

**CHARLESTON AREA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY
(CARTA)**

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

May 21, 2025

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, May 21, 2025.

MEMBERSHIP: Brad Belt; MaryBeth Berry; Joe Boykin; Mike Brown; Daniel Brownstein; Reggie Burgess; William Cogswell; Henry Darby; Dwayne Green; Will Haynie; Brandon Hudson; James Lewis; Craig Logan; Pat O'Neil; Christie Rainwater; Michael Seekings; Jimmy Ward; Robert Wehrman

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

PROXIES: Craig Harris for Mayor Belt; Ron Brinson for Mayor Burgess; Robert Somerville for Mayor Cogswell; Jerry Lahm for Councilman Darby; Lt. Reyes for Mayor Rainwater

OTHERS PRESENT: Robert Milhous (Robert E. Milhous, CPA, PA & Associates); Mila Buzhinskaya (HNTB); Elissa Smith (HDR); Karen Campbell (WeDriveU); Sharon Broderick (WeDriveU Local Union #610 President); William Hamilton (Best Friends of Lowcountry Transit); Tom Hiles (WSP); Andrew Fisher (STV)

STAFF PRESENT: Ron Mitchum; Andrea Kozloski; Robin Mitchum; Sharon Hollis; Megan Ross; Matthew Spath; Graham Glaab (intern); Kim Coleman

1. Call to Order

Chairman Seekings called the CARTA Board of Directors Meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. followed by a moment of silence and a quorum determination.

2. Consideration of Board Minutes: April 16, 2025 Meeting

Mr. Boykin made a motion to approve the April 16, 2025 Meeting Minutes as presented.

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

3. FY24 Audit Presentation – Robert E. 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, 2024. 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 Management's Discussion and Analysis. He delivered a detailed overview of the Financial Statements. Mr. Milhous then addressed questions and comments. Chairman Seekings thanked Mr. Milhous for his report and commended Deputy Director of Finance and Administration, Robin Mitchum, and her staff for their dedicated work resulting in favorable audit reports. The Board of Directors received the FY24 Audit Presentation as information.

4. Financial Status Report – Robin Mitchum

Robin Mitchum, Deputy Director of Finance and Administration, presented the financial status report for the period ending March 31, 2025. She noted that, overall, the agency remains in good shape, continues to be in line with the budget at 50% complete for the year, and ended the month with unexpended funds of \$1,886,929. Ms. Mitchum provided information on the following activities for FY25 thus far:

Revenues:

- Farebox is the fares collected on the revenue vehicles.
- Passes & Mobile Ticketing are bus pass fares sold to customers.
- Federal Revenue includes operating for the year-to-date. Federal Revenue is recorded as eligible expenditures are incurred.
- Advertising is the advertising on the buses.
- Insurance proceeds are a result of accidents.
- Sale of Assets is the proceeds from the sale of a 1986 Chevrolet truck and a 2017 van.
- Miscellaneous Revenue is the sale of scrap metal.

Expenditures:

- Retiree Benefits include the cost of retiree insurance.
- Supplies include office, facility maintenance and rebranding supplies.
- Printing includes costs of printing passes and brochures.
- Automotive is the cost to service the 2018 Ford F-150.
- 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, Medcom Street and the charging stations at Leeds Avenue.
- Auditing is the cost of the FY24 GASB 75 Actuary.
- Custodial Services are the cost of janitorial services at the Melnick Park & Ride location.
- OnDemand Program is customer transportation cost for same-day service through independent rideshare.
- Other Professional Services include bus wash inspection services and the fire extinguisher inspection at the SuperStop.
- 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 and by Extra Duty Solutions at the Mary Street bus stop.
- 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 January 1. CARTA will add and remove items on the policy throughout the year, but this is the majority of the cost for the fiscal year.

- 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 the Hometown Trolley Villager.
- 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, radios, access control equipment and AVL equipment.
- Facilities Construction is Shipwatch Square engineering.
- Capital (IT, Facility Repairs, Maint.) is the purchase of bike racks, a Genfare vault, Genfare controller modules and the SuperStop HVAC replacement.

Ms. Mitchum reviewed the activity of the OnDemand Program as of March 31, 2025. She noted that the FY25 total cost is \$262,284 at 96% completion. The Board of Directors received the Financial Status Report and the OnDemand Program Activity Report as information.

5. US 52 BRT Study – Presentation – Mila Buzhinskaya, HNTB

Chairman Seekings introduced Mila Buzhinskaya, Senior Transit Project Manager with HNTB. Ms. Buzhinskaya delivered a presentation regarding the US 52 Bus Rapid Transit Study. She noted that the purpose of the study is to access the corridor from Moncks Corner to North Charleston, evaluate TriCounty Link's service to improve access and increase ridership, assess the feasibility of transitioning to bus rapid transit (BRT), define connections to the LCRT system, and to develop a phased implementation plan with costs and timelines. She noted that several public and stakeholder engagement events have taken place and will continue to be held. Ms. Buzhinskaya explained the US 52 alignment alternatives, study objectives and screening criteria, screening results summary and key takeaways. She discussed the Southern Terminus Alternatives, its evaluation criteria and the results. Ms. Buzhinskaya reviewed challenges and opportunities as well as recommendations and costs including OnDemand zones for TriCounty Link. Ms. Buzhinskaya discussed the next steps, noting that a presentation will be delivered to the BCDCOG Board of Directors during the June 23, 2025 Board Meeting. Chairman Seekings thanked Ms. Buzhinskaya for the informative presentation. The Board of Directors received the US 52 BRT Study presentation as information.

6. CARTA Comprehensive Operational Analysis (COA) RFQ – Request for Approval

Ron Mitchum, Executive Director, noted that the Selection Committee met on May 20, 2025 and reviewed three proposals for the Comprehensive Operational Analysis (COA) and Strategic Implementation Plan. He stated that RFQs were received from Benesh, HNTB Corporation, and Nelson/Nygaard Consulting Associates, Inc. Based upon the overall score sheet rankings, staff is requesting approval to negotiate a contract with Nelson/Nygaard Consulting Associates, Inc. Mr. Mitchum addressed questions and comments.

Mr. Boykin made a motion to approve the CARTA Comprehensive Operational Analysis (COA) RFQ as presented. Mr. Brinson seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

7. Project Updates – Andrea Kozloski

Andrea Kozloski, Deputy Director of Operations and Support, discussed the Project Updates report regarding the following projects: 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. In the interest of time, she stated that a detailed report on each project is included in the agenda packet and encouraged Board Members to contact her with any questions or comments. Ms. Kozloski noted that work continues with MUSC regarding parking endeavors and we are awaiting cost proposals. She presented a video regarding the Beach Reach Shuttle featuring a media interview with Chairman Seekings. Ms. Kozloski then delivered a report regarding upcoming events and activities noting the following dates: Beach Reach Kick-Off Press Conference is May 22nd and the season launch is May 24th; Seniors Ride Free Day is May 28th for National Senior Health & Fitness Day; Charleston Moves' Light the Night is May 31st; and CARTA Night at the Riverdogs is June 29th. She also delivered an update on CARTA Amenities, noting the following: Greenridge Road, Azalea Drive at Meridian Road and Azalea Drive at Elegans Drive each have shelters in progress and are in the permitting phase (permits were received yesterday) and Skylark Drive at Savannah Highway is in the engineering phase; 41 new solar lights have been installed; 4 bench installations are in progress and 2 benches were installed in April. Ms. Kozloski highlighted Quanita Mack, Administrative Assistant, as the May Employee Spotlight. Ms. Mack was recognized for her versatility, professionalism and dedication to the team and has been a dedicated member of CARTA for the past 17 years. Ms. Kozloski also highlighted Melissa Graham, Fixed-Route Bus Operator. Ms. Graham received commendations stating she is always kind and polite to the passengers, she always greets riders with a smile and is willing to help whenever she can and that she handles her bus very well. Ms. Kozloski delivered information regarding the Transit App, noting that 910 new CARTA riders were welcomed aboard as they downloaded the app for the first time, a total of 8,519 riders have opened the app and they opened the app 510,553 times. An average weekday had 2,008 riders opening the app. She also noted that 10,328 riders subscribed to service alerts. Ms. Kozloski then presented slides depicting new bus wraps and the Beach Reach Shuttle Trolley. The Board of Directors received the Project Updates and the Upcoming Activities & Events Report as information.

8. Ridership Report – Megan Ross

Megan Ross, Transit Planner, presented the Ridership Reports for April 2025. She noted that passenger trips totaled 260,829 and there were 14.8 customers per service hour (14.1 last month). Ms. Ross stated that overall ridership comparing April 2025 to March 2025 increased by 4.03%, overall ridership comparing April 2025 to April 2024 increased by 25.5%, and overall ridership comparing 2025 YTD to 2024 YTD decreased 4.96%. She stated that Tel-A-Ride ridership for April 2025 was 4,565 (a decrease of 16.8% when comparing 2024 YTD to 2025 YTD). Ms. Ross reviewed safety trends for April 2025 noting that there were two preventable accidents which involved a sideswipe and fixed object (both on fixed-route vehicles). There were also 11 non-preventable accidents. She discussed complaints and commendations regarding Customer Service for the month of April noting that there were 12 complaints (rude operator/delayed service/missed service) and there were two commendations. Ms. Ross reviewed On-Time Performance noting that the fixed-route on-time performance for the month of April was 69.5%. The on-time performance for paratransit was 81%. She noted that missed trips for April 2025 resulted in 445.90 service hours missed, which was 2.45% of total scheduled monthly revenue hours. Ms. Ross discussed paratransit services in detail regarding the breakdown of total passengers, which was 4,565, total trips requested, no-shows and cancellations, the average ride length and distance as well as on-time performance, which was 81%. Ms. Ross then discussed OnDemand trips for April 2025, noting that the ridership for the month of April was 3,855 passengers between both Uber and Lyft. The trip cost averaged \$12.41, higher than March's average of \$11.44 and that 48% of the overall rides were from Tel-A-Ride passengers. Ms. Ross and Mr. Mitchum addressed questions and comments. The Board of Directors received the Ridership Report as information.

9. Executive Director's Report – Ron Mitchum

Mr. Mitchum briefed the Board of Directors regarding the Shipwatch Square project noting that it will be out for bid soon. He stated that work continues regarding the HOP lot. In the interest of time, Mr. Mitchum noted that if there are any specific questions or concerns related to the LCRT project, to please see Sharon Hollis after the meeting. 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 noted for the record:

- William Hamilton (Best Friends of Lowcountry Transit): Mr. Hamilton noted that there is a group of young adults who are advocates for better transit and for transit services to be offered in the Lincolnville/Summerville area. He stated that they are planning a demonstration to be held in June concerning transit from Summerville to the beach.
- Sharon Broderick (WeDriveU): Ms. Broderick spoke on behalf of bus operators regarding passenger complaints concerning the homeless situation at bus stops. She also expressed her concerns regarding bus operators receiving numerous complaints regarding the low-income cards and 1-day passes not being properly loaded with a monetary value and being rejected as "funds not available."

12. Executive Session – Legal Matters

Mr. Brinson made a motion that the Board of Directors convene into Executive Session.

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

Non-Board Members, Guests and Non-Essential Staff Members were excused.

Mr. Lewis 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 of Directors meeting noting that no action was taken related to legal matters discussed during Executive Session.

13. Board Comments, If Any

There was no further business to discuss.

14. Adjourn

Chairman Seekings announced that the next CARTA Board of Directors meeting will be held on June 25th as opposed to the usual third Wednesday of the month. He thanked the Board of Directors for their continued dedicated service to the CARTA Board of Directors and the communities they serve. There being no further business before the Board, Chairman Seekings adjourned the meeting at 2:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Kim Coleman