



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

**Draft Meeting Minutes
August 15th, 2024**

Members Present: Hattie Burns, Carolyn Gause, James Jackson, Judy Alexander, Yolonda Dupree, Tyron Jones, Rebecca M. Gamble, Belva Britt

Members Absent/Web Viewing: Vivian Rogers, Angelique Miles, George Jebaily

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

Guests: None

A. Hattie Burns called the meeting to order at 12:03 pm.

B. Invocation – Don Strickland

C. Approval of the Agenda:

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

D. Approval of the Minutes:

July 18th, 2024, meeting minutes – motioned, seconded and unanimously approved.

E. Public Comments:

None.

F. Operations Report:

Don Strickland, Executive Director, provided the Operation Report. Don shared that July was a big month for PDRTA and that, in a single month, there were 37,765 passenger trips. This is a 35% increase from the 27,916 passenger trips that occurred in July 2023. There was a 7% increase between July 2023 and July 2024 for the Florence Transit System. Don then discussed potential next steps for the Lake City Beach route since numbers have declined during the summer season. Don suggested this route may be a good opportunity for a van pool situation. Before moving forward with any changes, there will be a public comment and hearing segment that will come back before the Board. It will also require the input of Florence County and Lake City. The Johnsonville-Pamplico route had almost a 200% increase. Hartsville showed a small increase in the commuter bus. The

downtown shuttle had a 19% increase in ridership. The Dillon Express and Connect routes had a 62% combined increase in ridership and the Dillon Demand Response route increased 85%. The Dillon Harbor Freight route was down last year, which explains the high variance of 130% this year. The Chesterfield routes are new and cannot be based on anything from last year. Efforts are being made to increase awareness in the Chesterfield area. There was overall growth between 2023 and 2024, especially in the rural communities.

G. Executive Director Report:

Don Strickland shared his report. Don shared that a lot of meetings continue throughout PDRTA's service area and that there has been an increase in outside entities and other agencies wanting to learn more about public transportation. Don had a call with an entity that is doing a program in the Central Midlands area in Columbia, SC. One of their focuses is having individuals who lobby for them and seek additional Federal funds.

H. HR Report/Newsletter/EAP Update:

Ania Giannace-Dixon, HR Director, shared her report. Ania informed the board that PDRTA closed out the month of July with 69 employees. There were a few terminations, but the majority were voluntary resignations. This led to another shortage of drivers and the need to refocus on the current number of driver trainees. There are 11 driver trainees with 2 more being added August 5th. All the trainees still need to get their CDLs. An interview for a mechanic is scheduled for next week. Gabriella Perla is the new HR Support Personnel who started Monday, August 5th. She has been scheduling drivers and interview appointments. An offer has been made to one applicant for the Executive Assistant position. Job fairs are scheduled for next week in Pageland, as well as September 4th in Florence. Transfers and promotions were shared in June. The announcement for the employees of the month for July has been delayed until August.

Ania then reviewed the July Newsletter, which was redesigned by the new marketing intern, Preston Gerald. The newsletter features employee birthdays, current programs for new employees to review, information about Title VI, and more. Ania then shared information on First Sun EAP as PDRTA moves away from Trinity Behavioral Care. First Sun EAP goes beyond behavioral risk management and includes other benefits such as workplace risk management, employee family services, legal services, various types of counseling, financial consultations, and more. It is available for full time employees, their immediate family members, and anyone who lives in their household. First Sun EAP will also be PDRTA's partner for the drug and alcohol policy, which will be updated next month.

Lauren Leonard, Public Information Officer, shared a video from the PDRTA YouTube page, which aims to promote the Francis Marion route. PDRTA staff spoke with the RAs that work in the dorms and apartments at Francis Marion University to help spread the information to their students. Don then shared a video from SC Rural Transit Day 2024.

I. Committee Reports:

Don Strickland informed the Board that a draft audit will hopefully be ready for the November meeting and that the audit committee will send out reminders prior to the meeting.

J. Old/Current Business:

a. Policy #301 Classification Plan

Don Stickland shared that the Policy #301 Classification Plan had been brought before the Board the previous month and that they would be reviewing the same documents. Don opened the floor for any questions. Motion to approve the Policy #301 Classification Plan was made, seconded, and unanimously approved.

b. PDRTA By-Laws Update

Don Stickland informed the Board that the main change in the PDRTA By-Laws was moving the Board meeting back to every month. Motion to approve the revisions was made, seconded, and unanimously approved.

K. New Business:

a. 5339 Funding in the Amount of \$995,812

Don Strickland explained that each year, PDRTA will come before the Board for approval to move forward with their 5307 and 5311 applications. These applications are for rural and small urban funding. The 5339 funding is from SCDOT for small urban funds. The money sunsets, so the turnaround for the application will be quick. The money will likely go towards buses, cutaways, and some other local funding mechanism that the team is working on. PDRTA is also expecting another announcement from SCDOT regarding funding for infrastructure. Motion to approve 5339 funding in the amount of \$995,812 was made, seconded, and unanimously approved.

L. Executive Session:

a. Personnel Update

None.

M. Action Taken from Executive Session:

None.

N. Executive Director's Comments:

Don Strickland thanked everyone for their time, hard work, and dedication. In October/November, PDRTA will begin running services for AESC in the Darlington area. AESC is willing to help provide local funding to provide those services. PDRTA is also working to include more polling location information on the buses.

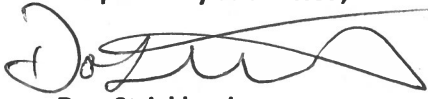
O. Chairman's Comments:

Chairwoman Burns thanked the staff and the Board and congratulated the team on the additional funding.

P. Adjournment:

Motion was made, seconded, and unanimously approved. The meeting adjourned at 1:06 pm.

Respectively submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Don Strickland', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Don Strickland
Executive Director