

**CHARLESTON AREA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY
(CARTA)
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
November 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, November 20, 2024.

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

MEMBERS PRESENT: Daniel Brownstein; Dwayne Green; Brandon Hudson; Michael Seekings; Ed Sutton; Jimmy Ward; Robert Wehrman

PROXIES: Craig Harris for Brad Belt; Kristen Wurster for Joe Boykin; Ron Brinson for Reggie Burgess; Robert Somerville for William Cogswell; Chief Gebhardt for Christie Rainwater; Jerry Lahm for Herb Sass

OTHERS PRESENT: David Bonner (WeDriveU Consultant); Josh Steele (WeDriveU); Stephanie Maher (WeDriveU); Leslie Stone (WeDriveU); Elissa Smith (HDR); Shawn Epps (HDR); William Hamilton (Best Friends of Lowcountry Transit); Abraham Champagne (WSP); Martyca Champion (Citizen); Margaret Palmer (West Ashley Resident)

STAFF PRESENT: Ron Mitchum; Andrea Kozloski; Robin Mitchum; Sharon Hollis; Megan Clark; Megan Ross; Matthew Spath

1. Call to Order

Chairman Seekings called the CARTA Board of Directors Meeting to order at 1:02 p.m. followed by a moment of silence and a quorum determination.

2. Consideration of Board Minutes: October 16, 2024 Meeting

***Mr. Lahm made a motion to approve the October 16, 2024 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 September 30, 2024. She noted that, overall, the agency remains in good shape and ended the month with unexpended funds of \$3,997,515. 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 nine MV-1s, seven 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) and the Charleston Metro Chamber of Commerce.
- Office Equipment Rental includes the monthly battery lease for the electric buses and property taxes on the equipment rental.
- 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, Medcom Street and the charging stations at Leeds Avenue.
- Advertising is Beach Reach outreach.
- 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.
- Electric Bus Master Plan is to transition CARTA's diesel bus fleet to all-electric buses.
- Other Professional Services include the bus wash inspection services and appraisal 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 is the 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.
- Paratransit is the cost of paratransit transportation provided by National Express Shuttle and Transit.
- Interest is the interest on the Melnick Park & Ride loan.

Capital Expenditures:

- Rolling Stock is the purchase of ten 2023 Voyager Vans and six 2023 Braunability Promasters.
- Bus Facilities/Charging Stations is the Leeds Avenue parking lot repairs and charging infrastructure.
- Bus Shelter Construction/Bench Install is the installation of shelters and benches.
- Security/Cameras & Equipment is the purchase of cameras, access control equipment and AVL equipment.
- Land is the purchase of land at the Fairgrounds.
- Facilities Construction is Shipwatch Square engineering.
- Capital (IT, Facility Repairs, Maint.) is Genfare equipment, shop lifts and driver shields.

Ms. Mitchum reviewed the activity of the OnDemand Program as of September 30, 2024. She noted that the FY24 total cost is \$323,179 at 60% completion. The Board of Directors received the Financial Status Report and the OnDemand Program Activity Report as information.

4. Project Updates – Andrea Kozloski

Andrea Kozloski, Deputy Director of Operations and Support, discussed the Project Updates report regarding the following Project Updates: Service Planning Initiatives; Downtown Route Study; US 52 BRT Study; CARTA OnDemand; Shelter Improvement Program; Shipwatch Square Transit Center; Transit Oriented Development Study; LCRT ; Dorchester Transit Signal Priority (TSP) Pilot Project; Mt. Pleasant Street Park & Ride; Fairgrounds Park & Ride; O&M Facility - LCRT; and Mobile Ticketing Sales and Use. Ms. Kozloski reviewed Upcoming Events and noted the following: there will be a “Day of Thanks & Giving” held on November 25th (food give-away); an LCRT Public Meeting and the Military Magnet Shelter Ribbon Cutting Ceremony will be held December 3rd; Holiday Parades are scheduled for December 7th (City of Charleston) and December 15th (Town of Mt. Pleasant); the final Senior Free Ride Day for 2024 will be held on December 20th; Christmas Day Free Rides will be held on December 25th. Ms. Kozloski discussed the scheduling for the holiday season and addressed questions and comments. The Board of Directors received the Project Updates report and the Upcoming Events/Activities report as information.

5. CARTA OnDemand Program – Ron Mitchum

Ron Mitchum, Executive Director, discussed the CARTA OnDemand Program. He noted that current demand for the OnDemand Voucher Program exceeds the funding programmed for the service. The number of eligible riders continues to grow while the budget has been expended. Mr. Mitchum delivered a presentation with slides depicting the Customer Basis as of October 31, 2024 of approved Tel-A-Ride customers being 171 and approved Seniors being 1,676. For Tel-A-Ride customers, the current policy is that the customer pays \$4 and the maximum CARTA subsidy is \$30. The average subsidy per trip is \$11 and the average trip cost is \$15. Tel-A-Ride customers are eligible for 50 vouchers per month. The Tel-A-Ride cost via the CARTA Tel-A-Ride service is \$42. Mr. Mitchum stated that there are no proposed program changes to Tel-A-Ride customers. He then discussed the program for Senior Customers noting that the current age requirement is 55+, the customer currently pays \$4 per trip and the maximum CARTA subsidy is \$21. The average subsidy per trip is \$10-12 and the average trip cost is \$14-16. Currently, Senior customers are eligible for 20 vouchers per month and a pass cost for a CARTA bus trip is \$1.00. Mr. Mitchum presented the proposed changes noting the following for the Senior’s program: increase age eligibility to 65+; customer pays \$5; the maximum CARTA subsidy would be

\$14; and Senior riders would be eligible for 3 vouchers per week. Discussion was held regarding the proposed changes and Mr. Mitchum addressed questions and comments.

***Mr. Brownstein made a motion to approve the CARTA OnDemand Program as presented.
Mr. Hudson seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.***

6. Ridership Report – Megan Ross

Megan Ross, Transit Planner, presented the Ridership Reports as of October 2024. She noted that passenger trips totaled 206,398 and there were 11.2 customers per service hour (11.6 last month). Ms. Ross stated that overall ridership comparing October 2024 to September 2024 increased by 6.8%, overall ridership comparing October 2024 to October 2023 increased by 2.0%, and overall ridership comparing 2024 YTD to 2023 YTD increased by 4.5%. She stated that Tel-A-Ride ridership for October 2024 was 5,071 (a decrease of 3.1% when comparing 2023 YTD to 2024 YTD). Ms. Ross discussed the OnDemand trips for October 2024, noting that the total ridership was 4,063 passengers between both Uber and Lyft. The trip cost averaged \$12.05, higher than September's average of \$10.58 and 44% 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.

7. Executive Director's Report – Ron Mitchum

Mr. Mitchum noted that a public meeting was held regarding potentially revising Route 104. The meeting was well-attended, including County Councilman Henry Darby. The attendees were opposed to the potential changes; therefore, no changes will be recommended. He noted that a comprehensive operational analysis will need to be initiated early in the New Year. This timing will be good since a similar process is being undertaken by TriCounty Link. The information developed from this process will provide a basis for updating the transit framework plan which identifies potential new services that could be undertaken by CARTA. This information will also be useful as the next Charleston County transportation sales tax referendum approaches. Mr. Mitchum noted that the purchase of updated automatic passenger counter (APC) equipment was approved during the BCDCOG's Executive Committee meeting held on November 18th. This will extend the life of the existing equipment. He announced that a new General Manager will begin employment with We Drive U on December 2nd. Mr. Mitchum addressed questions and comments. The Board of Directors received the Executive Director's Report as information.

8. Other Business, If Any

There was no further business to discuss.

9. Public Comments, If Any

There were two Public Comments that were noted for the record:

- Margaret Palmer (West Ashley Resident): Ms. Palmer expressed her concerns regarding CARTA OnDemand and more service in West Ashley. She also expressed her concerns of extreme traffic in the Charleston/North Charleston area and CARTA extending hours and service in the area.
- William Hamilton (Best Friends of Lowcountry Transit): Mr. Hamilton thanked the Board of Directors for the additional stops in Mt. Pleasant. He noted that Best Friends of Lowcountry Transit will begin its annual efforts promoting transportation from Mt. Pleasant hotels to Downtown Charleston as well as promoting Transit Equity Day which will be held February 4, 2025.

10. Executive Session – Legal Matters

Executive Session was not needed. Chairman Seekings commented briefly on Exchange Club Fairgrounds matters. He stated that an Executive Session will be held during the January meeting to update the Board on legal matters.

11. Board Comments, If Any

Councilman Brownstein congratulated Senator Sutton on the recent election. He thanked him for his service to the CARTA Board and the community. Mr. Brownstein briefly discussed the recent meeting at the 88 Club in Mt. Pleasant and noted that Roper facilities will be opening on Johnnie Dodds Boulevard. He suggested that discussions be held regarding possible service on Johns Island since the completion of the 526 Extension has been tabled due to the recent sale tax referendum not passing. Mr. Lewis commented on continued work with the Downtown Route’s bus stops. Mr. Green thanked the Public Speakers for their remarks and noted that their comments are helpful to the Board of Directors.

12. Adjourn

Chairman Seekings thanked the Board of Directors for their continued dedicated service to the Board and the communities they serve. He wished everyone a safe and happy Holiday Season. There being no further business before the Board, Chairman Seekings adjourned the meeting at 1:57 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Kim Coleman