



**Meeting Minutes**  
**Central Florida Regional Planning Council**  
**December 9, 2020, 9:30 a.m.**

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Dial in: (571) 317-3122; Access Code: 782-815-597

Chair Neda Cobb called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. Norman White led the invocation followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Norman White, Council Attorney, administered the Oath of Office to Highlands County Commissioner Kathleen Rapp.

Roll was called with the following members present:

Chair, Commissioner Neda Cobb, City of Wauchula  
Commissioner Buddy Mansfield, DeSoto County  
Councilmember Keith Keene, City of Arcadia  
Jackie Tucker, DeSoto County Gubernatorial Appointee  
Commissioner Kathleen Rapp, Highlands County  
Donna Howerton, Highlands County Gubernatorial Appointee; Highlands County School Board  
Commissioner Bobby Keefe, City of Okeechobee  
Commissioner Rick Wilson, Polk County  
Commissioner Morris West, City of Hanes City, Ridge League of Cities  
Commissioner Chad Mcleod, City of Lakeland  
Jeff Kincart, Polk County Gubernatorial Appointee  
Commissioner Nathaniel Birdsong, City of Winter Haven  
June Fisher, DeSoto County Planning Director, Ex-officio  
Chandra Frederick, Polk County Director of Growth Management, Ex-officio  
Elizabeth "Libby" Pigman, South Fla. Water Management District, Ex-officio  
Debora Chesna, Florida Department of Transportation, Ex-officio  
Kelly Boatwright for Mary Yeargan, Dept. of Environmental Protection, Ex-officio

Members absent:

City Commissioner Charlie Lowrance, City of Sebring  
Commissioner Bryant Culpepper, Okeechobee County  
Todd Miller, Hardee County Planning Director, Ex-officio  
Bill Royce, Okeechobee County Planning Director, Ex-officio  
Cindy Rodriguez, Southwest Florida Water Management District, Ex-officio

Others in Attendance:

Marcos Monts de Oca, Okeechobee City Manager  
Lawrence McNaul, Hardee County Manager  
Julie Flower, CliftonLarsonAllen, LLP



Staff in Attendance:

Pat Steed, Executive Director  
Kathy Hall, Program Coordinator  
Jennifer Codo-Salisbury, Deputy Director  
Shannon McPherson, Program Director  
Marybeth Soderstrom, Transportation Director  
Tami Hulse, Finance Director  
Curtis Knowles, Program Manager  
Beneshea Frazier, Program Manager

Announcements

Marybeth Soderstrom, Transportation Director, reviewed the GoToMeeting features.

**AGENDA ITEM #1 PUBLIC COMMENTS**

There were no public comments.

**AGENDA ITEM # 2 CFRPC 2020 RECOGNITIONS AND REVIEW**

The Council recognized Jackie Tucker for 20 years of service to the Central Florida Regional Planning Council, from October 2000 to October 2020. Ms. Tucker was honored for her achievement as the longest serving member on the Council with a certificate and flowers.

Chair Cobb congratulated and thanked Ms. Tucker for 20 years of devoted service on the CFRPC and stated that she enjoys serving with Ms. Tucker.

Jackie Tucker thanked the Council and staff and stated it has been her honor to serve on the Council and hoped to be able to continue her service.

Pat Steed, Executive Director, introduced and welcomed three new staff members joining CFRPC in 2020. The new staff members are Annie Arguello as Mobility Manager; Beneshea Frazier as Program Manager; and Heidi Villa as Grants Coordinator. She also recognized Tami Hulse, Finance Director, and Marybeth Soderstrom, Transportation Director for reaching their five-year milestones with the Council.

Ms. Steed reviewed awards received by the Council in 2020, including the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) Impact Award for the City of Fort Meade Economic Development and Disaster Resiliency Plan. The Council received a Best Places to Work for Commuters award and a CareerSource Polk Employer of Distinction award.

Ms. Steed stated that staff members serve on many boards, committees, and task forces. She recognized those staff members serving in regional and national leadership rolls.

Those staff members were: Beneshea Frazier, Leadership Polk Graduate; Marybeth Soderstrom, RPO America Council of Peers, and Jennifer Codo-Salisbury, SERDI Council of Peers. She also stated that she serves on the SERDI Council of Peers, is a member of the NADO Board, and is the FRCA past chair and treasure.

Staff continues to support the United Way with pledges of \$12,928.74 in 2020 which marked 100% staff participation for nine years running. CFRPC was recognized as a 2020 Pacesetter for United Way and received the United Way of Central Florida 2019 Summit Award top small business award for the three county United Way region for the large per capita contribution from a small organization.

Chair Cobb congratulated staff for their milestones and welcomed the new staff members. She added that the Council appreciates Pat Steed's leadership and the awards received this year.

### **AGENDA ITEM #3 COUNCIL ADMINISTRATION**

#### **A. Approval of September 9, 2020 Council Meeting Minutes**

Chair Cobb asked if there were any changes to the September 9, 2020 Council Meeting Minutes.

#### **MOTION**

There being none, Keith Keene moved to approve the September 9, 2020 Council Meeting Minutes as submitted. Nat Birdsong seconded.

Motion carried unanimously.

#### **B. Financial Report**

Pat Steed reviewed the Statement of Activities and Statement of Net Assets for the month ended November 30, 2020.

#### **MOTION**

Morris West moved to accept the November 2020 Financial Report as presented. Nathaniel Birdsong seconded.

Motion carried unanimously.

### **AGENDA ITEM #4 AUDIT REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED SEPTEMBER 30, 2020**

Julie Fowler, CliftonLarsonAllen, LLP, Certified Public Accountant, presented a review of the Council's Annual Audit report for FY 2019-2020. Each Council Member received a copy of the audit report including the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) and required Communications Letter. She presented an overview of the financial statements

which included the Statements of Net Position, Net Position by Year, and Statement of Activities, as well as the Revenues and Expenses by Type. The audit reports that were performed and the required communications that were issued for each report were reviewed. Those included the Independent Auditors Report on Compliance, Internal Control over Financial Reporting, Compliance with Major Federal Program, and the Management Letter and Independent Accountants' Report. Ms. Fowler stated there were no findings or adjustments in any of the reports, therefore issuing a clean audit. Auditing Standards require that the auditors reveal that there were no difficulties encountered during the audit and staff assisted and cooperated in preparation of the audit. In conclusion, Ms. Fowler thanked staff for their cooperation and assistance with this year's audit. Staff is incredibly conscientious and aware of the many strict requirements of each funding source, and they do a great job with complicated accounting. She added that the audit was conducted almost completely virtually and was very seamless with staff assistance.

#### **AGENDA ITEM #5 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE FINANCE COMMITTEE**

Pat Steed stated that the Finance Committee met virtually on November 30, 2020 to review the final budget amendment for FY 2019-2020 and to review the 2019-2020 Audit Report. She also acknowledged the continuing excellent performance of Tami Hulse, Finance Director, as shown in another successful Audit.

##### **A. Final Budget Amendment for FY 2019-2020**

Ms. Steed reviewed the Final Budget Amendment for FY 2019-2020 and stated that the Finance Committee is recommending its approval.

#### **MOTION**

Donna Howerton moved to accept the Finance Committee's recommendation to approve the Final Budget Amendment for FY 2019-2020 as shown in the Audit. Nathaniel Birdsong seconded.

Motion carried unanimously.

##### **B. Accept FY 2019-2020 Audit Report**

#### **MOTION**

Bobby Keefe moved to accept the Finance Committee's recommendation to approve the FY 2019-2020 Audit Report and Audited Financial Statements as presented. Keith Keene seconded.

Motion carried unanimously.

##### **C. Budget Amendment #1 for FY 2020-2021**

Pat Steed, Executive Director, reviewed each line item change to the revenue and expenses in the proposed budget amendment.

### **MOTION**

Nathaniel Birdsong moved to approve Budget Amendment #1 for FY 2020-21 as presented. Bobby Keefe seconded.

Motion carried unanimously.

### **AGENDA ITEM #6 HEARTLAND REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLANNING ORGANIZATION (HRTPO) ACTIVITIES**

Marybeth Soderstrom, Transportation Director, reported on current activities of the HRTPO. The 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) update is underway. There is a website to review the updates to the LRTP and make public comments at [www.hrtpo2045.org](http://www.hrtpo2045.org). The HRTPO Board has a workshop scheduled on December 16, 2020 at the Sebring Civic Center, where new board members will be provided information on the transportation planning process and the LRTP, to assist them for Plan adoption scheduled in March 2021. The first regular meeting of the HRTPO Board is scheduled for January 20, 2021. Ms. Soderstrom mentioned that the FDOT Draft Tentative Work Program is expected to be made available in January 2021 which is later than in typical years. If anyone has questions about project priorities or project positions for the new cycle, they may contact her. A Transportation Project Priorities Workshop for local governments in the HRTPO region is scheduled for December 13, 2020. This Workshop will be held virtually, and it will provide information about the application process.

### **AGENDA ITEM #7 OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC HEARING FOR FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION (FTA) GRANTS**

Marybeth Soderstrom, Transportation Director, stated that staff had prepared the FTA Capital Grant applications that require a public hearing be set in the event anyone from the public would like to comment on the grants. She stated that no requests for a public hearing had been received.

### **AGENDA ITEM #8 RESOLUTION 2020-12A APPROVING PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION GRANT AGREEMENT (PTGA) WITH FDOT FOR 5310 FUNDS**

Marybeth Soderstrom, Transportation Director, stated that the 5310 funds are for seniors and adults with disabilities. The funding goes to the Community Transportation Coordinator (CTC) to be used in DeSoto, Hardee, Highlands, and Okeechobee Counties to help supplement and provide additional trips to those populations. This resolution approves the grant agreement with FDOT and authorizes the Council to enter into the Public Transportation Grant Agreement (PTGA) with the Florida Department of Transportation to receive Section 5310 grant funds.

## **MOTION**

Donna Howerton moved to adopt Resolution 2020-12A as presented. Nathaniel Birdsong seconded.

Motion carried unanimously.

## **AGENDA ITEM #9 COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY (CEDS) 2020 UPDATE**

Shannon McPherson, Program Director, presented the update to the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). The CFRPC serves as the Economic Development District (EDD) designated by the US Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration (EDA) to provide technical assistance to the region's local governments, assist with administration of awarded projects, and identify regional funding opportunities for local governments within the region. One of the responsibilities is to develop and maintain a CEDS document for the Central Florida Region. The CEDS undergoes a complete update every five years and is updated at least annually. This 2020 update is to the 2017 CEDS. Next year will be the year to completely rewrite the document. This year's update is currently available online and is out for public comment. Ms. McPherson stated that the CEDS serves as an ongoing planning tool for the region. It guides economic growth and assists in job creation, and improves quality of life. She pointed out that aviation has been of particular focus over the past couple of years. Also, the Council applied for a CARES ACT grant to fund a new staff position to focus on response, recovery and resilience to disasters. She introduced Beneshea Frazier, who was hired to fill the new position.

Beneshea Frazier, Program Manager, introduced her program and how she will be working with communities within the region in terms of economic resiliency. She presented a detailed review of the CEDS update specifically regarding the impacts of Covid 19 and resilience, and presented a variety of demographic and economic statistics for all counties in the region. This included a comprehensive overview of current economic conditions and forecasts for the State of Florida, including Florida's current population growth rate, average annual wage by county, current employment conditions and Florida's housing market statistics.

## **MOTION**

Bobby Keefe moved to adopt the 2020 CEDS Update as presented. Nathaniel Birdsong seconded.

Motion carried unanimously.

## **AGENDA ITEM #10 US DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION (EDA) PARTNERSHIP PLANNING GRANT FY 2021-24**

Shannon McPherson, Program Director, stated that in accordance with the Economic Development Administration guidelines, staff has submitted the Partnership Planning Grant application for FY 2021-24. This grant funds the next cycle of coordination, preparation, and maintenance of the Economic Development District's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS).

### **MOTION**

Donna Howerton moved to adopt Resolution 2020-12B Authorizing the Executive Director to execute and administer the US Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration (EDA) Partnership Planning Grant FY 2021-24. Bobby Keefe seconded.

Motion carried unanimously.

### **AGENDA ITEM #11 CONTRACT FOR TECHNOLOGY SERVICES**

Jennifer Codo-Salisbury, Deputy Director, stated that the Council utilizes an information technology company to provide support for staff's computer system and network. These services include providing off-site backup of the server, keeping all office computer stations up-to-date with current software, and preventing firewall breaches. Staff recommends continuing services with Cipher Integration, Inc. for FY 2020-2021.

### **MOTION**

Morris West moved to approve FY 2020-2021 Contract with Cipher Integration, Inc. Keith Keene seconded.

Motion carried unanimously.

### **AGENDA ITEM #12 ELECTION OF COUNCIL OFFICERS FOR 2021**

#### **A. Elect 2021 Council Officers**

Donna Howerton stated that the Nominating Committee met virtually on December 2, 2020. Those members attending were: Highlands County Gubernatorial Appointee Donna Howerton, DeSoto County Commissioner Buddy Mansfield, and City of Winter Haven Commissioner Nathaniel Birdsong. Ms. Howerton announced that the Committee voted to nominate current Chair Wauchula City Commissioner Neda Cobb to continue serving as Chair for 2021, and voted to nominate City of Arcadia Councilman Keith Keene as Vice-Chair for 2021.

### **MOTION**

Nathaniel Birdsong moved to elect Neda Cobb as Chair of the Council for 2021 and to elect Keith Keene as Vice Chair of the Council for 2021. Morris West seconded.

Motion carried unanimously.



## B. Resolution 2020-12C Authorizing Banking Signatories

Pat Steed, Executive Director, stated that the Finance Committee determined at their last meeting that Council banking account signatories should be updated when new officers take office. Those signatories have traditionally been the Executive Director, the incoming Chair and Vice-Chair. The Finance Committee approved adding the Deputy Director as a signer on those accounts as well.

### **MOTION**

Donna Howerton moved to authorize banking signatories for the 2021 slate of officers as presented, along with the Executive Director and the Deputy Director. Bobby Keefe seconded.

Motion carried unanimously.

## **AGENDA ITEM# 13 APPOINT MEMBERS TO THE FLORIDA REGIONAL COUNCILS ASSOCIATION (FRCA) POLICY BOARD**

Chair Neda Cobb appointed Jackie Tucker, Nathaniel Birdsong and Buddy Mansfield to serve on the FRCA Policy Board for 2021. All members agreed to serve. Chair Cobb volunteered to serve in the Alternate position.

### **MOTION**

Nathaniel Birdsong moved to approve the FRCA Policy Board members for 2021 as appointed. Morris West seconded.

Motion carried unanimously.

## **AGENDA ITEM #14 APPOINT MEMBERS TO FINANCE COMMITTEE**

Chair Cobb appointed Donna Howerton, Keith Keene and Rick Wilson to serve with her on the Finance Committee for 2021.

### **MOTION**

Nathaniel Birdsong moved to approve the Finance Committee as appointed. Morris West seconded.

Motion carried unanimously.

## **AGENDA ITEM #15 2021 HOLIDAY SCHEDULE**

Pat Steed presented the proposed 2021 Holiday Schedule.

### **MOTION**



Keith Keene moved to approve the 2021 Holiday Schedule as presented. Bobby Keefe seconded.

Motion carried unanimously.

#### **AGENDA ITEM #16 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Pat Steed, Executive Director, reported on current work activities which included working with local governments as they conduct workshops and hearings in their development approval process. Transportation staff is working to fulfilling HRTPO required deadlines including the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) update.

Ms. Steed provided the Florida Regional Councils Association (FRCA) October Monthly Report and stated that the FRCA Policy Board will be conducting a virtual workshop on January 8, 2021. Meeting information will be forwarded to the Council's Policy Board members.

Ms. Steed also reported that staff will be working with the Economic Development Administration to conduct a regional workshop on grants for economic development professionals in the region. Also, staff will be coordinating with DEO to conduct a regional broadband workshop for local governments in the region.

#### **Amendment to Agenda Item #14 Vote**

Chair Cobb stated that she thought she failed to include herself in the list of members to serve on the Finance Committee, and asked for a motion to appoint Donna Howerton, Keith Keene, Rick Wilson, and Chair Neda Cobb to serve on the Finance Committee for 2021.

#### **MOTION**

Keith Keene moved to approve the Finance Committee as appointed. Donna Howerton seconded.

Motion carried unanimously.

#### **AGENDA ITEM #17 OTHER BUSINESS**

The next Council meeting was scheduled for February 10, 2021 at 9:30 a.m. The location or format will be announced prior to the meeting

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

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Neda Cobb, Chair  
December 9, 2020 Council Meeting Minutes