



Pee Dee Regional Transportation Authority Board of Directors Meeting

Draft Meeting Minutes July 18th, 2024

Members Present: James Jackson, Judy Alexander, Hattie Burns, Vivian Rogers, Rebecca Gamble, George Jebaily, Yolanda Dupree

Members Absent/Web Viewing: Tyron Jones, Carolyn Gause, Belva Britt

Staff Present: Samantha Mack, Ania Giannace-Dixon, Don Strickland, Tavorous Collins

Guests: None

A. Don Strickland called the meeting to order at 12:02 pm

B. Invocation – Don Strickland

C. **Approval of the Agenda:**

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

D. **Approval of the Minutes:**

June 20th, 2024, meeting minutes – motioned, seconded and unanimously approved.

E. **Public Comments:**

None.

F. **Operations Report:**

Tavorous Collins, Director of Safety and Operational Excellence, provided the Operation Report. Tavorous shared the majority of the PDRTA routes are experiencing growth with most increasing by over 30%. These increases are seen in the following services: Darlington-Florence Commuter, Bennettsville Express, McColl-Clio-Bennettsville, Cheraw Express, Mullins Express, Dillon Express and Timmonsville Express. A decrease in ridership was noted in Lake City due to these areas utilizing residents in the workforce. Tavorous shared PDRTA workforce transportation has increased especially with the influx of visa workers from Ruiz Foods. Overall PDRTA is seeing an increase in ridership. Demand response is offered in Florence, Hartsville and Bennettsville and has increased with numbers fluctuating month-to-month. Tavorous provided a safety update sharing that PDRTA is 7% away from having all employees CPR First Aid Certified and or pre-certified allowing them to

respond accordingly in an emergency. There will be a new CPR training session held next week. Tavorous expressed excitement over a new safety and training technician, Jovon.

G. Executive Director Report

Don Strickland, Executive Director, shared his report. He stated he attended numerous meetings in June that will provide potential growth opportunities for PDRTA. His conversations and meetings have revealed the communities' view of PDRTA is changing in a positive way. He expressed there is a waiting list for areas that want service from PDRTA and with the proper funding he looks forward to supporting future service.

H. HR Report/Newsletter

Ania Giannace-Dixon, HR Director, shared the report. As of June 30th, PDRTA reached 74 employed personnel, losing a few drivers. With the driver turnover Ania has started reaching out to applicants and has six prospects. Since PDRTA is close to fully staffed, HR has decreased their attendance of job fairs and resource fairs. PDRTA was in attendance as the SC Rural Transit Day. Employment offers have been made for a mechanic to join the maintenance team and one HR Support personnel. Two PDRTA operators were promoted to Safety and Training Tech and Dispatcher in the month of June. Ania expressed excitement over these promotions and the desire for growth within the company. A new intern from Francis Marion University has joined the PDRTA to help the Public Information Officer in design and production as well as social media management. Ania also shared the Newsletters for May and June. In the May newsletter she included the employment policies around CBD oils, and other hemp-derived oils that could cause a positive alert on drug tests. The title VI program was also included in both newsletters to inform employees of the policies and processes in place to address equality in the workplace.

Anis shared that the employees of the month were really on the last newsletter. The new employees of the month will be announced on the next newsletter as we are still in the process of gathering photos and preparing the announcement. Briston Gerald, marketing intern was featured in the June Newsletter as the Employee Spotlight. Ania shared Briston has been very helpful offering her knowledge to our public information officer and to Ania. PDRTA staff attended a ribbon cutting for the new bus shelter at Hope Village on Darlington Street. First Bank visited PDRTA to discuss financial wellness. FMU is hosting a preventative health screening to eligible employees.

I. Financial Report

Samantha Mack, Finance Director, shared the report. She began with operating revenue which she noted coincides with the report Tavorous shared regarding increase in service. The ADA and paratransit service increases this quarter showing 200% increase in people using the door-to-door service. Bus pass sales are at 190% of the projected budget. The Florence Transit is up 121% and Lake Tran is up 150%. PDRTA brought in \$65,000 in operating revenue, which is about 147% of the projected budget for this quarter. Samantha also highlighted the use of special services for qualified riders this quarter including Camp Adaptability(Special ABLED Miracles) and Boys and Girls Club. Samantha moved on to Grant Revenue indicating PDRTA is at 77% of the budget this quarter with a majority of the funds made up from everyday operating, preventative maintenance and capital funds. Purchases were minimal including ADA vans. Year-to-date the budget is at 66% and planning for the upcoming year will be better to come closer to budget. Our overtime is 221% which is mostly operations. Sam plans to be caught up middle of this year. Non-Operating Revenue is 97% of

what was projected for non-operating revenue. This includes funds from municipalities and local hospitals bringing us to 103% of budget at \$334,000. Samantha shared some program revenue was brought in for advertising and that insurance reimbursement was down, which was good to not have as much insurance reimbursement as expected. This will change due to a totaled vehicle insurance will cut a check for soon. This will triple the budget number for next quarter. PDRTA is at 82% of total revenue. PDRTA brought in \$1,668,000 with a projected budget of \$2,000,040 and we are at 82% of that total. Samantha noted this is the end of PDRTA's fiscal year. The auditor has already sent an engagement letter and will most likely make adjustments balancing things out. Operating Expenses are up across the board expected with the increase in employment with 75 employed. Salaries, overtime and employee benefits are the main contributing factor to the increase in operating expenses. Overtime is at 233% and Benefits is at 230%. The increase in employees has resulted in an increase in uniform purchase expense. Operations and office supplies are at 295%. Preventative Maintenance is at 223% which regard to the maintenance of our vehicles including aging fleet. Preventative Maintenance expenses are expected to decrease once we receive new fleet as our large bus fleet that has met its useful life is currently 72% for our benchmark. Employee incentives is 164% because we changed the way we are doing Employee of the Month moving forward. Samantha shared that overall, we have 112% of the budget and operating expenses. Adjustments in the new budget will help moving forward since we have been using the original budget. Don added the higher variances in the budget can be attributed to how timely the State sends payments. Maintenance Expenses are typically close to budget. At this time, Maintenance Expenses is at 85%. Currently, one mechanic is out which has resulted in overages and overtime. Admin Expenses Our salaries make up 8% of the budget, benefits make up 117% and physical exams make up 258%. Some additional costs include a new postage meter lease. A large portion of expenses are from the 50th Anniversary Celebration including printing which comes to 123%. 184% employee incentives. PDRTA received \$15,000 in sponsorships towards the 50th Anniversary Celebration and Family Fun Day.

J. Committee Reports

- a. 2024-2025 PDRTA Slate of Officers (For Discussion- Per Bylaws-Action to be Taken in July)

Don notified the board of the upcoming change in the slate of officers. This is Mr. Tyron Jones second year as Chair. For the FY 24 year a new Chair will be appointed per PDRTA By-Laws. Board member Geroge Jebaily generally creates the draft and passes it the Executive Director to compile the report. Chair positions traditionally are rotated, and the committee assignments as volunteered/assigned. The currently vacant board positions have been included as they are to be filled soon. Mr. James Jackson was recommended to the executive committee as first vice chair and Mrs. Hattie Burns as Chairperson. The By-Laws require that the Board only discuss the assignments in June and act at the July Meeting.

The board voted to approve the 2024-2025 PDRTA Slate of Officers unanimously.

Don thanked Mr. Tyron Jones for his service to the PDRTA Board Chairman for the past two years. Don also expressed his thanks to the outgoing Vice Board Chair and Second Vice Board Chair.

Don welcomed Ms. Hattie Burns as the new PDRTA Board Chairwoman.

K. Old/Current Business:

a. House of Hope Bus Shelter

Don Stickland shared images and details regarding the House of Hope Bus Shelter at Hope Village. Through a partnership with House of Hope, Florence County and Honda the shelter was erected, concrete work done, and the installation of solar power in the shelter for lighting and USB phone charging. There are plans to place 12 of these shelters in Hartsville through a partnership with the Byerly Foundation. Seeing these innovative shelters gets other communities excited about bringing them to their areas. These shelters will serve the entire community as the ones in Hartsville will be Wi-Fi enabled and can offer Wi-Fi to someone needs to submit a job application or a school child needing to work on a project.

b. PDRTA By-Laws Update

Don informed the Board there will not be a vote on the By-Laws at this time. He asked if we could table for the August meeting and the board concurred.

c. PDRTA Organizational Chart

Don shared with promotions and hiring of new positions the organizational chart will need to be modified.

Motion to approve PDRTA Organization Chart was made, seconded, and unanimously approved.

d. Wage and Salary Plan 24-25

Don proposed a cost-of-living adjustment of up to 2% if the budget allows. This is in the current policy but has not been utilized in recent years. A merit increase depends on an employee's performance at their annual evaluation. The increases are as follows: If the employee receives an exceeds performance, they receive a 4% increase, a meets performance receives 3%, and a below performance receives 0% and possible termination.

Motion to approve PDRTA Wage and Salary Plan 24-25 was made, seconded, and unanimously approved.

L. New Business:

a. SC Rural Transit Day

SC Rural Transit Day was held on July 10, 2024, in Clemson. Don will share a video of the event at the next board meeting.

M. Executive Director's Comments:

Don welcomed Ms. Miles to the Board and informed a Florence Representative would be added to the board in the next couple of months. Don recognized the hard work by the team in the past couple of months with planning and executing events. PDRTA applied for a Smart Grant which offers just over \$800,000 in federal funds. The Smart Grant would provide planning and implementation of a lot of technology PDRTA currently lacks. The grant required additional work from staff and the efforts are appreciated. Don shared Ride-A-Mile continues with staff riding routes and looking for opportunities to listen to passengers and driver needs and concerns. Don thanked the Board for their continued support.

N. Chairman's Comments:

Chairwoman Burns welcomed Ms. Miles to the PDRTA Board. She thanked the board for the opportunity to be the chair.

O. Adjournment:

Motion was made, seconded, and unanimously approved. The meeting adjourned at 1:27 pm.

Respectively submitted,

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

**Don Strickland
Executive Director**

