

CHARLESTON AREA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY (CARTA)
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
February 21, 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, February 21, 2024.

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

MEMBERS PRESENT: Joe Boykin; Daniel Brownstein; Dwayne Green; Brandon Hudson; James Lewis; Herb Sass; Michael Seekings; Ed Sutton

PROXIES: Craig Harris for John Labriola; Lt. Gebhardt for Christie Rainwater; Jerry Lahm for Robert Wehrman

OTHERS PRESENT: Daniel Monroe (BGRM); Robert Milhous (Robert E. Milhous, CPA, PA & Associates); Robert Somerville (City of Charleston); Elissa Smith (HDR); Robert Flagler (HNTB); McKenzie O'Connor (HNTB); David Bonner (Nations Express Transit); Sharon Mitchell (National Express Transit); Sharon Broderick (National Express Transit, President of Local Union #610); Leisa Barleston (National Express Transit/Local Union #610); William Hamilton (Best Friends of Lowcountry Transit); Yvonne Broaddus (West Ashley)

STAFF PRESENT: Ron Mitchum; Andrea Kozloski; Robin Mitchum; Sharon Hollis; Megan Ross; Daniel Brock; Kim Coleman

1. Call to Order

Chairman Seekings called the CARTA Board of Directors Meeting to order at 1:03 p.m. followed by a moment of silence and a quorum determination. Chairman Seekings introduced and welcomed new Board Member, Brandon Hudson. Mr. Hudson is Councilman for the City of North Charleston. Chairman Seekings also announced another new Board Member, Reggie Burgess, Mayor of the City of North Charleston. Mayor Burgess was unable to attend today's meeting.

2. Consideration of Board Minutes: January 17, 2024 Meeting

***Mr. Boykin made a motion to approve the January 17, 2024 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 December 31, 2023. She noted that, overall, the agency remains in good shape and ended the month with unexpended funds of \$1,107,242. 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:

- Retiree Benefits include the cost of retiree insurance.
- Supplies include office, facility maintenance and rebranding supplies.
- Printing includes costs of printing route brochures, passes 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, GMV Digital Signage, Genfare Support, Swiftly real time passenger predictions, Swiftly GPS Playback, Swiftly on-time performance, Swiftly run-times, RCN NetCloud Essentials and NetCloud Advanced for mobile routers and other 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 (CARTA OnDemand) 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 and this is the majority of the expenditure for FY24.
- Paratransit is the cost of paratransit transportation provided by National Express Shuttle and Transit.
- Interest is the interest accrued on the Melnick Park & Ride loan.

Capital Expenditures:

- Rolling Stock is costs associated with the purchase of five 2023 Voyager Vans.
- Bus Facilities/Charging Stations is the Leeds Avenue charging infrastructure.
- Bus Shelter Construction/Bench Install is the installation of shelters and benches.
- Security/Cameras & Equipment is the purchase of cameras and AVL equipment.
- Facilities Construction is the Leeds Avenue parking lot repairs.
- Capital (IT, Facility Repairs, Maint.) is Genfare, camera and AVL equipment.

Ms. Mitchum reviewed the activity of the Pilot Ride Program. It was noted that FY24 total cost is at \$36,016 at 40% complete. The Board of Directors received the Financial Status Report as information.

4. FY23 Audit Presentation – Robert Milhous, CPA

Chairman Seekings introduced Robert Milhous of Robert E. Milhous, CPA, PA & Associates. Mr. Milhous presented the Audit Report for the period ending September 30, 2023. He noted that all financial records were in order and in compliance with Government Auditing Standards. Mr. Milhous discussed the Auditor's Unmodified Opinion and delivered an overview of the Financial Statements. He explained the new section entitled Emphasis of Matter noting that it does not modify the Auditor's Unmodified Opinion. Mr. Milhous addressed questions and comments.

Chairman Seekings thanked Mr. Milhous for his report and commended the staff for their dedicated work resulting in good audit reports. The Board of Directors received the FY23 Audit Presentation as information.

5. Beach Reach Service – Request for Approval – Megan Ross

Megan Ross, Transit Planner, delivered a presentation on the Beach Reach Service. She discussed the partnership between CARTA, the City of the Isle of Palms, the Town of Mt. Pleasant and the Town Centre. Ms. Ross noted that the availability will be weekends and holidays beginning with Memorial Day in May and ending with Labor Day in September. She discussed the funding since the program’s inception in 2021 and noted the increase in ridership over the last three years. Ms. Ross discussed the cost prediction for the 2024 season, noting that the cost estimate is based upon the current hourly rate for the operating contractor, the projected fuel cost and the projected insurance cost. The prediction for the 2024 season totals \$29,619.01. She noted that staff is seeking approval to offer the Beach Reach Service for the discussed timing in 2024 and, if approved, staff is also requesting approval of offering the service July 4-7, 2024 for the July 4th Holiday Weekend (Thursday through Sunday). Mr. Mitchum noted that the City of the Isle of Palms and the Town of Mt. Pleasant will split the cost of the service by contributing \$10,000 each. Ms. Ross addressed questions and comments.

***Mr. Brownstein made a motion to approve the Beach Reach Service as presented to include the extended July 4th Holiday Weekend (beginning Thursday, July 4 and ending Sunday, July 7, 2024).
Mr. Boykin seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.***

Further discussion was held regarding a “beach-like” theme for the riders to enjoy during their commute to the beach and the possibility of exploring potential opportunities to expand the route.

6. Project Updates – Ron Mitchum/Staff

Ron Mitchum, Executive Director, 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: Service Planning Initiatives regarding the Route 10 Analysis; Downtown Route Study; US 52 BRT Study; CARTA OnDemand; Shelter Improvement Program; Shipwatch Square Transit Center, Transit Oriented Development Study; LCRT; Mt. Pleasant Street Park & Ride; O&M Facility; Mobile Ticketing Sales & Use; Fairgrounds Park & Ride. Mr. Mitchum addressed questions and comments. The Board of Directors received the Project Updates Report as information.

7. Ridership Report – Megan Ross

Andrea Kozloski, Deputy Director of Operations and Support, presented the Ridership Report on Ms. Ross’s behalf. Ms. Kozloski discussed the January 2024 Ridership Trends noting that passenger trips totaled 181,361 and there were 10.4 customers per service hour (10.4 last month). On-time, across all timepoints, was 76%. Ms. Kozloski stated that overall ridership comparing January 2024 to December 2023 increased by 5.6%. Overall ridership comparing January 2024 to January 2023 increased by 7.3%. Overall ridership comparing 2024 YTD to 2023 YTD increased 7.3%. She noted that Tel-A-Ride ridership for the month of January was 5,199 which was an increase of .83% when comparing 2023 YTD to 2024 YTD. It was noted that the total missed service for the month of January was 90.72 as compared to 410.23 in January 2023. Ms. Kozloski discussed the CARTA OnDemand ridership for January 2024 noting that there were 1,540 passengers between both Uber and Lyft at an average trip cost of \$9.49 which was lower than December 2023’s average trip cost of \$10.15. She noted that 66% of the overall rides were from Tel-A-Ride passengers. Ms. Kozloski addressed questions and comments. The Board of Directors received the Ridership Report as information.

8. Executive Director’s Report – Ron Mitchum

Mr. Mitchum updated the Board of Directors regarding the Fairgrounds property noting that an appraisal has been scheduled and staff will continue to seek alternatives; however, the timeline is challenging. He discussed recent matters with Proterra. Mr. Mitchum noted the first overhead charger installation is underway and that the public meetings regarding the Charleston County Transportation Sales Tax Referendum are wrapping up tomorrow. He announced that the Transportation Association of South Carolina (TASC) will hold the Legislative Reception on March 5th at the USC Alumni Center which is expected to be heavily attended. Mr. Mitchum addressed questions and comments. The Board of Directors received the Executive Director’s Report as information.

9. Other Business, If Any

There was no further business to discuss.

10. Public Comments, If Any

There were three public comments:

- William Hamilton, Best Friends of Lowcountry Transit: Mr. Hamilton thanked the Board for their service to the community and for their approval to continue the Beach Reach shuttle service. His team will reach out to local restaurants and hotels and will distribute postcards at various upcoming events. He requested bus schedules to distribute and noted that perhaps the flea market attendees will generate ridership.
- Sharon Broderick, National Express/President of Local Union #610: Ms. Broderick noted that work continues with improvements regarding employee matters at National Express. She expressed her concerns regarding bus driver input on Rivers Avenue, the Mt. Pleasant Street Park & Ride and for any new information. She appreciates the new APCs and that the trees were cut back on Antler Drive.
- Yvonne Broaddus of West Ashley: Ms. Broaddus expressed her concerns regarding the safety of bus riders at the stops on Glenn McConnell Parkway where road construction is underway.

11. Board Comments, If Any

There was no further business to discuss.

12. Adjourn

Chairman Seekings thanked the Board of Directors for their dedicated service to the Board of Directors and the communities they serve. There being no further business before the Board, Chairman Seekings adjourned the meeting at 1:48 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Kim Coleman