

**Wednesday, April 9, 2025 | 9:30 a.m.**  
Jack Stroup Civic Center, Sebring

Vice-Chair, Don Elwell called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. Council Attorney Norman White led the invocation followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. Roll was called and the following Council Members were in attendance:

Commissioner Don Elwell, Highlands County  
Council Member Keith Keene, City of Arcadia  
Commissioner Kenny Miller, Hardee County  
Donna Howerton, Highlands County Gubernatorial Appointee  
Robert "Jeff" Kincart, Polk County Gubernatorial Appointee  
Councilman Noel Chandler, City of Okeechobee  
Commissioner Stephanie Madden, City of Lakeland  
Commissioner Harrison Havery, City of Sebring  
Elizabeth Sweigert, Ex-Officio, Florida Department of Environmental Protection  
Cindy Rodriguez, Ex-Officio, Southwest Florida Water Management District  
Todd Miller, Ex-Officio, Hardee County  
Benjamin Dunn, Ex-Officio, Polk County

**A quorum of members was present.**

### **1) Opportunity for Public Comments**

No comments were offered.

### **2) Council Administration**

Approval of Minutes:

A motion to approve the nominations was made by: Keith Keene

- The motion was seconded by: Noel Chandler
- The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

Approval of February 2025 Financials:

A motion to approve the Financial Report was made by: Noel Chandler

- The motion was seconded by: Keith Keene
- The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

### **3) Legislative Update regarding Regional Planning Councils**

Jennifer Codo-Salisbury presented information regarding the legislative update. There are many bills that may affect the region if passed. Jennifer focused on the bills directly affecting the CFRPC and all Regional Planning Councils. Jennifer shared information with the board regarding Florida Regional Councils Association. Resolution 2025-4A is in support of RPCs to be provided to FL Legislature.

A motion to approve Resolution 2025-4A was made by: Jeff Kincart

- The motion was seconded by: Donna Howerton
- The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

#### **4) Heartland 2060: Actions for a Resilient Future**

Shannon McPherson shared information regarding the Heartland 2060 which has been updated with input from the region. The CFRPC held a workshop on March 25, 2025 with the community to discuss Heartland 2060. Community members were able to provide direct feedback during the workshop on strategies. Next steps will be more focused conversations regarding economic development, workforce, talent pipeline, agriculture, land use and transportation and quality of life.

#### **5) U.S. Economic Development Administration Disaster Supplemental Grant**

Shannon McPherson provided a brief overview regarding the grant recently received for a multi-jurisdictional transportation corridor study. Initial requests for proposals for the project included a proposal from a qualified firm. CFRPC would like the board to Approve Consultant and authorize the Executive Director to negotiate and execute agreement with the Consultant.

A motion to approve Consultant and authorize the Executive Director to negotiate and execute agreement with the Consultant was made by: Keith Keene

- The motion was seconded by: Harrison Havery
- The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

#### **6) FloridaCommerce Community Planning Technical Assistance Grants and Competitive Florida Partnership Grants**

Jennifer Codo-Salisbury presented information regarding several successful projects from CPTA grants at Florida Commerce. It is anticipated that a FY 25 round of grants will come available.

A motion to approve Resolution 2025-4B was made by: Noel Chandler

- The motion was seconded by: Harrison Havery
- The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

A motion to approve Resolution 2025-4C was made by: Noel Chandler

- The motion was seconded by: Donna Howerton
- The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

#### **7) Heartland Regional Transportation Planning Organization (HRTPO) Activities**

Marybeth Soderstrom shared information regarding HRTPO recent activities. Several meetings are upcoming. There will be emphasis on identifying priorities.

#### **8) Heartland Regional Safety Action Plan Update and Demonstration Grant**

Marybeth Soderstrom provided information regarding this grant opportunity. This planning and demonstration grant focuses on beginning studies both regionally and locally.

A motion to authorize the Executive Director to submit a request to the Federal Highway Administration to conduct demonstration activities was made by: Donna Howerton.

- The motion was seconded by: Harrison Havery
- The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

#### **9) Avon Park Air Force Range – National Sentinel Landscape Conference**

Sheila McNamara provided an update on the National Sentinel Landscape Conference. The purpose of this is to further advance the national sentinel landscape partnership goals of: increasing resilience, sustainable land management and national defense.

**10) Executive Director’s Report**

Updates were provided about events across the region including the Sun N Fun Event at Lakeland Liner Airport. Jeff Kincart provided additional information.

**11) Sebring Community Redevelopment Agency**

Kristie Vazquez, Executive Director of the Sebring Community Redevelopment Agency provided an overview of Downtown Sebring’s recent revitalization efforts and local improvements which have been highlighted on HGTV’s Hometown Makeover. [www.downtownsebring.org/HGTV](http://www.downtownsebring.org/HGTV)

**12) Next Meeting and Other Business**

A) Next Meeting: Wednesday, June 11, 2025 at 9:30 AM  
Bartow Executive Airport, 5993 Airport Boulevard, Bartow, FL 33830

B) Other Business

- League of Cities, Dinner in Arcadia

**13) Adjourn to Optional Tour of Downtown Sebring**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

---

Don Elwell, Vice Chair