

## **Lowcountry RTA Board Meeting Minutes**

Meeting Date: November 23, 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 2:02 pm.

The invocation was said by Mr. Bickley 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  
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 (via telephone)  
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. Zellman 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.

### **Guests and Public Forum**

There were no guests or members of the public.

## **Approval of Minutes**

**A motion to approve the minutes from September 23, 2020 was made by Mr. Bickley and seconded by Mr. Hamilton. The motion carried unanimously.**

## **Action Items**

There were no action items.

## **Informational Items**

1. Ms. Franzoni provided the Executive Director's report. Highlights included:
  - The administrative office space renovation is complete. The renovation was done by Kenneth Scott Builders.
  - We have started receiving vendor proposals for our new security and camera update project. This would be for cameras inside and outside the building and card access into the building.
  - We are currently out to bid for the RFP for the new phone system. It is on our website. Today is the last day vendors can ask questions. We have 3 to 5 vendors considering bidding. This RFP will close in December.
  - September was a big month for Daufuskie ID cards. Ms. Atkinson made 71 new identification cards. The Daufuskie Shuttle was supposed to end September 15<sup>th</sup> but due to the demand it has been extended indefinitely.
  - For the past two years, God's Goods Thrift Store has brought its store here for our passengers to shop from. This year, request forms for toys were given to passengers and we received a strong response.
  - We participated the Lantern Parade in Place. Last year we transported people to the end of South Beach. This year we transported the marching band and the puppeteers to different spots where the Parade was stationed.
  - In September, we had our second annual Passenger Appreciation Day. It was a great time. We had goody bags and an ice cream truck for all to enjoy.
  - We are working on updating the Beaufort County Transit Services with the limitation that we stay within the same budget we have. Mr. McElhose and I met with Rob Merchant (Deputy Planning Director) and a consultant who is working on their comprehensive plan. We will continue meeting with them.

Ms. Zellman asked about the Bluffton Reverse Christmas Parade and if we would have a trolley in it. Ms. Franzoni responded that yes, we will be participating.

2. Mr. Criss reported on the financial statements.
  - September and October, we are on track as far as budget goes. The expense percentages are more balanced than previously reported. There is a line under the expenses that says Projected Capital Expenses. At this point, we have not pulled out Capital Expenditures from Operating Expenditures on the financials. Mr. Criss plans to reflect actual capital expenditures separately from operating expenditures within the next two board meetings.

- Our expenses are in line with our revenue. Our revenue and cash flow look good. Our reserve account remains intact. Our revenue looks good with the CARES Act funding. We are maintaining enough in our bank account to not only meet our current demands but to have a good cushion in there.
- To address a question Mr. Bickley had last meeting in regards to CARES Act Funding from the FTA through SCDOT under 5311 – we are working with the state on the program budget. Initially between February and June, we were appropriated approximately \$1.5 million for that period. This fiscal year approximately \$2.6 million was set aside for the whole year. The original plan was for SCDOT to release approximately \$655,000 per quarter. We haven't received authorization to add 1<sup>st</sup> quarter FY21 amount. We are awaiting approval.
- Chair Zellman asked if Mr. Hamilton, Chair of the Finance Committee, had any questions. Mr. Hamilton asked Mary Lou if she would appraise every one of the changes to the Finance Department. Ms. Franzoni stated with the departure of Ms. Wiley, the position of the Director of Finance and Administration was open. The position was advertised and interviews took place. She gave thanks to Mr. Hamilton, Mr. Bickley and Ms. Sherry Smith from the LCOG for their assistance with the interviews. There were 3 candidates interviewed. Mr. Criss was chosen as our new Director of Finance and Administration. In doing that, job descriptions and positions are being restructured in order to have an accountant on staff. We have since advertised for a Staff Accountant and have three interviews for that position. Chair Zellman asked if that was a full or part time position. Ms. Franzoni stated it was a full-time position. Mr. Criss went on to discuss how by realigning the positions, our internal controls can be stronger. Chair Zellman asked if SCDOT recommended certain financial procedures or segregation of duties. Ms. Franzoni responded that when we were just a rural property, every finance policy was overseen was SCDOT. Now that we are rural and urban, the FTA does not manage us at that level. Ms. Franzoni stated that SCDOT told her that now since LRTA is being audited and reviewed by FTA that SCDOT will review us differently. Chair Zellman asked for an update on the audit. Mr. Criss said there are some challenges but nothing nefarious in the audit. He said there is a significant credit balance in our Accounts Receivable. He believes it must be a material error somewhere in the process. After working with the consulting firm, it looks like revenue that was captured in this fiscal year should have been captured in the year prior. We are tracing it back so we can adjust that out. He anticipates it being done in the next few weeks. Ms. Franzoni said it was revenues in July that should have been accepted in June. She agrees that it will be resolved soon. Chair Zellman asked is the evaluation of the financial software system was on hold for now. Ms. Franzoni stated we are getting our transition in place and the audit complete. After that we will evaluate the current software.

### 3. Chairperson's Report

- Chair Zellman thanked Mr. Hamilton and Mr. Bickley for their participation in the Finance Director interviews. She congratulated Mr. Criss on his new position.

- Committee reports will be in January. Chair Zellman asked that those be completed the week before the board meeting in January.
- The road usage fee discussed in the last meeting was thought to have been at the second reading. It was actually at its third reading. Chair Zellman emailed Joe Passiment asking what impact it would have on us.

### **Old Business**

#### 1. Board Retreat/Training

Ms. Franzoni has been in discussion with Curtis Sims from SCDOT. Mr. Sims will be conducting this training via Zoom. Other people from SCDOT will be presenting as well. Mr. Sims was asking what dates worked. The training is from 10am to 3pm with a one-hour break. There was a discussion of what dates worked.

#### 2. LATS Update

Ms. Rossi discussed that negotiations are still ongoing with the consulting firm selected to complete the Long Range Transportation Plan update.

#### 3. Final Urban Study Plan Phase 2

Ms. Franzoni stated that she sent out the plan in the board packet. The plan was published in October and it is on LCOG's website and the Palmetto Breeze website.

### **New Business**

Before the first item was discussed, Ms. Franzoni stated that the Montage Palmetto Bluff had made contact with her regarding a route. This is one trip in the morning and one in the afternoon. This will start December 1, 2020.

#### 1. Holiday Dinner

Chair Zellman asked the board members what they thought and Mr. Bickley commented that he doesn't think it's a good idea this year given the size of the group and the proximity to each other. He stated that if the staff wanted to have one that was up to them. Mr. Hamilton said he wouldn't feel comfortable as well. He agreed if the staff wanted to have one that isn't an issue. Chair Zellman agreed, she wasn't comfortable but it was up to the staff. Ms. Franzoni stated the staff would like to have a dinner but suggested bringing a computer so board members could ZOOM in. Mr. Mitchell was asked for his input. He stated he was not in favor of it but if the staff wanted to that's fine. Chair Zellman said that maybe it could be postponed when clearance is given. Chair Zellman asked Ms. Pinckney what her thoughts were. Ms. Pinckney stated that she would not be able to attend one this year. Ms. Childs asked for Mr. Russell's opinion. Mr. Russell agreed that he was not in favor of it. Ms. Rossi stated that she agrees with the board. Mr. Bickley asked Ms. Franzoni what the latest staff health position was. Ms. Franzoni stated that there was one driver that has not returned. There are no current cases and no cases since August.

### **Announcements**

Ms. Franzoni said that Second Helpings has outdone themselves this year. The group went out and bought 40 turkeys to hand out to our passengers.

### **Next Steps**

1. Ms. Franzoni will send a thank you note from the board and staff to God's Gifts.
2. Ms. Franzoni will provide logistics to the board in regards to the Christmas Parade should anyone want to attend.
3. The board members will review the final report of Phase 2.
4. Ms. Franzoni will provide an update on the Holiday Dinner.

### **Adjournment**

Mr. Hamilton motioned to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Childs seconded. There was a unanimous vote to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 3:00pm.