



**LOWCOUNTRY REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY
BOARD OF DIRECTOR'S MEETING**

**Wednesday, September 27, 2023
2:00 P.M.**

Meeting Conducted via Zoom Online Meetings

**Lowcountry Regional Transportation Authority
25 Benton Field Road
Bluffton, S.C. 29910**

MINUTES

I. CALL TO ORDER

Board Vice Chair, Barbara Childs, called the meeting to order at 2:05 P.M.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE AND INVOCATION

Board Member Robinson gave the invocation and Director of Maintenance Chris Dreisbach led the pledge of allegiance.

III. FOIA

Public notification of this meeting has been published, posted, and distributed in compliance with the South Carolina Freedom of Information Act.

IV. ROLL CALL OF BOARD MEMBERS AND RECOGNITION OF STAFF PRESENT

Board Members Present via ZOOM: Representing Beaufort County: Vice Chair Barbara Childs, Henry Criss, and Art Handman; representing Hampton County: Laura Atkinson; representing Allendale County: William Robinson; and representing Lowcountry Council of Governments: Stephanie Rossi.

Board Chair: Representing Jasper County: Board Chair Charles Mitchell, arrived at 2:25 p.m.

Board Members Absent: Latosia Simmons, representing Colleton County

Staff Members Present: Mary Lou Franzoni, Executive Director; Kristine Hepburn, Director of Finance & Administration; Tori Mitchell, Director of Operations; Chris Dreisbach, Director of Maintenance, Charles Cattell, Safety and Training Manager, Karen Morales, Mobility Manager and Carolyn Rollins, Operations Manager.

V. WELCOME

Board Vice Chair Childs welcomed all Board members.

VI. PUBLIC FORUM

Beaufort County Council liaison Thomas Reitz joined the meeting.

VII. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

JULY 26, 2023, Board Meeting

Motion: Board Member Childs moved that the minutes from the July 26, 2023, Board meeting be approved. The motion was seconded by Board Member Handman.

Vote: The motion was carried unanimously.

VIII. RECOGNITION OF DRIVER OF THE MONTH

Executive Director Mary Lou Franzoni recognized **Ms. Sally Boyce** as Employee of the Month for July, and **Ms. Alison Kogar** as the Employee of the Month for August.

IX. ACTION ITEMS

n/a

X. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

a. **Executive Director's Report** – Highlights for July and August included:

Ms. Franzoni reported that the audit is proceeding on schedule as we have submitted all requested documentation. She discussed the marketing promotions for the Breeze Trolley including the “Breeze Trolley ROCKS!” campaign. This campaign is back for the second year and has grown in popularity. Riders’ paint and hide rocks along the trolley route. Once

a rock is found, the finder posts on the Trolley Facebook page. The finder may keep or re-hide the rock. The prizes from local businesses are awarded to the participants with the most posts. The event was included in the Town of HHI's 360/40 Celebration events. Another very popular offering was the "Trolley Tip Tuesday" with a listing of what is happening on the island for the week.

Ms. Franzoni reported that she presented an overview of services offered at the Bluffton Town Council meeting in early August. Ms. Franzoni and Ms. Hepburn met with John Robinson, Interim Beaufort County Administrator, to discuss the shortfall in the local match payment from Beaufort County. The local match request for the new year was not fulfilled as requested. An explanation for the increase as well as the possibility of service cuts was discussed. We were given assurance that Beaufort County would fulfill the original request for local match.

- b. Finance Director's Report** – Ms. Hepburn presented a summary of financial reports for the most recent period. The Finance Department is keeping close tabs on revenue and expenses. Local match revenue is slow coming in but FTA and SCDOT funds are on track. The Finance team is finalizing the audit and the current 5307 grant is in the final approval process. If anyone has further questions, please email Ms. Hepburn.
- c. Board Chair's Report** – Nothing to report.

XI.12. OLD BUSINESS

- a. LATS Update** – Stephanie Rossi from the Lowcountry Council of Governments provided an update for the next LATS meeting scheduled for October 6, 2023, at 9:30 a.m. Ms. Rossi stated that they are updating the Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) and had reached out to Ms. Franzoni for updated numbers through 2033. She noted that it is very easy to amend the TIP as conditions change.

Ms. Rossi provided an update on the potential for a new MPO for the newly recognized small urban area in Beaufort/Port Royal. She stated that all municipalities in the new urbanized area have passed resolutions to remain with LATS, so a consolidated MPO should be the approved go-forward motion, facilitating a more coordinated regional transportation plan.

- b. Benton Field Road Repair Update** – The work is scheduled to begin in early October. Thank you to Board member Handman for advocating to move this project to this year with the County Transportation Committee (CTC) that he is a member of.
- c. APTA EXPO October 9, 10, and 11** – The APTA Expo is returning to Orlando. The EXPO is every 3 years and showcases the latest in vehicles, amenities, software solutions, and parts vendors. It is a great opportunity to evaluate new products and

vendors. There is no charge for the EXPO, so let me know if any Board member would like to attend.

d. Northern Beaufort Transit Study

Ms. Franzoni reported that Ms. Sabrina Graham from LCOG has sent letters to the City of Beaufort, the Town of Port Royal, and Beaufort County requesting the match for the study. Once the match is confirmed, the RFP will be released and we will begin the study.

XII.

13. NEW BUSINESS

- a. **Bluffton Breeze Okatie Route** – On October 2, we are adding the Okatie Route to the existing Bluffton Breeze service. In addition, the middle of the day service that was cut earlier in the year due to a shortage of drivers, was restored. The additional route will attract riders from an area that we receive many requests for service. In the interest of removing all barriers to trying the public transit service, the fares have been waived for 6 months.
- b. **Personnel Changes** – Tori Mitchell has been promoted from Assistant Director of Operations to Director of Operations; Charles Cattell has shifted from Director of Operations to Safety & Training Manager, Carolyn Robbins has been promoted from Driver Supervisor to Operations Manager, and Linda Norton promoted from Dispatcher to Lead Dispatcher.
- c. **Local Match Requirement Discussion** – Ms. Franzoni emphasized how important the local match is to the continuity of services that are provided. Our funding is on a reimbursement basis, at varying percentages. For example, Operations are reimbursed at 50% of allowable costs after deducting fare revenue, Capital is reimbursed at 80%, and Administration is reimbursed through the application of the indirect cost rate. Not having enough local match can result in reduction of service as we cannot incur costs that do not have local funds available.

XIII. Announcements

There were no announcements.

XIV. Adjournment

Board Vice Chair Childs made a motion to adjourn which was seconded by Board Member Robinson. The motion carried unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 2:53 P.M.

**NEXT LRTA Board Meeting: Wednesday, November 29, 2023 at Palmetto Breeze with
Committee Meetings prior to Meeting. Deadline for Agenda Items: November 17, 2023**