

CHARLESTON AREA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY (CARTA)

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

March 20, 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, March 20, 2024.

MEMBERSHIP: MaryBeth Berry; Joe Boykin; Mike Brown; Daniel Brownstein; Reggie Burgess; William Cogswell; 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; Brandon Hudson; Pat O'Neil; Herb Sass; Michael Seekings; Ed Sutton; Robert Wehrman

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

OTHERS PRESENT: Daniel Monroe (BGRM); Elissa Smith (HDR); Ryan Bauman (HDR); Robert Flagler (HNTB); Mila Buzhinskaya (HNTB); Karen Campbell (Nations Express Transit); Denis Komakech (National Express Transit); Charles Frasier (National Express Transit); Sharon Broderick (National Express Transit, President of Local Union #610); Leisa Barleston (National Express Transit/Local Union #610); Morven Muclean (WSP); Abraham Champagne (WSP); Scott Barhight (Charleston Metro Chamber of Commerce); Legare Clement (Exchange Club of Charleston); William Hamilton (Best Friends of Lowcountry Transit); Louise Brown (Best Friends of Lowcountry Transit); Bo Rupert (Summerville Resident); Linda Ashley (Citizen); Teri Errico Griffis (Post & Courier); Brian Heins (WCIV News 4)

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 1:05 p.m. followed by a moment of silence and a quorum determination. Chairman Seekings welcomed back former Board Member and City of North Charleston Councilman, Ron Brinson. Mr. Brinson is the permanent proxy for Mayor Burgess. Ron Mitchum, Executive Director, noted there has been a slight revision to today's Meeting Agenda to honor a special guest. Chairman Seekings requested a motion to accept the Meeting Agenda as amended. Mr. Boykin made a motion to accept the Revised Meeting Agenda and Mr. Sutton seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

2. Consideration of Board Minutes: February 21, 2024 Meeting

Mr. Lahm made a motion to approve the February 21, 2024 Meeting Minutes as presented.

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

3. Recognition of Special Guest

Andrea Kozloski, Deputy Director of Operations and Support, recognized special guest, Charles Frasier. Ms. Kozloski stated that Mr. Frasier is being recognized at today's Board of Directors meeting as he celebrates his 50th Employment Anniversary. Mr. Frasier has faithfully served the community for over five decades and continues to be a friendly, knowledgeable and professional driver as well as a special friend to countless CARTA passengers. Karen Campbell, Assistant General Manager with National Express Transit, presented a video regarding Mr. Frasier's dedicated service. Ms. Campbell introduced Mr. Frasier (aka "King of Route 20"/"King of the #1 Route"). Mr. Frasier thanked the Board of Directors for the opportunity to serve since 1973 stating it has been his pleasure in doing so. On behalf of the Board of Directors, management and staff, Chairman Seekings thanked Mr. Frasier for his many years of invaluable and dedicated service to the agency, his passengers and the community. Mr. Frasier and Board Members posed for a photograph.

4. Financial Status Report – Robin Mitchum

Robin Mitchum, Deputy Director of Finance and Administration, presented the financial status report for the period ending January 31, 2024. She noted that, overall, the agency remains in good shape and ended the month with unexpended funds of \$1,454,933. 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, 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.
- Auditing is the cost of the FY23 GASB 75 Actuary and Audit.
- 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 and Electric Bus Master Plan 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 ten 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 \$50,486 at 43% complete. The Board of Directors received the Financial Status Report as information.

5. Design Services: Public Transit & Workforce Development Center – Request for Approval

Ron Mitchum, Executive Director, discussed design services for the Public Transit and Workforce Development Center. He noted that the BCDCOG Selection Committee met on March 6, 2024 and reviewed two proposals for the Design Services: Public Transit and Workforce Development Center RFQ. Proposals were received from HDR Engineering, Inc. and Wendel Architecture. One additional proposal was received but was determined to be non-responsive. Mr. Mitchum stated that staff is requesting approval to negotiate a scope and fee with HDR Engineering, Inc. based upon the overall score sheet rankings. Mr. Mitchum addressed questions and comments.

Mr. Brinson made a motion to approve the Design Services for the Public Transit & Workforce Development Center as presented. Mr. Boykin seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

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 noting that staff is working on proposed changes in order to improve on-time performance and coordination with the introduction of the on-route charging infrastructure located near Trident Hospital; Downtown Route Study noting that staff is wrapping up the second round of public input and awaiting results from the consultants regarding public input; US 52 BRT Study noting that data collection/analysis is underway, the public engagement plan is being completed and the first stakeholder meeting is being scheduled; CARTA OnDemand noting that the riders in February was a 200% increase in trips from December 2023 and the average trip cost was slightly up; Shelter Improvement Program noting that digital signage and solar lighting projects continue although at a slower pace than desired; Shipwatch Square Transit Center noting that staff is currently working on the class of action that will be required for the environmental phase; Transit Oriented Development Study noting that work continues on this project; LCRT noting that engineers continue to work on the completion of the design and the Operations and Maintenance facility design is underway; Mt. Pleasant Street Park & Ride noting that final plans are complete and the first round of the City's TRC review is near completion; Mobile Ticketing Sales & Use noting that customers using the App continues to increase and work continues regarding security issues with passengers using credit cards; LCRT/TOD noting work continues to brief all new councilmembers regarding LCRT and TOD. Mr. Mitchum addressed questions and comments. The Board of Directors received the Project Updates Report as information.

7. Ridership Report – Megan Ross

Megan Ross, Transit Planner, presented the Ridership Report. She discussed the February 2024 Ridership Trends noting that passenger trips totaled 189,557 and there were 11.1 customers per service hour (10.4 last month). On-time, across all timepoints, was 76%. Ms. Ross stated that overall ridership comparing February 2024 to January 2024 increased by 4.5%. Overall ridership comparing February 2024 to February 2023 increased by 12.9%. Overall ridership comparing 2024 YTD to 2023 YTD increased 10.1%. She noted that Tel-A-Ride ridership for the month of February was 5,060 which was an increase of 1.6% when comparing 2023 YTD to 2024 YTD. It was noted that the total missed service for the month of February was 94.97 as compared to 756.96 in February 2023, which was an 88% decrease. Ms. Ross discussed the CARTA OnDemand ridership for February 2024 noting that there were 2,095 passengers between both Uber and Lyft at an average trip cost of \$11.85 which was higher than January's average trip cost of

\$9.49. She noted that 46% 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.

8. Executive Director's Report – Ron Mitchum

Mr. Mitchum discussed the Shipwatch Square facility regarding the Workforce Development component of that project, specifically, the grant targeted to training for CDLs. He explained that CDL drivers are in high demand in the region resulting in part of the struggle to retain drivers with CDLs. 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 congratulated the Board regarding the increase in ridership. Best Friends of Lowcountry Transit continues to support efforts to increase ridership. Their efforts also continue regarding outreach to hotel employees in the Town of Mt. Pleasant as well as support for the Beach Reach and DASH shuttles. Best Friends of Lowcountry Transit will continue to support CARTA and the BCDCOG's efforts regarding the LCRT's route continuing to the Fairgrounds and expressed his concerns regarding extending the line to Summerville. Mr. Hamilton expressed his concerns regarding continuing to see agitation within the community regarding the misrepresentation of transit and the riders and the chatter in the community regarding the LCRT line not continuing to the Fairgrounds.
- Bo Rupert, Summerville Resident: Mr. Rupert expressed his concerns regarding public transit needing to be more accommodating to visually impaired riders and to residents in the Town of Summerville.
- Louise Brown, Best Friends of Lowcountry Transit: Ms. Brown expressed her concerns regarding some misrepresentation of bus passengers and echoed Mr. Hamilton's concerns regarding the bus not going to the Fairgrounds.

11. Board Comments, If Any

Town of Mt. Pleasant Councilman Brownstein discussed his recent experience with riding the bus and encouraged all Board Members to ride and engage with passengers and drivers.

12. Adjourn

Chairman Seekings thanked the Board of Directors for their dedicated service to the Board and the communities they serve. Chairman Seekings announced that the next Board of Directors meeting will be held Wednesday, April 10th at 1:00 p.m. instead of the usual third Wednesday of the month. There being no further business before the Board, Chairman Seekings adjourned the meeting at 1:42 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Kim Coleman