

CHARLESTON AREA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY (CARTA)
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
January 17, 2024
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, January 17, 2024.

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

MEMBERS PRESENT: MaryBeth Berry; Joe Boykin; Daniel Brownstein; Dwayne Green; James Lewis; Pat O'Neil; Michael Seekings; Jimmy Ward; Robert Wehrman

PROXIES: Craig Harris for John Labriola; Lt. Davis for Christie Rainwater; Jerry Lahm for Herb Sass

OTHERS PRESENT: Robert Somerville (City of Charleston); Milbrey Heard (Nelson\Nygaard); Sam Wright (Nelson\Nygaard); David Bonner (National Express); Stephanie Maher (National Express); Daniel Monroe (BGRM); Elissa Smith (HDR); Abraham Champagne (WSP); Shannon Meder (HNTB); Mila Buzhinskaya (HNTB); William Hamilton (Best Friends of Lowcountry Transit); Steve Latour (Daniel Island)

STAFF PRESENT: Ron Mitchum; Andrea Kozloski; Robin Mitchum; Jeff Burns; Megan Ross; Daniel Brock; 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. Chairman Seekings introduced and welcomed new Board Member, Daniel Brownstein. Mr. Brownstein is Councilman for the Town of Mt. Pleasant. Chairman Seekings congratulated Board Member Jimmy Ward for his re-election to the City of Isle of Palms Council. Chairman Seekings also announced the passing of former Board Member, Alfred Harrison. Mr. Harrison served on the Board of Directors since 1997; Chairman Seekings recognized Mr. Harrison's outstanding service and leadership.

2. Consideration of Board Minutes: November 15, 2023 Meeting

***Mr. Boykin made a motion to approve the November 15, 2023 Meeting Minutes as presented.
Mr. Green 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 November 30, 2023. She noted that, overall, the agency remains in good shape and ended the month with an excess of revenues of \$1,771,835. Ms. Mitchum provided information on the following activities for FY24 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.
- Federal Revenue includes operating for the year-to-date. Federal Revenue is recorded as eligible expenditures are incurred.
- State Mass Transit Funds are operating funds available as match to Federal 5307 operating funds.
- Insurance proceeds are a result of accidents.
- Sale of Assets are the proceeds from the sale of a MV-1, two Amerivans and a 1996 New Flyer.

Expenditures:

- Staff Salaries & Benefits include the cost of retiree insurance.
- Supplies include office, facility maintenance and rebranding supplies.
- Printing includes costs of printing route brochures and labels.
- Automotive is the cost to service the 2018 Ford F-150.
- Postage is shipping fees.
- Dues/Membership is CARTA's membership with Transportation Association of South Carolina (TASC).
- Office Equipment Rental includes the monthly battery lease for the electric buses.
- Office Equipment Maintenance (OEM) includes GMV Sycromatics and IT services.
- Rent includes the Ashley Phosphate 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.
- Custodial Services are 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.
- Other Professional Services include the bus wash inspection services.
- 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 National Express Shuttle and Transit.
- Money Transport is the cost of the armored guard service to transport cash deposits to the bank.
- Security Services are contracted security service provided at the SuperStop by the City of North Charleston Police Department.
- 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 and vehicle title and registration fees.
- Insurance includes the cost of liability insurance provided by the Insurance Reserve Fund. The insurance policy renews on January 1st.
- Paratransit is the cost of paratransit transportation.

Capital Expenditures:

- Rolling Stock is costs associated with the purchase of five 2023 Voyager Vans.
- Bus Shelter Construction/Bench Install is the installation of shelters and benches.
- Security/Cameras & Equipment is the purchase of cameras and AVL equipment.

Ms. Mitchum reviewed the activity of the Pilot Ride Program. It was noted that FY24 total cost is at \$25,239 at 37% complete. The Board of Directors received the Financial Status Report as information.

4. Downtown Transit Study Presentation – Milbrey Heard, Nelson\Nygaard

Megan Ross, Transit Planner, noted that work continues on the Downtown Charleston Transit Study with Nelson\Nygaard. She introduced Milbrey Heard (Senior Principal) and Sam White (Senior Associate), with Nelson/Nygaard. In December, Nelson\Nygaard led a downtown service design workshop with staff and representatives from the City of Charleston and MUSC. Staff also participated in a walking tour of the proposed downtown alignment and station locations led by Nelson\Nygaard. Staff received final edits to the State of the Transit System and route profiles appendix from Nelson\Nygaard. Since December, Nelson\Nygaard has continued to work on the downtown network concepts, taking into consideration feedback received from staff and local agency representatives. Ms. Heard and Mr. Wright presented an overview of the draft downtown concepts which include short-term route changes that would be implemented prior to the LCRT as well as longer-term route changes to be implemented once LCRT service is in operation. It was noted that staff and Nelson\Nygaard are organizing the third TAG meeting, pop-up events at key transfer locations and meetings with neighborhood groups to present and receive feedback on these concepts in February. There will also be a survey to gather feedback from the public. Ms. Heard and Mr. White addressed questions and comments. The Board of Directors received the Downtown Transit Study presentation as information.

5. 2024 Calendar of Events – Request for Approval

Ron Mitchum, Executive Director, presented the proposed dates for the 2024 Calendar of Events. He noted that staff is seeking approval to provide free rides and/or offer promotions on the specific days/dates listed as well as participate in the various events that are listed. Proposed Days/Dates for Free Ride and/or Promotions: March (Driver Appreciation Day Promotions); April 22nd (Earth Day Free Day); May (Mobility Month Promotions); June 20th (Dump the Pump Free Day); November 5th (Ride to the Polls Free Day); November 11th (Veteran’s Ride Free Day); December 20th (Christmas Free Ride Day); as well as the 4 “Seniors Ride Free” Days to be held on February 19th (Presidents’ Day – February is “Senior Independence Month”); May 29th (National Senior Health & Fitness Day – May is “Old Americans Month”); August 21st (“National Senior Citizens’ Day”); December 20th (Holiday Gift). The events are as follows: Stingrays in February; Black Expo in March; MUSC Senior Fair in April; Earth Day in April; College of Charleston Sustainability Fair in April; North Charleston Business Expo in May; Charleston Riverdogs in either August or September; Trunk or Treat events in October; Turkey Giveaway in November; Christmas Parades in December; Bike Giveaway in December. It was noted that there may be a “No Pay May” if missed service numbers continue to decrease as well as free transportation to warming shelters. Mr. Mitchum requested that Christmas Day, December 25, 2024, also be offered as a Free Ride Day in observance of the Christmas Holiday. He addressed questions and comments.

Mr. Ward made a motion to approve the Calendar of Events as amended to include Christmas Day and Transportation to Warming Shelters.

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

6. Project Updates – Ron Mitchum/Staff

Mr. Mitchum stated 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 briefed the Board of Directors on the following projects: Route 10 Analysis; US 52 BRT Study; Shelter Improvement Program; Shipwatch Square Transit Center; Transit Oriented Development Study; Mt. Pleasant Street Park & Ride; O&M Facility for LCRT; Transit Signal Prioritization for Dorchester Road. Mr. Mitchum addressed questions and comments. The Board of Directors received the Project Updates Report as information.

7. Mobile Ticketing Sales and Use Report – Ron Mitchum

Mr. Mitchum introduced Jeff Burns, Grants and Contracts Compliance Administrator. Mr. Burns presented the Mobile Ticketing Sales and Use report. He noted that the mobile ticketing project has allowed CARTA to offer the region’s transit customers a safer and more convenient way to plan and pay for their trips. Its use has not only minimized the need of customers to handle cash and create a contactless system, it has also improved the overall efficiency of the system by allowing passengers to board the bus more quickly. Mr. Burns discussed the overview of the mobile ticket sales and usage since the launch date in May 2022 through December 2023 noting steady growth in sales and usage. A full-scale marketing effort is planned for January 2024. Mr. Burns addressed questions and comments. The Board of Directors received the Mobile Ticketing Sales and Usage Report as information.

8. Ridership Report – Megan Ross

Megan Ross, Transit Planner, presented the Ridership Reports as of November 2023 and December 2023. She discussed the November 2023 Ridership Trends noting that passenger trips totaled 186,188 and there were 11.1 customers per service hour (11.9 in October 2023). On-time, across all timepoints, was 73.7%. Ms. Ross stated that overall ridership comparing November 2023 to October 2023 decreased by 8.0%. Overall ridership comparing November 2023 to November 2022 increased by 13.8%. Overall ridership comparing 2023 YTD to 2022 YTD increased 2.7%. She noted that Tel-A-Ride ridership for the month of November was 4,905 which was a decrease of 10.3% when comparing 2022 YTD to 2023 YTD. It was noted that the total missed service for the month of November 2023 was 388.37 as compared to 465.65 in November 2022. Ms. Ross discussed the CARTA OnDemand ridership for November 2023 noting that there were 1,212 passengers between both Uber and Lyft at an average trip cost of \$10.11 which was lower than October 2023’s average trip cost of \$10.65. She noted that 66% of the overall rides were from Tel-A-Ride passengers. Ms. Ross then discussed December 2023 Ridership Trends noting that passenger trips totaled 171,807 and there were 10.4 customers per service hour (11.1 in November 2023). On-time, across all timepoints,

was 76%. Ms. Ross stated that overall ridership comparing December 2023 to November 2023 decreased by 7.7%. Overall ridership comparing December 2023 to December 2022 increased by 8.0%. Overall ridership comparing 2023 YTD to 2022 YTD increased 3.1%. She noted that Tel-A-Ride ridership for the month of December was 4,855 which was a decrease 9.5% when comparing 2022 YTD to 2023 YTD. It was noted that the total missed service for the month of December 2023 was 55.10 as compared to 363.59 in December 2022. Ms. Ross discussed the CARTA OnDemand ridership for December 2023 noting that there were 1,061 passengers between both Uber and Lyft at an average trip cost of \$10.15 which was higher than November 2023's average trip cost of \$10.11. She noted that 67% of the overall rides were from Tel-A-Ride 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 discussed the matters regarding the Exchange Club Website and emails to Board members. Meetings continue with the Fairgrounds and Exchange Club for a resolution to the issues. An appraisal is scheduled for next week so matters are expected to make progress. Discussion is also going forward regarding the recent OnDemand article in the Post & Courier. Referendum meetings are being held as well. Mr. Mitchum noted that the sale is complete with Proterra and they are focusing on getting parts ordered and distributed to customers. He announced that SCDOT Secretary, Christy Hall, plans to retire March 31, 2024. Mr. Mitchum addressed questions and comments. The Board of Directors received the Executive Director's Report as information.

10. Other Business, If Any

There was no further business to discuss.

11. Public Comments, If Any

There were two public comments:

- William Hamilton, Best Friends of Lowcountry Transit: Mr. Hamilton thanked the Board for their service to the community; he expressed his concerns regarding missed service and the APP; he hopes there is no changes to the #11.
- Steve Latour of Daniel Island: Mr. Latour expressed his concerns regarding the lack of CARTA service on Daniel Island.

12. Board Comments, If Any

There was no further business to discuss.

13. Adjourn

Chairman Seekings thanked the Board of Directors for their service. There being no further business before the Board, Chairman Seekings adjourned the meeting at 2:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Kim Coleman