



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

**Wednesday, November 29, 2023
2:00 P.M.**

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

MINUTES

I. CALL TO ORDER

Board Chair, Charles Mitchell called the meeting to order at 2:02 p.m.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE AND INVOCATION

Board member Henry Criss gave the invocation and 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: Representing Beaufort County: Vice Chair Barbara Childs, Henry Criss, and Art Handman; Representing Jasper County: Board Chair Charles Mitchell, Representing Hampton County: Laura Atkinson; representing Allendale County: William Robinson; Representing Colleton County Latosia Simmons and representing Lowcountry Council of Governments: Stephanie Rossi.

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; Brian Sullivan, Director of Marketing; Lily Crosman, Accounts Receivable; Linda Norton, Lead Dispatcher.

V. WELCOME

Chairman Charles Mitchell welcomed all Board members, staff and guests to the meeting.

1. Public Forum: No members of the public request to speak
2. Mauldin & Jenkins – Annual Audit Presentation - Trey Scott from Maudlin & Jenkins CPA & Advisors presented the findings for the 2023 Annual Audit & Compliance Report. He reported a clean audit and compliance report without compliance or audit errors, deficiencies, or violations and no difficulties or disagreements dealing with management.

Mr. Scott also provided an overview of the authority's financial statements for the 2023 fiscal year in which he reported a net position of \$1.9 million which includes \$10.7 million in assets and deferred outflows and \$8.8 million in liabilities and deferred inflows, \$7.1 million of noncurrent liabilities.

Mr. Scott reported an increase in net position of \$300,000 from the prior year including \$6.2 million in non-operational revenue from federal and state grants and \$400,000 in operating revenue with \$6.3 million in total operating expenses.

Mr. Scott also reported \$.4 million in cash at year end, a \$.2 million decrease from the previous year. He further reported that of the \$6.2 million revenue from federal and state grants, \$4.8 million was used for operating activities and \$1.6 million was used to purchase capital assets.

VI. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

September 27, 2023 Board Meeting

Motion: Board member Henry Criss moved that the minutes from the September 27, 2023, Board meeting be approved. The motion was seconded by Allendale County representative, William Robinson.

Vote: The motion was carried unanimously.

October 12, 2023 Special Meeting

Motion: Board member Robinson moved that the minutes from the September 27, 2023, Board meeting be approved. The motion was seconded by Board member Criss.

Vote: The motion was carried unanimously.

VII. RECOGNITION OF DRIVER OF THE MONTH

Executive Director Mary Lou Franzoni recognized **Rene Smith** as Employee of the Month for September, and **Glenda Johnson** as the Employee of the Month for October.

VIII. ACTION ITEMS

The revised Finance Manual was approved and signed by all present board members.

IX. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

a. Executive Director's Report – Highlights for September and October included:

Executive Director, Mary Lou Franzoni reported that Dianne Lackey will be the new SCDOT representative for Lowcountry RTA. The old representative, Scott Donahue, has accepted the position as Asset Manager at SCDOT.

Ms. Franzoni gave a status update on the 2023 Hilton Head Trolley season and reported a route change for the 2024 season to include a loop from Stop 2, King Neptune at the Shelter Cove Marina, to Stop 1, Shelter Cove Towne Center.

Ms. Franzoni provided an overview of community outreach projects that took place during September and October which included informational presentations to educate the public on transit and the Second Helpings program, which celebrated its sixth year of partnering with the authority to provide groceries once a week to the passengers.

The director gave an overview of the special trips and services that the authority provided for our partners during September and October and included the Bluffton Arts and Seafood Festival and the Folly Beach Shuttle for the Town of Hilton Head.

Ms. Franzoni gave an update on the Haig Point Ferry contract termination. She reported that Haig Point must vacate Buckingham Landing by January 1, 2024 and the contract will be awarded to a new company. She advised that ferry operations will move to the Broad Creek Marina once construction on the dock and parking area is complete.

Ms. Franzoni closed out her report by calling attention to Maintenance Director, Chris Dreisbach by noting that the authority had zero road calls in October and that vehicle repairs have been taken over by Cummins in Summerville because of service deficiencies at the Savannah location.

b. Finance Director's Report – Ms. Hepburn provided a summary of financial reports for the most recent period. The Finance team has begun working on the FY25 budget.

Director Franzoni reported that the Beaufort County Accommodations Tax Board has not disbursed funds to date and that if the authority is to receive any funds they will be disbursed in December.

- c. **Board Chair's Report** – Mr. Mitchell congratulated the staff on their hard work and encouraged board members to ride the bus and learn more about operations at Palmetto Breeze.

d. Committee/Project Reports

i. Operations Committee – William Robinson, Laura Atkinson

Board member Atkinson provided a summary of accidents and complaints during the most recent period:

September: Board member Atkinson reported there was one (1) preventative accident and one (1) non-preventative accident during September. She further reported that there were multiple complaints citing missed stops on the Walterboro route. The driver was counselled, and the route has been updated and the schedule posted online.

October: Board member Atkinson reported there were two (2) preventable accidents in October in which a non-revenue vehicle rear ended another vehicle. The vehicle was towed, and the driver(s) involved were drug tested. The second preventable accident involved a hit and run side swipe accident in which another vehicle hit an authority vehicle and fled the scene. She stated that there were two (2) complaints about reckless driving. One of the drivers involved has resigned.

Board member Atkinson reported that the Operations Team ran a distracted driving campaign in which drivers and staff signed a pledge to not use cell phones while operating a vehicle. Drivers who pledged received a gift card. She reports that twenty-two drivers took the pledge.

ii. Maintenance Committee – Charles Mitchell, Henry Criss

Board member Criss reported that documentation of vehicle and facility maintenance was impressive and on time. He congratulated Director Dreisbach on zero road calls.

iii. Finance Committee- Barbara Childs, Art Handman

Board member Handman congratulated Director Hepburn and the Financial Team on a successful audit. He noted no discrepancies or errors in the financial documents for the past three (3) months.

X. OLD BUSINESS

- a. LATS Update** – Stephanie Rossi from the Lowcountry Council of Governments provided an update and reported the next LATS meeting will be held Friday, December 1, 2023 at 9 a.m. She stated that they are updating the transportation improvement program and asked the board to approve releasing the draft for public comment so that adjustments can be made before the final draft is due in February.
- b. Argent Road Property** – Ms. Franzoni provided an update on the sale of the Argent Road property. She stated that the 30-day inspection period has passed and that she has been asked to provide a resolution that gives her the authority to sign the closing documents. She estimates that closing will take place within 30 days.
- c. Bluffton Breeze Update** – Ms. Franzoni provided an update on the Bluffton Breeze expansion and reported that ridership has doubled since the introduction of the new Okatie segment of the Bluffton Breeze. She reported that Marketing Director, Brian Sullivan has been working with Staying Connected Sun City, a volunteer organization that assists Sun City residents with transportation to medical appointments and shopping centers, to coordinate transportation of residents to access the Bluffton Breeze.
- d. Northern Beaufort Transit Study** – Ms. Rossi from the Lowcountry Council of Governments gave an overview of the SCDOT approval process and reports that she is waiting for approval before she can move to the next step in completing the study. She further reported that she has received signed local match commitments from the City of Beaufort and the Town of Port Royal. She advised that Beaufort County is completing the approval process in November and that she does not anticipate any problems receiving approval.

XI. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Holiday Luncheon** – The holiday dinner for board members will not occur this year. All members are invited to attend the annual Christmas luncheon on December 13, 2023 at 12:30 p.m. at the Palmetto Breeze Annex.
- b. Benton Field Road Improvements** – Ms. Franzoni stated that Thomas Concrete has resumed operations and that road improvements have not been completed at this time. She stated that she has notified Kraig Gordon that operations have resumed at Thomas Concrete but that no work has been done on the road.
- c. Nominating Committee Appointments-** Board Chair Mitchell appointed Board members Criss and Atkinson to the committee.

XII. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Ms. Franzoni notified the board of a potential grievance at the next board meeting on January 24, 2023.

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

Board Chair Mitchell made a motion to adjourn which was seconded by Board Member Atkinson. The motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 2:50 p.m.

NEXT LRTA Board Meeting: Wednesday, January 31, 2023 at 2:00 p.m. via Zoom with the Deadline for Agenda Items: January 12, 2023