



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

**Wednesday, May 29, 2024
2:00 P.M.**

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

MINUTES

I. CALL TO ORDER

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

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE AND INVOCATION

Board member Barbara Childs 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 Jasper County: Board Chair Charles Mitchell; Representing Beaufort County: Barbara Childs; representing Hampton County: Laura Atkinson; representing Allendale County: Vice-Chair William Robinson; and Colleton County Representative, Latosia Simmons. Thomas Reitz, Beaufort County Council Liaison was also present.

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; Charles Cattell, Director of Safety & Training; Karen Morales, Mobility Manager; Michael McEarchen, Road Supervisor; Jerry Green, Road Supervisor.

V. WELCOME

Chairman Mitchell welcomed all Board, staff, and guests.

VI. PUBLIC FORUM

No members of the public requested to speak.

VII. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

March 27, 2024 Board Meeting

Motion: Board member Barbara Childs moved that the minutes from the March 27, 2024 Board meeting be approved. The motion was seconded by Hampton County representative, Laura Atkinson.

Vote: The motion was carried unanimously.

May 1, 2024 Special Board Meeting

Motion: Board member Barbara Childs moved that the minutes from the March 27, 2024 Special Board meeting be approved. The motion was seconded by Hampton County representative, Laura Atkinson.

Vote: The motion was carried unanimously.

VIII. RECOGNITION OF DRIVERS OF THE MONTH

Executive Director Mary Lou Franzoni recognized **Sarah Jones** as Employee of the Month for March, and **Allison Koger** as the Employee of the Month for April.

IX. ACTION ITEMS

1. Approval of FY25 Budget

Motion: After a presentation by Finance Director Kristine Hepburn, the Board discussed the elements of the FY25 Budget. Beaufort County Representative, Barbara Childs moved that the FY25 Budget be approved as recommended by Executive Director Mary Lou Franzoni and Finance Director Kristine Hepburn. William Robinson seconded the motion.

Vote: The motion was carried unanimously.

2. Approval of Revised Procurement Policy

Motion: Beaufort County Representative, Barbara Childs moved that the Revised Procurement Policy be approved as recommended by Executive Director Mary Lou Franzoni. Latosia Simmons seconded the motion.

Vote: The motion was carried unanimously.

3. Approval of Vehicle Maintenance Plan

Motion: Beaufort County Representative, Barbara Childs moved that the Vehicle Maintenance Plan be approved as recommended by Executive Director Mary Lou Franzoni. Latosia Simmons seconded the motion.

Vote: The motion was carried unanimously.

4. Approval of Award Management Policy

Motion: Beaufort County Representative, Barbara Childs moved that the Award Management Policy be approved as recommended by Executive Director Mary Lou Franzoni. Latosia Simmons seconded the motion.

Vote: The motion was carried unanimously.

5. Approval of Facility & Equipment Maintenance Plan

Motion: Beaufort County Representative, Barbara Childs moved that the Facility & Equipment Policy be approved as recommended by Executive Director Mary Lou Franzoni. Latosia Simmons seconded the motion.

Vote: The motion was carried unanimously.

6. Approval of Code of Ethics Policy

Motion: Beaufort County Representative, Barbara Childs moved that the Code of Ethics Policy be approved as recommended by Executive Director Mary Lou Franzoni. Latosia Simmons seconded the motion.

Vote: The motion was carried unanimously.

X. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

1. Executive Director's Report –

Welcome: The Executive Director welcomed Camika Beaton to the team. She recently joined Palmetto Breeze's finance department as the new staff accountant.

FTA Triennial Review Preparations: The Executive Director reported that our Triennial Audit by the FTA went very well, but that there will be several Findings. The first is with regard to having a Board-approved EEO Policy since within the three-year period our staff has grown to more than 50 people. The second Finding is an FFR reporting requirement to include indirect cost rates which our FTA regional representative had not instructed staff to include. These costs will now be included going forward. The final Finding is regarding our subrecipient, the Allendale Scooter service and its financial reporting and oversight.

Breeze Trolley Marketing: The Executive Director stated that the 2024 Rider's Guide for the Breeze Trolley was distributed to more than 125 locations ahead of the season and recognized Marketing Director, Brian Sullivan, for his hard work. The service is continuing to be well received and utilized.

New Token Transit Mobile Ticketing App: The Executive Director informed the Board that the mobile ticketing app, Masabi, has been replaced by Token Transit. The app is live as of May 1 and hopes that the new application will reduce fraud and increase accuracy in ticket sales.

Executive Director Search: The Executive Director reported that we are hoping to finalize a contract with the Board's selected firm to conduct the search for the new Executive Director. If we are not able to negotiate with them, she will approach the second choice from the committee.

Maintenance: Chris attended the MCI Academy for maintenance, and we will continue attending future sessions in Louisville, KY. Our mechanic shortage continues, and we are considering hiring a placement firm to help search for candidates.

2. Finance Director's Report –

Finance Director, Kristine Hepburn provided a summary of financial reports for the most recent period. She reported we remain on budget, that our Accounts Receivable and Accounts Payable are well in hand, and that planning for LRTA annual audit for FY24 is underway for this summer using the same audit firm (with different auditors assigned to our audit). Audit services could be put out to bid for the FY25 audit (one remaining option year on current contract) if the Board desires to do so.

3. Board Chair's Report – Board Chairman, Charles Mitchell stated that his participation in the TASC legislative conference in March was extremely educational. He was able to meet with many representatives who support public transportation, and that the Authority is recognized as a necessary good for the public. He is hopeful for a future increase in funding from the state for public transportation when compared to other states. He also reported that he had a conversation with a representative from LCOG regarding funneling CDL driver applicants to LRTA (though most will not likely have the required passenger endorsements).

Lastly, he reported that Jasper County council has agreed to fully match our funding request for FY25. He concluded with a message of appreciation for all LRTA staff.

4. Committee/Project Reports

a. Operations Committee: William Robinson, Laura Atkinson

Vice Chair Robinson met with Tori and Mary Lou to review operations for the months of January through April. He reported that there were two non-preventable accidents in February, and two accidents in March and April (one was preventable). In January and February routes for 505 (Breeze Trolley) and 511 (Bluffton Breeze) were updated within the Syncromatics software.

He reported that there were no employee grievances during the period and no ADA complaints. He reported that there were three valid passenger complaints in January and February, and six in March and April.

He reported that there were no on-the-job injuries.

He shared that the Operations team still needs trolley and commuter drivers, and that vehicle repairs have reduced the available spare ratio to an extremely low level, due to lack of maintenance staffing.

He reported that professional development is being hampered by SCDOT/RTAP staff changes. He is hopeful for more training SCDOT/RTAP as they sort through their internal changes.

He concluded with a statement that the LRTA's in-vehicle cameras resolve most passenger complaints but would like to see Operations implement a plan to ensure all cameras are operational.

b. Maintenance Committee: Charles Mitchell, Henry Criss

Chairman Mitchell reiterated the desperate need for mechanics. He appealed to the Board to continue to search for candidates. He reported that PMs achieved a 100% completion rate for the four-month period.

c. Finance Committee: Barbara Childs

Board Member Childs reported that she reviewed all four months' finance reports with Finance Director Hepburn. She reported no findings, and all seems balanced and in order. She thanked Hepburn and the Finance Team for their continued diligence and hard work.

XI. OLD BUSINESS

- 1. LATS Update** – Stephanie Rossi from the Lowcountry Council of Governments had a schedule conflict with today’s LRTA meeting, but wanted to remind the Board that the next LATS meeting will be held Friday, June 7, 2024 at 9:30 a.m.
- 2. FTA Triennial Review** – Executive Director Franzoni reiterated that we did well in our review with the findings included in her report.
- 3. Audit Status** – Executive Director Franzoni reiterated that the Finance Team is preparing for the annual audit, and we expect it to be clean.
- 4. Northern Beaufort Transit Study** — The consultant has been selected (RS&H) by LCOG, but LCOG continues to wait for SCDOT to issue the Notice to Proceed (NTP) before LCOG can sign the agreement. The Executive Director reported that timing of the study and its public and stakeholder outreach is important with regard to the November Beaufort County penny sales tax ballot initiative. Chairman Mitchell reinforced the importance of reaching out to elected officials for their support for the Beaufort County ballot initiative.

XII. NEW BUSINESS

- 1. SCDOT State Review** – LRTA is being reviewed by SCDOT June 27 and 28, with documents required June 3. This review covers six fiscal years (2017 through 2023), so the record-collection tasks are quite large. LRTA staff are collecting the required information, and we expect to meet the June 3 deadline.
- 2. TASC Conference September 4, 5 and 6** – The annual TASC conference will be held in Myrtle Beach, SC. They have secured great conference hotel rates in case Board members are interested in attending. Agenda to be set soon which will be distributed to all Board members.
- 3. Hurricane Season Preparations** – Chairman Mitchell asked for an update regarding hurricane season evacuation procedures. Executive Director Franzoni reported that operationally nothing has changed for 2024, but our staff representation has changed, and all have been properly trained for the season.

XIII. ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements.

XIV. ADJOURNMENT

Board Vice Chair William made a motion to adjourn which was seconded by Board Member Childs. The motion carried unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 3:17 p.m.

NEXT LRTA Board Meeting: Wednesday, July 31, 2024, at 2:00 p.m. via ZOOM teleconference call. Deadline for Agenda Items: July 19, 2024.