



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

**Meeting Minutes  
May 15th, 2025**

**Members Present:** Hattie Burns, Carolyn Gause, James Jackson, Tom Ewart, Judy Alexander, Rebecca Gamble

**Members Web Viewing/Absent:** George Jebaily (online), Yolonda Dupree (online), Belva Britt, Tyron Jones

**Staff Present:** Don Strickland, Ania Dixon, Rachel McMillian, Lauren Leonard

A. Hattie Burns called the meeting to order at 12:01 pm.

B. Invocation – James Jackson

C. **Approval of the Agenda:**

Agenda – motioned, seconded, and unanimously approved.

D. **Approval of the Minutes:**

April 17th, 2025, meeting minutes – motioned, seconded, and unanimously approved.

E. **Public Comments:**

None.

F. **Operations Report:**

Don Strickland, Executive Director, shared the April Operations Reports. There was a 3,400 trip increase from this time last year. The Lake City/Myrtle Beach route will likely end. There have been conversations with the mayor and passengers and two scheduled sessions for further conversations. The funds from that route will be redistributed to meet needs in lower Florence County. The team is working to create a vanpool option for current passengers. The Black River route from Lake City started in early spring last year and is currently doing 2.5x what it was then. The LakeTran route, Marion to Beach route, and Hartsville demand response are all showing growth. The Marion Express route is doing exceptionally well with 1,500 trips in April. The Ruiz Foods route dropped since they did not reinstate their visa program.

There is potential for PDRTA to be moving forward with a grant from Pete Mazzaroni and the Marion County Healthcare Foundation. This grant would cover operations expenses and bus shelters in Marion County.

**G. Executive Director Report:**

Don Strickland, Executive Director, shared the Executive Director Report but saved his comments for the Director's Comments portion of the meeting.

**H. HR Report & Newsletter**

Ania Dixon, HR Director, shared the HR Report and Newsletter. PDRTA ended April with 69 employees. There were 5 new hires (4 drivers, a lead dispatcher, and a finance employee) and 4 terminations. The HR team attended two job fairs in Lake City and Florence. They also posted a new job listing for an Outreach Coordinator position.

The HR newsletter covered new hires, employee birthdays, PDRTA's bowling night, policy highlights, First Sun EAP advertisements, and highlighted Mitch Brantley and his rodeo competition. It also included the employee of the month, Eugene McLellan, who received the amazing addition award.

**I. PIO Update**

Lauren Leonard, Public Information Officer, shared an overview of the work she completed in April. Some highlights included a Mother's Day video where she interviewed various passengers at the transit center. She also shared a promotional video for Veronica Bostic and the sponsorship opportunity that came with it. Lauren shared an update on current and upcoming fleet advertising for bus wraps.

**J. Committee Reports**

Don shared a draft for various committees for the upcoming fiscal year. He added a passenger representative position that will participate in meetings and be the voice of PDRTA's passengers. The team will need to identify six passengers, one from each county we serve.

A motion to keep the executive committee the same as last year was seconded and unanimously approved.

**K. Old Business**

**L. New Business**

**a. Approval of State Economic and Infrastructure Development Grant Program – VOTE**

The State Economic and Infrastructure Development Grant Program was motioned, seconded, and unanimously approved.

**b. Draft FY 25-26 Budget**

George Jebaily, Board member, asked about the city of Florence's contributions to the budget. They passed their first reading to increase \$50,000 of funding to PDRTA. Don shared that the city's contributions will help support workforce development and increase demand

response services. The goal is to extend the Florence Transit System operations beyond 6:00pm. PDRTA is also in need of bus replacements. The budget revisions are soon to be completed and will be presented to the finance committee prior to the next board meeting. The finance committee will also meet a couple of hours before the next board meeting to review the budget one more time before presenting it to the full board.

**M. Executive Session:**

An executive session was held.

**N. Action Taken from Executive Session:**

None.

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

Don thanked the board for their hard work and dedication. He shared that there are still a couple of positions to fill to have a complete board and will review the bylaws for instructions on membership structure. Currently, some counties have two representatives while others have one. Don is asking to go to a 15-member board. Further discussions can be made at the next meeting.

**P. Chairwoman's Comments:**

Chairwoman Hattie Burns thanked everyone on the Board and staff for their hard work.

**Q. Adjournment:**

Motion was made, seconded, and unanimously approved. The meeting adjourned at 1:52 pm.

Respectively submitted,

*Don Strickland*

**Don Strickland  
Executive Director**