



## Central Florida Regional Planning Council

### Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, September 8, 2021 | 9:30 a.m.

Okeechobee County Historical Courthouse | County Commission Chambers  
304 NW 2<sup>nd</sup> Street | Okeechobee, FL

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

Mr. White administered the Oath of Office to new Council Member Noel Chandler, from the City of Okeechobee.

Roll was called with the following members present:

Chair, Commissioner Neda Cobb, City of Wauchula  
Vice-Chair, Councilmember Keith Keene, City of Arcadia  
Commissioner Kathleen Rapp, Highlands County  
Commissioner Ashley Coone, DeSoto County  
Jackie Tucker, DeSoto County Gubernatorial Appointee  
Donna Howerton, Highlands County Gubernatorial Appointee; Highlands County School Board  
Commissioner Kelly Owen, Okeechobee County  
Commissioner Noel Chandler, City of Okeechobee  
Commissioner Rick Wilson, Polk County  
Commissioner Nathaniel Birdsong, City of Winter Haven  
Bill Royce, Okeechobee County Planning Director, Ex-officio

Members absent:

Commissioner Judith George, Hardee County  
Commissioner Charlie Lowrance, City of Sebring  
Commissioner Chad Mcleod, City of Lakeland  
Commissioner Morris West, City of Hanes City, Ridge League of Cities  
Jeff Kincart, Polk County Gubernatorial Appointee  
June Fisher, DeSoto County Planning Director, Ex-officio  
Todd Miller, Hardee County Planning Director, Ex-officio  
Leah Sauls, Highlands County Development Services Director, Ex-officio  
Chandra Frederick, Polk County Director of Growth Management, Ex-officio  
Deborah Chesna, Florida Department of Transportation, Ex-officio  
Elizabeth "Libby" Maxwell-Pigman, South Fla. Water Management District, Ex-officio  
Cindy Rodriguez, Southwest Florida Water Management District, Ex-officio

### Announcements



Pat Steed reported that the American Planning Association conducted their annual conference in person last month in Miami. CFRPC staff served on two panels where they presented information regarding Heartland 2060 and the Avon Park Air Force Range Sentinel Landscape project.

### **AGENDA ITEM #1 PUBLIC COMMENTS**

There were no public comments.

### **AGENDA ITEM #2 COUNCIL ADMINISTRATION**

#### A. June 9, 2021 Council Meeting Minutes

Chair Cobb asked if there were any changes to the June 9, 2021 Council Meeting Minutes.

#### **MOTION**

There being none, Rick Wilson moved to approve the Council Meeting Minutes as submitted. Jackie Tucker seconded.

Motion carried unanimously.

#### B. Financial Report

Pat Steed reviewed the Statement of Activities and Statement of Net Assets for the month ended August 31, 2021. Her report included information on plans to make repairs and updates to the Council office building and the need to remove a large, 200 year-old, diseased oak tree in the office parking lot.

#### **MOTION**

Keith Keen moved to accept the August 2021 Financial Report as presented. Rick Wilson seconded.

Motion carried unanimously.

### **AGENDA ITEM #3 OKEECHOBEE COUNTY ACTIVITIES REPORT**

Okeechobee County Commissioner Chairman Terry Burroughs introduced Bert Culbreth, President, Okeechobee County Economic Development Corporation. The Okeechobee County Economic Development Corporation is a private/public corporation comprised of private and public entities, including Okeechobee County, the City of Okeechobee, Okeechobee Chamber of Commerce, School Board, Indian River State College, Florida Power & Light, Okeechobee Utility Authority, and other private investors.

Mr. Bert Culbreth reported on several Economic Development activities currently being planned for Okeechobee County including plans to enhance the entryway to the

Okeechobee Airport Industrial Park, along with an expansion of several businesses in the Park using Enterprise Florida Grant Funds. Mr. Culbreth reported that they are working to bring a small distribution center to the City of Okeechobee as well as a boat dealership. Okeechobee County, the Indian River State College, and the Okeechobee County Economic Development Corporation are working together to acquire an 1,100 acre site in the County that is currently State owned that once was a school for boys. Once acquired this property will be used for economic development.

#### **AGENDA ITEM #4 UPDATE ON COMMUNITY TRANSPORTATION COORDINATORS (CTC) AND RURAL TRANSIT OPERATIONS**

Marybeth Soderstrom, Transportation Director, described the two Transportation Disadvantaged (TD) service areas in the heartland region. The first TD service area is made up of DeSoto, Hardee, Highlands and Okeechobee Counties, and Glades and Hendry Counties make up the second TD service area. Each TD service area has its own Community Transportation Coordinator (CTC). The CTC works to provide transportation through funds that are set aside in a trust fund by the State Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged as well as State and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) funds and rural public transit programs. These funds provide necessary trips for everything from medical appointments to grocery store. The CTC for DeSoto, Hardee, Highlands and Okeechobee service area is MTM Transit, Inc. The CTC for the Glades and Hendry service area is Hendry County. Each CTC has a five-year contract with the Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged. As a private company, MTM Transit cannot access the state and federal transit dollars that are available. Therefore, for the last 40 years or so, the Central Florida Regional Planning Council has served as the Designated Official Planning Agency and applies for the funding to pass through to the CTCs. Hendry County began operating as the CTC for the two-county service area, as of January 1, 2021, and also has a five year contract with the state Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged. Ms. Soderstrom described the Heartland Rides program which is an online resource for customer service to access the best available means of transportation for a specific need.

#### **AGENDA ITEM #5 FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION (FTA) GRANT APPLICATIONS**

Marybeth Soderstrom, Transportation Director, stated that each year the Council submits requests to the Florida Department of Transportation for FTA funding. These annual grant applications for operating and capital funds support the Transportation Disadvantaged Program, rural transit services and mobility management programs in DeSoto, Hardee, Highlands, and Okeechobee Counties. She presented Resolution 2021-9A which authorizes staff to apply for FTA 5310, 5311, and 5339 funding.

#### **MOTION**

Kelly Owens moved to adopt Resolution 2021-9A which authorizes staff to apply for FTA 5310, 5311, and 5339 grant funding. Nathaniel Birdsong seconded.

Motion carried unanimously.

**AGENDA ITEM #6 UPDATE ON THE HEARTLAND REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLANNING ORGANIZATION (HRTPO)**

Marybeth Soderstrom, Transportation Director, provided a brief summary of current HRTPO activities. She announced that the next HRTPO Board meeting was schedule for September 15, 2021 at the Lake Placid Government Center at 10:00 a.m. At that meeting, the HRTPO Board will be asked to authorize staff to apply for Urban Transit Program grant funds for the Highlands County service area. The Board will also be reviewing the annual update to the Transit Development Plan. The HRTPO Board will be asked to set a target for the five safety measures, including an acceptable number of serious injuries and fatalities on the roadways each year. FDOT sets there safety targets at zero, which the HRTPO Board has supported each year. The benefit to set the target at zero is when it is not achieved, the state must allocate more funds to the program in an effort to meet that target.

**AGENDA ITEM #7 SELECTION OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT EXERCISE CONSULTANT**

Pat Steed, Executive Director, stated that staff issued a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) and price proposals for a consultant to provide emergency management Exercise services and support for the Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC). She presented the draft scope of work and stated that staff recommends the selection of Emergency Response Educators and Consultants, Inc. and requested the Council authorize the Chair's signature and authorize the Executive Director to enter into negotiations and administer the contract. The price proposal from the consultant is approximately \$30,000 which is in the state grant.

**MOTION**

Jackie Tucker moved to approve the selection of Emergency Response Educators and Consultants, Inc., authorize the Chair's signature, and authorize the Executive Director to enter into negotiations and administer the contract. Donna Howerton seconded.

Motion carried unanimously.

**AGENDA ITEM #8 SELECTION OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT TRAINING CONSULTANT**

Pat Steed, Executive Director, stated that staff issued a Request for Qualifications and price proposals for a consultant to provide emergency management training exercise services and support for the Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC). She

presented the draft scope of work and stated that staff recommends the selection of Response Technologies Corporation and requested the Council authorize the Chair's signature and authorize the Executive Director to enter into negotiations and administer the contract. The price proposal from the consultant is approximately \$30,000 which is in the state grant.

### **MOTION**

Kelly Owens moved to approve the selection of Response Technologies Corporation, authorize the Chair's signature, and authorize the Executive Director to enter into negotiations and administer the contract. Kathy Rapp seconded.

Motion carried unanimously.

### **AGENDA ITEM #9 UPDATE ON US ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION (EDA) PROGRAMS**

Pat Steed, Executive Director, presented information regarding CFRPC's role as the Economic Development District (EDD) for the region as designated by the US Economic Development Administration (EDA). She reviewed several new federally funded opportunities through the US Economic Development Administration that communities in the region may be eligible for. The application information was presented and is available at [www.eda.gov/arpa](http://www.eda.gov/arpa). For staff assistance, members may contact Shannon McPherson, Program Director at [smcpherson@cfrpc.org](mailto:smcpherson@cfrpc.org) or Beneshea Frazier, Program Manager at [bfrazier@cfrpc.org](mailto:bfrazier@cfrpc.org).

### **AGENDA ITEM #10 FORMATION OF HEARTLAND REGIONAL RESILIENCY COALITION**

Pat Steed, Executive Director, presented the concept of developing and executing the formation of a Heartland Regional Resiliency Coalition to promote a collaborative partnership within the seven counties of the Heartland Region focused on resiliency goals for the future, and discussed the advantages of CFRPC staffing this effort. The Council's Heartland 2060 visioning effort was focused on economic resilience in the region. This concept of regional resiliency would focus on how this region can be better prepared to withstand, absorb or avoid damage when environmental or climate events occur, without suffering complete failure in as many areas as possible. Also, how to be prepared to rebuild and restore when failures do occur. Ms. Steed presented information on the Resilient Florida grant program that was recently passed by the Florida Legislature. She discussed the details of the program and its structure, and presented a Resolution authorizing the Executive Director to form and staff a Heartland Regional Resiliency Coalition.

Discussion followed.

**MOTION**

Rick Wilson moved to adopt Resolution 2021-9B as presented. Kathy Rapp seconded.

Motion carried unanimously.

**AGENDA ITEM #11 ADOPT RESOLUTION 2021-9C AUTHORIZING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO EXECUTE AND ADMINISTER DEO GRANT FOR FY 2021/22**

Pat Steed, Executive Director, stated that staff submitted grant applications to the State of Florida, Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO) for FY 2021/22 Community Planning Technical Assistance Grants. A grant application was submitted and awarded to prepare a parks, recreation, open space, and trails plan for Hardee County. Resolution 2021-9C authorizes the Executive Director to execute and administer a Community Planning Technical Assistance Grant with DEO.

Kelly Owens moved to adopt Resolution 2021-9C as presented. Donna Howerton seconded.

Motion carried unanimously.

**AGENDA ITEM #12 COMMITTEE TO NOMINATE COUNCIL OFFICERS FOR 2022**

Chair Cobb appointed Okeechobee County Commissioner Kelly Owens, Winter Haven City Commissioner Nathaniel Birdsong, and DeSoto County Gubernatorial Appointee Jackie Tucker to serve on the Nominating Committee to nominate a Chair and Vice-Chair of the Council for 2022. All appointees agreed to serve. The election will take place at the December 8, 2021 Council Meeting.

**MOTION**

Noel Chandler moved to approve the Nominating Committee as appointed. Keith Keene seconded.

Motion carried unanimously.

**AGENDA ITEM #13 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S ANNUAL PERFORMANCE EVALUATION**

Chair Cobb stated that ten (10) performance evaluations were returned by Council members. The Executive Director received "Excellent" ratings, with one (1) "Good" rating and a few "Not Personally Observed". She stated that all the comments submitted regarding Pat Steed's performance as Executive Director were extremely positive. Chair Cobb read a few of those comments and stated that the evaluation forms are available for anyone to review. She thanked Ms. Steed for her continued outstanding leadership as the Council's Executive Director.



Chair Cobb referred to a letter from Ms. Steed requesting she be authorized to exchange her accumulated annual leave hours at her current hourly rate, to avoid exceeding the Council's annual carry-forward limit. Chair Cobb stated that Ms. Steed was not able to use her annual leave due to lack of ability to travel during the on-going pandemic crisis and the increased workload. The funds for this exchange are included in the Council's leave-time liability fund, within the Council's Fund Balance.

### **MOTION**

Jackie Tucker moved to approve the Executive Director's performance evaluation as presented and authorized the exchange of annual leave hours as requested. Keith Keen seconded.

Motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Steed thanked the Council for their support and dedication to their service on the Council. She thanked the Council staff for their professionalism and working diligently through very unusual circumstances.

### **AGENDA ITEM #14 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

#### A. Project Updates

Ms. Steed reported on various projects currently being worked on by staff. She stated that the US Department of Defense grant for a compatible use plan update, formerly called the Joint Landuse Study for Avon Park Air Force Range, was delayed approximately twelve months. It is expected to begin this fall, along with the CDBG grant to support the resiliency coalition efforts.

#### B. Site Maintenance

Ms. Steed reported that plans to renovate and improvement the Council office building are made and will soon begin. Also, she reported that a large, 200 year-old, diseased oak tree in the office parking lot had been assessed by an Arborist and deemed to be unsafe. Plans are being made to have it removed.

#### C. FRCA July Policy Board Meeting

Ms. Steed reported that the FRCA Policy Board meeting was recently held. She thanked Jackie Tucker and Nathaniel Birdsong for attending to represent the Council. Chair Neda Cobb attended virtually, and stated it was a good meeting. Jackie Tucker and Nathaniel Birdsong added that the FRCA Policy Board meeting are always interesting and she enjoys learning about other regional planning council's interests, activities, programs, and activities.

### **AGENDA ITEM # 15 NEXT MEETING AND OTHER BUSINESS**

A. Next Meeting

The next CFRPC meeting is scheduled for December 8, 2021 at 9:30 a.m. Meeting will be in Polk County, and the location to be announced.

B. Other Business

There being no other business, the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

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Neda Cobb, Chair  
September 8, 2021 Council Meeting Minutes