



**Pee Dee Regional Transportation Authority
Board of Directors Meeting
Meeting Minutes
February 19th, 2026**

Members Present/Web Viewing: Carolyn Gause, Rebecca Gamble, Tyron Jones, Hattie Burns, Neil Jackson, James Jackson, Belva Britt, Robert Williams, Yolonda Dupree (online), George Jebaily (online)

Members Absent: Tom Ewart, Derrick Graves, Vivian Rogers

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

A. James Jackson called the meeting to order at 12:03 pm.

B. Invocation – James Jackson

C. **Approval of the Agenda:**

Agenda – motioned, seconded, and unanimously approved.

D. **Approval of the Minutes:**

January 15th, 2026, meeting minutes – motioned, seconded, and unanimously approved.

E. **Welcome New Members:**

Don Strickland, Executive Director, took this time to introduce our newest team members: Laura Rhoads, Director of Finance; Taylor Daniels, Finance Manager; and Dylan Roberts, IT Technician.

F. **Public Comments:**

None.

G. **Operations Report:**

David Adorno, Director of Operations, reviewed the Operations Report. There has been a significant 35% increase in the Florence Transit System from November 2025 to January 2026 from 217,000 passenger trips to 293,000. ADA trips increased 4% from 331 to 345 trips. Our team is moving

forward with reviewing ridership trends and routes to address needs and make changes to fit our current budget.

H. HR Report & Newsletter

Ania Dixon, HR Director, shared the HR Report for January. We had 10 hires and ended the month with 67 employees. We filled the maintenance manager position and are currently focusing on drivers, dispatchers, and mechanics. The HR team attended one job fair in Marion and have two more scheduled in March.

Ania also shared the HR Newsletter for February. It included employee birthdays, work anniversaries, open positions, new team spotlights, information regarding the Pee Dee Pathways event which saw thousands of students, a first sun newsletter article, and policy of the month.

I. PIO Update & Quarterly Newsletter

Lauren Leonard, Public Information Officer, shared the PIO update for February. It included social media posts, finalizing 2026 holiday calendar, links for grants PDRTA received, a document for Florence County Legislative Day, hearing flyers, and highlighted current projects in progress such as training videos, bus signage, bus wraps, and poster ads.

The Quarterly Newsletter included information regarding our passenger survey, impacts from going fare free, ride-a-mile with the Florence Chamber of Commerce, the SPOT App, holiday events, our End of Year Celebration, and general information for advertising.

J. Committee Reports

a. Service Committee Update

The service committee met to share updates on public hearings. We are looking at existing routes and identifying areas that can be modified, especially for low ridership areas. Some existing fixed routes would work better with demand response. The overall goal is to streamline service and address local funding gaps. Changes will not affect driver employment. They will be shifted to a new area, and it will help with overtime. PDRTA policy requires that any 25% or greater change to a route requires public hearings. PDRTA staff and the board discussed potential marketing avenues and opportunities for increased outreach. Don shared that we are leaning more towards microtransit in the future to increase access in rural and residential areas.

K. Old Business

None.

L. New Business

a. FFY2021 5307 Grant – VOTE

Don Strickland shared that this 5307 grant is through FTA and was set aside during the time CARES funds were being distributed during the pandemic. The CARES funds have since ended and it is time to disperse the 5307 funds before they become unavailable. It is about \$1.2 million to address capital needs covering 80% funding. We will need 15% local match. All grants require us to show we have local funding available to support the projects. Don is asking the board for approval to chase the 5307 funds.

FFY2021 5317 Grant was motioned, seconded, and unanimously approved.

M. Executive Session:

a. Personnel Update

N. Action Taken from Executive Session:

None.

O. Executive Director's Comments & Report:

Don Strickland welcomed our newest board member, Robert Williams, and thanked him for attending.

P. Chairwoman's Comments:

None.

Q. Adjournment:

Motion was made, seconded, and unanimously approved. The meeting adjourned at 1:31 pm.

Respectively submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Don Strickland', written in a cursive style.

Don Strickland

Executive Director