



**WACCAMAW REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY  
d/b/a THE COAST RTA  
REGULAR BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING  
Wednesday, October 27, 2021  
12:00 PM**

**Board Present:** Darrell Eickhoff  
Marvin Keene  
Joseph Lazzara  
Bernard Silverman  
Rob Sheehan  
Randall Wallace  
Katharine D'Angelo  
Lillie Jean Johnson  
Greg James

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

**Visitors:** Robert Pawlowski, Rider  
Chase Karacostas, Media

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 October 27, 2021.

**CALL TO ORDER:** Chairman Keene called the meeting to order at 12:00 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 AMENDED AGENDA** – There was a motion by Mr. Sheehan and a second by Mrs. D’Angelo that the agenda be approved. The agenda was amended by the Board where a resolution was added to the agenda. A voice vote was taken; no nays being heard the agenda was approved unanimously.

**APPROVAL OF AMENDED MINUTES** – There was a motion by Mrs. D’Angelo and a second by Mr. Eickhoff to approve the September minutes. The minutes were amended to adjust the Financial Report to add the budget on page 5. A voice vote was taken; no nays being heard, the motion passed unanimously.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF VISITORS:** Robert Pawlowski and Chase Karacostas

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** Mr. Pawlowski asked that the Authority establish a route from Conway to US 17 along SR 544 or at least offer a rideshare service (microtransit) in the area. Microtransit in Michigan is \$2-\$8 per ride. Mr. Pawlowski also wanted the Authority to explore using grocery stores and possibly the airport to offer methods to add fares to passes and/or phones. Mr. Piascik expressed his appreciation for the comments.

**FINANCE COMMITTEE:** Dr. Keene started off the discussion by talking about the year-end for FY 21. The Authority finished under budget but a major expense related to parking lot construction that slipped to FY 22. The Authority’s cash position is solid at the end of the year. Mr. Piascik continued the discussion by addressing questions from the incoming Chair of the Finance Committee, Mr. Silverman.

- **Where does the discussion stand related to equitable funding throughout the service area?** Mr. Piascik talked about recent strategy to ask municipalities to fund the Authority at level equivalent to the County for the service within their limits (based on route mile). These discussions have been met with varying results – Conway had \$50K in its original budget but it dropped out in subsequent readings – Myrtle Beach has level funded Coast RTA for years – North Myrtle Beach has been receptive to increasing funding as we move toward a higher level of service. Issues with the Road Use Fee have put a premium on obtaining municipal support. Dr. Sheehan expressed is concerned about the poor relationships between cities and the County and that the potential revenue sources in a referendum will not be supported. Mr. Piascik mentioned that the Board needed a strategic discussion on the referendum and moving forward.
- **Have we finished paying down grandfathered vacation?** Mr. Piascik said that the grandfathered vacation from those who switched between vacation/sick and PTO has been paid off. We still have a relatively high liability because many employees have not

had an opportunity to take vacation, so there will be a softening of the rules at the end of the year as we ask employees to keep their balance down to maximum accruals.

- **Mr. Silverman asked about merits and COLAs for staff?** Mr. Piascik said that the salary adjustment originally scheduled for October (merit+COLA) was implemented early in August. Another adjustment is planned for April but we will wait for a budget adjustment to see if that will be feasible.
- **There are no lawsuits currently affecting our audit at this time.**
- **Depreciation is expressed as a negative because it is debit.**
- **There was an “In-kind Revenue” line item on the Income Statement** indicating the use of local funds to cover capital expenses where the Authority is writing off liabilities to FTA or SCDOT. The current line item is part of the bus purchase where we were able to clear off liabilities related to past vehicle disposals.
- **Mr. Silverman asked for explanation on the use of the two accounts currently held by the Authority at the SC Treasury Local Government Investment Pool.** Mr. Piascik explained the account with the balance of \$650,000 was our O&M Reserve and the account with \$750,000 is being used for cash management. We left the Money Market at CNB just in case we needed to park some cash for a shorter time.
- **Inflows/Outflows** have to do with auditor assessment of future pension liabilities.
- **Some balance sheet items were explained to the Board.**

Mr. Eickhoff pointed out the increases in paratransit ridership and the potential impact on budget and fare revenue.

Ms. Johnson made the Board aware that Georgetown County has begun discussion on its own referendum and we need to work out how a Coast RTA referendum works with that. She also mentioned that any funding discussion with the City of Georgetown needs to happen after their elections in November.

**SERVICE/PAC COMMITTEE:** Ms. Johnson started the discussion about the Authority’s Sunshine Service initiative. Mr. Piascik mentioned that customer service training is ongoing and that there had been some issues getting drivers off the road. The Solar Panel has been very busy, working on a fare collection RFP. We have been trying to increase communication through a newsletter and GM/CEO Office hours. The newsletter is being published monthly. Driver recruitment is improving. Our internal CDL training has cleared two additional drivers with CDLs, and then four more are in the program. Mr. Eickhoff mentioned new regulations beginning next year that require training from an accredited institution (HGTC).

Mr. Piascik gave an update on the facility development project. Our original site at Fantasy Harbor is no longer available. The consultant has pulled four or five new sites into a new site evaluation. The Authority should hear about the RAISE Grant award sometime in November and we are

submitting the project for FTA 5339 Bus & Bus Facilities funds in November as well. If the RAISE Grant does not come through, it will slow us down. One of the sites being considered is close enough to downtown Myrtle Beach and big enough could actually accommodate the Ivory Wilson Transit Center, in addition to an O&M facility. Mr. Piascik explained to the Board the City does not want the transit center in its current location and that the structure there was always intended to be temporary. He went to say that the Facility Development Program includes planning for transit centers in both Myrtle Beach and Georgetown.

Split operations memo has been delivered to Coast RTA. The Loris Operation would cost \$285K per year not including cost reductions at the Conway facility. Communication with the realtor in Loris has been slow and there issues with us only offering a 3-year lease. Mr. Piascik mentioned that he hoped to get some funding from the State to subsidize the increase in cost related to split operations.

**AD-HOC Committees** – The Board discussed the actual required quorums based on board vacancies.

**OLD BUSINESS:** Mr. Piascik summarized his discussion with Counsel regarding COVID protocols related to the requirement of vaccines. Counsel recommended developing a policy regardless of our ultimate decision on whether to mandate vaccines. The policy must acknowledge medical and religious exemptions. Mandating vaccines does not require a testing program but in almost every situation where an employer mandates a vaccine it also provides testing for those not obtaining a vaccine. He went through a number concerns with additional turnover and expense related to providing tests. Incentives still require a policy, you have to pay those with vaccines, with exemptions and then those who obtain a vaccine. The Board discussed whether to require vaccines. It was decided that Mr. Piascik would develop a policy statement for the Board to discuss.

Mr. Piascik said that there have been no major conflicts with passengers related to the new No Mask, No Ride policy.

#### **NEW BUSINESS:**

**Board Membership** – Dr. Keene asked the Board for potential candidates to fill the vacancies on the Board. There was discussion of few individuals. The Board asked to send letters out to Board Member representative agencies.

**Committee membership** – Dr. Keene worked through the committee structure and established Mr. Silverman Chair of the Finance Committee, Ms. D’Angelo as Chair of the Service/Pac.

There was a short discussion about the timing of meetings for full board and committees. Committees will be scheduled for the third Thursday of the month at 10 AM and 11 AM respectively. Regular Board Meetings will be scheduled on the fourth Thursday of the month at 12 PM.

Mr. Piascik showed the Board the current Authority organizational structure by displaying Organization Chart. 7 Customer service reps, 37 transit operators and 12 paratransit operators. 6 Mechanics, 2 techs, 2.5 hostlers. The Org Chart ties back the Compensation Plan.

**Triennial Findings** – Mr. Piascik reviewed the findings from the Triennial Review. The legal and procurement findings that will required an updated Procurement Manual. We are trying to respond to everything by the end of December. The heaviest lift are the fixes in our ADA Program that mostly relate to the advertisement/notification of our procedures to the users of our systems. DBE and Title VI findings including not updating our DBE goal in a timely manner, and updating the public participation plan within our Title VI Plan and our EEO program has to be resized to correspond to the size of the Authority.

**RESOLUTION:**

Resolution OCT2021-14 – Award for Independent Auditor Contract

Staff requested to award the audit contract to Mauldin & Jenkins, the incumbent contractor. A motion by Mr. Eickhoff, seconded by Mr. Wallace was approved unanimously.

**GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT:**

Mr. Piascik mentioned that the Vanpool Program is on hold but Mr. Piascik would like implement a program as soon as possible. If the State can come up with some funding then we would try to move forward with a program. Vanpool is part of a litany projects submitted to the State for surplus funding, including split operations (Loris site), radio system, vanpool, replacement of remaining DART buses and facilities.

TASC is working with SCDOT on a statewide Compensation Study and a Transit Financial Analysis.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:** Dr. Keene asked that Board Members review their bios on the Coast RTA website and send in updates.

Mr. Piascik awarded Mr. Eickhoff with a plaque for his service as Chairman.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

There was a motion by Dr. Sheehan and a second by Mr. Eickhoff to adjourn the meeting. A voice vote was taken; no nays being heard the meeting was adjourned at 2:05 PM.