



**PINELLAS SUNCOAST TRANSIT AUTHORITY**  
**3201 SCHERER DRIVE, ST. PETERSBURG, FL 33716**  
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**PLANNING COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**MAY 19, 2021**

Committee Chairperson Shulman called the May 19, 2021 Planning meeting to order at 10:45 am. Members present: Josh Shulman, David Allbritton, Vince Cocks, and Deborah Figgs-Sanders. Members absent: Michael Fridovich and Rene Flowers. Also present: Brad Miller, CEO, and PSTA staff members.

**Public Comment:**

There were no public comments.

**Action Items:**

**Approve April 21, 2021 Meeting Minutes** – Mr. Allbritton made a motion, seconded by Mr. Cocks, to approve the minutes. Motion passed unanimously.

**FY21 Federal Grant Program of Projects** – Debbie Leous, Chief Financial Officer, summarized the proposed PSTA FY21 Program of Projects, which includes projects the PSTA proposes to fund with its annual federal apportionments and federal grants. Mr. Miller was pleased to report for the first time, Pinellas County was awarded \$3 million in Surface Transportation Priority (STP) funding thanks to Forward Pinellas and the support of Mr. Allbritton and the City of Clearwater. Ms. Leous introduced Pam Reitz, Manager of Contracts and Grants/Finance, who reported that PSTA expects to receive almost \$20 million in federal funding for projects including: the purchase of revenue vehicles, preventative maintenance, passenger amenities, computer hardware and software, short range planning, employee training and miscellaneous support equipment, and mobility management.

Ms. Figgs-Sanders made a motion, seconded by Mr. Allbritton, to approve the proposed FY21-Federal Grant Program of Projects and the submittal of all grant applications and the recommendation to adopt Resolution #21-03. There were no public comments. Motion passed unanimously.

**Information Items:**

**Fare Equity Proposal** – Mr. Miller introduced Cassandra Borchers, Chief Development Officer, who along with Heather Sobush, Director of Planning, and Nicole Dufva, Project Planner, presented an analysis of fare equity and options to improve on fare equity throughout PSTA. Ms. Borchers explained that during the COVID-19 pandemic, PSTA

suspended fare collection to allow for social distancing between operators and passengers. It raised the important issue of the possibility and implications of a “fare free” transit system.

Ms. Dufva presented several fare equity case studies from public transportation agencies across the country that have used the recent experience of being fare-less as an opportunity to explore the balance between community service and fixed route reduced fares that help support the riders we serve.

Ms. Sobush presented our rider profile and a monthly survival budget analysis that indicated the majority of transit riders are struggling to maintain household budgets with the rising costs of housing, and the low wages prevalent in Pinellas County. Ms. Sobush stressed our riders want more frequency, later evening service, more weekend service and faster, more direct routes. Ms. Borchers wrapped up the informative presentation with several recommendations for PSTA to become more equitable in our transit service and future planning. She recommended: fare capping with the launch of Flamingo Fares, the expansion of low-income fare options, and the removal of barriers to transportation for the most marginalized citizens in Pinellas County.

There were many positive comments and suggestions from committee members, including Mr. Cocks who fully supports more reduced fare options for the disadvantaged and disabled riders throughout Pinellas County. Committee-Chair Shulman and Ms. Figgs-Sanders raised the issue of the importance of having a clear and concise policy about the age of children who are allowed to ride the bus without parental or adult supervision.

#### **Other Business:**

Ms. Borchers reminded Committee members that there is a Sun Runner community outreach event this evening from 5:00 – 6:00 pm if anyone is interested in attending.

#### **Adjournment:**

The meeting was adjourned at 11:22 am. The next Planning Committee meeting is scheduled for June 16th at 10:30 am.