

CHARLESTON AREA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY (CARTA)
VIRTUAL BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
March 17, 2021
Meeting Notes

The Charleston Area Regional Transportation Authority (CARTA) Board of Directors held a virtual Board of Directors meeting at 1:00 p.m. on Wednesday, March, 2021.

MEMBERSHIP: Mary Beth Berry; Ron Brinson; Mike Brown; Brenda Corley; Dwayne Green; Alfred Harrison; Will Haynie; John Labriola; James Lewis; Pat O'Neil; Teddie Pryor; Christie Rainwater; Dickie Schweers; Michael Seekings; Keith Summey; John Tecklenburg; Jimmy Ward; Robert Wehrman

MEMBERSHIP PRESENT: Ron Brinson; Mike Brown; Brenda Corley; Dwayne Green; Will Haynie; James Lewis; Pat O'Neil; Michael Seekings; Jimmy Ward

PROXIES: Dennis Turner for Christie Rainwater; Ray Anderson for Keith Summey; Lynn Christian for Alfred Harrison; Jerry Lahm for Teddie Pryor; Kristen Salisbury for Dickie Schweers; Kristen Hess for Robert Wehrman; Stephanie Tillerson for John Labriola; Keith Benjamin for John Tecklenburg

STAFF PRESENT: Ron Mitchum; Andrea Kozloski; Robin Mitchum; Sharon Hollis; Jon Dodson; Michelle Emerson; Daniel Brock; Belen Vitello; Kim Coleman

OTHERS PRESENT: David Bonner (Transdev); Alisha Wigfall (Transdev); Robert Milhous (Robert E. Milhous, CPA); Jeff Webster (Rawle-Murdy Associates); Robert Flagler (Rawle-Murdy Associates); Rachel Angelos (Rawle-Murdy Associates); Daniel Monroe (Rawle-Murdy Associates); Scott Donahue (SDCOT); Charles Drayton (City of North Charleston); Megan Mills (Charleston Parks Conservancy); William Hamilton (Best Friends of Lowcountry Transit); Lexi Moore (Channel 2 News); Additional Interested Parties participated via virtual/conference call.

1. Call to Order

Chairman Seekings called the virtual CARTA Board of Directors Meeting to order at 1:02 p.m. followed by a moment of silence and quorum determination.

2. Consideration of Board Minutes: February 17, 2021 Meeting

***Mr. Brinson made a motion to approve the February 17, 2021 Meeting Minutes as presented.
Mayor Haynie seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.***

3. FY20 Audit Presentation – Robert E. Milhous, CPA

Ron Mitchum, Executive Director, introduced Robert Milhous of Robert E. Milhous, CPA. Mr. Milhous delivered the FY20 Audit Report noting that all financial records were in order and in compliance with auditing standards. He explained the Auditor's Unmodified Opinion and delivered an overview of the Financial Statements. The Board had no questions or comments. Chairman Seekings congratulated the Board and staff on such a smooth, non-eventful audit. The Board received the FY20 Audit Report as information.

4. Financial Status Report – Robin Mitchum

Robin Mitchum, Deputy Director of Finance and Administration, presented the financial status report for the period ending February 28, 2021. Ms. Mitchum noted that the agency remains in good shape and ended the month with an excess of revenues of \$491,546. She reviewed the following activities for FY21 thus far:

Revenues:

- Farebox is the fares collected on the revenue vehicles.
- HOP Lot Parking Fees are the parking fees received at the HOP lot.
- Armad Hoffer Properties is a contract service for additional HOP route access for their residents.
- Local contributions are funds received from local organizations for shelter construction.
- The Federal revenue includes operating for the year-to-date. Federal revenue is recorded as eligible expenditures are incurred.
- Interest is interest received from the SC Department of Revenue. CARTA submits for reimbursement of the SC Fuel Excise Tax each month. SCDOR periodically pays interest earned on the funds they have held in the reimbursement process.
- Insurance proceeds are a result of accidents.
- Sale of Assets is the proceeds from the sale of two NABI buses and three 1996 New Flyer buses.

Expenditures:

- Staff Salaries & Benefits include the cost of retiree insurance.
- Automotive costs include the maintenance on the administrative vehicles.
- Supplies include office and facility maintenance supplies.
- Printing includes cost of printing route maps, brochures and passes.
- Postage is postage meter refills used to mail passes.
- Dues/Memberships is CARTA's membership with Transportation Association of South Carolina (TASC).
- Office Equipment Rental includes the quarterly postage meter rental fee, the cost of the portable toilet rental for the HOP lot and the monthly battery lease for the electric buses.
- Office Equipment Maintenance (OEM) includes the FY21 portion of the Swiftly Transit Time & Insights (through 6/28/2021), the FY21 portion of the Cradlepoint NetCloud Essentials for mobile routers and Zscaler internet security renewal, in addition to other IT support.
- Rent includes the Ashley Phosphate Park & Ride lot, Dorchester Village Shopping Center Park & Ride lot, Leeds Avenue lot lease from SCE&G, SC Works Trident lease space and document storage.
- Communications is the cost of phone, internet and radio services at the facilities and on the buses.
- Utilities include electric and water at the SuperStop, Melnick Park & Ride, the Radio Shop at Leeds Avenue and the charging stations at Leeds Avenue.
- Custodial Services is the cost of janitorial services at the Melnick Park & Ride location and the SuperStop bus depot.
- Other Professional Services include pest control services, SuperStop security service and UST inspection services.
- Shared Contract Services (IGA & Management) is the extensive services BCDCOG provides to CARTA.
- Money Transport is the cost of the armored guard service, Brinks, to pick up and transport cash deposits to the bank.
- Vehicle Maintenance is the cost to maintain the fleet.
- Facility Repair & Maintenance is the cost to maintain the SuperStop facility.
- Operating Fees & Licenses include credit card transaction fees, storm water fees, solid waste user fees and vehicle title and registration fees.
- Insurance includes the cost of liability insurance provided by the Insurance Reserve Fund. This includes the FY21 portion of the 2021 renewal. The amount will increase and decrease as we add and remove items from the policy throughout the fiscal year but this is the bulk of the insurance expenditure for FY21.
- Interest is the interest accrued on the Melnick Park & Ride Loan.
- Non-Capitalized Assets include the purchase of additional driver and side shields on the buses, radio equipment and security equipment.

Capital Expenditures:

- Rolling Stock is the purchase of two Alexander Dennis Enviro 200 buses.
- Bus Shelter Construction/Bench Installation is the purchase of two shelters.
- Capital includes the purchase of a fork lift.
- ITS System is the purchase of the Synchromatics system.

Ms. Mitchum reviewed the HOP expenditures. As of February 28, 2021, total expenditures for the HOP program for FY21 is \$165,729. She addressed questions and comments. The Board received the Financial Status Report and HOP Expenditures Report as information.

5. Electric Bus Master Plan Contract – Request for Approval – Ron Mitchum

Ron Mitchum, Executive Director, discussed the Electric Bus Master Plan Contract. He noted that the Electric Bus Master Plan Selection Committee met on February 9, 2021 and reviewed seven qualification proposals for the Electric Bus Master Plan. Proposals were received from Atkins Global, Center for Technology and the Environment (CTE), HDR Engineering, IBI Group, Stantec Consulting Services, TranSystems Corporation and Wendel Companies. The Board approved the recommendation to negotiate a contract with Stantec Consulting Services on February 17, 2021. Staff now recommends that the CARTA Board approve entering into a contract with Stantec Consulting Services for the cost of \$262,785. Mr. Mitchum addressed questions and comments.

***Mr. Lewis made a motion to approve the Electric Bus Master Plan Contract as presented.
Mr. Green seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.***

6. Project Updates – Ron Mitchum & Staff:

- A) Transit Design Manual:** Mr. Mitchum noted that meetings have been held with key parties and Nelson/Nygaard are developing Transit & Bus Stop Guidelines anticipated for a roll-out in Summer 2021.
- B) TNC Peninsula Pilot:** Mr. Mitchum noted that staff contracted UZURV and Uber to provide subsidized transportation in the Fall of 2020. The pilot, CARTA OnDemand, launched on February 1st. The pilot offers door-to-door subsidized services for our seniors (55+) and Tel-A-Ride customers and covers a designated area with one end of the trip connecting to or from the Charleston Medical District on the Peninsula, Monday through Friday, between the hours of 9 AM and 5 PM. Trips with both UZURV and Uber cost \$4 each way. There were six trips on UZURV in February, while Uber has been slower to be adopted by the target population and still does not have any trips. Uber requires a smart phone while UZURV trips can be booked through a phone call. Outreach efforts continue to encourage usage of the pilot. In February, we have received approximately 20 emails inquiring about the service and added 16 customers to the senior roster. Staff spoke directly to over 200 individuals concerning CARTA OnDemand. Three separate groups comprised of over 100 individuals in total received presentations – these groups were the Lowcountry Senior Network, MUSC Sustainability and Canterbury House. Since January, staff contacted over 60 current Tel-A-Ride customers and is continuing to reach out to those residing on the Peninsula. There have also been approximately 50 general inquiries from individuals that reside outside the service area, the majority of which live in North Charleston. The second most was James Island, with others including West Ashley, Mount Pleasant and Goose Creek.
- C) Shelter Improvement Program (SIP):** Mr. Mitchum noted that bus stops play an important role in how our riders experience transit. CARTA is working to continuously improve our bus stops by providing the best amenities for riders as they board and depart the bus. There are some stops/shelters that are under review and others that have been approved and are awaiting construction.
- D) Solar Lighting:** Mr. Mitchum noted that solar lighting systems provide security and illumination in needed areas when grid power is unattainable or costly to bring to a site. CARTA has invested \$178,180 into solar lights for the region. To date, 101 have been installed. In recent developments, the City of Charleston approved 27 locations. We are currently working on the installation of solar lights at these approved locations.

- E) Digital Signage:** Mr. Mitchum noted that strategically-located displays enable the transit signage system to inform the public, minimize wait times and enhance the overall traveler's experience. The methodology selected priorities based on ridership, quantity of connecting routes, existing shelters and stop closures due to flooding. The City of Charleston's Design Review Committee (DRC) approved 9 locations within existing shelters. CARTA is currently working on a final quote for Phase 1 of this project. Phase 1 will have a total of 13 locations throughout the service area.
- F) Vanpool Program:** Mr. Mitchum noted that the BCDCOG received 11 vans for the program. The fleet has two sizes: one accommodates 15 riders, and the others are smaller vans that accommodate 7 riders. BCDCOG staff is working with employers on IOP, as well as other companies that have expressed an interest in forming a vanpool program. Employers are helping to identify interested staff so we can set up meetings with those interested to form vanpools based on locations close to home. Staff is also finalizing vanpool user agreements and policy documents to implement the program.
- G) Lowcountry Rapid Transit (LCRT):** Sharon Hollis, Principal Planner, presented an update on the Lowcountry Rapid Transit (LCRT). She noted that the LCRT team is working to complete the 30% design submittals over the next month. These plans will be used to develop the project scope, schedule and budget for FTA review. BCDCOG/County/SCDOT/CARTA have initiated discussions on interagency agreements needed. A Steering Committee meeting is scheduled for March 18th. Meeting with municipal and key stakeholders is ongoing. Monthly meetings are held with FTA. The required subplans are being developed to submit to FTA in April. FTA's Project Management Oversight Consultant (PMOC) will be assigned to the project in near future. An FTA led Risk Workshop will be scheduled in early Summer. Coordination meetings on the ridership model with FTA technical staff are ongoing. Documented Categorical Exclusion draft document is in development and will be submitted to FTA for review in March. Section 106 consultation is underway. Civil site design on the bus transfer loop is advancing. Transit Center concepts are being evaluated and coordinated with the City of North Charleston to incorporate a Police Precinct. The team is evaluating a maintenance facility site near the fairgrounds for LCRT vehicle storage and maintenance. This is within close proximity to the end of line Park & Ride facility that is being coordinated with the Exchange Park Fairgrounds. Transit signal prioritization at intersections is part of the LCRT project definition. A demonstration project of the TSP on Dorchester Road was initiated in March to develop the technology and infrastructure on a smaller scale corridor to advance that technology on CARTA transit buses traveling on Dorchester Road. This will provide the framework for the LCRT TSP technology which can be expanded to the remainder of the corridor. Station area planning workshops are being scheduled for 8 station areas through March and April. A TOD subcommittee meeting will be scheduled to review affordable housing and value capture strategies. Stakeholder and neighborhood meetings are ongoing. TOD workshops begin in March and LCRT public meetings will begin in April. Morgan Grimes, LCRT's communications specialist, has been visiting businesses along the corridor and reaching out to neighborhoods and community organizations. She has had direct communications with over 462 businesses and community members along the corridor, and that number continues to grow. Several virtual and in-person events are scheduled for the Spring. Ms. Hollis addressed questions and comments.

Mr. Mitchum and Ms. Hollis addressed questions and comments. The Board received the Project Updates as information.

7. Ridership Report – Jon Dodson

Jon Dodson, Planner II, presented the Ridership Report. He stated that ridership on a month-to-month comparison from February 2020 to February 2021 is down 46%. DASH & HOP shuttles have seen the biggest drop in ridership between February 2020 and February 2021, followed by Express routes with approximately 60% decline. The HOP is down 77% in the same period. Mr. Dodson noted that 11-Dorchester/Airport, 31-Folly Road, 32-Northbridge, 203-Medical shuttle had the lowest decline (40% or less) between February 2020 and February 2021. The number of routes with 40% or less decline have increased between February 2020 and February 2021 by six and now includes routes 10-Rivers, 11-Dorchester, 31-Folly, 32-Northbridge, 33-St. Andrews, 41-Coleman, 102-North Neck, 103-Leeds, 203-MUSC and 301-St. Andrews. The MUSC shuttle is back to pre-COVID ridership and increased 8% between

February 2020 and February 2021. Route 203 had 28 riders per hour which is the highest in the system. Additionally, Routes 10-Rivers Avenue (13), 11-Dorchester Airport (11), 20-King Street/Citadel (12), 32-Northbridge (13), 33-St. Andrews (10) and DASH 213 (10) had the highest riders per hour across the system. Mr. Dodson addressed questions and comments. The Board received the Ridership Report as information.

8. Executive Director's Report – Ron Mitchum

Mr. Mitchum noted that additional operating funds from the American Rescue Plan are expected; the funds will be primarily used to install UV lighting or HVAC filtration systems designed to kill COVID-19 and other harmful bacteria, viruses, etc. CARTA is exploring options in an effort to identify the most appropriate and effective system for the different types of vehicles. Mr. Mitchum thanked Charleston County for the lease agreement for the use of parking at the East Cooper Services Center as work continues to move forward with the Isle of Palms Beach Shuttle. He noted that work also continues with Charleston County and HDR regarding the design of the Shipwatch Square Transit Center facility. Mr. Mitchum stated that staff is working on an RFP for the development of a contactless fare payment system for both CARTA and TriCounty Link. Details will be presented to the Board within the next couple of months. Mr. Mitchum addressed questions and comments. The Board received the Executive Director's Report as information.

9. Other Business, If Any

There was no other business to discuss.

10. Public Comments, If Any

There was one public comment:

- William Hamilton, Executive Director of Best Friends of Lowcountry Transit, expressed his concerns regarding not being notified of the Steering Committee meeting and ETA system issues. He announced that Best Friends of Lowcountry Transit is preparing a Ride to the Beach campaign.

11. Board Comments, If Any

- Mr. Lewis inquired about a section of seating being designated for senior riders. David Bonner, General Manager of Transdev, noted that a separate section in the front would be provided.
- Chairman Seekings thanked everyone for their participation in the virtual Board Meeting and commended the staff for their hard work and again on the smooth audit. He thanked Board Members for their service to the agency and the community.

12. Adjourn

There being no further business before the Board, Chairman Seekings adjourned the meeting at 1:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Kim Coleman