

DRAFT MINUTES

**HARTLINE STUDY GROUP MEETING**  
**Friday, November 18, 2005, 9:00 AM**  
**601 E. Kennedy Blvd., 17<sup>th</sup> floor, Human Resources Training Room**  
**Tampa, FL 33602**

Group Members Present (7)

Commissioner Brian Blair  
Chelsea Bridges  
Brian Delamer  
Norbert Gobin  
Kathy Harris  
Carlton Lewis  
Barbara Merritt

Group Members Absent (1)

David Storck

Staff Members Present

John Dausman, Study Group Consultant  
Mary Helen Campbell, Cnty Atty's Ofc  
Christine Beck, County Atty's Office  
Ned Baier, HC Plng & Growth Mgmt

Others Present

Chiheh Zedini  
Gloria Mills  
Ted Hull  
Ron Beasers  
Pierre Mathurin  
Mike Peterson  
Ray Miller  
Bob Potts  
Al Steenson  
Mike McCoy  
Shirley Vereen  
Neil Cosentino  
Ralph Hughes  
Carl Warren Sr.  
Edward Giunta  
William Schnell  
Roger Grunke  
Jan Smith  
Mary Ann Stiles  
Mark Holan  
Bill Varian  
Steve Andrews  
Gordon Dempsey

Welcome and Introductions

Commissioner Brian Blair, HARTline Study Group chairman, called the meeting to order at about 9:10am. After introducing himself, he asked each person at the dais to introduce themselves.

Sunshine Law Requirements

Hillsborough County Managing Attorney Mary Helen Campbell presented an overview of pertinent portions of Florida's "Government in the Sunshine" law that regulate the manner in which Study Group members can communicate with each

## DRAFT MINUTES

other and how the public must be notified and be admitted to all meetings. Ms. Campbell answered questions from Study Group members and the public.

### More Introductions

Other individuals in attendance were introduced. These included Ray Miller, HARTline Executive Director, Bob Potts, HARTline staff, Christine Beck, Hillsborough County Managing Attorney assigned to the HARTline Study Group project, and Edward Giunta, HARTline Board member.

### Study Group Mission

Commissioner Blair presented a history of how the Study Group assignment got started with a discussion by the Hillsborough Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) in August 2005 which ultimately led to the creation of the HARTline Study Group and formal adoption of its mission statement by the BOCC in October 2005. Commissioner Blair read the adopted mission statement into the record. Copies of the mission statement were distributed to all attendees.

### HARTline Charter and Authorizing Legislation

Study Group consultant John Dausman presented an overview of certain features of HARTline's charter and state authorizing legislation. The key points covered were the membership basis of HARTline, board of director composition based on population, specific exclusion of city population in determining county representation, requirement for equitable distribution of services and costs among members, legal requirements imposed on a member who wants to withdraw from HARTline, and flexibility of funding options allowed by charter and authorizing legislation.

### Formation of Subcommittees and Assignment of Membership

Commissioner Blair proposed that two subcommittees, a Service subcommittee and a Finance subcommittee, be formed in order to accomplish the substantial amount of work required for this project in the short timeframe established by the BOCC. A proposed list of subcommittee membership was distributed to everyone present, with four Study Group members assigned to each subcommittee. The Study Group members accepted their assignments from the chairman.

Norbert Gobin commented that the two charts distributed earlier in the meeting covered only the ad valorem portion of HARTline's funding. He asked if the Study Group would receive information on other funding sources, particularly grants, and whether the group would be discussing the whole funding picture.

John Dausman affirmed that the Study Group's mission covers all those topics and that this information will be provided in advance of upcoming meetings.

Brian Delamer described some financial information he obtained from HARTline's website. He recommended that both subcommittees be kept informed of the

## DRAFT MINUTES

other subcommittee's progress in order to benefit from all information being presented and discussed.

Barbara Merritt commented that the Study Group membership includes active bus riders. This knowledge will assist the Study Group in its discussions.

In response to a question from the public, each Study Group member and staff described the extent of their use and knowledge of HARTline's bus system and also their perspective of being a member of the Study Group.

### Meeting Schedule

A proposed meeting schedule through March 2006 was issued to all attendees.

### Study Group Member Comments

Chairman Blair called for any comments from Study Group members before starting public comment.

Kathy Harris asked whether the resources of county departments are available for this project. John Dausman responded that the County Administrator had recommended the formation of the Study Group and supported its efforts. Also the consultant contract for this project requires that county staff be available to assist the Study Group.

Ms. Harris also requested that copies of the following documents be obtained and distributed to Study Group members: HARTline's most recent audit, most recent business plan, annual plan, and 2006 Budget request to Hillsborough County.

Ms. Harris also asked if all meetings were going to be held in County Center. She suggested that the mission of studying unincorporated county transit service merits outreach to locations in the unincorporated county.

Carlton Lewis requested that background data for the project be provided all at once rather than parceled out by individual meeting.

Barbara Merritt suggested that a web page be established for the Study Group similar to the ones maintained by the County for the Charter Review Board and the Health Care Study Group.

Ms. Merritt also requested that a copy of the County sponsored audit of HARTline of several years ago be included along with the financial information requested by Kathy Harris.

Brian Delamer suggested that the Study Group website include hot links to background data to enhance availability of information to everyone.

## DRAFT MINUTES

Norbert Gobin commented that the meeting location in County Center was convenient. He added that meetings could begin earlier if that helped attendees make better use of their time.

Mr. Gobin also requested that a copy of the raw data from HARTline's public opinion survey from spring 2005 be obtained and distributed to the Study Group.

### Public Comment

Chairman Blair stated that public comment would be moved to the beginning of future meeting agendas so that Study Group members would have the benefit of that information before any deliberations begin. Then he called for public comment for today's meeting.

William Schnell recommended that the Study Group include county infrastructure for transit in its inquiry. He stated that HARTline did not have an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) transition plan as required by law. He also commented that there was a redundancy between HARTline's paratransit service and the County's Sunshine Line service.

Neil Cosentino distributed a handout regarding a proposal by the FASTA-Florida group to provide public transportation to communities throughout Hillsborough County.

Ralph Hughes recommended that the County should consider using a competitive bid process in selecting a transit provider. He also asked for clarification on the rules for determining the number of seats each member has on the HARTline Board of Directors.

Carl Warren stated that accountability should be included in the Study Group's investigations. He suggested that the Study Group look at past comments at HARTline Board meetings to review public concerns about the quality of service. He also commented that the gentrification process pushes the poor into county areas. As a consequence, the need for public transportation is growing in these county areas.

Al Steenson recommended that the Study Group consider regional needs, not just unincorporated county. He expressed concern about the possible impact of county decisions on Tampa bus service.

Mike McCoy commented that Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) members make up a large part of HARTline's employees and cost. He recommended the formation of an employee advisory committee to the Study Group or some other formal method of providing input from the ATU membership.

Mike Peterson distributed a handout regarding transit needs in the SouthShore area. He said he would address the specifics of his group's recommendations at

## DRAFT MINUTES

future meetings. He said his group wanted to see a plan created to provide for increased transit over the next 10 years.

In response to comments about competitive bidding and privatization, Barbara Merritt requested that information be provided on HARTline's attempt at privatization in the early to mid 90's.

Ray Miller commented that it was a challenge to provide service to lower density areas of the County. He reiterated his commitment to providing resources and information to the Study Group. He also referred to the every-three-year effort to do a needs assessment that HARTline will be performing over the coming year. He stated that HARTline staff has identified a dozen subareas of the county to obtain input for this effort.

Mary Ann Stiles described her background with HARTline and public transportation issues and said that she was forming a transit advocacy group. She referred to all sources of funding for HARTline, not just ad valorem taxes. She stated that the Study Group's mission was inappropriate because its work impacts areas beyond unincorporated county. She stated that HARTline is a social service and that the County's agenda is to stop participation in that service.

Commissioner Blair responded that the Study Group was created by BOCC vote and that a proposal for a referendum to withdraw from HARTline had already been discussed and did not pass. He referred to the portion of HARTline's authorizing legislation that required equitable distribution of service and costs.

Shirley Vereen commented her stop on the 23X express bus had been eliminated. She stated that the bus still passed by this location and that elimination of this stop saved little time or money.

Jan Smith described her prior service on the Planning Commission, HARTline, Metropolitan Planning Commission, Tampa Historic Streetcar and the Streetcar Society. She suggested that the need for public transportation will grow substantially as baby boomers age. She recommended that the Study Group look at the past trend in funding of transit by the federal and state governments as well as the consequences of sidewalk waivers and low impact fees assessed on past development. She recommended that unincorporated residents view transit as similar to jails, police and fire services which she has never had to use but agrees that it needs to be there.

Gloria Mills provided a handout from Pierre Mathurin who had to leave the meeting early. She stated that she formed a group called Hillsborough County Advocates for Improved Transit. She praised Study Group member experience with bus usage and urged remaining members to ride HARTline to gain insight.

## DRAFT MINUTES

She recommended that the Study Group take into account the needs of the entire county, including the cities, in the group's work.

William Schnell recommended that the Study Group look at Plant City's decision to provide its own transit service.

Carl Warren commented that the ad valorem millage assessed by HARTline can only be increased beyond ½ mill by referendum.

Gloria Mills commented that the average homeowner contributes \$45 per year to HARTline.

### Closing Comments

Chairman Blair called for any closing comments from Study Group members.

Barbara Merritt asked for confirmation that public comment would be moved to the beginning of future meetings. The chairman confirmed that this would be the case.

Norbert Gobin commented that he was pleased to be appointed to this group and considered the Group's mission to be an important endeavor.

Kathy Harris recommended that the group consider creating a third subcommittee to deal with HARTline governance issues. She also commented that there was substantial public apprehension when the County Commission formed the Health Care Study Group but those concerns were largely dispelled as the Group conducted its work. She commented that mass transit is not a social service and that concepts such as privatization are valid topics for discussion. She called for open input and dialog with a focus on fixing things that benefit the whole system.

Carlton Lewis commented on the large amount of work to be done by the Study Group. He felt that the Study Group can't hope to fix everything but that the Study Group can facilitate a process to move toward improvement.

Brian Delamer acknowledged the range of concerns expressed by the public and the press. He referred to our representative method of government and the way that it allows looking at the needs of and benefits to everyone. He recommended that the Study Group consider the impact on areas such as jobs, tax base, congestion and income levels in developing transit system recommendations. He recommended that discipline in spending was necessary.

Chelsea Bridges recommended that the Study Group focus on improving service to all patrons.

Chairman Blair adjourned the meeting at approximately 11:15 am.