



**WACCAMAW REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY  
d/b/a THE COAST RTA  
REGULAR BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING  
WEDNESDAY, October 28, 2020  
12:00 PM**

**Board Present:** Darrell Eickhoff  
Dr. Marvin Keene  
Joseph Lazzara  
Katharine D'Angelo  
Lillie Jean Johnson  
Bernard Silverman  
Dr. Rob Sheehan  
Heather Edwards

**Staff Present:** Brian Piascik, General Manager/CEO  
Ron Prater, Chief Financial Officer  
Keisha Hemingway, Board Liaison  
Lauren Morris, PIO  
Douglas Herriott, Transportation Manager

**Visitors:** None

In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), the 2020 meeting schedule was provided to the press at the beginning of the 2020 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 October 26, 2020.

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

**INVOCATION/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Mr. Prater gave the invocation with a prayer, 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 Mr. Lazzara and a second by Mr. Sheehan that the agenda be approved. A voice vote was taken; no nays being heard the agenda was approved unanimously.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES** – There was a motion by Mr. Sheehan and a second by Mr. Lazzara to approve the September minutes. A voice vote was taken; no nays being heard, the motion passed unanimously.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF VISITORS:** None

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** None

**EXECUTIVE SESSION:** None

**EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION:** Mr. Piascik recognized Mr. Rick Carroll, Mrs. Sandra Bacchus, Mr. Anthony Moore, Mr. Theodore Capers, and Mr. Travis Shannon. Mr. Carroll a former supervisor, who recently moved into maintenance, is very ill and Mr. Piascik asked that we all keep him in our prayers. Mrs. Sandra Bacchus, who started as a paratransit driver and moved to maintenance as a hostler, was recognized for an amazing job cleaning the buses. Mr. Moore (operator), Mr. Cooper (road supervisor), Mr. Capers (road supervisor) and Mr. Shannon (maintenance) were recognized for their swift and appropriate action in response to the major accident that occurred earlier in the month. Mr. Moore is recovering and our prayers are with him and the family of the other driver, as well.

**CHAIRMAN’S CORNER:**

- Mr. Eickhoff had concerns about the schedule for implementation of new service, especially Aynor, Socastee and Georgetown. Mr. Piascik stated that we introduced a the package of service increases at the April Board meeting, which included an April 1, 2021 start date for service to Socastee and a Georgetown Local route will begin with hourly frequencies. We will also be adding a bus to Route 16 to increase frequency from 180 minutes to 90 minutes. Service to Socastee will take the form of an extension to Route 15S by adding a bus to the route and maintaining 60-minute frequency. We have some additional service planned in North Myrtle Beach with an entertainment shuttle similar to the service provided in Myrtle Beach. The package also includes a redesign of Conway based service that will eliminate the Route 1 loop, increase service to Loris and Bucksport and adding service to Aynor to begin on October 1, 2021. Mr. Piascik mentioned that he wanted to get back in front of Georgetown County Council to initiate the public input process. He also mentioned

that staff would be working on a new public involvement plan to address the process of getting public input in the COVID era. Mr. Piascik also said that he wanted to touch base with the City of North Myrtle Beach to determine if the shuttle will be operated or not. Route 17 currently carrying 15-25 people per day. Mr. Sheehan asked about the parking benefits of the NMB shuttle.

- Mr. Piascik talked about the establishment of a vanpool program and the cost effectiveness it presents to serve rural areas as opposed to fixed bus routes. \$260-280K to operate a single fixed route for year, that could be put toward 20-25 vanpools out to cover more area and actually transport more people. He was asked (Silverman) about what the financial burden to the Authority. The grant eligibility, burden for riders and monthly return from federal grants was discussed. Mr. Piascik said he would lay out how the program would work for the Board to answer their concerns.
- The Board discussed meeting times and how meetings will be schedule in the future. It was determined that both committees and the Board meeting would be held on December 9<sup>th</sup>.
- Mr. Eickhoff stated that the Finance and Service PAC meeting have separate meetings so that the Board Meetings will not take too much time being that most members are working during the meeting times. The Board also discussed the make-up Finance Committee and determined that they would wait for future

**Committee Reports:** There were no meetings for Service/PAC and Finance Committees in October.

#### **GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT:**

- Mr. Piascik discussed the financials with a point to cover the budget and expenses over the course of the full year, at the request of Dr. Keene. Beginning in mid-March we were 100% federal funding. The 5307 CARES Act kicked in February and the 5311 CARES Act money in March. A budget revision was implemented to cover some thing, but didn't cover others (which is being shown on the monitor). Mr. Piascik also stated that we are \$157K under budget for the budget revision which takes into account the losses on fare revenue. We were not excepting fares Mar 15 through July 20 and fare recovery is recovering very slowly. Fares should increase based on the introduction of Route 17.
- Dr. Sheehan mentioned that we should still be considering the possibility of going fare-free.
- Back to the Financials, Mr. Piascik stated that the overtime was high due to a driver shortage and the COVID. Although, we did hire 12 new employees so that we can get a handle on overtime. A new hire program has begun for all new employees which has 2 well trained trainers and we now have more qualified operators upon completing the course. We also had one mechanic to retired in September so the numbers are high due to vacation payout. Mr. Piascik mentioned that he was pleased with the new training program. Mr. Piascik talked about expenses on the Income Statement including some

capital expenses (bus stops and computer) that exceeded expectation but we could adjust the budget from the capital side.

- Mr. Piascik talked about how our normal revenue streams are being collected while we are using CARES Act funding. We are set for adding the additional service, created an O&M reserve and nearly enough local match for a facility.
- Mr. Piascik highlighted that we have \$1M in cash on hand with accounts at CNB and the Local Government Investment Pool (LGIP). Cash requirements look good.
- Mrs. D'Angelo reiterated that Finance Committee should be separated by at least week.
- Employee Recognition removed and added to agenda and minutes in its appropriate spot.
- Mr. Piascik briefed the Board on Route 17 service and productivity.
- Mr. Piascik displayed the current schedule for the maintenance facility development. Twenty-eight sites have been identified with some inside the area of opportunity some not. He discussed a call that staff had with FTA and went through the process requirements. Once a site is selected, the consultant will develop concept design, which includes a rendering of what the facility and we will enter into the environmental clearance (NEPA) process. The site cannot be purchased before the NEPA process is completed.
- A document will be added to the Board folder called Relative Order of Magnitude Cost of the facility. At this point we are at \$18.5 million for that facility based on the program that we did with all of the functions that will be housed. Which includes 40% contingency, leaving a lot of fluff so that the building can be designed once we know that the site looks like and how much the parcel is going to cost. Mr. Piascik mentioned that he would like to refine the cost to a number low enough to fit the reworking of the Conway site into a transfer facility. He then described where we stand on the Facility Development Program grant.

**OLD BUSINESS:** None

- Mr. Eickhoff said that he is very pleased with the new software Bluejeans. He states that out of all the virtual meeting used in the past Bluejeans by far is the best. He also thanked Mr. Piascik and Tom Arends for an outstanding job working to make it possible to use.

**NEW BUSINESS:** None

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:** None

**ADJOURNMENT:**

There was a motion by Mr. Wallace and a second by Dr. Sheehan to adjourn the meeting. A voice vote was taken; no nays being heard the meeting was adjourned at 1:38pm.