

FINAL
TRANSIT ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
September 25, 2023
MEETING MINUTES

TAB Members Present

James Darden
Ken Marlin
Cherie Newton (telephone)
Thomas Shibley
Jeff Souther
Matt Stigall

TAB Members Not Present

Allison Bickers
LaSandra Boykin
Jaha Howard
Walter Kolis
Mark Riggins
Forrest Shealy

Cobb County and Others Present

Drew Raessler, DOT
Theo Letman, DOT
Laura Beall, DOT
Ron Forrest, DOT
Marcia Lankford, DOT
Chuck Deeb, CDM Smith
Darrell Howard, CDM Smith
Tonia Proby, CDM Smith
Tim Sorenson, CDM Smith

I. Call to Order:

Vice Chair Ken Marlin welcomed everyone and called the TAB meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

II. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

August 28, 2023 Meeting Minutes: **Vice Chair Marlin** requested postponement of approval of the minutes due to a lack of quorum of members present.

III. OLD BUSINESS

A. DOT Department Update

CDM Smith Presentation – Mr. Tim Sorenson gave a presentation on Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and described what BRT is and the provided the goals a BRT to be faster, more reliable, and more comfortable/safe. Mr. Sorenson discussed light rail services in the United States as well as other BRTs in the United States with TAB and DOT. CDM Smith strives for bus stations to be within a quarter mile from each direction of a building location. There are local connections at crosswalks.

Mr. Raessler discussed faster access from Cumberland to downtown and from the airport. **Mr. Raessler** stated that Cobb, as well as other transit agencies, are looking at BRT options.

Community Outreach Update - Mr. Letman reported that Customer Engagement is underway with streamlining of the customer phone tree menu, freshening the Marietta Transfer Center.

Mr. Stigall requested better communication and marketing of the Circulator Bus Route to the public. **Mr. Letman** reported that there are a couple of studies being conducted to determine the improvements needed and that DOT/Transit is getting the word out to the Braves, the hotels, and restaurants that the Circulator is available and free to the public.

Mr. Raessler stated that Cobb is looking at more of a rapid moving system with more amenities that catches the eye of the public.

Mr. Letman reported that improvements, including Microtransit, will be forthcoming in the next few months.

Vice Chair Marlin requested the frequency of the Circulator and a timeline for Circulator improvements and preferably by the next Braves season.

Mr. Raessler stated that the desire is to have the Circulator improvements completed by the next Braves season but not without concerns.

Mr. Stigall recommended a potential partnership with Smyrna, Cumberland, and downtown Marietta similar to shuttle services in other states.

Operations Data and Ridership Reports Update – **Mr. Letman** reported that the ridership is continuing to improve and is above the previous year's numbers on many of the Fixed, Xpress, Paratransit, and the Flex Routes, as well as the Circulator Route. Improved Circulator ridership is due to the Brave's performance this season.

Vice Chair Marlin asked if the Brave's performance and improved ridership of the Circulator can be used to market the Circulator and CobbLinc.

Mr. Raessler stated as part of the revamp of the Circulator Route will include greater communication and visibility to the public.

Mr. Stigall shared that a Braves fan drives from Macon to the Marietta Transfer Center and takes CobbLinc to the Braves game, indicating the convenience and savings on parking fees.

Upcoming Agenda Items – **Mr. Letman** reported that the Breeze Mobile Agreement with MARTA is scheduled for BOC approval on 9/26/23 and **Mr. Raessler** reported that there were no concerns at the BOC work session regarding this item. Other future agenda items include the 2024 Title VI Report Update, Non-Revenue Vehicle Procurement Contract, Paratransit Schedule Software Contract, and the CAD/AVL Software Contract.

Mr. Stigall inquired about the status of the ongoing bus shelter/bus stop study.

Mr. Letman reported that DOT is awaiting the approval of the Breeze Mobile Agreement at the 9/26/23 BOC meeting and no update of the bus shelter/bus stop study is available yet.

Mr. Raessler stated that there were no questions about the Breeze Mobile Agreement at the 9/25/23 BOC Work Session.

Mr. Stigall inquired about the coordination of monthly passes and breeze cards between MARTA and CobbLinc to get a regional fare.

Mr. Raessler stated that the CobbLinc fare structure is old and that MARTA is in a multi-year procurement of a new system that is region wide and can be used by multiple transit systems.

Vice Chair Marlin requested DOT to provide an answer to TAB at the next meeting.

Mr. Raessler suggested that DOT discuss the regional fare internally and then provide an answer to TAB.

Mr. Darden expressed concern that 3 CobbLinc buses were running behind after each other on Austell Road at peak times in the mornings and evenings.

Mr. Letman reported that DOT meets with the Contractor regularly to discuss On Time Performance.

B. Committee Reports

(1) TAB Bylaws Update

Secretary Souther clarified/corrected that the Bylaws states that a quorum is 50% of the TAB members, not 51% as previously stated.

Mr. Raessler indicated that state law requires open public meetings to have 2 virtual meetings per year.

TAB discussed that a quorum of members had to be present to vote.

(2) Annual Report

Secretary Souther reported that he emailed a draft of the Annual Report to TAB members and requested review and feedback. **Secretary Souther** will email a copy of the draft Annual Report to **Mr. Darden** again, as he stated that he did not receive the attachment to the email.

(3) Marketing Outreach Update

Secretary Souther reported that **Ms. Lankford** provided a revised summary of the Marketing Outreach Update to include additional discussions by **Mr. Stigall** and **Mr. Kolis**.

Mr. Stigall expressed that some of the discussions of the Breeze Mobile Release 2.0 were not included in the revised summary of the Breeze Mobile Release 2.0 discussion.

Ms. Lankford will provide an additional revised summary.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

Annual Report

Secretary Souther reported that he had only received positive comments to the request for TAB members to the draft Annual Report and that **Ms. Lankford** recommended removal of **Mr. Neil Fusillo** as a TAB member. **Secretary Souther** removed Mr. Fusillo from list and will send updated list to the TAB members. The Annual Report is anticipated to be emailed to TAB members in December.

Appointment of Treasurer

Secretary Souther will verify if **Chair Bickers** appointed **Mr. Kolis** as Treasurer.

ADA Accessibility

Mr. Stigall, **Vice Chair Marlin**, and **Mr. Shibley** discussed concerns for restricted accessibility for public and people with disabilities to TAB meetings and if virtual access is an option. Vice Chair Marlin requested DOT to determine and provide the County’s governance on the public and TAB accessibility to TAB meetings.

Mr. Raessler will contact the County IS Department to see if there is a better virtual access for TAB members with disabilities. **Mr. Raessler** will also discuss the limits of public accessibility to TAB meetings with the County Manager and share any direction received.

Proxy for Absent TAB Members

Secretary Souther discussed that the Section 4.5 of the TAB Bylaws states that in the absence of a TAB member, a proxy process is formed by the Secretary and approved by the Chair to allow excused absences.

Vice Chair Marlin suggested that a proxy could be acknowledged by an email and that the County rules regarding should be verified.

Mr. Raessler will contact Legal for answers and to provide guidance on a proxy process.

Secretary Souther discussed the Bylaws will develop an approved system for excused absences using a proxy.

Mobility SPLOST

Mr. Stigall requested discussion of the Mobility SPLOST and asked how TAB may be helpful in determining the vision.

Mr. Raessler stated that public comment/outreach is coming up in October and may be pushed to November. **Mr. Raessler** shared that the strategic plan and the overarching vision for transportation. The strategic plan is on the agenda for the BOC at their 9/26/23 meeting. The public meetings will be shared with TAB and DOT welcomes TAB’s insight and comments.

Mr. Stigall expressed his opinion that DOT seek a candidate with a very strong Transit background to fill the Deputy Director of DOT Intermodal Services.

V. NEXT MEETING/ADJOURNMENT

The next TAB meeting is on October 23, 2023, at 6:30 p.m. With no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 8:13 p.m.

October 23, 2023

Approved