



**WACCAMAW REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY
d/b/a THE COAST RTA
REGULAR BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
Thursday, October 27, 2022
12:00 PM**

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

Staff Present: Brian Piascik, General Manager/CEO
Lauren Morris, PIO
Ron Prater, CFO
Doug Herriott, Transportation Manager
Tom Burda, Maintenance Manager
Candace Brown, Senior Planner/Special Projects
Ann-Martin Buffkin, Board Liaison

Visitors: Robert Pawlowski

In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), the 2022 meeting schedule was provided to the press at the beginning of the 2022 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 October 27, 2022.

CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Keene called the meeting to order at 12:06 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.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: There was a motion by Mr. Eickhoff and a second by Ms. D'Angelo to revise the agenda. Under General Manager's report, item B, the Board is to make a decision on an asset transfer of two 2016 cutaways to PDRTA. The cutaways have met their useful life and there will be no money exchanged. A voice vote was taken; no nays being heard, the motion passed unanimously to accept the agenda as amended.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: There was a motion by Ms. D'Angelo and a second by Mr. Lazzara to approve the September 2022 meeting minutes. A voice vote was taken; no nays being heard, the minutes was approved unanimously.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF VISITORS: Mr. Robert Pawlowski briefly commended Coast RTA for all the hard work in getting the new fare structure rolled out.

FINANCE COMMITTEE: Mr. Silverman summarized the last finance committee meeting agenda. He stated the committee spoke about fare structure and ridership. Ridership is better than expected given the new fare system. The committee also agreed that the budget process should start earlier so that the Board can weigh in and the county can look at the budget before it passed.

Mr. Piascik commended staff on what has been a trying close to the fiscal year. He states this has been stressful and there were findings he wants to share with the Board. He added that these issues would not be a problem going forward as there would be controls implemented to prevent a repeat of these findings. Mr. Piascik recapped these findings in five bullets.

1. Cares Act Funding was not available - there was \$627,000 in Cares Act revenue in the FY22 budget that was not there. It was money spent in FY21 budget that was never removed from the spreadsheet. This explains why we are significantly under budget on revenue for the year and why we are having cash issues.
2. Inventory was understated for the year – This was primarily because the prior maintenance clerk was not processing work orders. This resulted in \$200,000 additional expenses for the year.
3. Delayed fare collection implementation – There was \$150,000 from the budget from fares that never came to fruition. Instead, only a little over \$5,000 was collected.
4. Vehicle availability issues/inflated costs – Good decisions were made to purchase vehicles but the decisions were made with bad information as it relates to our cash position. Additionally, it is presently more expensive to purchase vehicles in a hot used vehicle market.

5. Fuel cost increase – It cost an extra \$40,000 to \$45,000 to maintain fuel.

Mr. Silverman asked how these findings would affect the new budget. Mr. Piascik stated they do not affect it. Revenue is okay in FY23 although most of our efforts would be focused on reducing costs. There are some concerns on our budget for vehicle maintenance and we will need to relook at that area and do a budget revision.

Mr. Piascik stated that from an accounting perspective, we have now set parameters that if inventory does not decrease over a three-month period, we will do a trend analysis to make sure any increases or decreases are documented. Mr. Prater is also adding GL segments to our accounting software, Sage, in order to tie expenses to grants. This will allow reports to track expenses to grant sources. Additionally, work orders will be entered into Ron Turley timely. Ron Turley will be used to its' full potential, which was not the case in the past. Ron Turley automates the entry and exit of parts via barcode, which is not a feature that had been used previously, although training for Ron Turley was provided.

Mr. Silverman asked if there was \$600,000 that we thought we had in the budget that we actually did not have, how did we continue to operate. Mr. Piascik stated that we had \$950,000 in the local government investment pool. Additionally, about two-thirds of that \$600,000 was recovered from other funding sources.

Mr. Piascik explains that given all the data mentioned above, we end FY22 \$207,205 over budget in expenses. On the revenue side, the \$3,482,000 in Total FY22 budget is where the Cares Act money resides. Even though we did not get those funds, that number was pulled in. We end FY22 \$120,922 under budget overall. Mr. Piascik congratulated Mrs. Morris on exceeding bus advertising revenue by \$8,151.

Dr. Sheehan suggested he would like to see a report that distinguishes one time money in our bank account versus money from grants. Mr. Piascik stated that at the next finance committee meeting, we would discuss how we can implement this suggestion. Dr. Sheehan asked if the auditors look at minutes from the board meetings and asked how much the Board is involved when it comes to budgeting. Mr. Piascik said that as part of the audit, the auditors do have a conversation with the Chairman of the Board but most of their time is spent on past accounting.

Mr. Silverman asked in what other ways can expenses be cut, other than cutting/changing service. Mr. Piascik stated that the new service is all about miles and we need to think about how that new service is provided. We have to trim miles out of the system. Service package in December will include what we plan to do when it comes to service changes.

SERVICE/PAC COMMITTEE: Ms. D'Angelo began the meeting by saying they met the prior Wednesday. The meeting discussions included: fare updates, Littlepay, RAISE grant, transfer center, site problems and possible new site.

Mr. Piascik presented numbers for fare collections. Total ridership to date is 47,716 trips on the system and 5,659 are taps. Total revenue, including tap revenue is \$36,373. This shows we have approximately 10,000 free rides in system that we have to investigate. To date, we have had only three complaints. Additionally, the validator noise when it declines a tap versus when it approves a tap is too similar so we are going to have KubPay update the sound. Mr. Sheehan asked that when the numbers are run for the next service meeting, to include numbers that eliminate Littlepay startup dates.

As far as facility update, Mr. Piascik explains we have an imminently fundable project and it is just a matter of landing it. We are also working the parcel at every angle and he has a meeting with City October 28, 2022 to talk about options.

Mr. Piascik summarized system ridership. He stated Routes 1, 2, 3 are back to pre-COVID levels; routes 7, 4 and 16 have seen a significant increase and route 17 and Paratransit are seeing very good growth. Route 10 is the biggest winner as it relates to ridership. Route 15S is a problem child and is an area we should look in to as a possible service change/improvement. The entire system has done pretty well in FY22 versus FY21 and FY19. Ridership went from 556,010 in FY19 to 621,165 in FY22, which is an 11.7% increase. Our costs per hour in transit went down from \$96.89 in FY19 to \$95.13 in FY22. That is putting more service hours on the street without increasing our expenses. Our system ridership is truly maturing and improving since September 2022.

COMPENSATION COMMITTEE: Dr. Sheehan stated that the committee has met, data has been entered, and copies have been distributed. A recommendation has been made and accepted. Paperwork was signed and we are now in fiscal year 2023.

AD HOC COMMITTEES: None

OLD BUSINESS: None

NEW BUSINESS: None

GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT:

Motion: A motion by Ms. D'Angelo and seconded by Dr. Sheehan to approve Resolution # Oct 2022-01 – Transfer of vehicles to PDRTA. A voice vote was taken; no nays being heard, the resolution passed unanimously to approve the transfer of vehicles to PDRTA.

Mrs. Morris gave a presentation of updates from the Sunshine Service. The presentation recapped goals from phase one. We created a service vision, communication plan, job descriptions, and training. Phase two identified easy wins, developed new training platforms, re-instituted State of Coast meetings as well as created an internal Facebook group. Nicholas Twigg suggested attaching metrics to the goals related to Solar Panel in order to see the effectiveness of the program. Creating the new fare collection system stemmed from the SWOT analysis and has now been implemented. Additionally, we have a new employee evaluation process, implemented new trainings, updated our employee handbook and increased communications via monthly staff meetings. Finally, we also have a new logo. Up next will be phase three, which includes marketing signage, rewards and recognition launch, expanded training programs for supervisors, branding style guide, standards of service and enhance quality assurance. Mr. Silverman suggested a secret shopper program, which is included in phase three goals.

The Board requested a copy of the updated job descriptions.

FOR THE GOOD OF THE ORDER: None

ANNOUNCEMENTS: None.

ADJOURNMENT: There was a motion by Mr. Wallace and a second by Mr. Eickhoff to adjourn the meeting. Dr. Keene adjourned the meeting at 1:53 PM.