

**METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION BOARD
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

1:30 p.m., June 8, 2022
Cape Coral Public Works Building
815 Nicholas Parkway E., Cape Coral, FL
Green Room/A200



Meeting Minutes

The meeting was called to order at 1:31 p.m. by MPO Chair/City of Fort Myers Councilmember Teresa Watkins Brown.

The roll was called and recorded by MPO staff. There was a quorum. Those MEC members in attendance included Village of Estero Mayor Katy Errington; City of Fort Myers Councilmember Teresa Watkins Brown; City of Fort Myers Councilmember Fred Burson; City of Cape Coral Councilmember Tom Hayden; City of Sanibel Councilmember Mike Miller; MPO Treasurer/Lee County Commissioner Kevin Ruane; and City of Bonita Springs Councilmember Fred Forbes. Others in attendance included MPO Legal Counsel Derek Rooney; City of Cape Coral Police Department Officer; Persides Zambrano with the City of Cape Coral; Wayne Gaither and L. K. Nandam with FDOT; Chris Kessler and Matt Finelli with Clifton Larson Allen (CLA); and MPO staff Don Scott, Calandra Barraco, and Brian Raimondo.

New Business

Agenda Item #1 - Public Comments Taken at Each Item

Chair Watkins Brown noted public comments will be taken at each agenda item.

Agenda Item #2 - *Review and Approval of the March 9, 2022 Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Kevin Ruane made the motion to approve the March 9, 2022 Meeting Minutes. Councilmember Fred Forbes seconded the motion. There were no objections, and the motion passed unanimously.

Agenda Item #3 - +Review of the Year End Audit for FY 2020/2021

Mr. Chris Kessler with Clifton Larson Allen (CLA), the MPO's auditor, presented this agenda item for the review of and comment on the MPO's end of year audit for FY 2020/2021. He introduced Mr. Matt Finelli, also with CLA. The [final audited financial statements](#) and [governance letter](#) were emailed to the committee prior to the meeting, posted to the MPO website, and provided as printed copies at the meeting. Mr. Kessler provided a brief overview of the FY 2020/2021 year-end audit that included information on a review of the governance letter, opinion on audit, finding information, accountant issues, and auditor general involvement. The committee discussed history of MPO accounting firms, not receiving quality of services paid for, possibility of changing accounting firm, prior request for proposal process that was followed, length of process, number of years with audit finding with current firm, amount billed by current accountant, response from current accountant, impact of Covid and other accounting staff pregnancy leave, number of entries per month, ethics of talking to other accounting firms, approaching end of fiscal year, inability of MPO staff to handle accounting due to internal controls, difficulty in finding a firm to take a small client like the MPO, possibility of using the same firm as another local agency, possibility and legality of approaching three local firms for service, releasing current accountant, using same firm as the regional planning council, and split from the regional planning council.

Commissioner Kevin Ruane made the motion for three local firms, Stroemer and Markham and Tuscan, to be contacted by the MPO attorney. Mayor Katy Errington seconded the motion.

The committee discussed providing information on the MPO's accounting practices to the potential firms, providing scope of services, using a firm that is familiar with local government work, end of fiscal year, impact of starting with new firm, continuing with current firm for year-end closeout and ensuring new firm is part of process, timing of last accountant switch, auditor involvement with new firm to explain past issues and assist with transition, possible occurrence of same issues with the current year closeout, requesting current firm provide corrected statements and ensuring accountability, and management process. Chair Watkins Brown called the motion.

There were no objections, and the motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Kevin Ruane made an additional motion for the MPO attorney to identify issues in the management report and provide that and the scope of services to each firm contacted. Councilmember Fred Forbes seconded the motion. There were no objections, and the motion passed unanimously.

Chair Watkins Brown thanked Mr. Kessler and Mr. Finelli.

Agenda Item #4 - *Complete and Approve the Evaluation of the Executive Director

Mr. Derek Rooney with Grey Robinson, the MPO's legal counsel, presented this agenda item to complete and approve an evaluation of the Executive Director. The evaluation form was provided to the Committee back in March, attached to the agenda packet, and [posted to the MPO website](#). Mr. Rooney said he has been collecting the completed forms and is still waiting for additional forms. He said the reviews have been good, and he will provide a summary in memo format when he receives all of them. Commissioner Ruane asked about new members. Mr. Rooney replied the reviews received and outstanding were all from senior members. Mr. Scott asked about addressing a cost of living adjustment (COLA) for staff. Mr. Rooney noted that Mr. Scott cannot receive a COLA if staff doesn't also receive it. The committee discussed the last COLA for MPO staff, recent Lee County Board of Commissioners recent decision on salary and COLA for Lee County employees, consideration of what other local jurisdictions are doing, separate adjustments for salary and COLA, unions in Cape Coral, and City of Fort Myers salary adjustments.

Commissioner Kevin Ruane made the motion to provide a five percent cost of living increase for staff now and decide on Mr. Scott's salary increase when his reviews are completed/provided to the Executive Committee by Mr. Rooney at a future meeting. Mayor Katy Errington seconded the motion. There were no objections, and the motion passed unanimously.

Chair Watkins Brown asked if there was further discussion on this item. There was none.

Agenda Item #5 - +Provide Input on the Safe Streets and Roads for All Discretionary Grant Opportunity and Information on Other Grant Opportunities

Mr. Don Scott presented this agenda item to provide input on the MPO applying for discretionary grant funding to develop an Action Plan for the Safe Streets for All Program. He commented that the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) has been sent out for the Safe Streets and Roads For All (SS4A) Discretionary Grant Program from USDOT. It was also attached to the agenda packet and [posted to the MPO website](#). He provided a Power Point presentation on the SS4A grant program that included slides with information on an introduction to the SS4A grant, eligibility, funding, comprehensive safety action plan defined, examples of supplemental activities, implementation

grants, and getting ready to apply. The SS4A presentation can be viewed here: [SS4A Grants](#) The committee discussed the length of the funding program, using resources now, MPO leveraging local resources to apply for grant, disadvantage of using staff time, taking three times to apply for TIGER grant before being awarded, evaluation of application by USDOT, safety treatment/implementation examples, examining problem areas and focusing improvements in those areas of need, example of US 41 downtown median project, performance measures, Estero staff, safety funding for infrastructure, amount of discretionary funding, identification of improvements in plan, commitment from locals, twenty percent local match, application covering several agencies with MPO as lead, funding range for study, hiring consultant to assist, no Federal match, FDOT assistance, possibility for jurisdictions to apply individually, Lee MPO being able to apply for all of Lee County, example of Sarasota/Manatee application, amount of work involved, assistance of local jurisdictions in process, MPO reaching out to local jurisdiction staff, example of sidewalks on SR 78, obligation of local jurisdictions, MPO funding for application and then if awarded bringing decision back to the MPO Board for a collective match of twenty percent, length of time to prepare plan, Lee County high crash area, FHWA observation of Lee County action, application for grant sending message that Lee County is trying to address safety concerns, and possibility of a motion to support grant application. Mr. Scott read a [public comment](#) from Ms. Diana Giraldo with Streets Alive of Southwest Florida that had been emailed to MPO staff prior to the meeting. Mayor Errington asked Mr. Scott to state a motion for this item. Mr. Scott replied the motion would be for MPO staff to apply for the grant in this cycle.

Mayor Katy Errington made the motion for MPO staff to apply for the SS4A grant in this cycle. Councilmember Fred Forbes seconded the motion. There were no objections, and the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Scott then provided a short Power Point presentation on an additional grant opportunity on reconnecting communities. The presentation can be viewed here: [Reconnecting Communities](#) The committee briefly discussed possible projects in Fort Myers, purpose of grant and project goals, funding for project, possible grant project general example, emphasis on larger scale projects that separate community, and low chances for a Lee County project to fit for this type of funding.

Agenda Item #6 - Presentation on the MPO TIGER Grant Project

Mr. Scott presented this agenda item as a follow up to the discussion at the March MEC meeting. He provided a Power Point presentation on the TIGER grant project, awarded in 2013 with project completing construction in 2018, that included slides with information on summary of project, funding, project description, project map, project team, design and construction, project timeline, what worked, wayfinding sign examples, project development, regional partnering, performance measures, lessons learned, and additional considerations. His presentation can be viewed here: [TIGER Project](#) Mr. Scott asked if there were any comments or questions. Mr. L. K. Nandam commented on letters provided by FDOT. Mr. Scott mentioned the collection of performance measure data continuation over the next two years.

Agenda Item #7 - Overview of the June 17th MPO Board Meeting Agenda

Mr. Scott presented this agenda item as an overview to the MPO Board meeting agenda for the June 17 meeting. The agenda items included General Planning Consultant contracts, Transportation Improvement Project, Federal/State/Multimodal priorities, and a presentation on the Old US 41 PD&E. Mr. Scott asked if there were any comments. There were none. He noted that after the June MPO Board meeting, the next MPO Board meeting would be in September.

Other Business

Agenda Item #8 - Public Comments on Items Not on the Agenda

Mr. Scott mentioned an additional [public comment](#) emailed by Ms. Diana Giraldo with Streets Alive of Southwest Florida prior to the meeting. Chair Watkins Brown asked if there were any comments. There were none.

Agenda Item #10 – Announcements

Mr. Scott mentioned the next MEC meeting would be August 10. The committee discussed a potential conflict with a Florida League of Cities conference in Hollywood, FL. Mr. Nandam commented on funding for the Caloosahatchee bridge sidewalk project. Mayor Errington commented on the public service announcement (PSA) project completed by Estero High School students. Mr. Scott added there were two PSAs, and they could also be used for other outreach.

Agenda Item #11 - Information/Distribution Items

There were no information and/or distribution items.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:52 p.m.

An audio recording of the meeting can be accessed here: [MEC June 8, 2022](#)

* Action Items * May Require Action

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