OKALOOSA TRANSIT COOPERATIVE MEETING MINUTES
West Florida Regional Planning Council (Designated staff)
Okaloosa County Board Chambers 1250 N. Eglin Parkway, Shalimar, FL 32579
August 9, 2018

Members attending:
Carolyn Ketchel
Dick Rynearson
Jean Hood
Skip Overdier
Elizabeth Roy
William Schaetzle

Okaloosa County Commissioner
Fort Walton Beach Mayor
Cinco Bayou Mayor
Destin City Councilman
Crestview City Clerk
Niceville Councilman

Others attending:
Bob Berksstresser
JoAnn Hofstad
Janet Willis
Elliot Kampert
Greg Kisela
Ron McElhose
Robert Lyerly
Howard Vanselov
MaryBeth Washnock
Austin Mount
Rob Mahan
Annie Walthall
Jo Anne Donatella

Okaloosa County
Okaloosa County
Okaloosa County
Okaloosa County
Maruti
Clean Consulting, Inc.
WFRPC
WFRPC
WFRPC Staff
WFRPC Staff
WFRPC Staff

I. CALL TO ORDER
Mayor Rynearson called the meeting to order and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA
Mayor Hood motioned to approve the agenda; Councilman Schaetzle seconded and the motion was carried.

III. CONSENT AGENDA
Mayor Hood moved to approve the May 24, 2018 Minutes; Councilman Schaetzle seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

IV. ANNOUNCEMENTS
1. For those wishing to speak, please fill out a speaker request form and indicate the agenda item(s) you would like to address. You will be called by the Chairperson at the appropriate time. If you would like to address an item not on the agenda, there will be an opportunity at the end of the meeting to speak.

V. ACTION ITEM
1. ENCLOSURE A – Consideration of Crestview Sister Cities Shuttle Service Request -
Mr. Rob Mahan, WFRPC
A request was received from Ms. Roy for shuttle service for Crestview Sister Cities. Mr. Mahan spoke with EC Rider staff and reported that they would not able to provide charters to the public. (Guidance information was included in this enclosure.) Mr. Mahan asked the board to vote on this recommendation. Ms. Roy commented that government officials and their guests would be included on the trip, meaning this would not in fact be designated as a charter. Crestview Sister Cities (which is a committee of the City of Crestview) and Councilman Whitten along with the Mayor would be taking their guests on the trip and would be an exception to the charter rule. Ms. Janet Willis, Okaloosa County, commented that this would need to be verified. Since this request would not be for service until October, there would be time to verify and return with results at the next meeting in September. Councilman Schaetzle moved to table discussion for the charter bus for Crestview until the September meeting; Mayor Hood seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

Gavel passed to Commissioner Ketchel

2. ENCLOSURE B – Consideration of Support for the County to Use Prior-Year Unobligated FTA Funds to Construct a Transfer Center – Ms. Janet Ann Willis, Okaloosa County
Ms. Willis reported that FTA unobligated funds are still available from FY 2013-FY2018. The county would like to apply for funds to finance the purchase of land and construction of a transfer station. Okaloosa Transit is left with a temporary location after it was forced to leave Uptown Station. Commissioner Ketchel asked if Ms. Willis had a new location in mind. Ms. Willis said there were some ideas, but the new location would ideally be as close as possible to Uptown Station, to minimize route disruption. FTA requires background work before application process could begin. Commissioner Ketchel asked Mayor Rynearson for his input on the location of the new transfer station. He said that the ridership missed the Uptown Station stop and preference would be to stay in that area.

Commissioner Ketchel asked for some background on the opposition to the Uptown Station bus stop. Mr. Kampert said he was notified by management of Uptown Station of two primary reasons they asked for the stop to be relocated: 1) there was a new anchor tenant concerned about several vehicles stacked in the same parking area as their customers and 2) there were often people that look homeless that waited near that bus stop and it was not appreciated by the clientele. Mr. Kamper said this was a common complaint in transit. Commissioner Ketchel asked if there were any leads on a good alternate location for a bus stop. Mr. Kampert said the K-Mart area outparcel and others in the general vicinity were being explored and that federal dollars would cover the cost once all the boxes were checked.

Commissioner Ketchel offered her assistance in speaking to anyone she could to help make the transit system work. Mr. Kampert explained that many of the bus stops existed by handshake agreements only and there were no leases or official agreements. Mr. Kampert suggested that long term leases/binding situations would be a good idea. He emphasized that the board members’ connections with city contacts would be very
beneficial in negotiating. Commissioner Ketchel and Mayor Rynearson agreed to work on this task.

**Mayor Rynearson moved to approve the use of prior-year unobligated FTA funds to construct a transfer center. Councilman Overdier seconded the motion.** Ms. Willis reported that one possible location being looked at costs $500,000. A permanent building could be constructed on the site. Ms. Roy asked if unobligated FTA money would be available for 5 years. Ms. Willis said yes, but the exact time frame these funds would drop off is unknown. Ms. Roy asked if these funds could be used for other things in addition to the transfer center. Ms. Willis said the funds could be used for other capital projects. **After no further discussion, the motion was approved.**

3. **ENCLOSURE C – Consideration of Designating a Co-op Member to attend the 2018 FPTA/CTD Annual Conference & EXPO – Mr. Rob Mahan, WFRPC**

Located in Daytona Beach in October. Mr. Mahan said that last year Jim Foreman attended, and he found it very beneficial. There are funds available to cover travel cost and registration. Commissioner Ketchel asked if any members were interested. Councilman Schaetzle said he would be available. He will coordinate with Ms. Willis.

4. **ENCLOSURE D – Consideration of Mullet Festival Shuttle Request – Ms. JoAnn Hofstad, Okaloosa County**

Commissioner Ketchel asked Niceville Councilman Schaetzle if he had put forth the request. He said he had coordinated with Ms. Hofstad and Niceville City Manager Corbin prior to the last meeting of this board and that they had submitted the request in his absence.

Ms. Hofstad said the shuttle will cost about $4,700. Last year roughly 990 riders used the shuttle during the Mullet Festival. If the same number of riders used it this year, at $1/ride it would still cost the county $2,500. Ms. Willis said the balance may be eligible for grant funding. In addition, the Mullet Festival organizers said they may consider advertising on the buses which could bring in some revenue.

**Mayor Rynearson motioned to approve the request for shuttle service for the Mullet Festival. Councilman Overdier seconded the motion.**

Councilman Schaetzle asked for clarification from the last meeting regarding charging fares for the shuttle. Commissioner Ketchel confirmed that fares for riders during special events had been officially approved. Ms. Hofstad reiterated that after charging $1 each way for the shuttle, it would still cost the county about $2,500, depending on final ridership numbers. The festival would require the shuttle 7.5 hours on Friday; 13.5 hours Saturday; and 8 hours on Sunday.

Commissioner Ketchel said she had no problem granting this request, even with the cost to the county, because it would reduce traffic volume and parking, and would provide safe transport to those that may have been drinking.
Ms. Roy was not present at the last meeting and asked if the $1 fare is a set amount or if it could be increased for special events. Ms. Hofstad explained that the charge cannot not be more than the customary fare, although it could be less.

With no further discussion, Commissioner Ketchel called for a vote on the motion. The motion carried.

VI. INFORMATION ITEMS

1. EC Rider Updates – Mr. Robert Berkstresser, Okaloosa County
Mr. Berkstresser said a transfer station near Destin would be beneficial, even if it was located on the west side of the city. The traffic situation is getting heavier every year and with continued growth the area is facing gridlock. Commissioner Ketchel acknowledged that and said that bike paths/bike sharing would come to the area within the next several years to help alleviate the vehicle congestion.

Vehicle status update
One more Ford Transit arrived and supports the paratransit system and allows the paratransit vehicle to transfer into the fixed route system.
5 Ford SUV’s have been ordered for the paratransit service. This frees up the county to turn in some vehicles.

New vehicle status
The state is coming out with a medium duty ADA compliant bus. The order was anticipated to be completed before end of July, but it has not been done.
8 vehicles in the fleet have doubled their life expectancy. 27 vehicles are past their life expectancy. Soon, there will be a need to get recommendations from this committee for more vehicles. Trolleys that are currently in the fleet have reached their useful life. Mr. Berkstresser shared a flyer that described new vehicle options.

Advertising update
12 of 18 fixed route buses currently feature paid advertising. This generates $4,450 monthly revenue and over $50,000 annual revenue. Advertising space is still available. Every dollar that is raised gives the county a matching dollar through the grant program.

Councilman Schaetzle asked what it cost on average to place a wrap/logo on a vehicle. Mr. Berkstresser said it cost about $275 for 2 sides of vehicle and full wrap about $600/month. Mr. Bertkstresser will send an email to the board with details.

Transit flyer. A new flyer will be produced and presented in the future.

Shelters, bike racks and benches
The Shalimar shelter arrived and will be installed before the fleet moves over and occupies the maintenance space in transit.
Grand Boulevard (inside the UZA) requested benches and bike racks in their facility.
Several requests for bus stop benches have come from clients that frequent Walmart. Walmart finished a construction project that had displaced the transit benches and will decide about reinstalling the benches on their property.

Commissioner Ketchel asked about airline advertising opportunities. Mr. Berktresser said he reached out to Allegiant Airlines and received no response. Commissioner Ketchel asked Mr. Berktresser to reach out again.

2. **Maruti Updates** – *Mr. Ron "Mack" McElhose, Maruti Fleet and Management, LLC.*

   Mr. McElhose reported there were 16 complaints during July. Most of the complaints were from people missing trips. Fixed routes complaints arise from route deviations. Some complainants believe the trolley is a taxi service and do not want to ride with other people. Route 1 and Route 14 are the busiest routes for deviations. Mr. McElhose said that once again, Maruti is trying to limit hours that are spent on TD.

   Mr. McElhose reported that the shuttles averaged about 3000 riders monthly for fixed route. Riders that are able should use the fixed route system and not ride the TD. When people call requesting a ride, the schedulers are not automatically putting them in the TD system but are looking to see if the fixed route is an option. Mr. McElhose said that about 54 clients from TD system have been transitioned to fixed route and there are about 50 more that will be transitioned. He emphasized the double map app as a useful tool for riders that are waiting for a bus on the fixed route.

   Staff update. Mr. McElhose reported that Maruti had lost some top staff including the ops manager, one dispatcher and one scheduler.

   Budget update. Maruti submitted their budget at a decrease of little less than 1½ from last year’s budget. They reduced their management fee; and reduced TD hours to stay within their budgeted funds. TD service will be limited to TD funding and fixed route funds will be used only for fixed route service. Mr. McElhose said the Destin transfer center would be welcomed. He said there are many riders that are dropped off at the Destin Holiday Inn that work in that area. Many people along the “strip” believe the shuttles are for handicapped riders only and not open to the public. Maruti has changed the signs on those buses to “Beach Shuttle” to try to attract more riders. The number of shuttles on the strip have been reduced to three.

3. **Draft RFP for Contract Operator / Selection Committee** – *Mr. Greg Kisela, Okaloosa County Deputy County Administrator*

   Mr. Kisela said that starting in late June the transit budget was very tight and would continue that way for the remainder of the fiscal year. The available hours to operate the TD must be kept within TD constraints or the program would be discontinued at the end of fiscal year (September 2018) or the general fund would need to be used. Getting ridership up and getting folks off the TD and onto the fixed route system is vital.

   The Board of County Commissioners held a transit workshop in May. They authorized separating the transit area from growth management and making it a stand-alone department. The BOCC finalized the change in July.
Mr. Kisela reported that the BOCC authorized the Operations Department to go to market to search for a transit manager. At the most recent BOCC meeting, the commissioners authorized the transit system to go to market for a new contractor to operate the program. He said the department would be looking from a procurement standpoint ask the FTA to allow an invitation to negotiate. This would use a very broad scope of work and let competitors bring their thoughts and ideas of how to serve this market. This approach would let the marketplace help solve the transit problems.

FTA will allow a 2-step process. A short list based on qualifications will be developed, then the finalists can compete economically. BOCC authorized Operations to seek a procurement selection committee and asked the Okaloosa Transit Co-op members to be part of that committee; and expand it by 3 additional individuals. A member of the Institute of Senior Professionals from NWFL State College was suggested as being a helpful addition. Two more individuals need to be recommended to the board. Commissioner Ketchel recommended the name Dick Schoditsch. Commissioner Ketchel asked Ms. MaryBeth Washnock if she would consider serving on the selection committee. Ms. Washnock replied that she would glad to serve. Mr. Kisela said that he is hoping to have the scope of service between now and Labor Day and asked if the members would be willing to call a special meeting before that date to work on the document. It would then go before the BOCC and subsequently to the marketplace. It would start with the scope of services and Mr. Kisela emphasized the need to have the performance metrics in place going to the marketplace.

Ms. Roy suggested that the board members submit dates to Mr. Kisela for which they are NOT available to meet before September 6th. Mr. Kisela reminded the members that once the county goes to marketplace, Sunshine Laws apply. It is imperative to be compliant with all federal guidelines. The process will take 4-6 months to start.

VII. OTHER BUSINESS

1. The next Okaloosa Transit Cooperative meeting is scheduled for Thursday, September 27, 2018 at 9:30 a.m., in the Okaloosa County Board Chambers – 1250 N. Eglin Parkway, Shalimar, Florida.

2. Rob Mahan, WFRPC. Mr. Mahan explained that WFRPC had an interlocal agreement between Okaloosa County and WFRPC to staff the Okaloosa County Transit Co-op meetings. The agreement was for 24 meetings (2 years), meeting once per month at a cost of $64,000. With today’s meetings the $64,000 has been exhausted. Mr. Mahan asked if the board would like to pursue another interlocal agreement between WFRPC and Okaloosa County and under what terms. The last agreement initially asked the WFRPC to staff a meeting every month for two years; it was reduced to meetings once every other month. Councilman Overdier asked if the new agreement would cover half the number of meetings and half the amount of money ($32,000). Mr. Mahan replied that it would have to be presented to the WFRPC board for approval.

Councilman Overdier motioned to request WFRPC to pursue an interlocal agreement between WFRPC and Okaloosa County to staff the Okaloosa County Transit Co-op
meetings for the next two years at a cost of $32,000. Mayor Hood seconded the motion and it was approved 6-0.

Mr. Mahan asked if the committee would like the WFRPC to staff the upcoming scope of services meeting. Mr. Kisela said the Purchasing Department would staff that meeting.

VIII. PUBLIC FORUM

1. Public – For those wishing to speak, please fill out a speaker request form.

2. Any additional items for discussion – Co-op, Okaloosa County Staff, Maruti, WFRPC Staff

IX. ADJOURNMENT 10:35 a.m.

Approved by Okaloosa Transit Cooperative

DATE: 9/27/18

SIGNED: [Signature]