

CHARLESTON AREA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY (CARTA)
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
August 16, 2023
Meeting Notes

A Charleston Area Regional Transportation Authority (CARTA) Board of Directors meeting was held at the Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester Council of Governments (BCDCOG) in the Barrett Lawrimore Conference Room located at 5790 Casper Padgett Way in North Charleston, SC at 1:00 p.m. on Wednesday, August 16, 2023.

MEMBERSHIP: MaryBeth Berry; Joe Boykin; Ron Brinson; Mike Brown; Dwayne Green; Will Haynie; John Iacofano; John Labriola; James Lewis; Pat O'Neil; Christie Rainwater; Herb Sass; Michael Seekings; Keith Summey; Ed Sutton; John Tecklenburg; Jimmy Ward; Robert Wehrman

MEMBERS PRESENT: MaryBeth Berry; Joe Boykin; Ron Brinson; Will Haynie; John Iacofano; James Lewis; Pat O'Neil; Michael Seekings; Ed Sutton; Jimmy Ward

PROXIES: Craig Harris for John Labriola; Jerry Lahm for Herb Sass; Megan Clark for Keith Summey; Robert Somerville for John Tecklenburg

OTHERS PRESENT: Rachel Angelos (BGRM); Daniel Monroe (BGRM); Scott Donahue (SCDOT); Stephanie Maher (National Express Transit); Jeff Carty (National Express Transit); Sean Huonker (National Express Transit); Sharon Broderick (National Express Transit/Local Union #610); Leisa Barleston (National Express Transit/Local Union #610); Sharon Mitchell (National Express Transit/Driver); Keisha Jamison (National Express Transit/Driver); Pamela Thomas (National Express Transit/Driver); Antwan Poole (National Express Transit/Driver); Elissa Smith (HDR); Abraham Champagne (WSP); William Hamilton (Best Friends of Lowcountry Transit)

STAFF PRESENT: Ron Mitchum; Andrea Kozloski; Robin Mitchum; Megan Ross; Kim Coleman

1. Call to Order

Chairman Seekings called the CARTA Board of Directors Meeting to order at 1:05 p.m. followed by a moment of silence and a quorum determination. He announced that today is Board Member MaryBeth Berry's birthday and thanked her for her service. Chairman Seekings announced the slight revision made to the agenda for today's meeting. He requested that a motion be made for approval of the amended agenda which places Executive Session earlier in the meeting.

***Mr. Boykin made a motion to approve the August 16, 2023 agenda as amended.
Mr. Sutton seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.***

2. Consideration of Board Minutes: June 14, 2023 Meeting

***Mr. Boykin made a motion to approve the June 14, 2023 Meeting Minutes as presented.
Mr. Iacofano seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.***

3. Executive Session – Contractual Matters

***Mayor O'Neil made a motion that the Board of Directors convene into Executive Session.
Mayor Haynie seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.
Non-Board Members, Guests and Non-Essential Staff Members were excused.
Mr. Lahm made a motion to reconvene the Board of Directors meeting.
Mr. Brinson seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.
Chairman Seekings reconvened the Board Meeting noting that no action was taken
related to contractual matters discussed during Executive Session.***

4. Financial Status Report – Robin Mitchum

Robin Mitchum, Deputy Director of Finance and Administration, presented the financial status report for the period ending June 30, 2023. She noted that, overall, the agency remains in good shape and ended the month with an excess of revenues of \$2,331,251. Ms. Mitchum reviewed the following activities for FY23 thus far:

Revenues:

- Farebox is the fares collected on the revenue vehicles.
- Passes & Mobile Ticketing are bus pass fares sold to customers.
- Local Contributions are funds received for shelter and bench construction.
- The Federal revenue includes operating for the year-to-date. Federal revenue is recorded as eligible expenditures are incurred.
- Insurance proceeds are a result of accidents.
- Sale of Assets are the proceeds from the sale of a 2010 New Flyer and ten 1996 New Flyers.

Expenditures:

- Staff Salaries & Benefits include the cost of retiree insurance.
- Supplies include office and facility maintenance supplies.
- Printing includes costs of printing route brochures and labels. The overage is reprinting of map brochures and passes for the rebrand.
- Automotive is the cost to service the 2018 Ford F-150.
- Dues/Membership is CARTA's membership with Transportation Association of South Carolina (TASC) and the Charleston Metro Chamber of Commerce.
- Office Equipment Rental includes the monthly battery lease for the electric buses and the postage meter.
- Office Equipment Maintenance (OEM) includes the Genfare software support, GMV Sycromatics, the Swiftly Transit Time and Insights, Cradlepoint NetCloud Essentials for mobile routers and Zscaler internet security, in addition to IT services.
- Rent includes the Ashley Phosphate Park & Ride lot, Dorchester Village Shopping Center Park & Ride lot, Leeds Avenue lot lease from Dominion 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.
- Advertising is promotional items related to the rebrand.
- Auditing is the cost of the annual audit.
- Custodial Services is the cost of janitorial services at the Melnick Park & Ride location.
- Pilot Ride Program is customer transportation cost for same-day service through independent rideshare.
- Electric Bus Master Plan is to transition CARTA's diesel bus fleet to all-electric buses.
- Other Professional Services include the Genfare report training, appraisal services, bus wash inspection services and the utility search for the Leeds Avenue infrastructure project service.
- Shared Contract Services (IGA & Management) is the extensive services the BCDCOG provides to CARTA.
- Fixed-Route Service is the cost of fixed and commuter service provided by Transdev.
- Money Transport is the cost of the armored guard service to transport cash deposits to the bank.
- Security Services is contracted security service provided at the SuperStop by the City of North Charleston Police Department.
- Rebranding is services provided to comprehensively review and rebrand agency logos and images.
- Vehicle Maintenance is the cost to maintain the fleet.
- Facility Repair & Maintenance is the cost to maintain facilities.
- 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. The policy renews January 1 and this is the majority of the expenditures for FY23.

- Paratransit is the cost of paratransit transportation.
- Interest is the interest accrued on the Melnick Park & Ride Loan.
- Non-Capitalized Assets include the purchase of shelter trash cans and office computer equipment.

Capital Expenditures:

- Rolling Stock is the purchase of a New Flyer Electric Bus.
- Bus Facilities/Charging Stations are the purchase of two charging depots.
- Bus Shelter Construction/Bench Install is the installation of shelters and benches.
- Security/Cameras & Equipment is the purchase of cameras at the Melnick Park & Ride lot, lighting and access control systems at Leeds Avenue, bus stop solar lighting and AVL equipment.
- Capital (IT, Facility Repairs/Maint) is the purchase of a submersible pump at the Leeds Avenue Facility and Genfare equipment.

Ms. Mitchum then reviewed the activity of the Pilot Ride Program. It was noted that the agency is at 67% of expended funds for the program. In addition, Ron Mitchum, Executive Director, stated that all member governments approved the proposed budget at their respective Council meetings. Mr. Mitchum and Ms. Mitchum addressed questions and comments. The Board of Directors received the Financial Status Report as information.

5. LCRT Operations and Maintenance Facility Sewer Easement – Request for Approval

Ron Mitchum, Executive Director, discussed the LCRT Operations and Maintenance Facility Sewer Easement. He delivered a presentation with slides depicting the sewer easement area of the property. Mr. Mitchum noted that staff is requesting approval to purchase a 10,250 sq/ft sewer easement at 186 Acres Drive in Ladson for \$200,000. If approved, the proposed easement will be used to run utilities to the future Lowcountry Rapid Transit Operations and Maintenance Facility located at 175 Acres Drive. Mr. Mitchum addressed questions and comments.

Mayor Haynie made a motion to approve the LCRT Operations and Maintenance Facility Sewer Easement as presented with the stipulation that all options are explored and reported to the Board of Directors. Mr. Brinson seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

6. Leeds Avenue Maintenance Facility Repairs – Presentation

Mr. Mitchum delivered a presentation regarding Leeds Avenue Maintenance Facility Repairs. He presented slides depicting areas that are in need of repair and discussed the challenges of several areas of the lot. Mr. Mitchum noted that the cost of the repairs is not in the capital plan and may be in the range of \$500,000 for the necessary repairs to be made. He stated that, if there is no objection from the Board of Directors, staff will move forward with the bidding process to present to the Board for approval. Mr. Mitchum addressed questions and comments. The Board of Directors received the Leeds Avenue Maintenance Facility Repairs presentation as information and did not object to staff proceeding with Leeds Avenue Maintenance Facility Repairs plans.

7. Project Updates – Ron Mitchum/Staff

Mr. Mitchum delivered an update on the following projects, noting that progress is being made on all projects: Service Planning Initiatives; Downtown Route Study; US 52 BRT Study; CARTA OnDemand; Shelter Improvement Program; Shipwatch Square Transit Center; Vanpool Program; Transit Oriented Development Study; LCRT. He discussed the following projects in detail:

- Downtown Route Study- It was noted that staff continues to participate in public engagement regarding the study with the second TAG meeting and first open-house as well as organizing one-on-one meetings. In addition, the survey ended with 1,400 people participating expressing the following concerns: reliability; increased frequency; extended service hours. Bi-weekly meetings continue with Nelson/Nygaard.
- LCRT Project- It was noted that 30% design review is complete and 60% design NTP is pending contract negotiations. Public involvement/NEPA for station location adjustments and Park & Ride are underway. Design for the Maintenance Facility is scheduled to begin in the Fall of 2023.

Mr. Mitchum noted that a detailed report regarding Project Updates was distributed in the Board Meeting Agenda Packet in advance of the meeting. He encouraged Board Members to contact him or the respective project manager regarding any specific concerns or questions. Mr. Mitchum addressed questions and comments. The Board of Directors received the Project Updates Report as information.

8. Ridership Report – Megan Ross

Megan Ross, Transit Planner, presented the Ridership Reports as of June and July 2023. Ridership Trends for June 2023 are as follows: 180,099 total passenger trips; 11.2 customers per service hour (11.5 in May); 82% on-time across all timepoints. Also in June 2023, she noted that overall ridership comparing May 2023 to June 2023 decreased by 4.9%; overall ridership comparing June 2022 to June 2023 decreased by 5.5%; overall ridership comparing 2022 YTD to 2023 YTD decreased by .93%. Ms. Ross noted that Tel-A-Ride ridership for June 2023 was 4,822 (a decrease of 9.3% when comparing 2022 YTD to 2023 YTD). She noted that the total missed service for the month of June 2023 was 1,096.23. Ms. Ross then discussed July 2023 Ridership Trends noting that passenger trips totaled 174,544 and there were 10.5 customers per service hour. On-time, across all timepoints, was 76%. Ms. Ross stated that overall ridership comparing June 2023 to July 2023 decreased by 3.1%, overall ridership comparing July 2022 to July 2023 increased by 1.0%, and overall ridership comparing 2022 YTD to 2023 YTD decreased by .67%. She noted that Tel-A-Ride ridership for the month of July was 4,723, which was a decrease of 10.2% when comparing 2022 YTD to 2023 YTD. Ms. Ross discussed the missed service comparing the first 8 months of calendar year 2022 to the first 8 months of calendar year 2023. She noted that the total missed service for the month of August (as of August 8, 2023) was 106.55. Ms. Ross noted the OnDemand trips for June and July 2023. For June, there were 926 passenger trips at an average cost per trip of \$9.83. For July 2023, there were 840 passenger trips at an average cost per trip of \$8.72. The subsidy changes went into effect on June 19, 2023 for paratransit passengers. Ms. Ross addressed questions and comments. The Board of Directors received the Ridership Report as information.

9. Executive Director's Report – Ron Mitchum

Mr. Mitchum updated the Board of Directors on paratransit vans noting five have been received and the remaining ten should be in within the next 90-120 days. He stated that the LCRT design phase continues to move forward and work continues with the Fairgrounds Board on property acquisition for the Park & Ride. The environmental process is underway and staff is working the SCDOT to identify curb cuts/access points so discussions can be finalized with the Fairgrounds Board. Mr. Mitchum discussed the Mt. Pleasant Street parcel noting that the process of procuring an engineering firm to complete the design of the Park & Ride is underway. He stated that the BCDCOG received a competitive discretionary planning grant under the areas of a persistent poverty program to look into developing a rural on-demand transit plan for Summerville and TriCounty Link that will be coordinated with CARTA. Mr. Mitchum announced CARTA Family & Friends Night at the Charleston Riverdogs on August 29th when Chairman Seekings will throw the first pitch. He encouraged everyone to attend. Mr. Mitchum addressed questions and comments. The Board of Directors received the Executive Director's Report as information. Mr. Mitchum then introduced National Express Transit personnel in attendance at today's meeting: Stephanie Maher (Regional Vice President), Jeff Carty (General Manager), Sean Huonker (Director of Customer Success), each addressing the Board of Directors. On behalf of the Board of Directors, Chairman Seekings welcomed them and noted that the Board, Management and Staff are looking forward to the partnership with National Express Transit.

10. Other Business, If Any

National Express Transit Drivers who were present at today's meeting were recognized and thanked for their service.

11. Public Comments, If Any

There were three public comments:

- William Hamilton, Best Friends of Lowcountry Transit: thanked the Board for continuing the Beach Reach Shuttle Service and for the additional promotional efforts; he noted that Route 41 is primarily employees traveling to & from work and tourists; he expressed his concerns regarding homelessness at Mary Street and at the SuperStop; he expressed his concerns regarding missed service and the transit app; he thanked the Board for their service and welcomed National Express Transit personnel.
- Sharon Broderick, National Express Transit Local Union #610 President: expressed her concerns regarding employee morale, benefits, pay and recruitment noting that there have been many challenges employees have faced throughout the transition.
- Pamela Thomas, National Express Transit Driver: expressed her concerns regarding drivers' issues, primarily the drivers on Route 10 needing bathroom breaks and lack of COVID pay during the pandemic.

12. Board Comments, If Any

- Ms. Berry commended the rebrand project and the Park & Ride signage on James Island.
- Mr. Iacofano commented on the transition with National Express Transit and is looking forward to seeing improvements.
- Mr. Lewis stated he enjoyed hearing from the drivers and encouraged them to bring any concerns to the Board's attention.

13. Adjourn

Chairman Seekings noted election season and recognized Mr. Ward and Mr. Brinson. He wished Mr. Ward luck in the upcoming election and commended Mr. Brinson and thanked him for his dedicated service to the Board of Directors and the community. There being no further business before the Board, Chairman Seekings adjourned the meeting at 2:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Kim Coleman