

Lowcountry RTA Board Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date: September 23, 2021.

Location: Palmetto Breeze Transit office at 25 Benton Field Rd, Bluffton, SC 29910

I. Call to Order

Chair Susan Zellman called the meeting to order at 2:09 pm.

II. The Invocation was said by Ms. Childs

III. Pledge of Allegiance

IV. Roll Call

Present:

Ms. Susan Zellman, Chair, Beaufort County
Ms. Barbara Childs, Vice Chair, Beaufort County
Mr. Rick Hamilton, Beaufort County -Zoom
Mr. Chris Bickley, Colleton County - Zoom
Mr. Darrell Russell, Hampton County - Zoom
Ms. Louise Pinkney, Allendale County - Zoom
Ms. Stephanie Rossi, Lowcountry Council of Governments
Mr. Charles Mitchell, Jasper County -Zoom

Others in attendance:

Ms. Mary Lou Franzoni, LRTA Executive Director
Mr. Detimex Stanley, LRTA Director of Maintenance
Mr. Theodis Jackson, LRTA Director of Operations
Mr. Brian Sullivan, LRTA Director of Marketing and Communications
Ms. Kerry Guzman, LRTA Human Resources and Payroll Administrator
Mr. Henry Criss, LRTA Director of Finance and Administration
Ms. Cavada Russell, LRTA Office Administrator
Ms. Laura Atkinson, LRTA Mobility Manager
Ms. Yazmin Winston-Black, LRTA Director of Safety and Training
Ms. Lily Crosman, LRTA Staff Accountant
Mr. Scott Donahue, SCDOT via Zoom

V. Welcome

There were no members of the public present.

VI. Recognition

Drivers of the Month: **July - Leander Myers**
August – Shantell Wilson

VII. Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Ms. Childs to approve the minutes from the Special Board meeting held on July 27, 2021. Mr. Russell seconded the motion. A motion was made by Mr. Hamilton to approve the minutes of the Board meeting held on July 28, 2021. Mr. Mitchell seconded the motion. Both motions carried unanimously.

VIII. Action Items

None

IX. Informational Items

1. Director's Report

This seasons Trolley ridership was just over 52,000 passengers as opposed to pre Covid in which the highest year was 15,000 riders. The addition of the second route as well as the record number of visitors to Hilton Head were contributing factors. Ms. Franzoni recognized Mr. Criss for being awarded the Certified Government Financial Manager Certificate by the Association of Government Accounting. Mr. Sullivan, Director of Marketing, produced and distributed a total of 40,000 schedules for the trolleys during our four months of active service. There was a five hundred percent increase in website activity over the last couple of years. Video monitors were added to each of the four trolleys as a tool to give riders some history about the island and to also give information about current events taking place in the area. Forty-three bus stop signs have been erected along the Bluffton and Buckwalter Parkways for the new Bluffton Breeze service. A Virtual Triennial Review was done by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) in July. The review covered 2017- 2020. The majority of the findings dealt with procurement. Recommendations are to take procurement training, redo the policy on procurement, and address other items in the report. The deadline to complete recommendations is December 7, 2021.

2. Finance Director's Report

Mr. Criss stated that there were no findings related to financial management during the Triennial Review and attributed this success to the hard work of the finance and administration team. Ms. Lily Crosman was introduced to the Board as the new Staff Accountant. The reports for the financial statements for the fiscal year of 2020-2021 included a breakdown of operating expenses for Rural and Urban service. Chair Zellman stated that the breakdown with Urban and Rural will be helpful in our strategic planning. Mr. Criss presented the financial statements for July and August. Mr. Criss pointed out that the statements reflect a deficit due to the fact that we have not received the SCDOT reimbursement for July and August, however those funds are expected soon which will offset the indicated deficit.

3. Chairperson's Report

Chair Zellman commented on how well the ribbon cutting event for the Bluffton Breeze went. She gave recognition to attendees which included The Greater Bluffton Chamber of Commerce, Mr. Logan Cunningham, County Council member and manager of the Station 300 restaurant, and

Bridgette Frazier, Bluffton County Council. Mr. Cunningham spoke at the event expressing his interest in the Bluffton Breeze and how it will be a resource for his employees. Chair Zellman informed everyone that she was in attendance at the Lowcountry Area Transportation Study (LATS) meeting. She met with Mr. Sullivan to discuss the story cards for Palmetto Breeze. They agreed that the card would be used to hand out to perspective stakeholders, partners in the community, and potential employees.

4. **Committee/Project Reports**

- **Operations Committee**

The Operations Committee was unable to meet due to scheduling conflicts. Ms. Franzoni stated that the operations team spent a lot of time keeping the trolleys running as well as starting the Bluffton Breeze and everyone did a great job working as a team. Ms. Franzoni stated that the phone system was replaced.

- **Maintenance Committee**

Mr. Russell stated that everything was fine with the reports. He stated that there were some concerns with broken brackets on some of the buses and the response from Mr. Stanley was more than adequate. Mr. Russell pointed out that there were two months of positive preventative maintenance.

- **Finance Committee**

Mr. Hamilton stated that the Finance Committee conducted a series of phone calls and in-person meetings during late July and early August in order to prepare for the recent audit.

X. **Old Business**

1. **Grant Opportunity:**

Palmetto Breeze did not get selected for the grant opportunity with RTAP for the planning study to improve service in northern Beaufort County. Ms. Franzoni stated that she plans to look into other grant opportunities.

2. **Triennial Reviews:**

Deadline for corrections is December 7, 2021. A final report will be issued by the first of the year.

3. **The Bluffton Breeze:**

Began service on September 7 and runs from 7am-6pm Monday thru Friday. The service is fare free until January 1, 2022.

4. **Retreat Planning:**

Reservations have been made for Sergeant Jasper Park for October 28, 2021 from 9:30am to 4:00pm. The Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA) has agreed to provide a facilitator.

5. **Sale of Property:**

The sale of the property on Argent Road has been canceled due to the potential buyer, Carolina Investment South, wanting to negotiate a \$75,000 price reduction. The property has been placed back on the market.

6. **Lowcountry Area Transportation Study (LATS) Update:**

Ms. Rossi informed the Board that Lowcountry Council of Governments (LCOG) applied for a grant to pair with the National Rural Transportation Assistance Program (RTAP) efforts through the National Aging and Disability Transportation Center. If awarded, the planning grant offers \$20,000.00 in funding. Awardees would then get \$50,000 for implementation. LCOG is looking at the Hampton area. LCOG is updating their Long-Range Transportation Plan. The LCOG held several stake holder meetings in August and September. A public meeting was also held during the first week in September. Ms. Rossi stated that transportation survey was launched and that they are looking for as much participation from the public as possible. Selections were made for the 5310 rural area funds and everyone that applied was funded. It will go to the Commission on October 21st for the final approval. The next LATS meeting will be held on October 1st.

XI. New Business

Due to Allendale County's recent budget cuts, we are not certain if they will make contributions for the Palmetto Breeze services they receive for the fiscal year 2022. Ms. Franzoni stated that the issue will be revisited to find out what the outcome will look like moving forward.

XII. Next Steps/ Summary of To Do Items

1. Ms. Franzoni will continue to look for grants for The North of the Broad Services.
2. Staff will attend Procurement Training
3. The Board of Directors will plan to ride on the Bluffton Breeze prior to the next Board meeting.
4. Chair Zellman will contact the Lowcountry Presbyterian Church about putting information about Bluffton Breeze in their bulletin.
5. Chair Zellman, Ms. Franzoni, and Mr. Bickley are going to meet again regarding the Retreat.
6. Chair Zellman has an October 1, 2021. LATS meeting.
7. Ms. Franzoni will continue to follow up on State Mass Transit Funds (SMTF) funds for Allendale.
8. Ms. Pinkney is going to follow up with Allendale County council members to get an update on funding.

9. Board members are to complete the transportation survey.

VII. Announcements

None

XIV. Adjournment

Ms. Childs motioned to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Russell seconded. There was a unanimous vote to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 3:12pm.

Next Meeting:

Tuesday, November 30, 2021 at 2:00 p.m.

Virtual Meeting