

Lowcountry RTA Board Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date: March 24, 2021

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 2:07 pm.

The invocation was said by Mr. Hamilton and Chair Zellman 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. Louise Pinkney, Allendale County
Mr. Charles Mitchell, Jasper County (Arrived at 2:30pm)
Ms. Stephanie Rossi, Lowcountry Council of Governments

Others in attendance:

Ms. Mary Lou Franzoni, LRTA Executive Director
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
Ms. Kerry Guzman, LRTA Human Resources and Payroll Administrator
Ms. Laura Atkinson, LRTA Mobility Manager
Mr. Henry Criss, LRTA Director of Finance and Administration
Ms. Cavada Russell, LRTA Office Administrator
Mr. Scott Donahue, SCDOT
Mr. Trey Scott, Mauldin & Jenkins

Ms. Childs welcomed everyone 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.

Mr. Scott discussed the audit that was completed. He referenced the Auditor's Discussion and Analysis packet for most of the conversation. LRTA was issued a clean, unmodified opinion with

no findings. He also discussed the single audit results from the federal grant programs. There were no issues or findings from the single audit. There was one recommendation for improvement and that has already been implemented by management. Chair Zellman asked if any of the training offered by Mauldin & Jenkins would be beneficial for board members. Mr. Scott stated that some are and will put Mr. Criss on the email list and he can send out the training invites. Mr. Bickley asked Mr. Hamilton and Ms. Childs if they had spent any extra time on the reports. Mr. Hamilton stated that the Finance Committee had met last week with Mr. Criss. Chair Zellman thanked Mr. Scott. Mr. Bickley asked Mr. Scott if there was anything about the finances that he thinks the board needs to know. Mr. Scott stated that there was nothing that was giving him a cause for a concern. Chair Zellman asked Ms. Franzoni and Mr. Criss if they had any comments. Ms. Franzoni commended the finance team for all their hard work. Mr. Criss also commended the finance team for their teamwork and all hands-on deck attitude. Mr. Criss discussed the recommendations and how the team is already implementing the changes. Chair Zellman asked Mr. Scott how long he had been LRTA's auditor. Mr. Scott said Mauldin & Jenkins has been the authority's auditor since 2016. Mr. Bickley asked how many years we had left on our current contract. Mr. Scott said this year was the last year. Mr. Criss said we had gone out to bid for new services and we intend to award to Mauldin & Jenkins as they are a lower bid. There was discussion as to the board being involved in the procurement process of the auditing firms.

Mr. Bickley motioned to approve the information submitted by Mauldin & Jenkins. Mr. Hamilton seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Guests and Public Forum

There were no guests or members of the public.

Approval of Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes from January 27, 2021 was made by Ms. Childs and seconded by Mr. Hamilton. Ms. Pinkney abstained from voting. The motion carried with 6 ayes, zero nays, and one abstention.

Discussion Items

1. Board Attendance and Bylaws: Chair Zellman brought to the board's attention the section in the by-laws about attendance. Chair Zellman asked Ms. Franzoni to send out the attendance to each appointing body after the May meeting. Chair Zellman and Ms. Childs drafted a letter to send to members who are not attending as many meetings as needed. Chair Zellman did not ask for a vote but for a general consensus that she and Ms. Childs can send out the letter if needed.
2. Conflict of Interest Reaffirmation: Ms. Franzoni stated that this is done annually and asked everyone to please send to her by email or by mail.
3. FOIA Policy: Ms. Franzoni stated that while we follow FOIA guidelines we do not have an official policy. A policy has now been developed. It does not need to be voted on.

Informational Items

1. Ms. Franzoni provided the Executive Director's report. Highlights included:

- February 2021 compared to February 2020 we are showing a 14.5% decrease in ridership. This is due to places still not being open from the pandemic.
 - We are acquiring new software for the Finance Department. Blackbaud was purchased over 10 years ago and doesn't fit our needs. We chose a vendor from a consortium that is similar to a state contract purchase. Mr. Bickley asked how the staff felt with the change. Mr. Criss stated the idea of changing software was very welcomed.
 - Discussion was had with the Town of Hilton Head and we are expanding our routes on Hilton Head with the trollies. The trollies will be fare free for 2021. Chair Zellman asked how many were running. Ms. Franzoni said three will be running and one spare. We are working on staffing the trolley.
 - There were no accidents for January and February.
2. Mr. Criss reported on the financial statements.
- January and February balance sheet show that our assets continue to grow. There will be an increase in fixed assets over the next several months.
 - We are on track on our revenue and expenses compared to the budget. Revenue is up because of the CARES act funding. Administration expense is high due to turnover and hiring of contractors to assist with accounting consulting.
 - We are in the process of grant applications for federal fiscal year 2021. This will be transmitted by May. We are applying for the Mobility Manager grant with the state. We are working with the state on the 5311-grant.

Ms. Childs asked if the \$70,000 was transferred. Mr. Criss stated it was and our reserve is at \$300,000.

3. Chairperson's Report

- Chair Zellman asked Senator Davis for a letter of support for the VW settlement. It was sent with the grant application. Ms. Franzoni said that we should receive notice by mid-April.
- Chair Zellman asked if there were small cards that board members could carry about what Palmetto Breeze does. Mr. Sullivan said he will look into it.
- Chair Zellman asked if any of the committees were able to meet. Mr. Hamilton said that he and Ms. Childs met with Mr. Criss. Chair Zellman asked the committees meet before the May meeting.

There was discussion about the May meeting if it should be in person or on Zoom. A decision will be made a week before the May meeting.

Old Business

1. Board Retreat

Ms. Franzoni discussed the planning of an overnight in person board retreat with an agenda, program and facilitator. Chair Zellman agreed with the idea to be free of distractions. Mr. Bickley stated the key to the retreat would be the program and facilitator. He cautioned having an overnight meeting. He suggested a half day or two thirds day and having the retreat at the COG office or at Sergeant Jasper Park. There was discussion as

to where and when to have the retreat. Suggestions for facilitators are to be emailed to Ms. Franzoni. An update will be provided at the next meeting.

2. LATS Update

Ms. Rossi stated there were no major changes with the Long-Range Transportation Plan. She is hopeful to have an update at the next meeting. Ms. Rossi will be on the lookout for the 5310-grant application when it comes through the COG. She reminded Ms. Franzoni to let her know if anything goes through the TIP process so she can enter it into the STIP. There was discussion of the processes for TIP, STIP and SCDOT between LRTA and the LCOG. April 9, 2021 is the next LATS meeting.

New Business

1. Bluffton Service Launch 07/01/21

Ms. Franzoni discussed the new Town of Bluffton service that is planned to start on July 1. The service will run hourly Monday through Friday starting at 7am to around 6pm. The service will require two buses with 3 full time drivers and 1 part time driver. The service plan was well received by the town. An RFP is being put together for bus shelters. Chair Zellman asked if there was a ceremony being planned for the Bluffton launch. Mr. Bickley asked if there was a name for the Bluffton service and Ms. Franzoni responded it is called the Bluffton Breeze. The town of Bluffton is paying the local match share of the grant. Chair Zellman asked how much the local match was and Ms. Franzoni stated it was \$59,000. Ms. Childs asked when about the Beaufort service contract that was being worked on. Ms. Franzoni stated it's a work in progress. September or October of this year is when changes will start.

Announcements

There were no announcements.

Next Steps

Chair Zellman reviewed previous meeting's "Next Steps". The bus wash: progress has been made. Mr. Stanley stated that hopefully mid next month the bus wash will be up and running.

1. Board Attendance.
2. Committee meetings will be done before the May meeting.
3. Conflict of Interest forms to Ms. Franzoni.
4. Mr. Mitchell will contact Sergeant Jasper Park.
5. Mr. Sullivan will look into informational cards for board members.

Adjournment

Mr. Russell motioned to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Mitchell seconded. There was a unanimous vote to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 3:31pm.