

Lowcountry RTA Board Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date: June 10, 2020

Location: Teleconference Call with LRTA Board Members and Palmetto Breeze staff at 25 Benton Field Rd, Bluffton, SC 29910

Call to Order

Chair Susan Zellman called the meeting to order at 2:03 pm.

The invocation was said by Ms. Childs and Mr. Russell led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call

Present:

Ms. Susan Zellman, Chair, Beaufort County

Mr. Rick Hamilton, Beaufort County

Ms. Barbara Childs, Vice Chair, Beaufort County

Mr. Chris Bickley, Colleton County

Mr. Darrell Russell, Hampton County

Ms. Ginnie Kozak, Lowcountry Council of Governments and LATS (ex-officio)

Absent:

Ms. Louise Pinkney, Allendale County

Others in attendance:

Ms. Mary Lou Franzoni, LRTA Executive Director

Ms. LaToya Wiley, LRTA Director of Finance and Administration

Mr. Detimex Stanley, LRTA Director of Maintenance

Mr. Ronald McElhose, LRTA Director of Operations

Ms. Yazmin Winston Black, LRTA Director of Safety and Training

Mr. Brian Sullivan, LRTA Director of Marketing and Communications (via telephone)

Ms. Kerry Guzman, LRTA Human Resources and Payroll Administrator

Ms. Laura Atkinson, LRTA Mobility Manager

Mr. Scott Donahue, SCDOT

Ms. Zellman welcomed everyone to the special meeting and noted that all Board Members were remote via Zoom to respect safety measures put in place regarding the coronavirus. She thanked everyone for participating. The meeting was being broadcast live via the Palmetto Breeze Facebook page to allow the public the opportunity to listen to the meeting. The public is invited to make comments via Facebook and responses would be sent after the meeting. She asked that all who responded with a comment, motion or second motion to please state their name before responding.

Guests and Public Forum

There were no guests or members of the public.

Approval of Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes from April 15, 2020 was made by Mr. Hamilton and seconded by Mr. Bickley. The motion carried.

Action Items

Finance Committee Report re: Budget and Discussion and Approval of 2020 Budget:

Mr. Hamilton expressed his appreciation to the staff for working with him and Ms. Childs in looking at the financials. Mr. Hamilton stated to the board members that it has been an interesting time that we have seen a lot of evolution in the last four years at LRTA. Employee driven management has replaced contract management and we have new and rebuilt equipment and facilities acquired through available grant opportunities. There has been reorganization and refocus of administration, expansion of operations and maintenance teams to improve their work flow and processes. There have been upgrades of automated systems including accounting and finance. And unfortunately, windstorms, pandemic and turnover. The budgeting process has evolved as well. In operations, this excludes capital expense, the 2019-2020 budget was \$3.7 million with a seven-page presentation and focused on grant allocations. The financial results which are based on May 31, 2019-2020 results show us to be for the same figure, \$3.6 million expected actual. The presentation was compressed to about one to two pages of very significant information. There was accompanying information that includes additional expense categories and information about grant allocation review. The 2020-2021 fiscal period budget is for the same operations expense, \$3.8 million, with a process underway to revise allocation formulas. To go from a \$3.7 million budget, \$3.6 million actual to \$3.8 million budget shows how well LRTA is and has weathered the past years. Managements budget request is complete and the result appears in line with prior budget and the projected result for the current fiscal year. One another remark is on capital expenditures, currently the last number Mr. Hamilton saw which is driven by current need and grant availability, was \$149,000. The committee has left to say nothing more than the recommendation is for approval.

Ms. Childs stated that she was having technical difficulties accessing her information. She stated that Mr. Hamilton had to do the major work. She thanked him for doing that.

Ms. Franzoni stated that this year's budget was a challenge as we had turnover in the department with both the Director and the Grants & Compliance Administrator leaving in December. The previous Finance Director did not leave a file with the breakdown into the line items that are in this year's budget or even in last year's budget. He never input that into the financials with the detail into the computer system. When we tried to look at last years and compare line by line, the detail amounts, we didn't have that breakdown. This made year to year comparison very challenging. The format is a different format and one LRTA modeled after Coast RTA. They have been a huge help with all our plans. Brian Piascik has been very helpful and patient and has really helped us understand these concepts and to get them into our processes. Ms. Wiley was supposed to go to Coast in March to learn from them, however Covid came and that training did not happen. SCDOT was also planning on having Ms. Wiley come and understand SCDOT processes but again due to COVID, Ms. Wiley was not able to attend. Ms. Franzoni stated that we are very happy to be using this new format. What is different about this format is that this is now one budget. The budget is allocated between rural and urban and based on revenue miles. Ms. Atkinson using Syncromatics software is able to breakdown all the miles in just a few hours. We

applied the indirect cost rate. Those are the things that are different this year. It wasn't changed just for the sake of changing but it was needed for us to continue on our evolution to an urban/rural system. Ms. Franzoni asked if there were any questions or comments. There were none so the conversation was turned over to Ms. Wiley.

Ms. Childs then asked about the line item called Other – Goodwill for \$4,000. She asked for an example. Ms. Franzoni stated that it is used for things that are non-reimbursable. The company luncheon for the staff in December is one of those items.

Ms. Zellman asked if there were any comments about the process. Ms. Zellman stated that Ms. Franzoni and Ms. Wiley had done a wonderful job. Ms. Zellman asked how they felt moving forward. Ms. Wiley stated that moving forward it will be a better process, much easier. The new budget is almost like a road map and it will help us answer questions throughout the year. Ms. Zellman made a general comment about how it was nice to have a budget and allocated the way it was done.

Ms. Zellman thanked the Finance Committee, Mr. Hamilton and Ms. Childs. She also thanked Ms. Franzoni and Ms. Wiley. Ms. Zellman asked if there was a motion to approve the budget.

Mr. Russell made a motion to approve the budget. Mr. Bickley seconded the motion. Ms. Zellman asked for any further discussion and there was none. A roll call was done for approval and it was unanimously approved.

Ms. Kozak stated that in her memory that this is the first time the budget was done correctly and easy to understand and one that can be reviewed as we go.

Mr. Bickley stated that the challenge now is the execution and consistency both in operational and reporting. He commended everyone on getting the job and that he is thankful. He looks forward to having the same Finance Director at LRTA this time next year.

By-laws:

Ms. Zellman asked Ms. Childs to give a summary of the items that have been updated. Ms. Childs stated that she removed the Citizens Advisory Committee section and reduced the entire document wording to single spaced. The numbering of the articles was updated and adjusted the Table of Contents accordingly. Ms. Zellman asked if Ms. Childs updated the ad hoc committee section and Ms. Childs said she added the “as needed” sentence to the section. Ms. Zellman asked if there were any questions or comments. Ms. Zellman asked if we were ready to move forward with the by-laws. Mr. Hamilton said he was ready. Mr. Bickley stated he did not feel ready but did not want to stand in the way of the rest of the group if they did feel ready. Ms. Zellman asked why he didn't feel ready. Mr. Bickley said because Ms. Zellman and Ms. Childs have spent more time on it than he had. He stated that was his fault and he would like to read through them again. He did not want to be the hold up on it. Mr. Hamilton said this would move us forward. Mr. Bickley agreed with Mr. Hamilton. Mr. Russell asked if we were reserving the Citizens Advisory Committee for a future use under ad hoc. Ms. Zellman stated that we are not including it in the by-laws. Ms. Zellman stated that they double checked the code for notifications for emergency meetings. Mr. Russell does not see a problem with passing these by-laws and appreciates all the work that has been put into it. Ms. Zellman asked for a motion to approve the 2020 by-laws. Mr. Hamilton made a motion to approve. Mr. Russell seconded the motion. Ms. Zellman asked for any further discussion and there was none. A roll call was done for approval and it was unanimously approved. Ms. Zellman stated that the signature page will need to get around. Ms. Childs asked if

the new board member should be added. Ms. Zellman stated that he didn't vote on the by-laws. Ms. Childs asked if that space should remain vacant on the signature page. Ms. Zellman stated that it is an approval page. Ms. Childs said she would update the front page to state "June". Ms. Zellman thanked Ms. Childs and Mr. Hamilton for working on this project. She stated that Ms. Franzoni had found the charter and Ms. Childs stated that worked well for them. Ms. Zellman asked Ms. Franzoni if she was comfortable with the by-laws because she had not commented on it. Ms. Franzoni stated that the by-laws are more of a board document and the only struggle she feels, that she will work on, is the packet in the time frame required. Ms. Zellman said that sending the agenda out early and then the rest of the documents is an option. Ms. Zellman asked everyone to notify her as to when their committee meetings are.

Ms. Kozak said good-bye and that it was good to see LRTA moving forward and a board that is motivated and informed.

Adjournment

Mr. Bickley motioned for the meeting to be adjourned. Ms. Childs seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously. Chair Zellman declared the meeting adjourned at 2:45pm.