

CHARLESTON AREA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY (CARTA)
VIRTUAL BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
May 19, 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, May 19, 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: Mary Beth Berry; Ron Brinson; Dwayne Green; Will Haynie; James Lewis; Pat O'Neil; Michael Seekings; Jimmy Ward; Robert Wehrman

PROXIES: Dennis Turner for Christie Rainwater; Ray Anderson for Keith Summey; Lynn Christian for Alfred Harrison; Jerry Lahm for Teddie Pryor; Keith Benjamin for John Tecklenburg; Devri Detoma for Dickie Schweers

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

OTHERS PRESENT: David Bonner (Transdev); Jason Woznac (Transdev); Karen Campbell (Transdev); Jeff Webster (Rawle-Murdy Associates); Rachel Angelos (Rawle-Murdy Associates); Robert Flagler (Rawle-Murdy Associates); Daniel Monroe (Rawle-Murdy Associates); Scott Donahue (SDCOT); Doug Frate (SCDOT); Jennifer Humphreys (CDM Smith); David Parker (CDM Smith); Tim Sorenson (CDM Smith); William Hamilton (Best Friends of Lowcountry Transit); 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 1:00 p.m. followed by a moment of silence and quorum determination.

2. Consideration of Board Minutes: April 21, 2021 Meeting

Mr. Green made a motion to approve the April 21, 2021 Meeting Minutes as presented.

Mr. Brinson seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

3. Financial Status Report – Robin Mitchum

Robin Mitchum, Deputy Director of Finance and Administration, presented the financial status report for the period ending April 30, 2021. Ms. Mitchum noted that the agency remains in good shape and ended the month with an excess of revenues of \$41,704. 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.
- State Mass Transit Funds are the funds available and expended as match to the Federal 5307 operating funds.
- 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, five 1996 New Flyer buses and one 1997 New Flyer bus.

Expenditures:

- Staff Salaries & Benefits include the cost of retiree insurance.
- Supplies include office and facility maintenance supplies.
- Printing includes cost of printing route maps, brochures and passes.
- Automotive costs include the maintenance on the administrative vehicles and mileage reimbursements.
- 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 through September, 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 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.
- Security Services is contracted security service provided at the SuperStop by the City of North Charleston Police Department.
- Electric Bus Master Plan is the project to develop the necessary planning documents to transition CARTA's diesel bus fleet to all-electric buses.
- 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 and three Proterra Electric buses.
- Bus Shelter Construction/Bench is the purchase of shelters.
- Capital includes the purchase of a fork lift and digital signage for shelters and bus stops.
- ITS System is the purchase of the Syncromatics system.

Ms. Mitchum reviewed the HOP expenditures. As of April 30, 2021, total expenditures for the HOP program for FY21 is \$236,995. She addressed questions and comments. The Board received the Financial Status Report and HOP Expenditures Report as information.

4. Operator (Transdev) Contract Extension – Request for Approval – Ron Mitchum

Ron Mitchum, Executive Director, presented the Operator Contract Extension. He stated that CARTA is requesting approval to amend the Transdev Services - Fixed Route, Paratransit and Maintenance Services contract for an additional year pursuant to the renewal terms outlined in the contract. The contract was awarded on July 1, 2016 as a 3-year contract with 7 options to renew annually. This amendment will extend the contract through June 30, 2022. The new services rates indicate a 2.98% increase over the previous year. Mr. Green commended Mr. Mitchum and staff for continuing service and working with a reduction of bus operators. Mr. Mitchum addressed questions and comments.

Mr. Green made a motion to approve the Operator Contract Extension contingent upon Mr. Mitchum meeting with Transdev to further discuss the rate increase.

Mr. Lewis seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

5. Leeds Avenue Building Lease Agreement – Request for Approval – Ron Mitchum

Mr. Mitchum presented the Leeds Avenue Building Lease Agreement. He stated that CARTA is requesting approval to amend the Transdev Services – Building Lease Agreement contract for an additional year pursuant to the renewal terms outlined in the contract. This amendment will extend the contract through June 30, 2022. Mr. Mitchum addressed questions and comments.

Mr. Lewis made a motion to approve the Leeds Avenue Building Lease Agreement as presented.

Mr. Green seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

6. TNC Project Expansion – Request for Approval – Jon Dodson

Jon Dodson, Senior Transit Planner, discussed the TNC Project. He noted that ridership for the program has remained low since its launch in the beginning of February for seniors 55 years old and over and for approved Tel-A-Ride customers. Despite marketing efforts, 31 seniors have applied and have been approved but not all of the applicants live downtown therefore cannot use the service. Only 15 trips have been taken between Uber and UZURV since the service began. Mr. Dodson explained that staff believes that the low ridership is primarily due to the geographic limitations of the service and recommends expanding the service area coverage as well as the number of approved medical facility destinations. As of May, only 15% of customers on the active Tel-A-Ride service roster live on the downtown Charleston Peninsula. Expanding the OnDemand service to cover CARTA's entire service area would also make the service accessible to an additional 3,185 Tel-A-Ride customers and even more seniors. The expansion would significantly increase the number of customers that would be able to utilize the service, thereby increasing ridership and allowing staff a better opportunity to analyze the viability of TNCs as a lower cost alternative to providing paratransit service for ambulatory Tel-A-Ride customers. Three months into the one-year pilot project, CARTA has only expended \$175.77 (less than 1%) of a \$180,000 budget. Staff projects that following the service expansion, the project will still remain within budget for the remaining duration of the one-year pilot period. Mr. Dodson addressed questions and comments.

Mr. Benjamin made a motion to approve the TNC Project Expansion as presented.

Mr. Lewis seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

7. HOP Lot Development – Request for Guidance – Ron Mitchum

Mr. Mitchum noted that discussions will be held with the City of Charleston regarding housing and parking lot/garage concept as part of the HOP lot development. He addressed questions and comments. Chairman Seekings encouraged Mr. Mitchum to continue with process.

8. Project Updates – Ron Mitchum & Staff:

Mr. Mitchum stated that if anyone has any questions regarding the project updates, to please contact him or staff members for further information. A summary was distributed in the Board packet in advance of the meeting on the following projects: Stop/Shelter Design Guidelines; Service Planning Initiatives; Electric Bus Master Plan; CARTA OnDemand; Shelter Improvement Program; Solar Lighting Installation; Digital Signage; and VanPool Program. Mr. Mitchum discussed, in detail, the Shipwatch Square Transit Project noting that the Charleston County Council approved the ground lease during yesterday's Finance Committee meeting but it still must be approved at the County Council meeting. The site will be called "Pinehaven" and the groundbreaking for the on-site library was held Monday. Mr. Mitchum addressed questions and comments. Sharon Hollis, Principal Planner, delivered an update on the LCRT project noting that coordination with the SCDOT and project stakeholders is ongoing to identify the system's configurations and concept of operations regarding signal prioritization and that stakeholder and neighborhood meetings are ongoing as well as online public meetings. Morgan Grimes, Communications Specialist, has been visiting businesses along the corridor and reaching out to neighborhoods and community organizations. She has had direct communications with almost 600 businesses and community members along the corridor and that number continues to grow. Ms. Hollis addressed questions and comments. Mr. Dodson updated the Board on the Beach Reach project. He stated that the service will run between Memorial Day and Labor Day (from 9:15am to 6:05pm) for weekend service between Mt. Pleasant and the Isle of Palms. In partnership with the Mt. Pleasant Town Centre, the park-and-ride will be located along Market Center Boulevard. The Town of Mt. Pleasant has committed to paying \$8 thousand as the Town's share of the cost of the service but, in order for the service to be offered at no cost to riders, the City of Isle of Palms needs to commit to \$8 thousand as well. As of today's meeting, the Isle of Palms has not committed to paying \$8 thousand. If the City does not pay \$8 thousand, the cost of the service will be \$2 each way. Mr. Dodson addressed questions and comments. The Board received the Project Updates as information.

9. Ridership Report – Jon Dodson

Mr. Dodson presented the Ridership Report. He stated that ridership on a month-to-month comparison from March 2021 to April 2021 is up 3%; Ridership from April 2020 to April 2021 is up 162%; and Ridership from April 2019 to April 2021 is down 37%. Route 31 Ridership for April 2021 is higher than each of April 2020 and April 2019. Route 203-MUSC has 21 riders per hour, which is the highest in the system. Additionally, Routes 32-North Bridge (16), DASH 211 (15), 10-Rivers Avenue (14), 20-King Street/Citadel (13), and 11-Dorchester Airport (12) had the highest riders per hour across the system. DASH services are up 292% and Express services are up 143% from April 2020 to April 2021. However, when comparing April 2019 to April 2021, DASH services are down 58% while Express services are down 59%. Mr. Dodson addressed questions and comments. The Board received the Ridership Report as information.

10. Executive Director's Report – Ron Mitchum

Mr. Mitchum noted that a 5339 competitive grant for SCDOT OPT funds was awarded to the agency and will be used to purchase a battery-operated vehicle and a megawatt charger. He also stated that Channel 5 News, through the Freedom of Information Act, has requested all videos of the Dorchester Road accident which involved a bus and injured three passengers. The request has been referred to the agency's attorney. Mr. Mitchum announced that the Federal Mask Mandate for transit vehicles remains in effect until September 15, 2021. He then discussed the Triennial Review and noted that the review resulted in four findings. Mr. Mitchum discussed the findings in detail and explained the findings' respective resolutions. Mr. Mitchum addressed questions and comments. The Board received the Executive Director's Report as information.

11. Other Business, If Any

There was no other business to discuss.

12. Public Comments, If Any

There was one public comment:

- William Hamilton, Executive Director of Best Friends of Lowcountry Transit, expressed his appreciation for the Beach Reach service. Mr. Hamilton also commented on the Best Friends of Lowcountry Transit's Ride to the Beach campaign as well as Kids to the Beach campaign and requested printed schedules and flyers from CARTA.

13. Board Comments, If Any

- Mr. Lahm noted that the online comments regarding the LCRT project are a big help with keeping information rolling out to the public.
- Mr. Benjamin commended BCDCOG staff members Belen Vitello, Michelle Emerson and Jon Dodson for their help on projects.
- Chairman Seekings congratulated Sullivans Island Mayor O'Neil for winning his re-election at a record-breaking turnout. He thanked him for his public service to the Town of Sullivans Island, to the CARTA Board and to the community. Chairman Seekings also thanked everyone for their participation in the virtual Board Meeting and stated that the next meeting will be held virtually on June 16th. He reminded Board Members there will not be meetings held in July and August and that in-person meetings will resume in September.

14. Adjourn

There being no further business before the Board, Chairman Seekings adjourned the meeting at 1:56 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Kim Coleman