



**WACCAMAW REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY
d/b/a THE COAST RTA
REGULAR BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
Thursday, April 28, 2022
12:00 PM**

Board Present: Darrell Eickhoff
Marvin Keene
Bernard Silverman
Rob Sheehan
Katharine D'Angelo
Joe Lazzara
Lillie Jean Johnson
Randal Wallace

Staff Present: Brian Piascik, General Manager/CEO
Ron Prater, Chief Financial Officer
Lauren Morris, PIO

Visitors: Robert Pawlowski

In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), the 2021 meeting schedule was provided to the press at the beginning of the 2021 calendar year, stating the date, time and location. In addition, notice of this meeting was provided to the press and stakeholders, stating the date, time, and location on December 4, 2021.

CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Keene called the meeting to order at 12:04 PM and welcomed everyone.

INVOCATION/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Dr. Keene gave the invocation, then led the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL/ANNOUNCEMENT OF QUORUM: Roll call was taken. A quorum was present. The Board Chairman and Past Board Chairman asked that those absent from board meetings be recognized as "Excused", only if that board member informs the Board Liaison, in advance, that they are unable to attend. Board members who do not attend the meeting and do not inform the Board Liaison that they will be absent will be recognized as "Absent".

APPROVAL OF AGENDA – There was a motion by Dr. Sheehan and a second by Mr. Silverman that the agenda be approved. A voice vote was taken; no nays being heard the agenda was approved unanimously.

APPROVAL OF AMENDED MINUTES – There was a motion by Ms. D’Angelo and a second by Mr. Eickhoff Sheehan to approve the March minutes. A voice vote was taken; no nays being heard, the motion passed unanimously to accept the minutes as amended.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF VISITORS: There were some audio issues with Mr. Pawlowski’s connection, therefore, public input was pushed to later in the meeting. Mr. Pawlowski made comments regarding the recent TV report on WBTW. Federal funding increases are always good. We need to focus on capital projects, increases service to N. Myrtle Beach. He thinks that Coast RTA needs to focus on the transfer facility in Georgetown immediately after the O&M facility is complete. We need new buses, new shelters would all be good investments with the increase in funding.

FINANCE COMMITTEE: Mr. Silverman summarized the Finance Committee proceedings where the March financials were reviewed. Fuel cost was expectedly high but also the system is seeing record ridership on both fixed route and paratransit systems. The revised budget will include provisions for lease, capital investments and moving expenses for split operations that will be funded substantially through a grant from SCDOT. Fare implementation is underway for contactless fare collection equipment. The plan now includes keep the Genfare fareboxes in service for passengers using cash. No magnetic strip tickets will be accepted. The Committee is still working through a budget revisions to include overages on the income statement, split operations expense, fare implementation and updated revenues, including Horry County’s effort to transition Coast RTA to vehicle registration fees.

Mr. Piascik covered a number assumptions related to the budget revision, including potential cash flow issues related to the transition to vehicle registration fees (No issues because the County has one more payment scheduled in FY 2022). Mr. Piascik was extremely appreciative of Horry Council’s efforts to protect the funding they dedicated to transit in FY 19. Coast RTA is working with attorneys to determine if vehicle registration fees are appropriate even though they are culled out in the State RTA legislation. County projections show \$2.38M for FY23 (\$200K increase over FY 22). The Board discussed some of the potential consequences of the changeover to vehicle registration fee that staff has raised with our legal team, as well as some of the political impetus behind the ordinance under consideration by Horry County Council. Consensus was reached by the Board that a Funding Committee meeting was not necessary at this time.

Mr. Piascik updated the Board on the Facility Development Program. A RAISE Grant was submitted on April 14th but before that, staff was debriefed by USDOT on our application to RAISE in FY 21. The application was rated as “recommended” but needs a “highly recommended” to be

eligible for funding. Staff was able to incorporate some of the constructive criticism from USDOT into the FY 22 application. Coast RTA got support letters from Sen. Scott, City of Myrtle Beach, Horry County, Santee-Cooper and several conservation groups. The next grant to be submitted to 5339 Low-No/Bus & Bus Facilities in May. The project has been modified to include electric buses and other efforts to reduce emissions. LPA Report and Environmental Checklist will be delivered to the GM next week. FTA will review the checklist and determine if the parcel is environmentally cleared or if they want Coast RTA to go into more detail in certain areas.

Mr. Piascik displayed the budget for Contactless Fare Collection and updated the Board on that initiative. Staff is still working on acquiring validators, negotiations on agreements and working through data needs for the acquiring bank. The budget also includes placing internet hubs and different applications to support those passengers who do not have bank accounts (elimination of cash). The \$440K in funding from ARPA will last approximately 3 fiscal years. Mr. Silverman asked about the equity in the system and if FTA had any controlling interest in the program. Mr. Piascik responded that the system was procured in compliance with FTA, will be maintained using FTA funds but the ARPA funding is essentially coming to the Authority as local funds. Mr. Silverman asked about the expense of operating and maintenance of the existing fareboxes and how it compared to the expense related to the new fare system. Mr. Piascik replied that if the hours counting money were included, the annual expense would exceed \$80,000/year by a long shot. Ms. Johnson asked if the funding was in our account and Piascik said that the program would be funded on a reimbursement process. Dr. Sheehan expressed a concern about any pushback from Horry County because the new fare system will be extended into Georgetown County. Mr. Piascik said that all funding is considered regional and that both Counties contribute to the system. Genfares will be removed from the system as soon as possible. Staff will be engaging a marketing firm to put together a public notification of the fare system and the ways passengers can utilize the system. Mr. Sheehan mentioned an article about an Ohio transit system adding temporary conductors to help people through the transition to contactless payment. Mr. Piascik said something similar may be a good way to initiate the fare collection system.

Mr. Piascik went through a number of grants to be written through the end of the fiscal year, including: 5307 Urban Formula for FY 23, State Mass Transit Funds, 5311 Rural Program, 5339 Split Operations Grant and GSATs funding for buses. He then reviewed the assumptions for the budget revision (see slides) on expenses and revenues. Mr. Eickhoff mentioned an assumption in the County budget related to health insurance. Mr. Piascik summarized revenue and expenses for the remainder of the year to show a balanced budget even with a 6% increase in cost for the year.

Mr. Piascik listed a number of capital projects to occur during the remainder of the fiscal year, including vehicle lifts, an office for the new maintenance building, a shop truck and vehicles. There are three Ford Cutaways through a procurement in Oklahoma, to be funded through our

GSATS funding and unobligated 5339 formula funds. We still have one on order through the SC procurement that has no timetable for delivery. Staff has also decided to go ahead and replace the push-to-talk radio system with a true 2-way radio system, using 5339 dollars.

Mr. Piascik then discussed the possibility of acquiring five (5) trolley buses for \$96K (\$85K Purchase and \$11K Delivery). These are 2002 and 2007 Gillig chassis 30 ft. trolleys, low floor, rear engine and two door operation. Staff is confident that parts are available and the buses match up with Gilligs Coast RTA has operated in the past. Mr. Piascik said the vehicles provide an excellent bridge to electric buses in 3-5 years. Staff was still working on the procurement process. The vehicles would go into service on entertainment shuttle(s) as soon as they can be entered into service. Mr. Piascik told the Board that purchasing the vehicles, regardless of how much the cities contribute to the purchase, virtually removes the possibility of purchasing the property for the O&M facility with all local funds. Mr. Piascik said that federalizing the purchase of the property was probably the way we were headed anyway. Mr. Piascik asked the Board for consensus to purchase these vehicles with all local funds. Mr. Silverman asked about where in the budget the Authority would place this purchase.

Motion: Ms. D'Angelo made a motion to authorize the GM to procure the vehicles (or similar), seconded by Mr. Wallace. The Board voted unanimously to approve the motion.

The Board then discussed the decision about whether or not we should implement fares on the entertainment shuttle(s). Mr. Piascik talked about FTA requirements, the need to be closer to cash-free and the need to discuss with partners. **The Board agreed consider charging fares and the associated timing at a future meeting.**

SERVICE/PAC COMMITTEE: No Service/PAC Meeting was held. Ms. D'Angelo mentioned the ad in N. Myrtle Beach for operators. Mr. Piascik outlined recruiting successes and that the Authority has hired more drivers than we had lost in the last six months.

AD HOC COMMITTEES – No Reports from the Ad Hoc Committees.

OLD BUSINESS: The Board discussed member vacancies briefly.

NEW BUSINESS: There was a brief discussion about the Board Project Listing with an update promised for the next meeting.

GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT: Mr. Piascik gave the Board an update on Sunshine Service Initiatives; including the continuation of the SWOT Analysis, customer service training refresher courses, our list of wins, and scoping for year 2. Ms. Morris mentioned that the farebox came from the Solar Panel. Coast RTA has formalized the employee evaluation process and generated job descriptions for all positions.

FOR THE GOOD OF THE ORDER: None.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: None.

ADJOURNMENT:

There was a motion by Mr. Lazzara and a second by Ms. D'Angelo to adjourn the meeting.
A voice vote was taken; no nays being heard the meeting was adjourned at 1:51PM.