



**Pee Dee Regional Transportation Authority  
Board of Directors Meeting**

**Draft Meeting Minutes  
January 18<sup>th</sup>, 2024**

**Members Present:** James Jackson, Judy Alexander, Yolonda Dupree, Hattie Burns, Vivian Rogers, Rebecca Gamble, Belva Britt

**Members Absent/Web Viewing:** George Jebaily (Virtual), Adell McManus-McCoy (Virtual), Tyron Jones, Carolyn Guase, Drew Huggins

**Staff Present:** Don Strickland, Samantha Mack, Chestly Morris, Ania Giannace Dixon, Will Johnson, Jessica McCullum, Tavorous Collins, Cindy Ward

**Guests:** None

**A.** James Jackson called the meeting to order at 12:12 pm

**B.** Invocation – James Jackson

**C. Approval of the Agenda:**

Agenda, as amended – motioned, seconded, and unanimously approved.

**D. Approval of the Minutes:**

November 16<sup>th</sup>, 2023, meeting minutes – motioned, seconded, and unanimously approved on the condition that grammatical errors are resolved.

**E. Public Comments:**

None.

**F. Committee Reports:**

None.

**G. Operations Report:**

Chestly Morris, Director of Operations, shared the report. Ridership is up overall. With the addition of new services total passenger trips have seen a 43% increase this YTD versus last YTD. Top growth experienced on DART and commuter, Bennettsville, Dillon, and Cheraw routes. The Demand and Response services in Marion, Dillon, and Marlboro experienced a decline. Mr. Morris stated that this was partly a result of increased fixed route services in the area, which is a positive. Looking at the historical trend of passenger trips and revenue miles over a six-year period, it continues to trend upward. With the addition of new services and increased ridership numbers PDRTA has recovered from the lows of the COVID pandemic and is experiencing a record number of both passenger trips and revenue miles. Mr. Morris pointed out that revenue miles per day over the last six months has surpassed the benchmark each month. A concern for the operations department and the board has been deadhead miles. Mr. Morris was happy to share that over the last two months through purposeful planning that decreased Deadhead almost 2%. With the addition of new drivers and because of the holidays overtime hours have dropped dramatically since October. This has brought the YTD average closer to the benchmark set at 7% according to Mr. Morris.

#### **H. HR Report/Newsletter**

Ania Giannace-Dixon, Director of Human Resources, shared the report. Mrs. Giannace-Dixon began with the November monthly report. The YTD turnover percentage dropped 10% from November 2022. She included there were two new hires in November before switching to the December monthly report. The YTD turnover percentage saw the same decrease as November at 10% compared to December 2022. She stated that there are still several vacancies to fill including one for transportation supervisor and four or more for drivers. There were several job promotions in the restructuring of the operations department. Some drivers were promoted to dispatchers and a dispatcher was promoted to transportation supervisor. Mrs. Giannace-Dixon discussed the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) when presenting the January Newsletter. The EAP is a partnership with Trinity Behavioral Care to provide mental health, substance abuse, and other counseling for PDRTA employees at no cost. Mrs. Giannace-Dixon also explained that SCDOT provides a substance abuse program if an employee wishes to come forward to receive help.

Mr. James Jackson, Board Member, questioned the rehiring process if any employee were to utilize the SCDOT program.

Mrs. Cindy Ward, Safety and Training Manager, explained that for employees that complete the program and receive reemployment that SCDOT mandatory testing can last for six months to five years depending on the circumstances.

Mrs. Giannace-Dixon added that reemployment is situational, and many factors are considered such as work performance and attendance.

#### **I. Finance Update and Financial Report 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter:**

Samantha Mack, Director of Finance, shared the report. Sam went over the income statement line items before the board. The ADA paratransit is trending up thus the increase in the line item under operating revenue. Mr. Don Strickland, Executive Director, explained that ADA complementary paratransit is federally mandated in fixed route service areas. The rider must fill out an ADA application and not be in accessible proximity to fixed route service. He also stated that some routes

that are primarily fixed will operate as a deviated fixed route service. A deviated fixed route service means the bus follows a primary route and dispatcher can change stops off the route to provide door to door service to comply with federal mandates. The Lake City to Beach route is down revenue and ridership. The decrease is due to the seasonal shift of work at the beach. During the winter months ridership typically decreases. Sam stated that with new and continuing conversations with government officials, stakeholders, and industries that it looks to change.

Financial Report 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter – motioned, seconded, and unanimously approved.

**J. Old/Current Business:**

**a. Chesterfield County Startup – Jan 29<sup>th</sup>**

- i. Chesterfield County Connector and Demand/response service are set to start January 29<sup>th</sup>. There will be two fixed route services, McBee-Jefferson-Pageland route, and Cheraw-Chesterfield-Pageland route, both will operate on Monday, Wednesday, Friday.
- ii. Demand and Response service will be provided in the Cash community and Town of Patrick. This service will operate on Tuesday and Thursday. This service will allow riders to schedule transportation up to 24 hours in advance to the City of Cheraw and back to their pickup location.
- iii. The Ribbon Cutting Ceremony for Chesterfield County services will be held on January 29<sup>th</sup> at 12:00 pm in the Chesterfield County administration building in downtown Chesterfield. Stakeholders and local officials will be invited with one to two speakers in attendance to commemorate the challenging work everyone has put in to achieve this goal.

**b. MUSC Black River, Lake City, Florence Startup – Feb 5<sup>th</sup>**

- i. Service is set to start on February 5<sup>th</sup> for MUSC Black River route connecting to Lake Tran and to MUSC Florence. This service will connect Lake City, Coward, Scranton, and Florence.
- ii. Ribbon Cutting for the new route will be held at MUSC Black River on Feb 5<sup>th</sup>. An official press release commemorating the partnership between MUSC Black River and PDRTA will be released at that time.

**c. RFP/IFB Procurement Update**

- i. The RFP for the bus shelter program sponsored in part by the Byerly Foundation has opened.
- ii. The House of Hope Bus Shelter has been shipped from the manufacturer.
- iii. State contracts for the addition of buses are in progress.

**d. PDRTA 50<sup>TH</sup> Anniversary Events/Planning**

- i. PDRTA is celebrating the organization's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2024. To commemorate longevity and continued success an event day and formal dinner will be held in June. The approval of additional funds other than sponsorships will be presented to the board later if needed.

Approval of planning for the PDRTA 50<sup>TH</sup> Anniversary Day Event and Formal Dinner – Motioned, Seconded, and unanimously approved.

**K. New Business:**

**a. Ruiz H2B Workforce 2024**

- i. Ruiz foods is asking for a new proposal to partner with their work visa program. The company was impressed with PDRTA's 99% on time performance. They are asking that the new proposal allows transportation services for 7-8 months for their workers, which is longer than the previous proposal's PDRTA has completed with Ruiz for 3-4 months. Mrs. Giannace-Dixon worked with Ruiz's English Second Language (ESL) workers previously as a linguist to help them learn how to navigate public transportation.

**b. TASC Legislative Reception – March 5<sup>th</sup> at 5:00 pm**

- i. The Transportation Association of South Carolina (TASC) is hosting its Legislative reception in Columbia at the Pastides Alumni Center on March 5<sup>th</sup>, 2024, at 5:00pm. Invited are members of TASC, legislative members, Transit Agency Board Members, and other stakeholders. The Executive Director, Don Strickland, is also the President of the organization.

**c. 2024-2026 PDRTA Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Plan**

- i. DOT requires that transit agencies have a board approved plan on file through their Disadvantaged Business enterprise Program (DBE) to "level the playing field" when applying for DOT funding. The board was asked to approve a renewal of the DBE plan.

Approval of PDRTA DBE Plan 2024-2026 -- motioned, seconded, and unanimously approved.

**d. Authorization 011824 – To process 5307/5311 and other applicable grants for 2024/2025**

- i. The PDRTA board must approve applications for grant funding whether federally, state, or other before applying. The board votes to allow PDRTA to apply for funding yearly.

Authorization 011824 -- motioned, seconded, and unanimously approved.

**e. Title VI Program**

- i. Mrs. Giannace-Dixon presented before board and updated Title VI Program to be voted on. The Title VI Program is voted on by PDRTA board every three years

in compliance with federal regulations regarding federal financial assisted programs and activities.

Title VI Program -- motioned, seconded, and unanimously approved.

**L. Executive Director's Comments:**

Don thanked the board for their attendance and for the board's direction, allowing PDRTA to keep things moving.

**M. Chairman's Comments:**

Mr. Jackson thanked the employees in attendance for their dedication and service.

**N. Adjournment:**

Motion was made, seconded, and unanimously approved. The meeting adjourned at 2:22 pm.

**Respectively submitted,**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Don Strickland", written over a horizontal line.

**Don Strickland  
Executive Director**