



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

**Wednesday, July 31, 2024
2:00 P.M.**

**Lowcountry Regional Transportation Authority
Via Zoom**

MINUTES

I. CALL TO ORDER

Board Chairman, Charles Mitchell called the meeting to order at 2:09 p.m.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE AND INVOCATION

Board Chairman Charles Mitchell 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: Henry Criss; representing Hampton County: Laura Atkinson; and representing Colleton County: Latosia Simmons

Board Chair: Board Chair Charles Mitchell

Staff Members Present: Mary Lou Franzoni, Executive Director; Kristine Hepburn, Director of Finance & Administration; Tori Mitchell, Director of Operations; Chris

Dreisbach, Director of Maintenance; Brian Sullivan, Director of Marketing; Diane Lackey, SCDOT Regional Representative, was present.

V. WELCOME

Board Chairman Charles Mitchell welcomed all Board members.

VI. PUBLIC FORUM

No members of the public request to speak.

VII. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

May 29, 2024, Board Meeting

Motion: Board member Henry Criss moved that the minutes from the May 29, 2024 Board meeting be approved. The motion was seconded by Beaufort County representative, Laura Atkinson.

Vote: The motion was carried unanimously.

VIII. RECOGNITION OF DRIVER OF THE MONTH

Executive Director Mary Lou Franzoni recognized **Pamela Young-Holmes** as Employee of the Month for May, and **Darrion Williamson** as the Employee of the Month for June.

IX. ACTION ITEMS

1. No Action Items were presented for board review and approval

X. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

a. Executive Director's Report – Highlights for May and June included:

Executive Director, Mary Lou Franzoni reported that ridership numbers are down compared to pre-covid and that the trend shows a potential continued decline as the years progress. She advised the Board that the staff is monitoring the situation and will inform the board should any changes to service be required.

The Director informed the Board of ongoing projects for other transit services offered by the Authority including the new Bluffton Breeze fixed route. Ms. Franzoni reported that Brian Sullivan, the Director of Marketing and Communications and Karen Morales, the Mobility Manager have been working diligently on translating marketing materials into Spanish to encourage ridership from the Hispanic community. Currently, the Bluffton Breeze is running fare-free service until September 30, 2024 as approved by the LRTA Board. A review is scheduled for discussion at the September meeting.

The Director reported that Brian Sullivan attended the Northern Beaufort Regional Plan and Implementation Committee meeting in her stead and was successful in presenting the Beaufort committees with information and insight into the services offered within Beaufort County and the direct impact on the lives of the residents. She further noted that the Authority's presence has grown in recent years with the implementation of the Hilton Head Trolley and the Bluffton Breeze, however there is still more work to be done to spotlight the LRTA services and efforts to provide safe and reliable transportation to Lowcountry residents.

The Director reported to the Board regarding 2 incidents that occurred during the June and July months including a small brush fire that occurred during the weekend shift in which an employee accidentally caused a brush fire on the property after barbecuing on the property during their break time. She reported that the fire department was able to extinguish the fire and no damage was done. As a result, the brush was removed, and the topic was discussed at the monthly safety meeting. Secondly, a passenger reported an injury that occurred on the Hilton Head trolley when the driver stopped unexpectedly and caused the passenger to slide from the seat and hit her head on the railing. The incident was reported to the insurance company and an investigation was conducted.

The Director reported two maintenance road calls for the months of May and June. She commended the Maintenance Director, Chris Dreisbach, for his continued efforts to provide safe and reliable vehicles to the Authority despite the continued staffing shortage. She

informed the board of plans to re-start recruitment in the fall in hopes of receiving an increase in applications when the weather starts to cool.

b. Finance Director's Report – Highlights for January and February included:

Finance Director, Kristine Hepburn provided a summary of financial reports for the most recent period. She reported that the year ended well and under budget. Currently the finance team is working on meeting the requirements for the annual audit.

c. Board Chair's Report – Board Chairman, Charles Mitchell commended management and staff who worked to make July 4, 2024 service a success. He expressed excitement at the growing support from the local county and city councils.

XI. OLD BUSINESS

a. LATS Update – Executive Director, Mary Lou Franzoni announced that the next LATS meeting is on Friday August 2, 2024 at 9:30 a.m. at the Technical College of the Lowcountry.

b. Northern Beaufort Transit Study — Ms. Franzoni gave a brief overview of the status of the contract between RS&H and SCDOT. She reported that SCDOT had made some changes to the contract and that SCDOT has submitted the changes for review. She is hopeful that the contract will be approved soon, and work can begin. She further reported that she met with members of the Beaufort County Council to discuss the upcoming referendum in which additional funds would become available for public transportation. She reported that funds would not be available until May 2025.

c. Executive Director Search — The Executive Director, Mary Lou Franzoni read an update from Christin Mack from Find Great People which provided a general data update and status of recruitment. Thus far 47 applications have been received, of which 23 were interviewed. After phase I interviews were conducted, 9 applicants were invited to proceed with the application and meet virtually with recruiters. The director informed the Board of plans to meet with recruitment staff to discuss next steps and set up virtual interviews of candidates.

XII. NEW BUSINESS

- a. **TASC Conference** — Executive Director Mary Lou Franzoni gave a brief summary of the latest TASC Conference meeting in which the Bus and Maintenance Roadeo was postponed until next year. The Director reported that her last day on the TASC Board was July 1, 2024. She has stepped down in light of her upcoming retirement.

XIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Beaufort County Representative, Henry Criss motioned to adjourn to go into executive session to discuss a pending legal matter. The motion was seconded by Board Member Laura Atkinson. The Board entered Executive Session at 2:39 p.m.

XIV. ACTION RESULTING FROM EXECUTIVE SESSION

Motion: Beaufort County Representative, Henry Chris moved to resume regular session. The motion was seconded by Board Member Laura Atkinson.

Vote: The motion was carried unanimously at 3:05 p.m.

Motion: Board Member, Henry Criss moved to authorize Executive Director, Mary Lou Franzoni, to negotiate a settlement of the legal matter with an amount not exceeding an additional \$50,000. The motion was seconded by Beaufort County Representative, Laura Atkinson.

Vote: The motion was carried unanimously.

XIV. ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements.

XV. ADJOURNMENT

Board Chair Charles Mitchell made a motion to adjourn which was seconded by Board Member Henry Criss. The motion carried unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 3:10 p.m.

NEXT LRTA Board Meeting: Wednesday, September 25, 2024 at 2:00 p.m. at LRTA Annex at 25 Benton Field Rd with Committee Meetings prior to meeting. Deadline for Agenda Items: September 13, 2024.