



**Pee Dee Regional Transportation Authority  
Board of Directors Meeting  
Meeting Minutes  
March 26th, 2026**

**Members Present/Web Viewing:** Rebecca Gamble, Hattie Burns, James Jackson, Robert Williams, Yolonda Dupree, George Jebaily (online), Tom Ewart, Vivian Rogers, Tyron Jones (online), Belva Britt (online), Neil Jackson

**Members Absent:** Carolyn Gause

**Staff Present:** Don Strickland, David Adorno, Ania Dixon, Rachel McMillian, Lauren Leonard, Artavius McClain, Laura Rhoads, Taylor Daniels, Willie Anthony

A. James Jackson called the meeting to order at 12:28 pm.

B. Invocation – Tom Ewart

C. **Approval of the Agenda:**

Agenda – motioned, seconded, and unanimously approved.

D. **Approval of the Minutes:**

February 19th, 2026, meeting minutes – motioned, seconded, and unanimously approved.

E. **Welcome New Members:**

Don Strickland, Executive Director, took this time to introduce our newest team member: Willie Anthony, Maintenance Manager and allowed all present staff and board members to introduce themselves.

F. **Public Comments:**

None.

G. **Operations Report:**

David Adorno, Director of Operations, reviewed the Operations Report. There was a 20% increase in riders overall from January to February. The Florence Transit System is showing a 79% increase from this time last year. Don pointed out that overall ridership jumped from 260,000 last year to 333,000 this year. 28% growth in one year is massive and almost unheard of in transit.

#### **H. HR Report & Newsletter**

Ania Dixon, HR Director, shared the HR Report and Newsletter. There were 3 new hires, 6 terminations, and we ended the month with 64 employees. There were interviews for various positions, job fairs, and a hiring event at Goodwill. Leroy Foster was our employee of the month. Laura Rhoads, Finance Manager, created a benefits hourly rate calculator to give potential applicants a better understanding of the value of the benefits at PDRTA.

#### **I. PIO Update & Quarterly Newsletter**

Lauren Leonard, Public Information Officer, shared the PIO update for March. Lauren worked on updating funding newsletters, workforce handouts, PDRTA general information power point slides, social media posts and tracking. The next quarterly newsletter is also in progress. Several bus wraps were completed with more in the pipeline.

#### **J. Committee Reports**

None.

#### **K. Old Business**

None.

#### **L. New Business**

##### **a. RFP 013026 APC Award – VOTE**

Rachel McMillian, Purchasing Manager, shared information regarding RFP 013026. The Automatic Passenger Counter (APC) system will track ridership trends, specifically when and where riders board and alight the bus. This is required information for NTD reporting and also helps us assess the effectiveness of current routes and areas where they can be improved. A 4-month lease was completed with ETA Transit, the intent of award for this contract.

RFP 013026 APC Award was motioned, seconded, and unanimously approved.

##### **b. Sisters of Charity Grant – VOTE**

Taylor Daniels, Finance Manager, shared information regarding the Sisters of Charity grant. The previous Monday, Taylor submitted the letter of interest. This opportunity funds operational expenses which will help with existing areas that are currently underfunded. It's focusing on agencies that impact people with poverty in South Carolina and addresses economic mobility and getting people to work and resources. We'll hear back on June 22<sup>nd</sup> for the first round of funding. The second round will be available in August.

Don requested to make an amendment to the agenda to add the RHTP Grant as item D under New Business. This motion was seconded and unanimously approved.

The Sisters of Charity Grant was motioned, seconded, and unanimously approved.

##### **c. Coastal Plain Rural Health Network Board – VOTE**

Don Strickland shared that the Coastal Plan Rural Health Network is a coalition that started in the mid-2000's. It's a board of CEO's that meet quarterly to discuss impacts at the state level. This board is a 501c3 and can potentially help with funding.

Don's nomination to the Coastal Plain Rural Health Network Board was motioned, seconded, and unanimously approved.

**d. RHTP Grant – VOTE**

Don shared that 1 billion dollars has been allocated to South Carolina for funding tied to healthcare. What PDRTA has been doing across our region is unlike what any other RTA in the state does. It has a short cycle, meaning everything funded should be spent during that time. The grant focuses on mobility and access and opens April 1<sup>st</sup>.

The Rural Health Transformation Project (RHTP) Grant was motioned, seconded, and unanimously approved.

**M. Executive Session:**

None.

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

None.

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

Don Strickland shared that he had several conversations with senior staff while in Washington D.C. He mentioned that we are in the planning stages for the Intermodal Center with a focus on preliminary A&E, Environmental studies, and Title VI Compliance. Senator Graham Appropriations request will target the Intermodal Center and heavy-duty low-floor buses. The TASCORoadero was last weekend, and we competed in 3 categories. Johnathan Bennett won first place in the heavy-duty bus category and Veronica Bostic won second place in the cutaway category. Johnathan will compete in Omaha, Nebraska in the CTAA roadeo. We are hopeful to put on a regional roadeo in late summer or early fall.

**P. Chairwoman's Comments:**

Chairwoman Hattie Burns thanked all PDRTA staff and board for this hard work and specifically thanked James Jackson for helping facilitate the meeting.

**Q. Adjournment:**

Motion was made, seconded, and unanimously approved. The meeting adjourned at 1:26 pm.

Respectively submitted,



**Don Strickland**

**Executive Director**