN-PERSON

Wendy Scott, *MPO Planner*
Betty-Ann Sherer, *MPO Planner*
Laks Gurram, *MPO Principal Planner*
Heidi Maddox, *Charlotte County Transit*
Eva Tomszak, *Charlotte County Fiscal*
Rich Weingarten, *Citizen*

1. Call to Order & Roll Call

LCB Chair Ken Doherty called the regular LCB Meeting to order at 10:14 a.m. at the conclusion of the Annual Public Meeting.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

3. Public Comments on Agenda Items

Rich Weingarten inquired about the source of funding for the upcoming Transit Development Plan (TDP). Heidi Maddox stated that it would be conducted using the FTA Section 5307 grant.

4. Consent Agenda

A. Approval of Minutes: [Approval of Minutes: November 4, 2023 LCB Meeting](#)

LCB Chair Doherty appreciated LCB Vice Chair Roberts chairing the November meeting in his absence. She noted that it had been her pleasure to serve the LCB.

Suzanne Roberts made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Maricela Morado seconded the motion. The Consent Agenda was approved unanimously.

5. [Election of LCB Vice-Chairperson](#)

The LCB Bylaws require the election of a Vice-Chairperson during the first scheduled meeting of the calendar year. The Vice-Chairperson shall serve a term of one year starting with the first meeting after the election. The Vice-Chairperson may serve more than one term. The Vice-Chairperson shall, during the absence of the Chair, have and exercise all the duties and powers of the Chair. The Vice-Chairperson shall also perform other such duties as may be assigned by the Chair.

LCB Chair Doherty requested that Wendy Scott chair the meeting for the election of the LCB Vice-Chairperson.

Commissioner Doherty made a motion to nominate Suzanne Roberts to serve as LCB Vice-Chairperson. Joe Sabatino seconded the motion. There were no additional nominations, and the nominations were closed. The motion was approved unanimously.

LCB Chair Doherty resumed chairing the meeting.

6. [Overview of the LCB Process \(Annual Training\)](#)

As described in the Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged (CTD) annual planning grant executed with the Charlotte County-Punta Gorda MPO, planning staff members are

required to annually “provide technical assistance and training for the local coordinating board.” This is accomplished at the January LCB meeting each year. The annual LCB Member Training was conducted using the *Local Coordinating Board Transportation Disadvantaged Training Video*. LCB Members were then shown a graphic identifying the names of current LCB Members and what position they fill on the LCB.

7. Review/Endorsement of Charlotte County’s Section 5310 and 5311 Grant Applications

Federal transportation legislation includes the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5310 and Section 5311 funding programs. Section 5310 is aimed at enhancing mobility for seniors and persons with disabilities, while rural residents benefit from Section 5311. Charlotte County Transit is applying for operating grants in both programs.

Suzanne Roberts made a motion to endorse the Charlotte County FTA Section 5310 and 5311 Grant Applications. Maricela Morado seconded the motion. Candice Monroy abstained from voting due to her FDOT grant approval duties. The motion was approved with one abstention.

8. Community Transportation Coordinator (CTC) Quarterly Report

Given the timing of the holiday period and a very short turnaround time, the CTC Quarterly Report covering the October-December 2023 timeframe was not available for the January 4, 2024 LCB meeting. It will be reviewed along with the January-March 2024 report at the May 2, 2024 LCB meeting.

9. Transit Development Plan (TDP) Update

Transit Development Plans (TDPs) are required for transit grant program recipients in Section 341.052, F.S. A TDP is the provider's planning, development, and operational guidance document, based on a ten-year planning horizon and covers the year for which funding is sought and the nine subsequent years. Florida Administrative Code 14-73.001 Public Transportation further details TDP requirements. Substantial proposed changes to the current “TDP rule” are currently underway. These changes should promote better coordination between transit agencies and MPO planning efforts.

Heidi Maddox stated that the TDP scope had completed legal review. The vendor had been approved, and the document was awaiting BCC signature. The hard work would be commencing soon. A transit fare study, a transit marketing study and the feasibility of using alternate fuel vehicles would all be accomplished with the development of the TDP.

Wendy Scott raised the issue of the ongoing development of the new statewide Transit Development Plan rule and its potential impact to both the County’s next TDP and the MPO’s 2050 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) development efforts. Timelines for both documents were a concern. Candice Monroy agreed to inquire with District One and FDOT Central Office staff regarding the latest developments with the TDP rule revisions. Heidi Maddox indicated that Transit would proceed with TDP development using the current rule until notified otherwise. Currently, this would mean TDP submission to FDOT by September 1, 2024

under the existing TDP rule. LCB Chair Doherty expressed interest in having FDOT and other staff discuss the development of these studies further at a future MPO Board Meeting to keep all interested parties informed.

10. Citizen Comments

No public comments were given.

11. Staff Comments

Wendy Scott gave the following report:

- Thank you to everyone participating in the LCB Meeting.
- Welcome to Pamela Jordan as the representative for Elderly Interests.

Pamela Jordan discussed her previous 44-year career in Anne Arundel County, Maryland in various governmental roles, including County Americans with Disabilities Act Coordinator, Director of Aging & Disabilities and Deputy Chief Information Officer for Health & Human Services. She described her personal interest in advocating for individuals with disabilities due to a family member's health challenges. LCB Members welcomed her to the board.

- The representative for the Children-at-Risk position will be filled by Mr. Lynn Dorler who is the Executive Director of the Boys and Girls Clubs of Charlotte County. He was not at the meeting due to a scheduling conflict, but he expects to attend the next LCB meeting.
- Dottie Fulton, Citizen Advocate/Transit System User, had been approved by the MPO Board for another three-year term. This news was well-received by the LCB Members.
- There are currently two LCB vacancies: (1) a representative for disabled interests who is an individual with a disability, and (2) new – a representative of the local private-for-profit transportation industry. MPO staff had received some interest for the first position; but thus far, they had not received a completed application.
- TD Legislative Awareness Day will be held in Tallahassee at the Capitol Building on Thursday, January 18, 2024 (given this year's earlier legislative session). Vehicles and program advocates converge on the Capitol grounds to increase program awareness. You or your organizational representatives in the Panhandle area are invited to participate. Commissioner Doherty indicated that he would be in Tallahassee at that time with the Florida Association of Counties organization and might attend.
- MPO staff monitored the December 11, 2023 business meeting of the Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged which was held virtually. Just above 1.4 million trips were taken statewide in the past program year, as the program moves beyond the lean travel years of the pandemic period. A new County profile page will be part of the Commission's Annual Performance Report, and it is currently available on the Commission's website. (*Staff displayed the information on screen*). A major Commission goal this year is to implement the results of the Annual Operating Report (AOR) study conducted last year. Going forward a timeline for implementation and

guidance will be developed, resulting in the eventual shift from relying on each County's AOR report to the new data reporting material.

- MPO Staff was glad to participate with Transit and other County and human service agencies on December 14, 2023 at the Family Services Center in a holiday outreach event for Seniors, Veterans and Adults with Disabilities.

Betty-Ann Sherer also commented on the holiday outreach event. She provided flyers regarding an upcoming Team Punta Gorda-sponsored effort to replenish the Saint Vincent DePaul food pantry. It is a drive-through event on January 12, 2024 at the Charlotte County Community Foundation at 227 Sullivan Street from 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. Joe Sabatino noted that approximately 50-60 families are served weekly through the food pantry on Monday/Wednesday/Friday. Staff would also forward the flyers digitally post-meeting.

Heidi Maddox described the wonderful opportunity that Transit staff now has in the post-pandemic period to do community outreach events. She described the increased number of contract drivers (17 on weekdays and 3 on Saturdays). She was pleased that the new software had resulted in a significant decrease in unmet trips and no-shows. With the new software, passengers were able to confirm or cancel trips the evening before travel, as well as receive "your bus in on the way" notices just prior to their pickups. She said that exciting data would be presented at the next meeting. She noted that there were currently 20 full time and 4 part time drivers in place. Full time drivers were being utilized as stand by drivers when needed to fill their 40-hour work week. She was happy that a number of same day and next day trips were being accommodated. LCB Chair Doherty requested that whenever Heidi Maddox was ready to brief the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) on recent transit accomplishments, she coordinate a BCC presentation through Gordon Burger and Emily Lewis. Ms. Maddox indicated that she would be pleased to do a BCC presentation regarding transit.

Heidi Maddox stated that Shirley Ciampi had been promoted to a new Mobility Manager position and would be involved with grants, procurement compliance and public outreach. Ms. Ciampi was working with Jocey Henderson at the Veterans Services Office to conduct public trainings on the mobile phone application and was also going to hold lunch-and-learn sessions with human services organizations. She was also updating the transit brochure.

Suzanne Roberts praised assistance received from Charlotte County Transit for transporting the 2024 Leadership Charlotte group. She had received a wonderful response from the participants, especially since over half of them were unaware of how Charlotte County Transit can support the community. She thanked the Transit Division for their assistance.

Heidi Maddox described the new mobile phone application and its registration process coordinated through Transit Dispatchers. She reviewed a slide of phone screen shots of scheduling enhancements for bookings, trip details and trip history information. The process was similar to that of booking an Uber trip. Commissioner Doherty asked about security for the phone application system. Heidi Maddox stated that it was cloud-based and had been thoroughly reviewed and approved by the County's IT Department regarding system security. It was noted that the rides are currently free, and the drivers are contracted through a private firm. Suzanne

Roberts thanked Transit staff for including the Virginia B. Andes Volunteer Community Clinic in a pilot program for testing the new software.

Laks Gurrum congratulated Heidi Maddox on the selection of the Transit TDP consultant and stated that the MPO staff was happy to be working with Transit on the development of the document. He noted several upcoming MPO Board Meetings:

- Joint meeting with Sarasota/Manatee MPO Board on January 29, 2024, 11 a.m, Venice Community Center, 326 Nokomis Avenue S, Venice, FL
- Joint meeting with the Lee County MPO Board on February 16, 2024, 9:30 a.m, Burnt Store Road Presbyterian Church, Stewart Hall, 11330 Burnt Store Road, Punta Gorda, FL
- MPO Board Meeting on March 21, 2024 (new date/time), 9 a.m, Charlotte County Administration Center, 18300 Murdock Circle, Port Charlotte, FL

Betty-Ann Sherer noted that the information was available on the MPO’s website: [Events from November 7 – March 7 – Charlotte County-Punta Gorda Metropolitan Planning Organization \(ccpgmpo.gov\)](https://www.ccpgmpo.gov)

12. Member Comments

Maricela Morado stated that her agency still had robotic pets and funding assistance to seniors and adults with disabilities for Hurricane Ian expenses such as damaged appliances, windows, flooring and portions of roofs) without income verification. She urged interested parties to call the Southwest Florida Area Agency on Aging helpline for assistance.

Suzanne Roberts thanked all for their condolences to the Volunteer Community Clinic staff on the passing of Dr. David Klein and Dr. Mark Asperilla who had been instrumental in her organization’s founding and growth. She was happy to announce that the Clinic’s mobile medical bus would arrive in February 2024 and be presented to the Board of County Commissioners in March 2024 with a ribbon cutting and an opening event in the evening. The Clinic still needs a full-time driver, an Advanced Practice Registered Nurse (APRN) and a full-time coordinator.

Pamela Jordan stressed that the best language to use in recruiting a new LCB Member is to “do people first” (i.e., state “individual with a disability” or “person with a disability).”

Candice Monroy gave the FDOT report. She discussed the following topics:

- She is continuing to process grants for FY 2022 following delays from FDOT Central Office in getting the funding in place.
- She had received Charlotte County’s two grant applications for the next cycle (as reviewed earlier in the meeting). The application process is closed and review is underway. Decisions would be forthcoming in May 2024, and no obstacles exist at this time.
- Triennial reviews (Round 3) are starting, beginning with small non-profit agencies.

Eva Tomszak inquired about how individuals qualified to be a patient of the Virginia B. Andes Volunteer Community Clinic. Suzanne Roberts responded that a patient must be at 200% or below poverty level income and a resident of Charlotte County including illegal residents. She noted that the mission is all about healthcare and saving people's lives. The non-profit Clinic is located at 21297 Olean Blvd. directly across from Fawcett Hospital. She invited all to visit Monday-Friday from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. It has existed for 15 years, and she has been the Chief Executive Officer for the past 14 years. Information may be found here: [Virginia B. Andes Volunteer Community Clinic | Providing no cost volunteer medical, pharmacy and wellness services to the under-served in Charlotte County \(volunteercare.org\)](https://volunteercare.org)

Lynda Faieta stated that the School Board still needs drivers. She commented favorably on the LCB Member training video. She enjoys participating on the LCB.

LCB Chair Doherty described his pleasant holiday with generations of his family and hoped those present had experienced a wonderful holiday season, too. He looked forward to a good year full of much activity. Charlotte County has been experiencing tremendous growth with 300+ single family building permits issued each month. He noted that it still was important to maintain the area's quality of life. He characterized the LCB as a great group and appreciated each one's participation.

13. Adjournment (Next Meeting – May 2, 2024) at the Charlotte County Transit Facility, 545 Theresa Blvd., Port Charlotte, FL 33954)

The next LCB meeting is scheduled for Thursday, May 2, 2024, at the Transit Facility located at 545 Theresa Blvd. in Port Charlotte, FL 33954. The meeting was adjourned at 11:12 a.m.