



**WACCAMAW REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY  
d/b/a THE COAST RTA  
REGULAR BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING  
Wednesday January 31, 2024  
12:00 PM**

**Board Present:** Melissa Bilka  
Darrell Eickhoff  
Lillie Jean Johnson  
Marvin Keene  
Elijah Metherd  
Robert Sheehan  
Bernard Silverman  
Nicholas Twigg  
Randal Wallace

**Staff Present:** Brian Piascik, General Manager/CEO  
Ron Prater, CFO  
Tom Burda, Maintenance Manager  
Candace Brown, Senior Planner/Special Projects  
Ann-Martin Buffkin, Board Liaison  
Lauren Morris, Director of Strategic Communications

**Visitors:** Robert Pawlowski and Jeremiah Farley

In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), the 2024 meeting schedule was provided to the press at the beginning of the 2024 fiscal 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 January 31, 2024.

**CALL TO ORDER:** Chairman Sheehan called the meeting to order at 12:00 PM and welcomed everyone.

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

**ROLL CALL/ANNOUNCEMENT OF QUORUM:** Roll call was taken. A quorum was present.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA:** A voice vote was taken; no nays being heard; the minutes were approved unanimously.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** A voice vote was taken; no nays being heard; the minutes were approved unanimously.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF VISITORS:** Robert Pawlowski was introduced by Dr. Sheehan and Mr. Piascik introduced Jeremiah Farley from BMORE. Robert Pawlowski reflected on the progress of Coast RTA in 2023 with ride share, updating fleet and increasing tourism. Mr. Pawlowski stated that transportation seems to be the last on the list countrywide; however, he highlighted that it is an essential right to citizens. Mr. Pawloski hopes that Authority representatives facilitate more conversations with State Senators and the Governor.

**SERVICE/PAC COMMITTEE:** Dr. Twigg stated the committee met the prior week with lots to discuss. Members examined the committee's purpose and why it was created, as well as committee structure. Mr. Piascik presented slides that included reestablishing a citizens advisory committee to include a focus group that would include passengers as well as Authority personnel. Dr. Twigg noted that marketing needs to be more of a priority to encourage our region to invest in transit. Mr. Piascik will provide the committee with a set of slides and documents that outline everything the Authority's consultants suggest with regards to transit improvements. As part of the Human Service Coordination Plan, the Authority will investigate how to best work with Medicaid, Aging, Disability and Special needs transportation with hopes to "fill in the gaps." Additionally, fare structure, transit development plan, and financial analysis were discussed. Mr. Eickhoff asked that the citizens advisory committee be put on the master project list under category B. Dr. Twigg requested reports to include customer complaints and ridership (how many people are riding each route).

**FINANCE COMMITTEE:** Mr. Silverman recapped financials from the committee meeting. He noted fares are down on revenue side, transit expense is overbudget and transit overtime is over budget mainly due to driver shortage. Mr. Silverman stated the importance of hiring and being able to retain CDL drivers. He went on to say that maintenance expenses are overbudget largely due to the new maintenance facility and the costs associated. Facility maintenance, vehicle maintenance and fuel are all under budget, although the Authority has major repairs needed on our New Flyers. Mr. Silverman stated that cash requirements fall to a low amount a few times during the month; however, he is not too concerned. The O&M reserve shows \$87,000 and the next two months show a \$12,000 deposit each month. Mr. Silverman stated he would like to see

the Authority work on getting the O&M reserve fund up. Mr. Piascik will provide an overview of the Entertainment shuttle at the next finance committee meeting. Mr. Silverman pointed out that My Horry News wrote an article regarding possible free fares for the entertainment shuttle. It was noted that the Authority needs to work with Myrtle Beach and North Myrtle Beach on how to roll out the entertainment shuttle this year. Mrs. Morris stated we are working to solve routing issues at North Myrtle Beach. To conclude, the Authority challenges are as follows: money is tight, expenses are up, and we need more staffing,

**COMPENSATION COMMITTEE:** None.

**AD HOC COMMITTEES:** None.

**OLD BUSINESS:** None.

**NEW BUSINESS:** In March 2024, Mr. Eickhoff would like a layout of options regarding grants (what money sources are out there). Mr. Wallace asked where is the Authority with the new parcel? Mr. Piascik stated the new parcel should be purchased June 1<sup>st</sup> 2024 (\$750,000 from the City of Myrtle Beach and \$875,000 from Horry County).

**GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT:** Mr. Piascik began by saying the Authority has been awarded \$350,000 under the 5310 grant from GSATS. With this grant, the Authority will get two small vehicles and one cutaway. Mr. Piascik is hopeful of getting another cutaway with 5339 money. The FY2023 audit is in progress with no flags. Mr. Piascik stated he owes the board members a project listing which will be shared on the One Drive accessible by Board iPads. Mr. Piascik finished the NTD report, which showed our peak pullout is 29 vehicles, 30 is the threshold. If the Authority adds vanpool, we will up to full reporter on Horizon for these reports. Triennial submission in progress and will be due February 29<sup>th</sup>, 2024. Staff training – Candace Brown and Ann-Martin “Marty” Buffkin will be attending triennial training in Atlanta February 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> 2024. Supervisor training in Austin TX for Matt King and Stacy Baldauff. Mr. Piascik will be attending online NTI training.

Mr. Piascik shared his spring calendar which included many pertinent dates for Board members and Authority Personnel. Ride IV meetings were announced, and Board members were asked to attend, is possible. The Horry I&R committee meeting is on February 13<sup>th</sup>, 2024, and the Authority needs to plan for rejuvenating its' O&M reserve. Finance committee to meet on February 8<sup>th</sup>, 2024, at 11 am to go through what Mr. Piascik will present. Mr. Piascik stated there will be a service change in the first part of March 2024. This change will pull the second bus on Route 16 and make permanent until new funding is found. This will hopefully also decrease expenses and take some pressure off operations as they try to prep for summer. The Authority will ask for a final decision at the February 2024 board meeting. Public involvement will be the first week in February 2024 for this change. Committee meetings will need to be

moved from 11am to 1pm on February 21, 2024, due to Ride IV conflict. Mr. Piascik asked if any board members want to go to Columbia to the TASC Legislative Reception on March 5<sup>th</sup>, 2024. Mr. Piascik plans to visit Georgetown in the month of February 2024. April 7<sup>th</sup> 2024, through April 9<sup>th</sup>, 2024, Mr. Piascik will be going to the APTA legislative training in DC. He asked someone from the board to attend with him. Between now and the end of April 2024, the Authority should have a plan for all public meetings for the organization plan.

**FOR THE GOOD OF THE ORDER:** None.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:** Mr. Eickhoff asked about the mold issue at the Conway location. He stated he noticed tiles are missing and damaged. He suggested the Authority may need to look at getting out of the Conway building prior to moving to the new parcel.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION:** None.

**ADJOURNMENT:** There was a motion by Mr. Silverman and a second by Dr. Keene to adjourn the meeting. Dr. Sheehan adjourned the meeting at 1:16 PM.