

**MINUTES OF THE GLADES-HENDRY JOINT LOCAL COORDINATING BOARD  
FOR THE TRANSPORTATION DISADVANTAGED  
JOINT TRANSPORTATION DISADVANTAGED LOCAL COORDINATING BOARD**

Staff services provided by Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council -- TD Planning Program  
1926 Victoria Avenue, Fort Myers FL 33901; (239) 338-2550-extension 232; fax (239) 338-2560  
E-mail: [ngwinnett@swfrpc.org](mailto:ngwinnett@swfrpc.org) \*\*\* TD web page: [www.swfrpc.org](http://www.swfrpc.org)

**Minutes of the Public Hearing**

Wednesday, May 4, 2016 at 10:30 a.m.

**Glades County Department of Health  
1021 Health Park Drive  
Moore Haven, Florida**

<b>Representing</b>	<b>Voting Member</b>	<b>Agency</b>	<b>Alternate Member</b>	<b>Agency</b>
<b>The RPC/DOPA shall appoint one elected official to serve as the official Chairperson for all Coordinating Board meetings.</b>	Commissioner Donna Storter- Long <b>(ABSENT)</b>	Glades County BCC	Commissioner Janet Taylor <b>(PRESENT)</b>  Commissioner Darrell Harris <b>(ABSENT)</b>	Hendry County BCC
<b>A. A local representative of the Florida Department of Transportation (DOT)</b>	Debi Stephens <b>(PRESENT)</b>	Florida Departm ent of Transport ation	Richard Shine <b>(ABSENT)</b>	Florida Department of Transportation
<b>B. A local representative of the Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF)</b>	Aaron Stitt <b>(PRESENT)</b>	FL Dept. of Children and Families	Vacant	
<b>C. A local representative of the Public Education Community which could include, but not be limited to, a representative of the District School Board, School Board Transportation Office, or Headstart Program in areas where the School District is responsible</b>	Jim Brickel <b>(PRESENT)</b>	Glades County School System	Gary Ensor <b>(ABSENT)</b>	Hendry County School System
<b>D. In areas where they exist, a local representative of</b>	Victoria Aguilar <b>(PRESENT)</b>		<b>(VACANT)</b>	

the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services or the Division of Blind Services, representing the Department of Education				
E. A person recommended by the local Veterans Service Office, representing Veterans of the county	Philip Nall (ABSENT)		VACANT	
F. A person recognized by the Florida Association for Community Action representing the economically disadvantaged	VACANT	Glades County Social Services	VACANT	
G. A person representing the Elderly in the county	Kristina Rodriguez (PRESENT)	Hope Connections	Bill Iffland (ABSENT)	Hope Connections
H. A person with a disability representing the disabled in the county	VACANT		VACANT	
I-1. [One of Two] Citizen Advocates in the County	Ron Stephens (PRESENT)		Patricia Webber (ABSENT) Debbie Howell (ABSENT)	
I-2. [One of two] Citizen Advocates this one must be a person who uses the transportation service(s) of the system as their primary means of transportation.	VACANT		VACANT	
J. A local representative for children at risk	Vanessa Fischel (PRESENT)	FL Dept. of Health in Hendry	Sherry Shupp (ABSENT)	RCMA
K. In areas where they exist, the Chairperson or designee of the local Mass Transit or Public Transit	N/A		N/A	

Systems Board, except in cases where they are also the Community Transportation Coordinator.				
L. A local representative of the Florida Department of Elder Affairs	Beth Severo (PRESENT)	Florida Dept. of Elder Affairs	VACANT	Florida Dept. of Elder Affairs
M. An experienced representative of the local private for profit transportation industry. In areas where such representative is not available, a local private non-profit representative will be appointed, except where said representative is also the Community Transportation Coordinator	VACANT		VACANT	
N. A local representative of the Florida Agency for Health Care Administration	Joe Martinez (PRESENT)	Agency for Health Care Administration	Patricia Brooks (ABSENT)	Agency for Health Care Administration
O. A representative of the Regional Workforce Development Board established in Chapter 445, Florida Statutes.	Rebecca Meeler (PRESENT)		Suseth Cunningham (ABSENT)	
P. A representative of the local medical community, which may include, but not be limited to, kidney dialysis centers, long term care facilities, hospitals, local health department or other home and	Mary Bartoshuk (PRESENT)		Nancy Acevedo (PRESENT)	

community based services, etc.				
-----------------------------------	--	--	--	--

**Guests/Public:**

Ruby Monroe, Citizen  
 Traci M. Thomas, Florida Community Health Centers  
 Traci Owens, Avidity Home Health  
 Janice D. Drown, Career Source – D.G. – MHHS  
 Estela Aguilar, Healthy Start/Help Me Grow  
 Lisa Sands, United Way  
 Annie Brown, Hendry County School Bus Aide  
 Maricela Morado, Abuse Counseling and Treatment, Inc.  
 Claudia Smith, Citizen  
 Dorothy J. Felton, Citizen  
 Nellie Corbett, Citizen  
 Kara Helvey, ACO Care Coordinator for Hendry Regional

**Staff:**

Alan Mandel, Good Wheels, Inc.  
 Nichole Gwinnett, SWFRPC

**Agenda Item #1 – Call to Order and Introductions**

Chair Taylor called the public hearing to order at 10:30 a.m. and then introductions were made.

**Agenda Item #2 – Public Comment on Transportation for the Disadvantaged**

Ms. Dorothy Felton explained that she had been a customer of Good Wheels for many years. During February 2015 she was involved in an accident on the bus and it took Good Wheels until the latter part of 2015. She said that accident wasn't her fault; however, she was told that she was at fault. She had issues with Good Wheels' customer service where she has called into Good Wheels and was told that someone would get back with her and she never received a returned call.

Ms. Felton explained another incident with Good Wheels when she had a doctor appointment in Palm Beach and the driver had told her that they were told to leave her so they could go to Belle Glade. Ms. Felton was told by the driver that it would take less than 45 minutes to go from Palm Beach to Belle Glade. When the driver told Ms. Felton that they would have to leave her, she said "not on her life". The driver then said those were her orders. Ms. Felton then called Good Wheels and explained to them that there was no way that she would be able to travel all the way to Palm Beach for that length of time because she has to take medicine at least 3 times each day and she needs to take it with food; and food and drink are not allowed on Good Wheels' buses and sometimes she didn't return back to her home until 6:30-7:00 p.m.

Ms. Felton stated that she appreciates the transportation that Good Wheels provides; however, she would like to see improvements made at the office of Good Wheels; because she is told one thing when she talks with one person and then a different thing when she speaks with another person at Good Wheels. They need to treat the customers with respect. The new drivers are very pleasant.

Ms. Felton explained when she called to make arrangements for transportation to today's meeting; she was told by dispatch that they didn't know anything about it. Ms. Felton then called Ms. Gwinnett and Ms. Gwinnett then called Good Wheels and spoke with Mr. Mandel regarding the issue. Immediately following speaking with Mr. Mandel, Ms. Gwinnett called Ms. Felton back and told her that everything would be taken care of. Ms. Felton then called the following day and there was a recording stating that they weren't taking any calls at that time and to call back. Ms. Felton called back the following Monday, 2 days prior to the meeting, and once again she was told that they didn't know anything about it. She explained that numerous times she had been placed on hold and no one ever came back on the line to speak with her. She said that the individuals who work in dispatch have bad attitudes.

Ms. Corbin explained that she appreciates the transportation that Good Wheels provides, but she has been late for doctor appointments five times.

Ms. Smith stated she appreciated the transportation which Good Wheels provides; however, what had happened a couple of times was she ended having to cancel her appointment because Good Wheels had called her and told her that they didn't have a driver and/or something else had come up and they were unable to provide the trip. As a result she had to find someone who would be able to take her to her doctor appointments in West Palm Beach.

Ms. Brown reiterated the same concerns that Ms. Cleo \_\_\_ had stated. Glades County needs Good Wheels and/or another form of transportation because there isn't any form of public transportation within Glades County.

Ms. Ruby Monroe stated the dispatchers/office personnel have been very rude.

Ms. Sands stated on the Immokalee Tech website it states that Good Wheels is providing transportation for students. She has received conflicting answers regarding that service because she works with students in trying to get them to the technical college so they would be able to get higher paying jobs. She said that she felt that transportation for students could be arranged for students from LaBelle and Clewiston to Immokalee for education purposes; and even to Fort Myers. She has contacted Good Wheels a few times and has received conflicting information. One time she was told that it would cost the customer \$1.00 each way and then another individual said that it would be very costly. She said that she would like clarification on whether or not the service is available and what is the cost to the student.

Ms. Tracy Owens said that she worked for a local health agency who works with many of the seniors in the area. She asked for clarification on her understanding that Good Wheels works with the Medicaid program; however, with the latest transition there are a few different providers for Medicaid. She then asked if there was currently a “freeze” on transportation until July 1, unless it was for dialysis or a life-threatening condition. But for a regular physician appointment, Good Wheels wouldn’t be able to provide those trips due to the lack of funding.

Ms. Tracy Owens asked if there is an individual who doesn’t have Medicaid but needs transportation, can they then seek privately for transportation for physician appointments. She then noted that there is a big gap in transportation for wheelchair accessible transportation. Patients who are discharged from the hospital and don’t need an ambulance for stretcher service or they don’t have someone to pick them up. There is a real big challenge finding transportation for those patients who are in wheelchairs.

Ms. Kara Helvey stated that she is a case manager who assists patients with transportation from the hospitals along with other facilities. She said that she had run into similar situations with the office staff at Good Wheels being non-professional as both Ms. Monroe and Ms. Corbin had stated. She had been placed on hold numerous times where she had to hang up and call back again. She said she felt that Good Wheels is a very good program; however, there needs to be some restructuring from the very top down to the drivers. She then said she was happy to see Good Wheels present at today’s meeting because there are many seniors who do not have transportation to their doctor appointments. The issue of not being able to eat or drink in the buses is very concerning because the many of the elderly need to take medications with food or drink. She asked the LCB is there was ever any consideration in coordinating with the other counties on having a flat fee or other grant funds. She explained Palm Beach County has Palm Tran and the Belle Glade Express.

Ms. Stephens with FDOT explained there are federal grants available. Good Wheels does receive funding specifically for seniors and persons with disabilities and also vehicles. Federal agencies pay 80%, the State pays 10%, and the local agencies pay 10%. Good Wheels also receives a 5311 grant for rural transportation for operating. Good Wheels runs the ClewBelle shuttle which FDOT assists with the funding through the 5311 grant for rural transportation along with a State Service Development grant which is used for match; the rural transportation grant has a 50/50 match requirement and we were able to leverage another grant program from the State in order to assist Good Wheels.

Ms. Lisa Sands from United Way Office in LaBelle explained that she has experience walk-ins complain that they are not able to get transportation to their appointments. One individual needed eye surgery and he was told that he wasn’t able to get that transportation from Good Wheels. She has been told by individuals that they had terrible issues with the office staff/dispatch at Good Wheels with placing them on hold and never returning.

Ms. Ruby Monroe explained she agreed with the comments made regarding having transportation issues for those individuals in wheelchairs. She expressed her concern with

those individuals who are wheelchair bound and are unable to obtain much needed transportation.

Ms. Maricela Morado, Residential Supervisor for the shelter in LaBelle and explained that the comments that had been made regarding Good Wheels customer service have also been experienced at ACT. She explained there is a great need for transportation to get people to the shelter, currently they are working with the law enforcement agencies but it would be nice to have other sources. She explained some of the situations that their clients encounter regarding transportation.

Chair Taylor stated at this time she would give Mr. Mandel of Good Wheels some time to address some of the issues that were just heard. However, regarding the staff at Good Wheels that is an internal issue that will need to be handled internally.

At this time there was a discussion that the guests of today's meeting were charged \$4.00 by Good Wheels.

Mr. Mandel introduced himself and announced that he had become the CEO of Good Wheels in June 2014. He said that he appreciated everyone's comments and concerns and it is his responsibility to make sure that those issues are resolved. He noted that he will address the internal issues.

He went on to explain the confusion experienced with the transportation related to today's meeting. Good Wheels receives funding from the Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged (CTD). The CTD was formed by the Governor and Legislature and it provides funding to the various Community Transportation Coordinators (CTCs) throughout the State. He explained the funding received from the State for Glades and Hendry Counties were exhausted too early and Good Wheels was notified by the CTD that they were running out of their current funding. Good Wheels had gone over in the allowable trips during the first few months of the year which in turn cut into the remaining funds for the end of the year for trips. He said that Good Wheels is paying for today's trips because there aren't any remaining funds from the State until July 1 when the new fiscal year begins. The bad news is Good Wheel doesn't have the funding to provide everyone transportation, so they are trying to take the most critical patients until July 1.

He then addressed the concern with clients being picked up early; however, it may come down to them having to be picked up even earlier because Good Wheels has been told by the Medicaid brokers that getting clients to their doctor appointments on time, especially dialysis, is extremely critical. Good Wheels was notified by one Medicaid broker that as of July 1, Good Wheels will be fined \$100 per trip if the patient is late to their dialysis/doctor appointment. So when you only receive \$12 to \$20 per trip, a \$100 fine is going to hurt. They are not so concerned with what time the patient arrives back home. The real focus is getting patients to their appointments on time.

Mr. Mandel explained Good Wheels does have a policy in place where a driver is required to only wait for a client for 5 minutes and he will make sure the policy is enforced. He then addressed the comments made about Good Wheels taking clients to Palm Beach and onto Miami. The LCB has done a very good job in allowing Good Wheels to provide those trips. With the permission of the LCB Good Wheels is allowed to cross county lines into both Lee County and Palm Beach County for TD trips. One of the key issues in keeping the costs low is to try to get as many clients onto one vehicle as much as possible.

Mr. Mandel explained where some of the local match for the grants comes from, such as counties, local agencies, etc. Ms. Stephens explained to Mr. Mandel that Good Wheels could use other funded trips that are funded with other types of funds as match.

**Agenda Item #3 – Adjournment**

**Chair Taylor adjourned the Public Hearing at 11:30 a.m. and preceded to Call To Order the Regular Meeting of the Glades-Hendry Local Coordinating Board at this time.**

APPROVED